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The Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching

Bousba Meriem
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English
University of Mentouri
Constantine

Abstract:

We make part of a contemporary globalized world characterized by extensive communication between people of different cultural backgrounds and languages. In a modern foreign language teaching and learning context, this entails that learners should be aided in developing their intercultural communicative competence. Put differently, in order to function appropriately and smoothly in intercultural situations, learners should be made aware of a set of fundamental facts about the culture that vehicles a foreign language, master a range of communicative skills and adopt new attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of culture-specific norms and behaviours. The present paper attempts to shed light on the situation of teaching culture at the Department of English, University of Jijel, and the need to develop third-year-LMD-students' intercultural communicative competence

Key Words: Development ; Intercultural Communicative Competence ; Foreign Language Teaching.

ملخص:

أصبحنا نشهد في عالمنا المعاصر الذي تسوده العولمة اتصالات واسعة النطاق بين أناس من مختلف اللغات و الخلفيات الثقافية. تبعا لذلك فقد أصبح لزاما أن يكون تدريس اللغات الأجنبية منفتحا على مساعدة الطلاب في تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات. بمعنى آخر، لن يتسنى للمتعلم أن يتصرف بشكل مناسب وبسلاسة عند مصادفة ثقافات أخرى إلا عن طريق الإلمام بمجموعة من الحقائق الأساسية عن ثقافة اللغة الأجنبية، وإتقان مجموعة من المهارات التواصلية و كذا تبنّي مواقف جديدة تعبّر عن التسامح وقبول القواعد والسلوكيات التي تطبع الثقافات الأخرى. ضمن هذا الإطار، يهدف المقال أدناه إلى تسليط الضوء على أوضاع تدريس الثقافة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة جيجل وتبيان الحاجة إلى تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لدى طلاب السنة الثالثة نظام ل.م.د.

Introduction:

Several decades ago, the aim of foreign language teaching (FLT henceforth) was to enable learners read literary texts and master the grammar of the target language in order to get access to 'great works'. Yet, despite the succession of different methods, not least the proposition of communicative competence in Communicative Approaches, culture was totally unattended to. It was only in the 1980s that the light was shed on culture

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Several researchers, then, began to examine culture dynamics, its critical influence and contribution to 'successful' language learning (Byram and Morgan, 1994; Kramsch, 1998). That is to say, scholars became increasingly aware of the import of culture in conducting successful communication. Stemming from these considerations, an intercultural communicative competence model (ICC henceforth) was suggested to supersede that of communicative competence (Byram, 1997). In the FLT context, language teachers, thus, are now required to help learners develop such competence in order to achieve appropriate intercultural communication, as this paper will reveal.

The Synergy of Language and Culture

Language and culture are two inseparable entities which hold a specific relationship. Yet, before delving into the investigation of the nature of language-culture relationship, a review of the literature dealing with the definition of culture seems fundamental.

The general ubiquity of culture in every human aspect accounts for the variety of definitions given to the construct. As an anthropologist, Hofstede (1994:5) describes culture as "… the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." This definition shows the pivotal role that culture plays in any community as a glue, but also as a mental software that joins the members of any society and guides their behaviours. Moreover, the British anthropologist Tylor defines culture as: "… [a] complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (1871:1). Thus, culture encompasses all the values, ideas and beliefs that are internalized by a given society, the artifacts that it has made or achieved as well as acceptable behavioural patterns that are learnt and acquired by members of the said society. Similarly, Moran (2001) proposes a comprehensive description of culture stating that:

> *Culture is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts (24).*

As such, culture includes all the visible and invisible traits that characterize the identity of groups and communities. By the visible traits it is meant the physical manifestations and achievements made by members of a particular community, as literature and fine art. Whereas, the invisible aspects refer to the attitudes, beliefs, values and even the internalized patterned ways of acceptable behaviours. People who belong to a specific group share similar views and expectations about appropriate and inappropriate actions, with regard to their common attitudes and values. These two visible and invisible aspects of culture are also referred to as: Formal/ Big C culture and deep/ small c culture in FLT, respectively (Chastain, 1988). In addition to his description of culture, Moran (*ibid.:* 29) explains that culture is shared between members of the same community, is dynamic and ever-changing since it is affected by its members' interaction with people having different cultures. Add to this that culture has an essential symbolic nature and function. In this vein, Thompson (1990) posits that culture is "… the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances, and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs" (132). In other words, the aspects of culture, ranging from behaviours to beliefs and conceptions, are but symbols or codes used by members of the same group as referential signs in interaction.

In a nutshell, culture has two facets: Small c culture related to those invisible aspects such as beliefs and attitudes, and Big C culture referring to the tangible manifestations of a given society as artifacts and literature. Moreover, culture has a plethora of characteristics: it is symbolic, acquired, learnt, shared, dynamic, ever-changing and transmitted by members of the same group.

