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**Assessing Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence
in a Digitalised Era**

**The Case of Third Year Pupils in Ketroussi Mohamed Middle School,
Mostaganem**

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and New Technologies

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those who have constantly stood by me during the ups and downs conducting this research: To my beloved parents, wife and cute son, brother, four sisters, in-laws, friends, and colleagues.

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Abstract

In today's interconnected world, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is becoming increasingly vital for effective communication. The current research explores the assessment of Algerian middle school learners' intercultural communicative competence in the digitalised era. This research adopts a mixed-method approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to obtain data. Qualitative approach includes a questionnaire distributed to 42 middle school learners to assess learners' knowledge, attitudes, and skills towards the other culture. Moreover, Qualitative approach involves an interview administered to 11 middle school teachers of English language to investigate if teachers teach foreign culture to learners and assess their ICC development. In addition to this, the researcher evaluated third year middle school textbook adopting Xiao's (2010) textbook evaluation checklist to highlight whether the textbook as the main source and resource for middle school teachers is reliable and relevant in helping them assessing their learners' ICC. Data reveals that third-year middle school learners possess enough knowledge about the target culture. They are tolerant, empathetic, and open-minded to learn about other culture. Learners show that they are aware about differences between their own culture and the host one. Data obtained from the textbook evaluation reveals that the textbook contains shortcoming and that the authors need to take into consideration learners needs in the 21st century as world or global citizens. Learners need to possess skills of communication to communicate effectively with people who are different from them in terms of language and culture. Data gained from the teachers' interview shows believe that they have to teach culture to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence to make them ready in today's interconnected world. Teachers need to be trained on how to teach culture to young learners and how to assess learners' ICC.

Keywords: Assessment, Learners, Intercultural communicative competence, digitalised era

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General Introduction

Over the last few decades, assessing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been given great emphasis and has become increasingly significant in English language teaching (ELT). In the age of globalization, learning foreign languages, especially English has become necessary to communicate effectively with people from different cultures and backgrounds. In today's interconnected world, the significance of intercultural communicative competence has become paramount in the context of education. As societies become more diverse and globalized, the ability to communicate and interact effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds has emerged as a critical skill. Particularly, this is true in Algeria where the digital era has brought unprecedented opportunities for intercultural exchange and collaboration. The focus of this research is to explore the intricacies of evaluating Algerian middle school students' intercultural communicative competence in the context of the digital age. The digital revolution has transformed the landscape of communication, offering new platforms and mediums through which individuals can engage with diverse cultures. However, this digitalization also brings forth unique challenges and considerations that must be addressed in the context of education. Algeria, like many countries, is grappling with the challenge of preparing its youth to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. Teaching at Middle Schools is considered a crucial stage in the educational journey where foundational skills are developed and attitudes towards cultural diversity are shaped. Understanding the interplay between digital technologies and intercultural competence at this pivotal stage is essential for devising effective educational strategies that promote global citizenship and cross-cultural understanding. In addition to this, this research establishes a theoretical framework by integrating key elements and concepts from intercultural communication theory and digital literacy. This framework will provide a

perspective for analysing and assessing the intercultural communicative competence of Algerian middle school learners in the digital era. This empirical research examines the current state of intercultural communicative competence among Algerian middle school students. This study will involve collecting and analysing data through a questionnaire administered to third-year middle school students, conducting interviews with middle school teachers, and evaluating the third-year middle school textbook (*My Book of English*). The focus will be on understanding and assessing students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to the target culture in an intercultural context. This research explores the role of digital technologies in facilitating intercultural learning experiences. It will investigate how various digital platforms, such as social media, virtual exchange programs, and online collaborative projects, can be leveraged to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence. Over the last few decades, assessing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been given great emphasis and has become increasingly significant in English language teaching (ELT). This emphasis aims to help learners communicate effectively with people who have different languages, cultures, and backgrounds (Byram, 1997).

The world today heavily fosters interdependence and interconnectedness (Samovar, 2009). Thus, individuals with diverse languages and cultures can effectively communicate with others from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds using English as a global language. Nowadays, assessing learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is becoming a vital and challenging issue in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). It is considered to be the key to successful intercultural communication (Huang, 2014). Therefore, if the assessment of learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is included in English Language Teaching (ELT) practices in middle schools in Algeria, learners will be able to learn and use English for effective communication and interaction with other English speakers worldwide.

Education in a global community underscores the need to develop learners with knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Education in a global community emphasizes the importance of cultivating learners with knowledge of diverse cultures and languages, as well as an understanding of the connections between cultures and languages, known as intercultural knowledge (Corbett, 2003). Most importantly, the process of teaching and learning a foreign language involves the presence of another culture and contact with other individuals who possess different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This contact challenges the existing values, beliefs, and behaviours of people. This challenge may lead either to a confrontational relationship with others, in which the self and others are experienced as irreconcilable; or it may lead to a relationship of acceptance where the self and others are trying to negotiate a cultural platform that is satisfactory to all parties involved. In the age of globalization and new technologies, it is essential to connect with people worldwide through social media to communicate with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and behavioural backgrounds. This contact may lead to misunderstandings between the communicators due to their different cultural backgrounds. If communication breaks down, it results in failure for both parties. Thus, it is necessary to cultivate learners with intercultural skills, knowledge, and attitudes to prepare them to communicate effectively with speakers of the target language. To effectively communicate with foreigners, language programs should offer learners courses, assignments, and strategies.

For the purpose of investigating the assessment of learners' ICC, the researcher suggests the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. Are third-year middle school learners intercultural competent?
2. How can third-year middle school learners be intercultural competent?
3. What are the learners' attitudes towards the English culture?

4. How do Algerian Middle School teachers succeed to integrate ICC in EFL classrooms?

1. It is assumed that third year middle school learners are or are not intercultural competent.

2. Third year Middle School learners may be intercultural competent if they do develop both linguistic and intercultural competencies

3. It is supposed that third year middle school learners have or have not positive attitudes towards the English culture.

4. It is supposed that Algerian Middle School teachers may or may not integrate ICC in their classrooms.

The current thesis is divided into five chapters. First, Chapter One dealt with the need for integrating culture in Algerian middle schools. Second, Chapter Two addressed language testing and the assessment of learners' intercultural communicative competence. In Chapter Three, the methodology, research design, and data collection instruments for gathering data were discussed. In Chapter Four, the focus was on data analysis and findings. Chapter five discusses implications, suggestions, and recommendations for future studies. Drawing on the findings from theoretical analysis and empirical research, the thesis will provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers in Algeria. These recommendations will cover strategies for integrating intercultural competence development into the middle school curriculum, as well as utilizing digital tools and resources to enhance effective intercultural learning experiences. By addressing these objectives, this thesis aims to contribute to the expanding body of literature on intercultural communicative competence and digital education. It also aims to offer practical insights for educators and stakeholders in Algeria who are striving to equip their students for success in the globalized digital age.

Chapter One: Integrating Culture in EFL Contexts

Introduction

Undeniably, Algeria is a linguistically diverse country. There has been a rapid spread of the English language in Algeria. For instance, the US Embassy launched a new language program in the summer of 2013 at the Berlitz centre in Algeria. The program offers free English language classes to individuals of all ages, regardless of their current proficiency levels (Belmihoub, 2017). Learning a foreign language has become a necessary task to communicate with people from different countries and cultures. The ultimate aim of teaching a foreign language is to enable learners to communicate with foreigners who speak a different language. So, teaching foreign languages and English language in particular aims to prepare learners for interaction in a global community. First of all, the current chapter seeks to explore the term culture in the EFL context. It begins with the need to integrate culture in Algerian middle schools into EFL classrooms. Next, it deals with objectives and the status of English language teaching/learning at Middle School. Also, it explores the different methods and approaches that are implemented in teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria. Then, it sheds light on the term culture and how researchers and scholars perceive this concept and define it. Besides, it tackles the close relationship between language and culture and the important role that the latter plays to help learners communicate effectively with people who speak English as a first language (L1) and those who speak English as a second language (ESL) and foreign language (FL) known as (L2). As a further matter, the current chapter deals with the history of teaching and learning foreign languages in general and English language in particular to grasp the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria. Also, it highlights the English language policy and planning in Algeria. Moreover, this chapter tackles the finalities and objectives of teaching English in Algerian Middle Schools to prepare learners for the 21st

century so that to communicate effectively using ICTs as tools to communicate and learn about the target language and its culture.

1. Algeria's Language Education Policies Since its Independence

Algeria, situated in North Africa, boasts a rich history of linguistic diversity that has influenced its cultural and social structure. This linguistic diversity can be attributed to the country's complex historical trajectory, which has been shaped by various conquerors, traders, and settlers. In this section, we will explore the history of linguistic diversity in Algeria, tracing its roots from ancient times to the present day. The linguistic diversity in Algeria finds its origins in the ancient civilizations that inhabited the region. In ancient times, Phoenicians, Romans, and Carthaginians established colonies and trading posts along the Algerian coastline. These civilizations brought their languages, such as Punic, Latin, and Greek, which left lasting linguistic influences on the local populations (Belmihoub, 2017). The Phoenician language, for instance, had a significant impact on the development of Berber languages, which are still spoken by indigenous communities in Algeria today. One of the most significant linguistic events in Algerian history was the Arab conquest in the 7th century. With the spread of Islam, Arabic became the dominant language of administration, religion, and education.