Now that the term culture is clearly defined, it is worthwhile to progress to examine the nature of the relationship of language and culture. During the 1950's, a seminal research work that investigated the language/culture relationship came to be known as the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. In this hypothesis, it is.claimed that language determines the way people think, Indeed, language is the key factor that makes people of one culture perceive the world differently from those of another culture. As Duranti (1997:49) penned, "[Language is] an important window on the universe of thought". Hence,

language is a mirror-like feature of a community's culture. It characterizes the cultural aspect of human life and contributes in building meaning and shaping individuals' thought.

Moreover, language functions as both a means and a guide to the cultural orientations and heritage a group. In other words, culture is revealed in or can be understood via language. Therefore, alongside artifacts, behavioural patterns, norms, and values, language constitutes one of the cultural manifestations of any society and a tool by which cultural features can be detected. This is the reason why Risager (2007) contends that language should be conceived of as a cultural product or manifestation, and that it is influenced by culture itself.

Brown (2000), for his part, stresses the interdependence of both language and culture in that "A language is part of a culture and culture is part of language. The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (*ibid*: 177). In another context, Brown (1994:170) argues that language and culture are two interrelated entities saying: "Language …is the most visible and available expression of … culture". On the one hand, language is a cultural manifestation in the sense that it expresses the cultural reality of a given society. On the other hand, culture is considered as part of language for linguistic realizations reflect people's cultural modes of perception and thought.

The fact language and culture are two inseparable entities, and the existence of one requires the other pushed many scholars to stress the importance of integrating the teaching of culture alongside teaching of language in FLT contexts, as the following section indicates.

Culture Teaching Integration in FL Classrooms

The idea of culture inclusion in FLT curricula and syllabi became the focal point of research with the increased awareness of the tight relation holding between language and culture. Indeed, researchers (Chastain, 1988; and Stern, 1992) set themselves the task of answering the three cardinal questions of why, what and how to teach culture with the view to designing a principled integration of culture teaching. Each of these questions will be tackled in this section.

The new trend to FLT maintains that culture cannot be taught without language and vice versa. That is to say, the inseparability of language and culture entails that language teaching is culture teaching. Departing from researchers who argue that language and culture teaching should take place simultaneously, Peck (1998) claims that: "Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete" (1). Thus, language cannot be taught without teaching its culture. The study of culture must be part of the profession of FLT as the following quote of Politzer (1959) suggests:

> *As language teachers, we must be interested in the study of culture… not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach the language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning (123).*

The other reason behind teaching culture alongside language is that the major aim of FLT is to develop learners' communicative competence. This very aim is set due to the close relationship between culture and communication. As Samovar *et al.* (1981) accentuates:

> *Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted… Culture…is the foundation of communication (3).*

Language learners, then, need to be aware of the culturally appropriate ways for addressing people, greetings, and expressing agreement or disagreement with someone, to mention but few cultural demands. Accordingly, learners should know that behaviours that are acceptable by their own culture's standards may not be so in another culture, and that even what is commonly used in their language can be considered as inappropriate in another speech community. By the same token, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) and Byram (1989) insist on the necessity to raise learners' awareness of the culturally

appropriate behaviours associated with language use. For Tomalin and Stempleski *(ibid*.: 11), culture is taught for two reasons: "to increase cultural awareness, and to promote cross-cultural interaction". As for Byram (*op cit.),* teaching culture permits learners to become familiar with the new system of meanings and the symbols related to these meanings. In doing so, learners will be able to understand the target behaviours and behave appropriately as well.

Concerning the second question that relates to culture teaching, namely the culture content, attempts were made and propositions put forward by researchers that aim to help teachers integrate such aspect in their language teaching courses. Language classrooms, according to Tomalin and Stempleski (*op.cit*) should be based on "small c" culture, i.e. the "culturally influenced beliefs and perceptions, especially as expressed through language, but also through cultural behaviors that affect acceptability in the host community" (6). Likewise, Stern (1992) recommends a cultural survival kit that every language learner should know. These topics include: places, individual persons and way of life, people and society in general, history, institutions, art, music, literature and other achievements. Stern goes on to argue that a learner needs to have "some sense of physical location to which to relate the target language" (*ibid*.: 219). Following the same line of thought, Byram and Morgan (1994) suggest a content of cultural learning which, for them, should cover the following broad categories: social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behaviour, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life-cycle, national history, national geography, national culture heritage, as well as stereotypes and national identity. It should be borne in mind that the above suggestions are but few attempts among many others, and that the multidimensional nature of culture makes it difficult to agree on a common content.