Over time, Arabic gradually replaced other languages, such as Latin, Berber, and Punic, as the primary means of communication in Algeria. (Belmihoub, 2017). This Arabization process had a lasting impact on the linguistic landscape of the country. In the 19th century, Algeria came under French colonial rule, which lasted for over a century. French became the language of the colonial administration, education, and economic activities. The French colonial period had a profound impact on the linguistic diversity of Algeria. French gained prominence as a language of power and prestige, and it became widely

spoken among the Algerian elite and the urban population (Benrabah, 2007). The influence of French on Algerian society can still be observed in the significant number of French loanwords present in Algerian Arabic dialects. Despite centuries of Arabization and French influence, Berber languages have managed to persist and regain recognition in recent years. Berber communities, comprising various tribes and ethnic groups, have fought for the recognition and preservation of their languages and cultural heritage. In 2002, the Algerian government officially recognized Tamazight (Berber language) as a national language alongside Arabic (Benrabah, 2007). This recognition marked an important step towards acknowledging and revitalizing Algeria's linguistic diversity.

To better understand the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria, one of the Maghreb countries, it is essential to provide a brief historical overview of linguistic diversity in the North African Maghreb region, to which Algeria belongs. According to Ennaji (2005) in his book entitled "Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco," Massinissa was one of the most famous kings who united Berber tribes and developed agriculture at the time. Historically, the Maghreb region gained prominence during the Arab-Islamic era (647 AD) and further evolved during the French colonization (1830 AD). However, Ennaji (2005) supports Fatouri's (1983) assumption that the Maghreb emerged as a cultural and political community during the Berber era before 215 BC. The contact between Berber and Latin occurred between 215 BC and 440 AD following an invasion by the Vandals. The Maghreb became Roman territory, and colonies were established to export grains to Italy. So, the Latin language was introduced to the region, but it did not have a lasting influence because the Romans were more focused on trade than on assimilating the locals and imposing their language. In 534 AD, the Byzantines, coming from Europe, conquered the Maghreb. In addition to this, Benrabah (2014) notes that Algeria witnessed several conquering groups that more or less shaped its sociocultural and sociolinguistic profiles. Berber came under the yoke

of Phoenicians who imposed their Carthaginian rule for about seven centuries, subsequently Romans for approximately six centuries, and the Vandals and Romanized Byzantines for about a century each. The Islamo-Arabo-Berbers dominated the region for about four centuries, the Turks for about three centuries, and the French, who ended Turkish domination, for more than a century and a quarter. Spaniards conquered enclaves along the Mediterranean coast intermittently between 1505 and 1792.

Thus, one of the consequences of this long history of mixing people, known as language contact and its by-product, multilingualism, includes Berber-Punic, Berber-Punic-Latin, Berber, Berber-Arabic, Berber-Arabic-Spanish-Turkish, Berber-Arabic-French, and so on (Benrabah, 2014, p. 43). According to the aforementioned conquering groups, one can understand that the Arabs and the French have had a significant impact on the linguistic profile of Algeria. In the seventh century, the Byzantines were defeated by the Arabs who came from the east to spread Islam. North Africans gradually converted to Islam, and by the twelfth century, the majority had become Sunni Muslims. As for language, there was something peculiar about the introduction of Arabic in North Africa. Benrabah (2014) notes that from the beginning of the Arab invasion, the Arabic language became closely linked with Islam in North Africa. In the same vein, Benrabah (2014) notes that the Berbers acknowledged the superiority of Arabic over their language, possibly due to the connection between Arabic and religion, and perhaps also because of the reverence they held for the written forms that their language lacked. An increasing number of Berbers abandoned their mother tongue to become Arabic speakers, leading to the gradual proliferation of the Arabic language (Benrabah, 2014). The French colonized Algeria from 1832 to 1962, while imposing a protectorate on Morocco and Tunisia for a period of time (Ennaji, 2005). Unlike in the protectorate regions such as Morocco and Tunisia, the French aimed for total control and annexation of Algeria with France. Consequently, the French introduced advanced

administrative and education systems. The French came to impose their language, culture, and identity on the Maghreb region (Ennaji, 2005). The linguistic diversity in Algeria is the result of a complex historical process involving ancient civilizations, conquests, colonization, and cultural interactions. Arabic, as the official language, and French, as a legacy of colonialism, continue to play significant roles in Algerian society. At the same time, Berber languages are experiencing a resurgence and gaining recognition as an integral part of Algeria's linguistic heritage. The preservation and promotion of linguistic diversity in Algeria are essential for fostering a sense of cultural identity and inclusivity in the country.

Historically speaking, Benrabah (2007) describes three main phases in Algeria's language policy that have significantly influenced language education policies in the country's development history since gaining independence. The first phase is characterized by colonial legacies, where the educational system was predominantly influenced by the French language, while Arabic was gradually gaining significance. The second phase began in the 1960s and lasted until the late 1990s. During this period, known as the socialist era of the centrally planned economy, there was a transition to nationalism where the Arabic language was gradually mandated in the educational sector. This period coincided with the European ideal of linguistic convergence and the subsequent rise of nationalism in the 19th century.

The third phase started in the early 2000s, witnessing the transition to a free economic market with less assertive Arabization policies (Benrabah, 2007, p. 226). During the third phase, the Algerian government has actually acknowledged that education has "failed." To illustrate this "failure," in June 2005, ten classes in the city of Mascara took their final examination at the end of the primary cycle (Sixth Form examination for 11-12-year-olds), and no pupil succeeded. Another illustration concerns university standards. In mid-November 2005, the Minister of Higher Education announced that 80% of first-year students fail their final exams

due to linguistic incompetence. The majority of the students who enrol in higher education have been schooled only in Literary/Classical Arabic and are therefore weak in French, which is the language of instruction in scientific streams (Benrabah, 2007). The nationalist phase was considered the major source of this "failure" due to the imposition of an exclusively Arabic monolingual schooling system implemented by the Algerian authority (Benrabah, 2007, p. 226). Eventually, the aforementioned phases demonstrated that the Algerian educational system was in crisis.

1.1. The Educational System in Algeria

Undoubtedly, since the early 2000s, the Algerian educational system has been the subject of considerable debate regarding languages: should schools continue to endorse monolingualism in Arabic, or should they adopt Arabic-French bilingualism? On the one hand, Arabo-Islamists who support the Arabization policy as the language of instruction argue that opponents of Arabization are enemies of Islam (Benrabah, 2007). They considered those who endorsed the educational reform as enemies of Islam and the Arabic language, seeking to westernize Algerians. On the other hand, Modernists, who supported educational reform since the previous one had failed, were mainly secular and francophone members of the population and the elite. They called for the implementation of Arabic-French bilingualism (Benrabah, 2007, p. 227).

In May 2000, the newly elected Head of State, President Abdel Aziz BOUTAFLIKA established up the National Commission for the Reform of the Educational System (SNRSE in French) identify out shortcomings drawbacks of existing prevalent educational system. In March 2001, the SNRSE recommended that the French language be reintroduced as the first mandatory foreign language in Grade Two (for 6-7-year-olds) of the primary cycle, instead of starting it in Grade Four (for 8-9-year-olds) as had been the practice since the late 1970s.

Furthermore, the CNRSE recommended that scientific disciplines should be taught in French rather than Arabic in secondary schools (Sebti, 2001; as cited in Benrabah, 2007). One of the advantages of the reform is enabling learners to become bilingual through the implementation of an Arabic-French policy.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks have significantly altered the global landscape in terms of alliances for or against terrorism. Algeria, like most Arab-Muslim states around the world, came under pressure from the West, mainly the USA, to reform educational curricula as part of the Global War on Terror (Karmani, 2005; cited in Benrabah, p. 227). Moreover, the reform through bilingualism was made possible by significant factors. Firstly, the need for economic reforms arises from the pressure exerted by globalization and the transition to a market economy. Secondly, there are socio-political demands for democratization and minority linguistic rights (Benrabah, 2007). Thus, educational reform that aims at bilingual/multilingual education is not simply an educational issue.

1.2. The Status of English in the Algerian Educational System

Algeria is one of the most multilingual countries in Africa. It is characterized by rich linguistic diversity. Classical Arabic has been adopted as the national and official language since the country gained independence. Classical Arabic is specified in Article 3 of the Algerian Constitution. Alongside Berber in its various forms (Kabyle, Chaouia, and Tumzabt), the language and dialect of many groups in North Africa and west of the Nile River have been recognized as a national language by constitutional amendment since May 8th, 2002. In February 2016, a constitutional resolution was passed, making Berber an official language alongside Arabic (Wikipedia, 2024). Undoubtedly, Algerian Arabic is the dialect spoken by the majority of Algerians. Furthermore, the French language is spoken by government authorities, agencies associated with it, and various media outlets. The French

language is also used in education and has gained significant importance in Algeria due to colonization from 1830 to 1962. The status of the French language gradually declined in Algeria due to the increasing presence of English as a foreign language. This shift began in the second year of primary school, where students were given the option to study either French or English (Milliani, 2000). Nowadays, needless to say, the emphasis on teaching English worldwide and in Algeria in particular is becoming a vital part of education globally. So, the recognition of English by the Algerian government in general, and the Ministry of Education in particular, is due to the increasing significance that English holds in the world today.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education announced educational reform, leading to several changes in the teaching of English. Although the English language is still considered the second foreign language in the Algerian Educational System after French, it has received considerable attention within the educational reform. At first-year middle school level, English is introduced. It covers seven years: four in middle school and three in secondary school. English has become the "lingua franca," and therefore the Algerian Ministry of Education has designed new syllabi and developed new textbooks known as the second generation, along with accompanying documents. In addition to this, a new approach was adopted which is the Competency-Based Approach.

As mentioned above, English is taught as a compulsory subject starting from the first year of middle school. However, as a second language in the educational system, English is primarily learned for academic purposes, often to prepare for exams, due to historical, political, and social reasons. Undeniably, English is primarily taught in formal classroom settings, with limited opportunities for daily communicative use outside the classroom.