The third issue that deals with how to integrate and teach culture in language courses was addressed by Chastain (1988), who highlights some techniques of teaching culture but used the term 'approach' interchangeably with 'technique', and Stern (1992), who presents eight groups of techniques of culture teaching under the name 'approaches'. The following section stands for illustrating four main techniques proposed in these works, namely the cultural side, the culture assimilator, the culture capsule and the culture cluster.

The cultural side refers to an unpredicted cultural comment or information provided by the teacher when it arises in the text, i.e. context-based information (Chastain, *op.cit*; and Stern, *ibid*.). Though it can be considered as disordered information, it helps learners to make a clear association between the cultural information and language item used. As for the culture assimilator, it is a brief description of a critical incident that appears in cross-cultural interaction and which can cause a misinterpretation and misunderstanding on the part of the learners (Chastain, *ibid*.; and Tomalin and Stempleski, *op.cit*). Students, then, are given four possible explanations and are asked to choose the appropriate one. The culture assimilators are said to be funny and help learners develop a sense of tolerance towards culture diversity. The third common technique deals with the culture capsule, and was first proposed by Taylor and Sorensen (1961 in Seelye, 1993). The technique offers a description of one cultural aspect of the target culture followed by a discussion of its contrasts in the home culture. This description can be presented orally either by the teacher himself or by the learners. Such a "capsule" is predicated to give students more opportunities to discuss and understand both their home and the target culture (Chastain, 1988). The last technique used in culture teaching is dubbed culture cluster (Meade and Morain, 1973 in Seelye, 1993). It is a combination of two or three culture capsules that are conceptually- related. The advantage of the culture cluster, according to Stern (1992: 126) is that it "lends itself well to behavioural training."

All in all, it has been maintained that language and culture are so interrelated in human life that language teaching and culture teaching are two sides of the same coin. Hence, mastering the linguistic component is not adequate for achieving successful communication in the target language. Rather, it is knowledge about the target culture, cultural diversity and the influence culture has on language use that allows learners to interact appropriately. This realization led to extending the concept of communicative competence to reach the cultural side in a new concept called Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). The concept of ICC is being crowned the basic aim of FLT, as the next section explains.

Beyond Communicative Competence: Intercultural Communicative Competence

The concept of ICC was introduced by Byram (1997) as an extension to that of communicative competence. It is only logical, then, to conduct a historical overview of the notion of communicative competence before highlighting that of ICC.

The phrase 'communicative competence' invokes Hymes (1972), the anthropological linguist who first introduces it. It was proposed as a response to Chomsky's linguistic competence (1965) and as an attempt to move from the common notion of ideal native speaker competence to focus on actual performance in context. 'Competence' was coined by the structural linguist Chomsky (1965: 3) to refer to the innate inborn capacity that any individual has about his native language, and it is distinct from 'performance'. Thus, whereas competence holds that every individual is equipped with a basic knowledge about the language system -its grammatical rules particularly- that allows him/her to speak accurately, understand and produce an unlimited number of structures, performance refers to the actual use of knowledge in a given situation (Chomsky, *ibid*.). With this distinction, Chomsky, then, was thought to have idealized the native speaker's knowledge of his/her language and neglected the contextual factors that may interfere in its use (Hymes, *op.cit* in Duranti, 2001).

In his rejection of Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance, Hymes (1972) argues that the two are one and the same thing since competence is the innate knowledge used and reflected in actual observable performance, and that grammatical competence is not sufficient for speaking a language and for communicating. The competent speaker, according to Hymes, should acquire both grammatical competence and competence of language use; i.e. what to say, to whom, when, how, etc. Because communication is a social behavior that should adhere to the socio-cultural rules in using language, communicative competence relates to the form and use of language in different contexts, and how to convey meaning appropriately in an effective way. Language acquisition, in Hymes' framework, is not context-free and is not a matter of abstract linguistic knowledge about grammar and vocabulary to be used arbitrarily; it is rather rules of language use or language functions in different contexts.

Additionally, Hymes proposes four elements that best present a theory of language use and its user being: formal possibility, feasibility, appropriateness

and performance or occurrence relating to the grammatical and cultural, psycholinguistic and cognitive, and social factors affecting language use in communication, respectively (*ibid.).* The theory provides the basic elements that allow the acquisition of the requisite competence and which refer to both knowledge and abilities that contribute in the maintenance of any communicative action.

Despite the different arguments presented by Hymes (*ibid*.), communicative competence remained an ambiguous notion. Yet, it started to take its shape mainly with Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) who introduce it to the field of FLT in USA. Canale and Swain start from Hymes ideas of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence to define communicative competence as:

> *...a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse. (ibid.: 20)*

Accordingly, communicative competence is made up of three components: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Furthermore, Canale (*op.cit*) further elaborate sociolinguistic competence to encompass two separate competences viz. sociolinguistic and discourse competences. Additionally, he distinguishes between communicative competence and what he calls 'actual communication'. Communicative competence, hence, refers to the underlying capacities and knowledge necessary to communicate appropriately whereas actual communication is the observable manifestation of the underlying knowledge and skills in real situation. Therefore, communicative competence was set to comprise four competences, after Canale's (*op.cit*) refinement and elaboration: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence described hereunder.

Taking after Chomsky and Hymes, Canale and Swain (*op.cit*) use the term *Grammatical competence* to refer to the knowledge of the grammatical rules, vocabulary, lexis, semantics, i.e. the speaker's ability to produce different

accurate grammatical structures, and understand and interpret utterances' meaning. As regards *Sociolinguistic competence*, it relates mainly to the knowledge and awareness of the socio-cultural rules such as cultural references, social status, style and politeness. These rules underlie appropriate language use and help speakers succeed in their communicative behavior (Hymes, 1972). As for the *Discourse competence*, it is centered on knowledge of the rules for achieving coherence and cohesion of speech, i.e. the ability to combine stretches of sentence in a coherent and cohesive way and provide a unified text or speech, spoken or written (Canale and Swain, *op.cit*). Last, the *Strategic competence* is composed of communicative strategies, whether verbal and non-verbal, used to compensate for communicative breakdowns, due to some deficiencies that relate to lack of knowledge either at discourse or grammatical level, or inappropriateness at the sociolinguistic level (Canale, 1983).

It is worth mentioning that various successive models have been proposed either to add new notions to communicative competence or modify the original ones. However, with the increase of intercultural contact and technological development, a necessity was felt to re-conceptualize the notion of communicative competence and provide a new alternative that goes in line with the present globalized communicative situations.

Indeed, Byram (1997) asserts that the aim of FLT " … requires learners to engage with both familiar and unfamiliar experience through the medium of another language … [and] to use that language to interact with people for whom it is their preferred and natural medium of experience" (3), i.e. native speakers. Since communicative competence does not really achieve the expected outcomes, the basic criticisms pointed to the marginalization of the cultural aspect in the different proposed models and the idealization of the model of 'native speaker' which learners should imitate (House and Kasper, 2000). FL learners are, then, seen from the eye of the native speakers' norms. This idea was rejected because of three main reasons; the first is that non-native speakers needs and requirements do differ from those of native speakers, depending on the social and cultural contexts of language use (Byram and Fleming, 1998). FL learners are required to learn new elements that contribute in successful communication, rather than to imitate native speakers as their models. Moreover, confining learners' competence to imitating that of native

speakers would probably demotivate learners and devalue their identity as social members (Byram, 1997). This is because engaging in communication entails establishing personal relationships, expressing oneself and sharing ideas and beliefs, from one side. From the other side, communication is an ever-changing process, and is guided by the context of speech. The third reason behind rejecting the native speaker model is that even providing learners with all the communicative contexts that a native speaker would fall in in classroom instruction is quite impossible; there must be a space for the learner to observe, think, analyze, and obtain conclusions and decisions that work with the different situational context and his/her own identity.

The construct of intercultural speaker came to substitute that of the native speaker. The intercultural speaker is said to be the one who is aware of his own cultural being as well as that of the foreigners' (Byram, 1997, and Kramsch, 1998). Researchers used various terms for the intercultural speaker; some maintained the "intercultural" descriptor (Byram and Fleming 1998) while others oscillated between the "intercultural" and the "transcultural" appellations for the speaker (Aguilar, 2007).

With her notion of the 'third sphere' or the 'sphere of interculturality', Kramsch (1993) argues that the intercultural speaker is the one who can easily shift from one's own cultural community to the target one. He is the one who "has knowledge of one, or preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly," according to Byram and Fleming (*op.cit*: 9). Communicating successfully with people whose culture is different from one's own entails understanding and accepting what is not native, hence reacting appropriately. So, learners are expected to be mediators between two or more cultures through interpretation of and comparison between the two worldviews. They are also required to learn to decenter themselves, observe what is target and different from their own frames, understand and realize the delight of this difference and, finally, set themselves in a third area.