1.3. Goals of English in Middle School in Algeria

Designers of the middle school English curriculum have identified key objectives that assist teachers in instructing English and learners in acquiring the target language. These designers have established several objectives that must meet the learners' needs in order to effectively communicate with speakers of the target language. So, the teaching of English must meet the following objectives:

- To help our society to live in harmony with modernity by providing the learner with linguistic tools essential for efficient communication.
- To promote national and universal or international values.
- To develop critical thinking, tolerance, and openness to the world
- To contribute to the shaping of a good citizen who is aware of the changes and challenges of today and tomorrow.
- To allow every learner to have access to science, technology, and culture avoiding the dangers of acculturation.

(Adapted from Curriculum of English for Middle School Education, May 2015)

The ultimate goal of teaching English in middle school is to enhance the learners' communicative competence. Thus, the designers of this curriculum focus on fostering

learners' communicative competence to interact with individuals who speak English as their target language. The paramount goal is to prepare middle school learners as global citizens and mediators to transmit their own culture and to be open to the target culture. Therefore, socialization of the learner is essential for their growth through learning English and to be open to the world.

1.4. Finalities of Teaching English in Middle Schools

Within the introduction of the middle school English curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education, the document outlines a series of objectives that are expected to be accomplished over a four-year period. The statement clarifies that the traditional narrow view of language learning, focused solely on acquiring linguistic items, has evolved to encompass cross-curricular competencies. These competencies are intellectual in nature as learners utilize their critical thinking skills to analyse various types of texts. Methodological competence involves learners actively participating in group or pair work to develop strategies for listening, interpreting, and producing oral or written messages. Communicative competence refers to the learner's ability to communicate with others using ICTs such as blogs, webpages, Facebook, Skype, and discussion forums to interact with learners from different cultures using English as a medium of communication. Social and personal competencies refer to the learner's awareness of their own role and the roles of others in project development. Additionally, learners' behaviours are consistent with their national values. These competencies must be included in all lessons. In addition to this, learning English in middle school aims primarily at developing communicative competence in English (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 2005). Moreover, designers of the current curriculum are moving away from the paradigm of accumulating and transmitting linguistic knowledge and ideas towards a paradigm of interaction and integration, based on a social constructivist view of learning. The

main objective is to enable learners to communicate effectively and appropriately with people who speak the target language, English. Therefore, communicative competence or intercultural competence which are used interchangeably in this research. Communicative competence or intercultural competence are given great importance in this curriculum. The focus on the learner will enable them to be actively engaged in deeper cognition, acquisition of knowledge, and the development of several competencies that are interdependent and evolving. So, any incomplete acquisition of one will automatically hinder the acquisition of the others. Also, an important role is given to learning strategies (strategic competence) to enhance effective learning (Ministere de l'education Nationale, 2005).

1.5. The Achievement of Learners' Global Profile

First and foremost, the global profile can be defined as the acquisition of communication competencies, as well as cross-curricular skills common to all disciplines or subjects in the curriculum. In addition, similar to other disciplines, teaching and learning English incorporates core values. These values aim to raise awareness among learners about their national identity in three dimensions: national conscience, citizenship, and openness to the world. It is worth mentioning that the goal of teaching English in middle school is to enable learners to communicate effectively and be intercultural competent.

In sum, the teaching of nowadays aims nowadays not aims to develop learners' linguistic competence also their also competence. one. Learners are expected to acquire the skills to communicate effectively with others using the English language as the lingua franca. This includes discussing their own country and its cultural values, as well as gaining knowledge about other countries and their values (Ministere de l'education Nationale, 2005).

1.6. The Textbook Description as a Pedagogical Tool

Researchers have provided various definitions of textbooks. It is argued that textbooks are almost universal sources of teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them. Interestingly, the textbook is regarded as a global teaching material used almost everywhere in the field of foreign language teaching (Cunningsworth, 1995). Similarly, Brown & Lee (2024) believe that textbooks serve as source materials that help teachers prepare their teaching contents. They support teachers in delivering the subject matter effectively and aim to actualize the curriculum. Textbooks contain yearly courses of study, facts, and ideas related to a specific subject (Brown & Lee, 2024). As stated in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "a textbook is a book that teaches a particular subject and is used especially in schools and colleges." Brown & Lee (2024) assert that a textbook serves as a teacher imparting content to potential students, a map guiding both teachers and learners towards language proficiency, and a resource offering the content to be taught. In essence, textbooks are instructional materials provided to teachers and students to serve as a guide.

1.6.1. Aims and Objectives of The Textbook

Textbooks have an important role in the teaching and learning process of any foreign language in the EFL/ESL context although teaching a foreign language does not always require using them slavishly. Researchers highlight numerous of advantages utilizing textbooks. In this regard, Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks represent the visible heart of any ELT program and offer noticeable benefits for both teachers and learners when they are being used in EFL classrooms. Generally speaking, textbooks are instructional teaching and learning materials that are offered to both teachers and learners to depend on to guide and facilitate the teaching and learning continuum.

Textbooks are widely used in both teaching and learning processes (Brown & Lee, 2024). It has been recognized as one of the most valuable teaching resources. Textbooks play a crucial role in the teaching and learning process of any foreign language in the EFL/ESL context. However, teaching a foreign language does not always necessitate using them rigidly. Researchers have highlighted numerous advantages of utilizing textbooks. In this regard, Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks represent the visible heart of any English Language Teaching (ELT) program and offer noticeable benefits for both teachers and learners when they are used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Generally speaking, textbooks are instructional materials provided to teachers and students to guide and facilitate the teaching and learning process. The aims and objectives of textbooks are based on the learners' level. English language teaching at middle schools aims to develop learners' knowledge, receptive, and productive skills, along with the necessary motivation to continue learning. Many scholars discuss the idea that textbooks have advantages and disadvantages.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) define the textbook as "a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer and an authority". Moreover, a textbook is viewed as a resource because it contains a set of materials and activities available to the teacher, from which one can choose. It can also serve as a mentor for novice teachers who require valuable instructions, support, and guidance. As an authority, a textbook is considered valid, reliable, written by experts, and authorized by important publishers or ministries of education. In Cunningsworth's view (1995), the role of textbooks are identified as:

- an effective resource for self-directed learning and self-study; – a valuable resource for presentation material (written and spoken)
- a source of ideas and activities for learner practice and communicative interaction; – a reference source for students

- a syllabus
- support for less experienced teachers to gain confidence and demonstrate new methodologies

Furthermore, Tomlinson (2014) argues that: “a textbook is the most convenient for presenting materials, it helps to achieve consistency and continuation, it gives learners a sense of system, cohesion, and progress and it helps teachers prepare and learners revise” (Tomlinson, 2014, p.37). Moreover, learners educate each other by utilizing textbooks. However, textbooks in English Language Teaching (ELT) play a significant role. They are considered as supportive tools for teachers, providing them with better content to teach and clearer instructions to follow (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). In addition, Brown & Lee (2024) identify the advantages of textbooks for teachers, as they provide a carefully planned and organized structure, syllabus, content, texts, and tasks. While for the learners, it serves as a source of knowledge to be used independently from teachers. Similarly, Richards (2001) argues that:

Without textbooks, a program may have no impact, therefore, they provide structure and a syllabus. Besides, the use of a textbook in a program can guarantee that students in different classes will receive similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way.

(Richards, 2001, p. 1)

1.6.2. Pros and Cons of the Textbook

Richards (2001) believes that a textbook is a teacher's map, resource, and authority. A textbook provides teachers with the content to be taught. It is also a resource that contains a set of materials and activities available to the teacher from which one can choose. It can also be a trainer for novice teachers who need valuable instructions, support, and guidance. As an authority, a textbook is seen as valid, reliable, written by experts, and authorized by important publishers or ministries of education. Additionally, Cunningsworth (1995) notes that textbooks are resources in achieving aims and objectives which identify the roles of textbooks in ELT:

- a resource for presentation material (spoken & written)
- a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
- a reference for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation
- a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities
- a syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that have already been determined)
- a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work
- support for less experienced teachers to gain confidence

Furthermore, Tomlinson argues that a textbook is the most convenient form of presenting materials, it helps to achieve consistency and continuation, it gives learners a sense of system, cohesion, and progress and it helps teachers prepare and learners revise (Tomlinson, 2003, p.37). In the same line of thought, Hutchinson & Torres (1994) view that the textbook plays a vital and positive role in a day-to-day job teaching English. They also argue that textbooks are providers of input into classroom lessons in the form of texts, activities, explanations, and so on. In a similar vein, Richards (2001) states that:

Textbooks in teaching have both advantages and disadvantages, and mark the advantages as follows: firstly, they provide structure and a syllabus for a program. Secondly, they help with standardized instructions. Thirdly, they maintain quality. In addition, they provide a variety of learning resources. Also, they are efficient and they can provide effective language models and input.

(Richards, 2001, p.5)

Scholars bring to light that textbooks have advantages and disadvantages and also limitations. As there are many remarkable advantages, textbooks have also limitations and disadvantages that may not match with teachers' and learners' abilities. In this regard, Richards (2001) notes that textbooks may have negative effects such as:

- Textbooks may contain inauthentic language, i.e., textbooks provide inauthentic language because texts, dialogs, and other aspects of content in the textbook are not represented most of the time in real language use
- Textbooks may distort content, i.e., they may represent a utopian view of the world
- The textbook may not reflect learners' needs, i.e., textbooks are designed for market purposes, and therefore, they may not match with learners' interests and needs
- They may deskill teachers, in the sense that, if teachers rely on the textbook heavily, their role will be reduced to that of a technician whose job is to present materials prepared by others.
- They are expensive

Additionally, Graves (2000) identifies four major disadvantages of using a ready-made textbook as the following:

- First, the content may not be relevant or appropriate to the group and may not reflect the student's needs.
- Second, it may contain inauthentic language.
- Third, the content may not be at the right level.
- Fourth, the sequence of units is not by the real work-related needs.

Besides, the timetable for completing the textbook or parts of it may be unrealistic and, the textbook doesn't take the students' background knowledge into account.

1.7. Teaching Methods and Approaches in Language Teaching

There are several theories and approaches to teaching foreign languages. However, determining which theory or approach is suitable for enhancing learners' intercultural competence is of paramount importance. In Algeria, teachers have implemented various methods to teach English in middle school, secondary school, and university to prepare learners to be intercultural competent. The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algeria is a story of ambition and achievement. Over time, English language education has embraced various methods and approaches developed in the literature on foreign language teaching/learning. This evolution has progressed from the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) to the contemporary Competency-Based Approach (CBA). Clearly, for a comprehensive study of English language teaching methodology in Algeria, one should examine the various methods and approaches that have influenced and shaped EFL classrooms. These methods and approaches include the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Structural Approach, the Communicative Approach, and eventually the Competency-Based Approach.

1.7.1. Grammar –Translation Method

In the mid-19th century, the Grammar-Translation Method originated in Prussia. It was the offspring of German scholastic philosophy and was therefore first known in America as the Prussian method (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). For more than a century, it dominated the field of foreign language teaching and learning. This method was originally applied to teach classical languages, such as Latin and Greek, which were not taught for everyday communication. But gradually, it was generalized to teach modern languages such as French and English. As its name suggests, it emphasized the teaching of second language grammar; its primary practice involves translation to and from the target language.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) outlined the main principles of this method highlighting several key characteristics. First of all, they note that this method focuses on teaching grammar and translating literary texts from the target language into the mother tongue. The approach heavily relies on formal descriptions of the target language and translation exercises between the target language and the native language. Moreover, the focus of this method lies on productive skills (reading & writing) and it neglects the receptive ones (speaking & listening). In addition to this, it focuses on vocabulary teaching and memorization of grammatical rules and a list of vocabulary words. In addition to this, they identify eight characteristics of this method mentioned as the following:

1. Classes are taught in the first language, with little active use of the target language;
2. Much of the vocabulary is in the form of lists of isolated words;
3. Detail explanation of the structure of grammar is given;
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words;
5. Reading difficult classical texts at the beginning of the class;

6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis;
7. In teaching grammar, it is important to make the language situations and language material as realistic as possible. After explaining the lesson, the teacher can provide a chance for the learners to use the language that they learn in the classroom.

Even though the Grammar-Translation method was widely used, it can bring boredom to EFL classrooms. When modified, learners can acquire grammar competence in an enjoyable classroom without getting bored (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). So, this method has been criticized on various grounds. Thus, the shortcomings gave birth to another teaching method called the Direct Method.

1.7.2. The Direct Method

The Direct method emerged as a direct response to the prevalent shortcomings of the Grammar-Translation Method. The latter was unhelpful to learners who want to acquire a foreign language for communication purposes. This method is also called the "Natural Method." The advocates of the Direct Method were proponents of the Natural Method, which emerged during the sixteenth century in Europe and later in America (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). As its name indicates, this new method emphasizes language learning through direct contact with the foreign language in meaningful situations. The main principles underlying this method involve the use of everyday vocabulary and structure. Firstly, grammar is taught through meaningful situations. Secondly, introducing numerous new items within the same lesson encourages natural-sounding language and normal conversation. Thirdly, oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary. Fourthly, concrete meanings are conveyed through object lessons, while abstract meanings are conveyed through the association of ideas (Benmostefa, 2014). Advocates of this method emphasize conversation as the primary tool for teaching a

foreign language. Practically, the direct method provides an exciting and interesting framework for learning a language through activities (Benmostefa, p.121). Rivers (1981) notes:

Since students are required at all times to make a direct association between phrases and situations, it is the highly intelligent student with well-developed powers of induction who profits most from this method, which can be discouraging and bewildering for the less.

(Rivers, 1981, p.34).

Further, Freeman (1986) notes that:

Direct Method has one basic rule which was the prohibition of the use of translation because meaning should be taught directly in the FL through the use of demonstrations and visual aids, without any resort to the learner's mother tongue.

(Freeman, 1986, p.23)

In other words, the ultimate goal of this method is to communicate in the target language. Richards and Rodgers (1986) mentioned some of the major principles of this method as follows. Initially, instructions in foreign language classrooms were exclusively provided in the target language. Therefore, the learners did not use their mother tongue at all. Second, communication skills were developed through a carefully structured process of question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and learners. Third, vocabulary was emphasized over grammar and taught through associations of ideas. Grammar was taught inductively, meaning that grammar rules were not taught explicitly but rather acquired

unconsciously through intensive listening and imitation. Lastly, in this method, pronunciation was targeted, and both speech and listening were considered crucial as well.

To sum up, even though the Direct Method gained popularity as a theoretical approach to teaching a foreign language in the first quarter of the 20th century, it did not make much progress since it has been criticized for its fragile foundations and its overemphasis on the skill and personality of teacher rather than the methodology per se (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Thus, it paved the way for another teaching approach or method known as the Audio-Lingual Method.

1.7.3. The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

The emergence of this method resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States by the end of the 1950s, prompting the U.S. government to rethink its approach to foreign language instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was the primary approach used to teach foreign languages in the United States during the Second World War. At that time, there was a need for American military personnel to be proficient in the languages of both allies and enemies. This method also aimed to teach oral skills, like the previous method (DM). However, this method was different and emphasized grammatical sentence patterns (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This method emphasizes mastering good grammatical habits over enhancing learners' communicative abilities. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman (2000) notes that teachers who employ the Audio-Lingual Method aim for their students to be able to use the target language communicatively. To achieve this, they believe that their learners need to overlearn the target language so they can use it automatically without stopping to think. So, the teachers aim to help their learners achieve this by forming new habits in the target language and overcoming the old habits of their native language. Larsen-Freeman (2000) highlights some main

principles of this method. Materials were presented in the form of habit formation. The method fostered dependence on mimicry and memorization of set phrases, leading to over-learning. Structured lessons were sequenced and taught one at a time. Structural patterns were taught using repetitive drills, with little to no grammatical explanations provided. Thus, grammar was taught inductively. Vocabulary was also strictly limited and learned in context. Furthermore, great importance was placed on achieving precise, native-like pronunciation. The use of the mother tongue by the teacher was both permitted and discouraged among the learners. Teachers need to prevent students' errors that might lead to the formation of bad habits. Positive reinforcement helps students develop correct habits (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Although this method helps learners acquire learn a foreign language has it gained popularity, it fails failed develop long-term teach-long communicative proficiency. The ALM continues to be adopted in contemporary methodologies, but it did not last forever due to misconceptions by its advocates. This method posits that language learning is similar to other forms of learning. Since it is a formal, rule-governed system, it can be organized formally to maximize teaching and learning efficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Moreover, Richards & Rodgers (1986) note that there are similarities between Situational Language Teaching and the Audio-lingual method in terms of the order in which language skills are introduced. The focus on accuracy through drill and practice in the basic structures and sentence patterns of the target language might suggest that these methods draw on each other.

1.7.4. Structural Approach

The structural approach to language teaching, also known as the grammar approach, represents, a compromise language teaching model which attempts to strike the balance between the formal teaching of grammar with heavy use of meta-language and translation activities and the non-allowed use of the learners' mother tongue (Benmostefa 2014). The structural approach is a by-product of structuralism, in a structural syllabus the grammatical structures form the whole of the teaching/learning process. A structural-based language course is based on units that are defined in grammatical terms (Benmostefa, 2014). In addition to this, the different parts of the language are taught separately and gradually so that learning establishes itself as an accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of language is fully mastered. The following list provides the underlying assumptions of the structural syllabus:

- Language is a system consisting of a set of grammatical rules.
- Learning a language is learning the grammatical rules.
- Application of grammatical rules to practical language usage.
- The linguistic input is selected and graded according to grammatical simplicity or complexity.
- Mastery of the structure before moving to the next.

(Benmostefa, 2014, p.122)

To sum up, the grammar of the target language occupies a central place and holds the lion's share in the teaching and learning process. This approach focuses on two main components: a list of language structures, i.e. the grammar to be taught, and a list of words, i.e.; the lexicon to be taught. This over-emphasis on linguistic competence has a detrimental effect on the development of communicative skills since it does not address the immediate communication needs of the learner.

1.7.5. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The real impetus for this approach came from the changing educational reality in Europe (Richards, 2006). The emergence of independent European countries arose the need to teach people the major language to communicate among the member countries of the European Market. CLT draws on aspiration from the current ideas about language, mainly about language as a social tool, thus this approach is organized based on certain communicational functions like apologizing, describing, inviting, promising. CLT is rooted in a theory of language as communication and the goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1971) calls Communicative Competence.

According to Spolsky (1975), this approach emerged as a reaction against the prevalent approach, i.e. Situational Language Teaching. In Situational Language Teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. Proponents of this approach (CLT) argue that learning foreign languages relies much more on conversations rather than through the customary method of formal analysis and translation. In the same line of thought, Henry Widdowson in his book "Teaching Language as Communication" (1981), presented a view of the relationship between linguistic systems and their communicative values in text and discourse. He focuses on communicative acts underlying the ability to use language for different purposes (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

At the level of language teaching theory, CLT has a rich, eclectic, theoretical base. The main characteristics of the CLT approach are as the following:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
- The primary function of language is interaction and communication.

- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

(Richards & Rogers, 1986, p.72)

Fundamentally, Richards and Rodgers (1986) note that although much has been written in Communicative Language Teaching literature about communicative dimensions of language, little has been written about learning theory. The latter underlines the principles of CLT practices. The first principle is described as the communication principle with activities that involves real communication and promote learning. A second element is the task principle where language is carried out through meaningful tasks (Johnson, 1982 cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1980). A third element is the “meaningfulness” principle in which language is meaningful to the learner and supports the learning process. Additionally, language learning activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learners in meaningful and authentic language use. The aforementioned principles can be inferred from CLT practices (Littlewood 1981; Johnson 1982, cited in Richards & Rodgers, p. 72). Recent accounts of the CLT approach have attempted to describe language theories of language learning that are compatible with the communicative approach (Richards & Rodgers, 1980). Further, Scholars such as Littlewood (1981), Johnson (1982), and Savignon (1983) have developed theories of second language acquisition which are compatible with the principles of the CLT approach. These theorists considered the role of linguistic, social, cognitive, and individual variables in language acquisition as compatible with the communicative approach (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 72).

In the same vein, Piepho (1981), discusses the following levels of objectives in a communicative approach:

1. An integrative and content level (language as a means of expression).
2. A linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system and an object of learning).
3. An affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others).
4. A level of individuals' learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis).
5. A general educational level of extra-linguistic goals (language learning within the school curriculum). (Piepho, 1981, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

These objectives are proposed as the general goals, applicable to teaching situation. Particular objectives for CLT cannot be defined beyond this level of specification, since such an approach assumes that language teaching will reflect the particular needs of the target learners. These needs reflect the domains of the four skills (receptive & productive) which can be approached from a communicative perspective. Moreover, Curriculum or instructional objectives for a particular course would reflect specific aspects of communicative competence according to the learner's proficiency level and communication (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Generally speaking, CLT is a paramount approach in second language teaching/learning. Richards & Rodgers (1986) highlight the main characteristics behind the implementation of this method. According to them, if it is well applied, the learners of the target language will achieve their goals in communication with speakers of the target language.

Hence, attempts to communicate in the target language could be encouraged from the start. Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible and the translation may be used where students need or benefit from it. Reading and writing can start from the first day if

desired (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Yet, Communicative Language Teaching does not neglect the role of grammar in the process of language learning, rather, it insists that the grammatical rules are useless if not applied to real-life situations. Activities are supposed to be communicative (Ma, 2009). In the same line of thought, Hymes maintains that grammatical competence is not a sufficient basis for communication. There must be a shift of emphasis from usage to the use of language. Therefore, CLT emphasises functional, communicative, and social interactive activities. Communicative competence necessitates the knowledge of how to use language appropriately in given situations and cultural contexts so that to reach the desired objectives. So, to make language learning more practical and realistic in language classes it is essential to create social and real-life situations. These situations in language classrooms should be an important strategy for teaching English as a second and a foreign language (Saroja, 2002). In the same vein, Littlewood (1980) notes that “Foreign language learners need opportunities to develop the skills by being exposed to situations... the learners need to acquire not only the repertoire of linguistic items but repertoires of strategies for using them in concrete situations” (Littlewood, 1980, p. 4).

Advocates of the CLT over the years strive to educate communicative approaches to teaching English in their ways. Scholars who provided a theoretical base to the CLT as Halliday and Widdowson deserve a notable mention. Halliday (1966) highlights the functional accounts of language use. In this respect, he remarks that Linguistics focuses on describing speech acts or texts because examining language in use is the only way to highlight all its functions and components of meaning (Halliday, 1966).

The primary aim of the CLT is to help learners communicate effectively. CLT like any other kind of language teaching should be geared to the objectives of the learners’ needs. In this respect, Ma (2009) discusses the following objectives in a communicative approach:

1. Integration and content level (language as a means of expression).

2. Linguistic and instrument level (language as a semiotic system).
3. Affection level of interpersonal relationships language as a means of expressing judgments).
4. Level of individual learning needs (remedial learning).
5. Level of general extra-linguistic needs.

So, these aforementioned levels are general objectives applicable to any leading situation. Instructional objectives for a communicative language teaching course should reflect specific aspects of communication competence according to the learner's proficiency level and communication needs (Ma, 2009).

In Algeria, approaches and methods of language teaching were implemented and are inside the classrooms to enhance learners' communicative competence. However, some obstacles hinder applying CLT effectively in Algeria. Ma (2009) describes the popular perception of CLT as including the following:

1. Primacy is given to oral practice.
2. Practice is equally distributed in the classroom.
3. Group or pair work for enabling equal distribution of practice.
4. Most useful in classes under twenty seated in a U-shaped arrangement.

Most importantly, communicative language teaching is suitable for learners to communicate effectively using English language in different settings. In this respect, Littlewood (1981) notes that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. Undoubtedly, any method or approach has advantages and disadvantages. The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has brought many advantages for teaching English as a second or foreign language. Unlike the previous approaches, this approach emphasizes 'task-oriented, student-centred' language

teaching practice and it provides learners with comprehensive use of the English language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). In addition to this view, other scholars highlight some of the main and major advantages of CLT as the following:

(a) It motivates the learners to improve their abilities to use English by themselves since the emphasis is on fluency in the target language. Meaning that it provides learners with assignments that allow them to improve their ideas about what they are going to talk about and how they are going to express themselves. This enables learners to be more confident when interacting with other people and they also enjoy talking (Brown, 2001).

(b) CLT aims at enhancing communicative competence in learners and therefore it enables the learners to use the language in communicative situations to satisfy their needs in real-life communication (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). In other words, it brings the real-life situation of native English into classroom activities such as role-play and simulation (Harmer, 2001).

(c) The major portion of the learning process does not depend upon the teacher. CLT classes have moved from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. Meaning that much more time is issued by the learner where the role of the teacher is a facilitator of the learning process. Thus, learners should exercise and communicate enough in the classroom to achieve communicative competence (Brown, 2001). However, there has been various criticism of the principles of the communicative approach to teaching/learning a language as follows:

(1) CLT gives priority to meanings and rules rather than to grammar and rules of structure. In other words, it is felt that there is not enough emphasis on the correction of pronunciation and grammar errors. It emphasizes meaning at the expense of form.

(2) CLT focuses on fluency rather than accuracy in grammar and pronunciation. According to Hughes (1983), communicative language teaching leads to the production of ‘‘fluent but not accurate learners. What is anticipated to happen here is the danger of giving priority to fluency over accuracy in CLT classes (Simhachalam, 2015).

(3) CLT approach is suitable for intermediate and advanced learners, however, for beginners, some controlled practice is needed because learners with a low level of proficiency in the target language may find it difficult to participate in oral activities, and if the exams used by any institution are grammar based, fluency may not be appropriate (Simhachalam, 2015).

(4) The monitoring ability of the teacher must be very good. Despite teachers’ efforts, classroom activities are not real-life and it can be difficult to reproduce truly authentic language use and facilitate genuine interaction. Moreover, a major principle underlying this approach is its emphasis on learners’ needs and interests. This implies that much more effort is expected that each teacher should modify the syllabus to correspond with the learners’ needs (Simhachalam, 2015).

(5) CLT approach is sometimes difficult to be implemented in an EFL classroom due to the lack of authentic sources and equipment’s, native speaker teachers as well as the large classes. In addition to this, unavailability of suitable classrooms that can allow for group work activities (Burnaby & Sun, 1989, cited in Simhachalam, 2015, p. 97).

Eventually, more and more experts in the field of ELT are turning to CLT as an effective method to improve language proficiency all over the world. Communicative language teaching is one of the latest humanistic approaches, which gives emphasis to language use and provides more opportunities for learners to practice the target language despite its limitation. Nowadays, the main apprehension of most learners of English as a second/foreign language is the use of the target language in real-life situations fluently and

independently in communicative situations such as in meetings and conferences, restaurants, airports, ...etc. Since CLT enables learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations, it is inferred that this approach can achieve the current goal of teaching a language and improve the learners' communicative competence (Simhachalam, 2015).

1.7.6. Competency-Based Approach (CBA)

Competency-Based Approach emerged during the 1970s. CBA ideas are deeply rooted in the Behaviourist School of thought. This approach has come to light in the United States in 1970s and it was adopted for the designation of vocational training programmes. Docking (1994), assumes that CBA is:

Organized not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting

(Docking, p.16)

Richards & Rodgers (2001) argue that Competency-based Approach advocates both interactional and functional standpoints of language teaching and learning. The advocates of this approach assume that learners determine the learning goals at the end of a course of study (Hamada, 2015).

Although there are not many records on the history of the CBA, h, some argued that the theoretical foundation of this approach lies in the behaviourist models of human psychology from the 1950s. This is based on the view that the CBA is about making inferences about competency based on performance (Chelli, 2010). Besides, it can be traced back to the scientific management theory of Frederick (1947), one of the founders of

industrial psychology, who elevated job analysis into a science, and first developed CBA as it is known today. In addition to this, it has been argued that CBA was first utilized in the military field in the late 1960s in the United States of America. Then, it was developed into professional educational programmes. Moreover, it was introduced in the form of vocational training programs in the United Kingdom and Germany in the 1970s, and vocational training and professional skills recognition in Australia in the 1990s (Frederick,1974, p.15).

Fundamentally, the CBA is characterized by the following ideas:

- It is action-oriented in that it gears learning to the acquisition of know-how embedded or fixed in functions and skills and thus these will allow and help the learner to become an effective competent user of language in real-life situations outside the classroom.
- It is a problem-solving approach that puts learners in situations that test/check their abilities to handle and overcome obstacles and problems. It makes learners think and learn by doing.
- It is social-constructivist in that it looks at learning through social in the sense that learning is not concerned with the transmission of pre-determined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced, but as the creative use of a newly constructive knowledge via the process of social interaction with other people.
- It is a cognitive approach indebted to Bloomfield's taxonomy.