As a consequence to the introduction of notion of intercultural speaker, ICC was introduced by Byram (1997). As a definition, Maria Jose Coprias Aguilar (2007:68) claims that achieving ICC means:

> *[D]eveloping attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures, promoting the ability to handle intercultural contact situations, promoting reflection on cultural differences or promoting increased understanding of one's own culture.*

The definition above can be consulted as it offers a thorough account of the different points that ICC covers. Taking another vantage point, Meyer (1991:137) defines it as follows: "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures". Similarly, Meyer is referring to attitudes and skills for appropriate communication. Byram's conception of ICC, then, has much in common with Aguilar's view though Byram mentions that it can be developed through experience and analysis, and seconds the idea of integrating this competence in the teaching field (*op.cit*). In addition to the commonly-known competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences, Byram (*ibid.*) adds the 'intercultural components' which he, subsequently, classifies into three main categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes as follows:

- *Savoir etre : ... showing curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own;*
- *Saviors : ... knowledge of social groups,... their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutors country...;*
- *Savoir comprendre : ... skills of interpreting [events from another culture] and relating [them to one's own];*
- *Savoir apprendre/ faire : ... skills of discovery and interaction...*
- *Savoir s'engager : ... critical cultural awareness ...; which means having the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products (Byram 1997 : 31-54)*

In plain terms, Byram dealt with five types of knowledge: Knowledge of the surrounding environment, including self and others, knowledge of

interactional purposes such as interpretation and discovery, knowledge of valuing one's concepts and beliefs and those of others, and gaining critical cultural awareness. All those variables contribute to the formation of a competent speaker in intercultural situation.

To conclude, it can be claimed that the model of ICC reveals a working framework that satisfies FL learners' needs, and which compensates for deficiencies while interacting inter-culturally. This is because it has significant differences with the communicative competence model, particularly with the focus on attitudes as well as the scope that each of knowledge and skill covers.

Method

The research instruments used in this study are a questionnaire and a written discourse completion task (WDCT henceforth) designed for teachers and students, respectively. This study involved 110 third year LMD students and 16 teachers at the University of Jijel, Algeria. The students were selected on an immediate convenience sampling basis. The aim of using the teachers' questionnaire is to elicit data about the teachers' views on the development of the students' ICC with regard to the current approach of teaching culture. The students' WDCT provides data about their ICC development.

The questionnaire given to teachers comprises three parts: background information, ICC development, and culture teaching. As for the background information, all teachers hold Master/ 'Magistère' degree, where only 4 of them are fulltime lecturers and 9 others are part-time ones. Their teaching experience in years varies between 1 to 9 years. Three teachers did not return the questionnaire sheets. With regard to their views about the students' development of ICC and their practices in teaching culture, the results will be shown and analyzed after reviewing students' WDCT in the next section.

The students' WDCT is also divided into four parts: background information, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and socio-cultural knowledge. The students are aged between 20 to above 30 years old where 53, nearly half of them, are 22 years old. Students were asked about their views on the most important thing in learning English, the type of hindrances they face most often in using English and their self-evaluation of their ability to

communicate successfully in English. The second part of linguistic competence aims at evaluating students' development of linguistic competence, being one variable within ICC. The same aim applies for pragmatic competence, the third part of the WDCT. The last part of socio-cultural knowledge includes two sub-parts. The first one deals with the students' knowledge about British/ American cultural facts while the second is about the students' awareness of appropriate etiquette and reactions of foreign culture people, on the basis of a comparison between their worldviews and beliefs and those of native ones. It is worth mentioning that the evaluation procedure in this study is quantitative in nature on the basis of either correctness or appropriateness of the participants' responses to get the frequency of occurrence of each response.

Findings and Discussions

A. The Teachers' Questionnaire

As a starting point in the investigation of the teachers' views, a question about the effectiveness of the present English syllabus taught at the university in developing the learners' communicative skills and intercultural competences was posed. Twelve (75%) teachers answered with 'no' while four (25%) others answered with 'yes', as the table below shows. This indicates that teachers think that students have not yet developed the necessary skills and knowledge that help them in achieving successful intercultural communication. In the same vein, in question item 3 which tackles whether students face problems in communication, fourteen (87,5%) participants said 'yes', when only 2 (12, 5%) said "no' revealing a consistency in views.

	Syllabus efficacy	Learners' problems while communicating in English
Yes	**25%**	**87,50%**
No	**75%**	**12,50%**

Table 1: Correlation of Teachers' Answers to Question Items 1 and 3

Given their obvious dissatisfaction with the recently applied syllabus, teachers were, then, asked about which language component they think is not taught properly within the English course, as shown in table 2 below.

	Language component	Nature of the learners' communication problems
Grammar and vocabulary / Linguistic	**21.43%**	**18.18%**
Culture of the English / Cultural	**25%**	**33.33%**
Appropriate language use in communication /Pragmatic	**42.86%**	**33.33%**
Phonetics / Pronunciation	**10.71%**	**15.15%**

Table 2: Correlation of Teachers' Answers to Question Items 2 and 4

Accordingly, twelve (42,86%) teachers stated that the aspect of appropriate language use in communication is not taught properly. Similarly, seven (25%) of them claimed that culture is also another language unit that has not received much attention in the current syllabus. By the same token, eleven teachers (33,33%) thought that learners' communication problems are much more pragmatic or cultural in nature, respectively. This indicates the correspondence between the teachers' views and evaluation of the students' performances. It is worth mentioning that the choice in these two questions is not limited to one answer. Any teacher can choose two or more elements. Teachers have also added some extra factors regarding the nature of learners' communication problems being particularly of psychological nature such as: lack of self-esteem and unsuitable attitudes toward communication. Now, it can be said that according to teachers' responses, learners have not attained an adequate degree in the development of their ICC. The forthcoming questions highlight the teachers' practices in teaching culture.

Question five deals with the teachers' awareness about the role culture plays in using language, and the necessity to include it in the English courses to help learners manage successfully their intercultural communication. More specifically, it seeks to diagnose teachers' views about whether providing learners with the cultural background underlying language use would be beneficial for their understanding and attitudes towards the target culture or not. The results obtained show that all of the 16 teachers (100%) agree upon the importance of explaining the cultural references on which language use is

loaded. These results vindicate the above findings that the matter is related to the syllabus taught.

Questions six and seven aim to shed light on the actual practices and measures taken by instructors to teach the target culture alongside language teaching. The sixth question investigates the teachers' attempts to include some cultural points while teaching other subjects of English, at least through comparison between the target (English) and native language (Arabic or any other dialect). All participants (16 teachers: 100%) opted for the answer of 'yes'. This means that all teachers are aware of the importance of culture teaching inclusion in foreign language courses. Correspondingly, question seven deals with the frequency of such inclusions in English courses, as Table 3 shows:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Frequency of culture teaching inclusion	**18,75%**	**50%**	**18,75%**	**12,50%**

Table 3: Teachers' Responses to Question Item 7

The above table shows that half of the totality of respondents (8 teachers: 50%) do often try to include the cultural aspect of English in the teaching courses. Meanwhile, the second half of the participants do vary in their attempts to draw the learners' attention to the cultural elements inherent in language use with an equal statistical percentage of 18,75% (3 teachers) for the 'always' and 'sometimes' options. This proves teachers' awareness of the necessity of culture teaching inclusion in the foreign language teaching process, on the one hand, and their willingness to introduce and teach such cultural courses in the teaching syllabuses, on the other hand. This willingness is also clearly revealed in the data obtained from the last question. This latter is designed to prompt the teachers' awareness, intention, and will to introduce a course about the cultural aspects of English, being a foreign language. Indeed, all teachers (16 teachers: 100%) advocate this view and stress the importance of such aspect and its influence in developing learners' ICC.

All the above obtained data reveals three basic interpretations. The first one is that learners' development of ICC is not quite satisfactory due to the common remarkable marginalization of the cultural and pragmatic aspects of

English in the teaching syllabuses. Yet, teachers, on their part, try to provide learners with some basic instruction about culture in their different courses. Moreover, teachers at the University of Jijel show a willingness to incorporate culture within English courses. This refers to their awareness of the crucial role that culture has in successful intercultural communication.

B. The Students' WDCT

1. General Information

In the following WDCT, students are given three questions that tackle their awareness of the cultural component in language learning, their self-evaluation of the nature of hindrances they face most often in using English and of their ICC development. The following tables explain the students' perceptions of the nature language learning, in general, and cultural learning, in particular. Because of the correspondence between these three questions, the analysis and interpretation will be presented at the end. It is worth mentioning, here, that the first and the second questions can receive multiple answers by the same respondent.

The following table presents the statistical results taken from the participants' answers about the elements they think are most basic and crucial in learning English:

	Language (grammar and vocabulary)	Culture (civilization and literature)	Communi-cation	All of these aspects	Others
The Most important	**22,5%**	**0,83%**	**31,67%**	**43,33%**	**1,67%**

Table 4: Students' Answers to Question Item 1.4

The second question, as mentioned above, aims to shed light on the types of obstacles students encounter in their communicative processes, as Table 5 shows:

The nature of hindrances that you face most often in using English	Percentage
Inadequate linguistic knowledge (grammar and vocabulary)	**20.69%**
Inadequate cultural information about the target culture language	**18,1%**
Lack of self-confidence while communicating in English	**47,41%**
Negative attitudes about foreigners and the target culture	**2,59%**
Unawareness of the rules underlying appropriate language use.	**7,76%**
Others	**1,72%**
No answer	**1,72%**

Table 5: Students' Answers to Question Item 1.5

The third question investigates the students' self-evaluation of their ability to communicate successfully in English in intercultural situations. The respondents are supposed to answer with 'yes' or 'no'.