(Frederick ,1974, p. 16)

The most distinctive feature of CBA is its integration of project work as part of a learning strategy. Over all, if CBA expands on the communicative approach, it seeks to make the attainment visible in the sense that it makes learning concrete through the realization of projects. It also makes co-operate learning a concrete reality and opens new avenues for action, interaction and the construction of new knowledge. In other words, it is

only through carrying out project work that learners can experience the basic principles of CBA (Frederick, 1974).

In the last two decades, the discourse around education and training has shifted. A pseudo-commercial language of markets, investment, and products is widely used among people and even states nowadays. The interest in competence and competency has been part of this shift. However, these two terms are difficult to be defined. On the one hand, competence is the quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually or the ability to do something well “measured” against a standard, especially the ability acquired through experience or training (Chelli, 2010). In addition to this, Chelli (2010) defines competence as “a system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and also social behavioural components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in a particular context” (Chelli, 2010, p. 4). In this respect, competence can be understood as a dynamic, organizing the structure of activity characteristic allowing a person to adapt to various situations based on gained experience and practice. On the other hand, competency is defined in terms of superior performance (Hedge, 1996, quoted by Hyde, cited in Chelli, 2010, p. 4). On the other hand, competency is a skill or characteristic of a person that enables him or her to carry out a specific or superior level of performance. This means that competency and performance are not alike, however, it is what enables performance to occur (Chelli, 2010). Respectively, Armstrong (1995) endorses the same idea by saying that “competence as a fully human attribute has been reduced to competencies- a series of discrete activities people possess, the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to engage in effectively” (Armstrong, 1995; cited in Chelli, 2010, p.4). Besides, the term competency varies from one school of thought to another. The Behaviourists view that competency is applied to design observation and measurable behaviour resulting from a

certain training. However, the constructivists view that this term is used to illustrate the construction of capacities acquired from interaction among individuals engaged in the same situation.

1.8. The Cultural and Intercultural Dimensions of Foreign Language Teaching And Learning

Researchers and scholars have argued the close and tight relationship between language and culture in the field of foreign language teaching and education and therefore one cannot detach language from its culture (Kramersch, 1998, 1993; Risager, 2007). In this respect, Risager (2007), introduces the term ‘culture pedagogy’ in which she refers to the teaching of language and culture in foreign or second language learning and teaching. She notes that “Culture pedagogy normally refers to language teaching with a general purpose since that language and culture occur as a combined object of teaching” (Risager, 2007, p. 10). So, the present chapter deals with the tight relationship between language and culture.

1.8.1. Definition of Culture

For many decades, researchers and scholars have widely and differently discussed the term culture in various disciplines and fields of studies such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics. First of all, (Trompenaars, 1999) notes that:

A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water to a fish. It sustains us. We live and breathe through it. What one culture may regard as essential, a certain level of material wealth, for example, may not be so vital to other cultures

(Trompenaars, 1999, p. 3).

The word culture has several meanings, all derived from its Latin source, which refers to the ‘tilling of the soil’. Hofstede (2011), points out that culture in most western societies commonly means civilization or refinement of the mind and in particular the results of such refinements, such as education, art, and literature. However, culture in its broadest sense is ‘mental software’. This latter means a catchword for all those patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting in everyday activities. Not only activities supposed to refine the mind are involved, but also the ordinary ones such as: greeting, eating, showing and not showing feelings, keeping a certain physical distance from others, making love, and maintaining body hygiene (Hofstede, 2011). In this respect, Byram & Grundy (2002), note that culture is a complex concept being notoriously difficult to be defined (Byram & Grundy, 2002). The culture was first defined by the anthropologist (Tylor, 1871) as:

Culture or Civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.

(Tylor, 1871, p.1).

So, culture is typically a social product of individuals who belong to the same society and community. From the nineties onwards, scholars such as Claire Kramsch, Henry Widdowson, and others strive to shorten the gap between language and culture since the former was taught separately from the latter (Kramsch, 1998). According to Kramsch (1998), by the end of the nineties, the concept of culture was

coming to be substituted by the late modernist concepts such as historicity and subjectivity which put the focus on the historical and subjective nature of culture. The link between language and culture becomes necessary in language teaching and learning. In this respect, Byram & Grundy (2002) believe that in the communicative era language teachers tend to shed light on culture according to a combination of five views: the communicative view, the classical curriculum view, the instrumental or culture-free-language view, the deconstructionist view, and the competence view. The first three views treat cultural content as marginal and irrelevant to successful language learning. However, the last two views treat language and culture as being acquired in dynamic interaction, therefore one is essential for a full understanding of the other (Byram & Grundy, 2002). Besides, Agudelo (2009) notes that:

Culture tends to be invisible to us in our daily life until we are exposed to contexts in which cultural factors such as beliefs, behaviour, and language are challenged, either by direct intercultural experiences (e.g., living in another country or cultural context) or by learning experiences that provide us with cultural awareness.

(Agudelo, 2009, p.187)

Historically speaking, culture has been shaped by the social sciences and informed by research and ideas developed in the academic world. Definitions of culture are constantly changing over time and the early description of culture as a fixed and complete state was a wrong interpretation of reality. Therefore, anthropologists and social scientists agree that culture is not a complete construct,

however, it is a continuous, dynamic, and unfinished human process. The concept of culture is viewed from different angles and there is no common consensus about an exact and fixed definition therefore it may be suggested that the definition of culture relies on the specific interests, objectives, and social theory of the researcher (Agudelo, 2016). Despite a lack of consensus on the term 'culture', it is important to explain which definition is suitable for this study; Arvizu, Snyder, and Spinoza (1980) use a definition that is comprehensive and aligned to the intercultural approach that "Culture is a dynamic, creative, and a continuous process including behaviours, values and substance learned and shared by people that guides them in their struggle for survival and gives meaning to their lives" (Agudelo, 2009, p. 188). Besides, theorists in intercultural language teaching emphasize the dynamic nature of culture. Among them, Kramsch (1998) describes culture as "membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings" (Kramsch, 1998). (Ting-Toomey, 2012) notes that: culture is a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings, and symbols that are passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community (Ting-Toomey, 2012, p. 16). People within the same cultural community share a sense of traditions, values, worldviews, and patterns of life. To understand a culture or an individual in a cultural community one should know that any culture consists of surface-level culture, intermediate-level culture, and deep-level culture. Ting-Toomey (2012) explores these aforementioned levels of culture and note that culture is like an iceberg. They argue that culture consists of three levels in any society. Firstly, the deep layers or deep-level culture (e.g. traditions, beliefs, and values) are hidden from peoples' standpoints. Secondly, human beings tend to see and hear only the explicit

components of cultural artefacts (e.g. fashion, pop music, and mass-appeal commercial films). Thirdly, people can also see the transmission of overt verbal and nonverbal symbols. Fourthly, to understand commonalities between individuals and groups, one has to dig deeper into the level of universal human needs. These universal human needs, for instance, can include the need for security, love, respect, and control (Ting-Toomey 2012, p. 16).

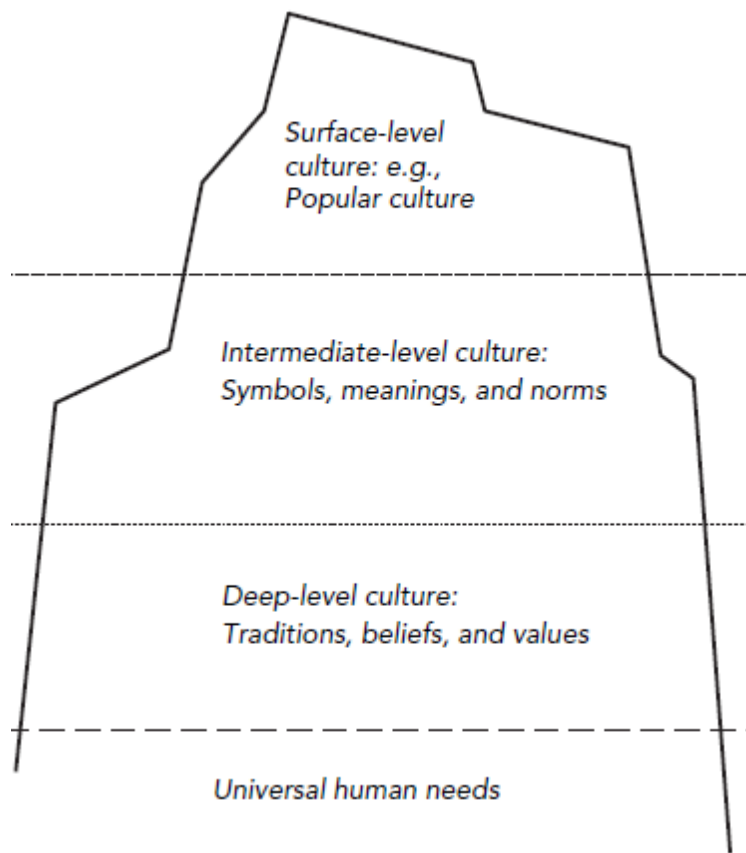


Figure 1.1: Culture: An Iceberg Metaphor (Ting-Toomey, 2012)

1.8.2. Dimensions of Culture

The synopsis above highlights how theorists and scholars in the field of language teaching and learning tend to view the close relationship between language and culture. The latter proved to be inseparable from the former. First of all, Trompenaars & Turner (1997) describe culture as a complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviours, practices, rituals, and lifestyles of the people who make up a cultural group, as well as the artefacts they produce and the institutions they create (Trompenaars & Turner, 1997). Seven dimensions of culture that are respectively classified as the following:

1. Cultural artefacts, i.e. different cultural products and depictions, like cuisine, art, architecture, music, costumes, and dance;
2. repeated patterns of behaviour, such as different types of practices, traditions, rituals, celebrations, how one maps out one's day, etc.;
3. collective religious conceptions and belief systems, i.e. different conceptions, values, virtues, opinion systems, norms, and evaluations, what is right and wrong;
4. thinking, i.e. the way to think, abstractions, concepts, categories, metaphors, memory functions, etc.;
5. emotions, i.e. frames of mind and emotional expressions and feelings;
6. the way to communicate and relate to one's surroundings, such as family relations and the relationship between sexes;
7. self -concept, how one constructs one's personal picture as a person.