Answer	Yes	No	No answer
Percentage	**40.9%**	**58.18%**	**0.91%**

Table 6: Students' Responses to Question Item 1.6

According to the data presented in Table 4, the value of the different aspects varies. However, most of the students opt for the fourth choice where all of the language, culture and communication variables are important, with a valuing of the 'communication' variable (for 38 students: 31,67%) over the 'language' one (for 27 respondents: 22,5%). Only one student (0,83%) chooses culture as a separate important unit in learning English. By such results, it can be claimed that most students do lack interest of exploring the target culture, and hence awareness of its importance in the learning of English as a whole.

In the second question, participants are required to determine the types of hindrances they encounter in their communication. The first type they, mostly, agree upon is the psychological one which refers mainly to lack of self-confidence with the average of 47,41% (55 students) out of 116 answers. The second and the third percentage is of the inadequate linguistic knowledge (20,69%) and the inadequate cultural information about English culture (18,1%). The least attention was given to the negative attitudes towards foreigners and the target culture, one aspect in culture learning (2,59%). The

negligence of the cultural side inherent in language learning from the part of students means that they are unaware of this aspect, and its vital dynamics in language learning and communication, at large. Subsequently, the largest part of the students (64 ones), forming 58,18% of the whole sample, think they are not adequately competent to run intercultural communication successfully.

2. Linguistic Competence

This part of linguistic competence aims to evaluate the intermediate learners' level of linguistic competence, being part of ICC. The question relates to the selection of the appropriate synonym to each of the given words from the list proposed.

Word	Meaning			No answer
Gracious:	Pretty	Clever	Pleasant	
	10.91%	**06.36%**	**74.55%**	**08.18%**
Fraud:	Malcontent	Imposter	Clown	
	29.09%	**41.82%**	**04.55%**	**24.55%**
Qualm:	Distress	Impunity	Scruple	
	39.09%	**07.27%**	**23.64%**	**30%**
Loquacious:	Talkative	Thirsty	Beautiful	
	41.82%	**05.45%**	**12.72%**	**40%**
Reverie:	Phantom	Daydream	Palimpsest	
	06.36%	**48.18%**	**04.55%**	**40.91%**

Table 7: Students' Answers to Question Item 2.1

The table above indicates that approximately half of the participants do have a good command in linguistic competence. This can be clearly deduced from the average of the correct answers obtained for the selected words respectively: 'pleasant' (74,55%) for the adjective 'gracious'; 'imposter' (41,82%) for the word 'fraud'; 'scruple' (23,64%) for the noun 'qualm'; 'talkative' (41,82%) for the adjective 'loquacious'; and 'daydream' (48,18%) for the noun 'reverie'. Thus, it can be said that third year learners of English have attained an acceptable degree of linguistic knowledge, hence competence.

3. Pragmatic Competence

Regarding the importance of pragmatic competence development in the learners' acquisition of ICC, the WDCT designed in this study attempts investigate this type of competence through providing the students with two various communicative situations with a list of speech acts, one of which is the appropriate. The learners, then, should choose the appropriate expression in each situation as shown below.

3.1. You meet a stranger who is pleased with your English, and is flattering you for your beautiful English. You say:

Response	Percentage
No, no, my English is very poor.	**27.27%**
Thank you. I had good teachers at university.	**13.63%**
Thank you so much.	**57.27%**
No answer	**01.82%**

Table 8: Students' Responses to Question Item 3.1

3.2. You stop a taxi. You want the taxi driver to take you to the museum. You say:

Response	**Percentage**
Pardon, can you take me to the museum, please?	**24.54%**
Museum, please.	**38.18%**
- Excuse me, would you mind taking me to the museum?	**35.45%**
No answer	**1.82%**

Table 9: Students' Responses to Question Item 3.2

In this section, the participants vary in their appropriate responses. For the first situation, as such, more than half of the participants favor the third option of "thank you so much" with an average of 57,27%. With regard to the most appropriate option in this context, it receives the least choice percentage. Only 15 students (13,63%) appoint it. This means that this way of answering a compliment is not common to them. They lack such types of pragmatic knowledge. In addition, the first answer of "no, no my English is very poor" is selected by 30 students (27,27%). This answer is considered not appropriate in the English culture, but in other cultures such as Chinese, and may be the Algerian, it is so. It can be claimed to be a transfer from the mother tongue

culture conventions. The choice of the first answer, with a second rate, indicates that these learners do miss such pragmatic information. Concerning the second situation, the matter differs since the appropriate answer was the first classified in rate with a totality of 42 voices (38,18%). However, the difference between the first and the second choice is not quite big (35,45%); this shows that nearly more than half of the whole sample have not attained an adequate level of pragmatic acquisition.