(Adapted from Trompenaars & Turner, 1997, p. 16)

1.8.3. Language and Culture

The literature views the tight relationship between language and its socio-cultural context across a range of interrelated disciplines (e.g. Holmes, 2007), social semiotics (e.g. Halliday, 1978), communication studies (e.g. Fiske, 1990) and cultural studies (e.g. Bourdieu, 1991; Cited in Agudelo, 2016). Brian Harrison (1990) claims that culture, both in itself and as it impinges on the language classroom, is seen as multi-faceted. The integration of culture in language teaching and learning is based on the view that one cannot be approached without the other; they are interwoven (Harrison cited in Agudelo, 2016). However, the question that poses itself is: how do teachers integrate language and culture in their lessons become a real issue of debate among researchers. Agudelo (2016) argues that there have been many practices in language education that have not reflected this interrelationship. He advocates two approaches in which he came to explain the tight relationship between language and culture. Moreover, Agudelo (2016) believes that the “Trivia Approach” and “Integrated Approach” focus on the central role of culture in language. Firstly, a trivia Approach insists on the inclusion of culture in language teaching (Agudelo, 2016). Weil (1998) calls this type of perspective the ‘Tourist Approach’ which regards culture as the transmission of cultural trivia. So, studying a language without considering the interrelationship with its culture is a naive venture. Furthermore, it is not unusual to hear comments related to the teaching of culture referred to as being implicitly covered, may be via the teaching of idiomatic expressions, food habits, watching a movie, or learning about cultural celebrations. However, it is not certain whether this perspective assists learners to learn about these cultural ‘manifestations’ that are interrelated with the language (Agudelo, 2016). In the same vein, Kramsch (1993) notes that:

Language is seen as a social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency. Culture in language teaching is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing

(Kramersch, 1993, p. 8)

In this respect, equally narrow is the view that refers to culture as a ‘fifth skill’ parallel to the known four linguistic skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Thus, separating culture from language in such a ‘structural form’ ignores this intrinsic relationship (Agudelo, 2016). Secondly, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, based on studies of American Indian languages, addresses the relationship between language and culture. It states the influence of peoples’ thoughts and behaviours. Though the implications of this theory have been debated and its insights acknowledged, a counter-argument refers to the impossibility of translating something to a different language due to the misunderstanding of different world views. The most accepted part of this hypothesis is that ‘semantic associations of common concepts differ from one culture to another, that is to say, language, as a code, reflects cultural preoccupation and constraints the way people think (Kramersch, 1998, p. 14; cited in Agudelo, 2016). Fundamentally, Kramersch (1993) points out that many approaches to language teaching have targeted linguistic features while the connections between discourse and culture have been insufficiently explored. To sum up, in terms of language teaching both teachers and learners have to be aware that culture is a broad, complex, flexible and dynamic concept that constitutes the way people think, feel, and behave. Eventually, language and culture cannot be

conceptually separated from one another, thus culture is the medium of language, and the latter is the vehicle of culture (Bruner, 2001, p. 10). Besides, Newton (2015) highlights the close relationship and interaction between language and culture in language teaching and learning as they clearly explain the aforementioned relationship. In the same line of thought, Doye (1996) notes:

The very nature of language forbids the separation of language from culture. If language is considered a system of signs, and signs are characterized by the fact that they are units of form and meaning, it is impossible to learn a language simply by acquiring the forms without their content. And as the content of a language is always culture-bound any reasonable foreign -language teaching cannot but include the study of culture from which the language stems.

(Doye, 1996; cited in Risager, 2007, p.105).

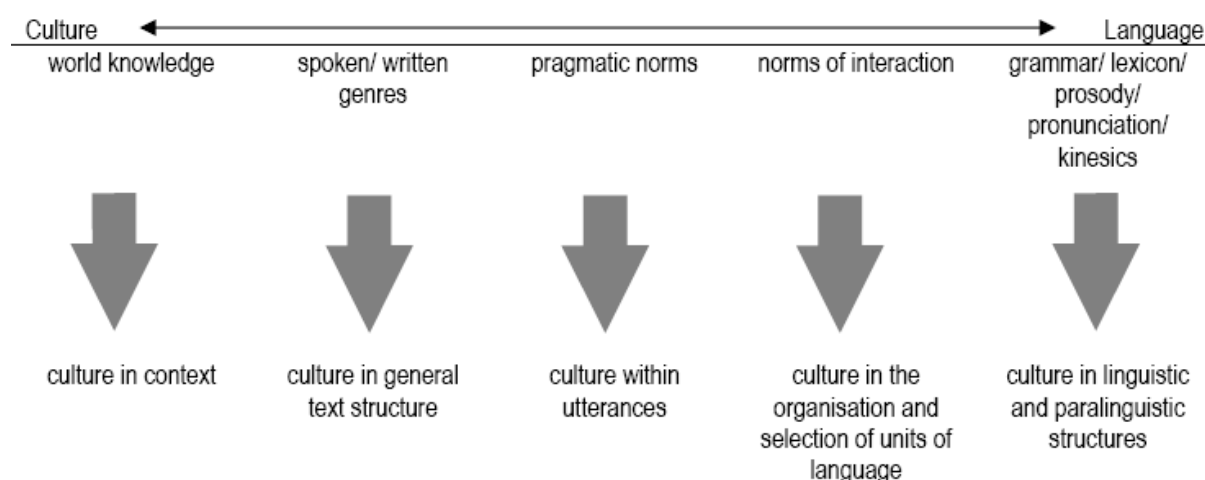


Figure 1.2: Interactions Between Culture and Language

Source: Crozet & Liddicoat 1999; Adopted from Newton & Shearn (2015)

This diagram shows how culture connects to all levels of language use and structure. At the remote left in the model, culture informs understanding of the world and knowledge kinds and sources that are valued within a particular cultural context. In turn, this knowledge informs the shape and nature of genre within a culture. This latter informs and contracts pragmatic and interactional norms, especially how politeness and ‘appropriateness’ are reached via a choice of communication strategies and speech acts. Eventually, at the far right in the model, culture is achieved at the pragma-linguistic level in linguistic signs, including the body language, the words, expressions, and grammar that realize particular speech acts or communication strategies. To sum up, cultural knowledge is required to precisely interpret and grasp native-speakers verbal and non-verbal attitudes in a particular context. The cultural dimensions used in interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers may lead to communication breakdowns with more serious consequences than those affected by linguistic difficulties. Gaps in linguistic competence lead to mutual intelligibility. Sociocultural problems arising from a lack of awareness of appropriateness and politeness tend to result in unintended offense and insult, or loss of face, hence authority or dignity on the part of the non-native speaker (Brown & Livinson, 1987; cited in Newton, 2015). In addition to this, to understand the relationship between language and culture, Atkinson (2002), emphasizes the tight relationship between language and culture and stresses the importance of cultural dimensions as a social phenomenon (Atkinson, 2002).

1.8.4. Teaching Culture to Enhance Communication

Some scholars focus on some publications on classroom practice. speak about culture with a ‘little c’ as encompassing products such as literature, art and artefacts, ideas such as beliefs, values, and institutions, and behaviours such as customs, habits, dress, foods, and leisure (Newton, 2015). They present a series of lesson plans that approach the relationship

between the language taught in the classroom, and the products, ideas, and behaviour that impact its meaning. These cultural products are presented as typically as a means of motivating language use. Moreover, Fantini (2006) introduces a similar anthology of cultural lesson plans in which he reverses the definition of anthropologist Edward Hall to assume that communication is culture. So, Fantini (2006) assumes that individual languages divide up the world of the learner into different categories, labelled by the different worlds and related by different grammar. Meanwhile, as the Whorfian standpoint asserts, learning a new language includes categorizing the learners' world and reformulating the relationship between its constituent parts. Thus, both of these selections of cultural lesson plans assert that language and culture are interwoven and inseparable and therefore learners will be motivated by cultural topics (Corbett, 2003). Besides, Richards & Schmidt (2002) define culture as:

The set of practices, codes, and values that mark a particular nation or group: the sum of a nation group's most highly thought of works of literature, art, music, etc. A difference is sometimes made between the 'High' culture of literature and the arts, and the small 'c' culture of attitudes, values, beliefs, and everyday lifestyles.

(Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 138)

These cultural dimensions are crucial because they combine to form 'discourses', i.e. ways of talking, thinking, and behaving. Rogers (2009) notes that "Culture is stored in individual human beings, in the form of their beliefs, attitudes, and values. There are strong similarities in the belief systems among the members of a given culture" (Rogers, 2009, p.81). In this respect, Rogers (2009) views that culture is shared not only by people who belong to the same

nation such as Chinese culture or American Culture, but also inside these nations subcultures do exist, thus culture is humans' creation and each group or population holds its own beliefs, values, norms, and behaviours which help to create its ways of life.