4. Socio-Cultural Knowledge

The fourth section in the students' WDCT is devoted to the evaluation of the students' acquisition of socio-cultural knowledge about English. It is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the learners' knowledge about the cultural facts of English i.e. Big C culture which concerns the general factual information about history, geography, literary achievements and so on. The second part focuses on the small c culture information which deals with the acceptable patterns, norms and conventions of appropriate behaviours, common in the target culture. In the first part, participants are asked to fill in the gaps with the appropriate answer, as Table 10 shows.

Statement	Answer	Correct Answer	Wrong Answer	No Answer
John Winthrop was	**A governor of the Massachussets Bay Colony**	**0%**	**10%**	**90%**
The Union Jack is	**The national flag of United Kingdom**	**4,55%**	**0%**	**95,45%**
Thanks giving day is on	**The fourth Thursday of November**	**0.91%**	**23,64%**	**75,45%**
The author of Sons and Lovers' is	**D.H.Lawrence**	**0%**	**2,73%**	**97.27%**
The difference between sonnet and couplet is	**Sonnet contains fourteen lines whereas a couplet has two lines**	**09,1%**	**53,65%**	**44,55%**

Table 10: The Students' Response to Question Item 4.1

According to the results shown in the table above, most or nearly all the participants are not able to answer the questions (0%, 4,55%, 09,1%, 0%, 09,1%) and complete the statements with the correct response. Instead, they resort to leave empty spaces (90%, 95,45%, 75,45%, 97,27%, 44,55%). Hence, the students' choice of not answering in such exercise where there is no alternative, unlike the other sections where various response choices are given, indicates that they do lack knowledge and factual information about the target culture, despite their so-called intermediate level. This proves that culture as a subject in foreign language teaching is totally discarded.

In the last part, as mentioned earlier, learners of English are given two situations where misunderstanding and conflict of the cultural beliefs and conviction occur. Respondents are supposed to give their own reaction and hypothesize about that of the native speaker in those situations. The aim of this part is to analyze the students' awareness of the cross-cultural differences between the target and native views that influence and determine the actual behaviours. The tables below present the extent to which these learners have developed their awareness of these cultural aspects.

4.1 You and your English friend have an appointment at 3 o'clock. Now, it is 3:45 and your friend does not show up. You call him but he does not answer.

Reaction	Will leave	Will wait for him because you know that he will come	Will keep calling to get any news about him	No answer
Responses for "Student"	**22.73%**	**12.72%**	**63.64%**	**0.91%**
Responses for "Native speaker"	**31.82%**	**36.36%**	**28.18%**	**03.64%**

Table 11: Students' Responses to Question Item 4.1

4.2 You are invited to your English friend's house. When you arrive and take a rest, he asks what you want to have; cafe or tea. You answer him back saying "Oh, no, no, no trouble, please". Your friend doesn't serve you anything to drink, then.

Reaction	Will get embarrassed	Will feel that he is	Will consider it	No answer

	because he does not give you anything	not hospitable	quite normal	
Responses for "Student"	**14.54%**	**21.82%**	**61.82%**	**01.82%**
Responses for "Native speaker"	**11.82%**	**31.82%**	**51.82%**	**04.54%**

Table 12: Students' Responses to Question Item 4.2

Differently from the previous part, approximately all students provide answers. Moreover, the appropriate reactions of the native speaker were attained by 36,36% of the total number of respondents in the first situation, and 51,82% for the second situation. This difference in the average between the first and second situation can be attributed to students' awareness about some culturally-loaded beliefs and conventions for British people. As for the students' reactions, there seems to be a consensus and harmony between members of the same community. This is revealed from the percentage obtained in both situations, where it is above the average (63,64%, 61,82%).

Conclusion

The above analysis shows that students have not attained the desired advanced level in ICC acquisition, not even a threshold one. This is clearly stated from the results obtained from third year students' WDCT, and teachers' questionnaire. Students, in the test, reveal that they do not receive ample instruction in British/American culture. This can, even partly, explain why they manifest lack of cultural awareness/knowledge about the target culture, or a superficial one in that. Despite their overall good command of the linguistic code, intermediate learners fail in responding to items pertaining to English pragmatics and culture, two fundamental aspects in developing ICC. This means that the students' failure to run appropriate cross-cultural communication is cultural in nature, and not only linguistic. One can safely judge that culture is not given its due share in the teaching syllabuses at the University of Jijel. This view is corroborated by the teachers' views about their students' ICC, and who impute it to the situation of culture teaching in the current syllabus. Teachers express their dissatisfaction with the inadequate

status given to culture in the implemented syllabuses, and show their readiness to include and foster it in their teaching. This study represents a case for the importance and necessity of integrating culture in the English courses and syllabi to enhance students' awareness of the cross-cultural differences. Doing so, it is hoped, would develop their knowledge of the cultural and pragmatic background information underlying language use. Ultimately, students will be able to develop their ICC, the pinnacle of cross-cultural communication.

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