1.8.5. Integrating and Teaching Culture in EFL Context in Algeria

To live and survive in today's world, many researchers admit that learning foreign languages is a need, especially in the third millennium. Nowadays the English language is the lingua franca that is to say, it is approximately spoken everywhere and therefore it plays a crucial role that one needs to learn to keep up with the latest information technologies in the world. It is of great necessity to draw attention to its culture as an aid to motivate learners. The integration of culture in EFL classes is crucial for effective language teaching and learning. Over the last few decades, developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been given a great emphasis, and is becoming increasingly significant in English language teaching (ELT) practices globally (Byram, 1997). The world today fosters interdependence and interconnectedness. Thus, people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can effectively communicate with each other using English as a global language (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

1.8.6. The Key Elements of Culture

Most of the definitions of the term culture among scholars refer to culture as a unit consisting of different components. According to (Rogers, 2009), culture is human-made, i.e each population or group create its way of life, with the values, norms, behaviours, and material objects they feel best suit their situation(s). The material objects produced by any culture, together with its musical and artistic productions, are referred to as cultural artifacts. The elements of culture such as its beliefs, values, and attitudes are not questionable among

the people who share the same culture and its elements (Rogers, 2009). In this respect, these components exist within any culture and therefore they are not debatable.

1.8.6.1. Attitudes and Beliefs

Attitudes are internal events that are not observable by other people who do not belong to the target culture. They are emotional reactions to objects, ideas, and people. Attitudes are not publically observable, that is to say, one cannot know the attitudes of another person if the latter does not express his or her beliefs and opinions overtly. People express opinions, outwardly observable verbal behaviour, and engage in other behaviour, partially based on their attitudes and beliefs (Rogers, 2009). Culture is stored in individual human beings but the form of their beliefs, attitudes, and values. The members of the same society share strong similarities in their belief systems because beliefs are internal as attitudes. Beliefs are the storage system for the content of peoples' past experiences, including thoughts, memories, and interpretations of events, hence they are shaped by the individual's culture. Beliefs are individuals' actions and speech of their outside worlds and therefore no person is able to recognize them except through observation. Some beliefs are seen to be very true such as $1+1=2$, i.e they are axiomatic. Others are seen as less probable, such as 'All old people sit at home in rocking chairs' (Rogers, 2009).

1.8.6.2. Values And Norms

Values differ from one culture to another and they are the core elements of any culture (Hofstede, 2001). Values are invisible in the sense that one may recognize one's values through his/her attitudes or behaviours. In addition to this, values are what members of any community or culture regard as strongly 'good and bad', and are hence closely related to the ideals shared by a group (Trompenaars, 1997). As a further matter, values serve as criteria to

determine a choice from existing alternatives. A value is a concept an individual or group has considering the desirable, for instance in one culture people might agree with the value: ‘‘Hard work is essential to a prosperous society’’. Values give us a tendency to feel how one aspires or tend to behave (Trompenaars & Turner, 1997).

Any culture has its deeper layer(s) such as norms and values. The former is the mutual sense a community or group has of what is ‘‘right’’ or ‘‘wrong’’ (Trompenaars, 1997). Norms can develop on a formal level as written laws, and an informal one as social control, for instance, the Japanese bow while greeting. Norms are the established behaviour models for members of a social system. They function as a guide to appropriate kind of behaviour. If a cultural norm is disobeyed, the individual is socially punished for not fulfilling the expectation of the system (Rogers, 2009) .

1.8.6.3. Artifacts

Shaules (2010) distinguishes between objective culture and subjective one. The former refers to products and artifacts such as food, clothing, and architecture while the latter refers to aspects that one cannot see or touch such as norms, values, and beliefs (Shaules, 2010, p.40). Generally speaking, arriving in a new country one can see artifacts such as landmarks or monuments which reflect the products of a group or community which include their visible achievements and entail certain physical and concrete elements be them in arts, architecture, technology, and inventions, for example, the Pyramids of the Pharaohs (Egypt), Big Ben (London), and Eiffel Tower (Paris) and so on (Shaules, 2010).

1.9. Moving Culture from The Margin to The Centre

Theorists and scholars, who assume that language and culture are inseparable, assert to move culture from the margins to the centre. (Corbett, 2003) insists on the adoption of the intercultural approach to language teaching/learning because the main objective is not to reach native-like proficiency but to communicate effectively with people of the target language and culture. So, it is up to the curriculum designers to select a suitable curriculum and be eclectic among the teaching methods and approaches to one that promotes learners' intercultural competence (Corbett, 2003). He also views that the intercultural approach differs from earlier approaches to teaching language and its culture by shifting intercultural knowledge and skills from the margins to the centre and making them an integral part of the curriculum. This means adopting strategies from ethnography as well as linguistics and defining, teaching, and testing intercultural knowledge and skills as well as language skills. The ultimate aim is to redefine the objectives of language education to acknowledge intercultural communicative competence rather than 'native-speaker proficiency' as the paramount goal (Corbett, 2003).

1.10. The Importance of Effective Communication

Linguists agree on the definition of language as a means of communication par excellence. However, teaching grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, and phonology is not enough for effective communication. Effective communication needs awareness of non-linguistic factors such as attitudes, ways of thinking, manners, and expectations to avoid misunderstanding while communicating. (Byram, 1997) notes that:

Successful communication is not judged solely in terms of efficiency of information exchange. It is focused on establishing and maintaining relationships. In this sense,

the efficacy of communication depends upon using language to demonstrate one's willingness to relate, which often involves indirectness of politeness rather than the direct and efficient choice of language full of information. That ways of being polite vary from one language and culture to another widely known.

(Byram, 1997, p.3)

In today's world of multilingualism and multiculturalism, linguistic and cultural diversity are the specificities for language teaching/learning. Actually, EFL classrooms teachers should prepare learners to be linguistic and culturally competent in the target language and its culture. Therefore, the missing cultural embodiment such as habits, values, beliefs, and social manners prevent learners to communicate effectively with people of the host language and culture (Liton, 2013). So, the lack of cultural features (values, habits, beliefs) among people is due to missing teaching language and its culture at the same time, and therefore communication among people breaks down. In this respect, the lack of communication has given rise to differences in language, in thinking, in systems of belief and culture generally. These differences have made hostility among societies endemic and seemingly eternal (Samovar, 2009).

1.11. Teaching Foreign Culture through ICTs

The age of globalization and the advent of science and technology witnessed a huge and rapid change in all domains and fields of life. Especially, in the field of education teachers and learners are using technology inside and outside the classroom to learn and get information about people who are different from them. For many, life in the digital era is

mediated via Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as new media, social networks, television, videos, and so forth. This digital experience has come to play a crucial role in our modern life (Tso, 2019). In addition to, Zaman (2011) defines ICTs as “Diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and create, disseminate, store and manage information” (Zaman, 2011, p.115). According to (Cullen, 2000) there is a variety of possible sources of information for teaching culture: Videos, CDs, TV, the Internet, songs, realia, newspaper, magazines, literature, etc. Nowadays, teachers of English around the world tend to apply some form of communicative teaching and learning, instead of the traditional methods of ELT which dominate the teacher-centeredness and neglect the learner-centred or communication skills (Jayanthi, 2016). A successful EFL teacher is not the one who applies or who is restricted to one method of teaching or another, rather the ICTs have changed the pace of teaching strategies to suit the goals of his/her teaching materials and learners’ needs. In addition to this, ICTs put forward an influential base for efficient teaching and learning. Modern technologies are used and integrated into EFL classrooms for a better-blended method of delivery to create apt teaching techniques to promote the learning process of the English language. ICTs are very motivating since they help both teachers and learners to learn the language which is carefully designed to meet the prescribed objectives (Jayanthi, 2016).

1.11.1. The Impacts of ICTs on ELT

Undoubtedly, motivation is the cornerstone in the process of acquiring or learning foreign languages. Most of the time, learners have positive attitudes toward the use of cellphones and computers, though these ICTs are a double-edged sword. The advantages of these modern technologies are acknowledgeable over their pitfalls (Jayanthi, 2016). Undeniably, ICTs have a significant and positive impact on ELT, so the following are some of them. As a further matter, ICTs help in accessing remote learning resources. Both teachers and learners no longer have to rely merely on printed books and other materials in physical

media housed in libraries (and available in restricted quantities) for their educational purposes (Jayanthi, 2016).

1.11.2. Materials Availability

ICTs as means for teaching and learning are very stimulating because of their availability as learning tools, whether it is computer-based on the web or CDs. With the spread and integration of ICTs in language teaching and learning learners become autonomous and learn from very patient educator (machine). At the same time, online use of telecommunications for the sake of teaching and learning through the computer in the classroom across the world will consolidate the progress of different academic skills (Jayanthi, 2016). Besides, the availability of images, animation, audio, and video clips will assist much more in presenting and practicing the target language and its culture (Jayanthi, 2016).

1.11.3. Learners' Attitudes Towards ICTs

Learners, namely young ones, are so motivated to learn via ICTs. So, ICTs have a positive impact on learners' attitudes towards language teaching and learning. With the appropriate use of technology, learners feel more successful in and out of school and they increase self-confidence and self-esteem while using computer-based instruction. Moreover, ICTs have encouraged learners to be dependent while learning, in the sense that they can choose the elements of the target language and culture which they want to focus on meeting their learning strategies and styles. Most importantly, learners feel free to practice the language without fear of others at their paces (Jayanthi, 2016).

1.11.4. Authenticity

ICTs provide both teachers and learners with an authentic learning environment since they can interact with others using Skype, Facebook, Instagram, watts app, emails, and so on.

E-tandems (chatts & emails) assist learners to enhance their production both in writing as well as speaking skills since they give the learners the opportunity to communicate with native speakers virtually. These exchanges are fruitful and very positive as they engaged learners in cooperative learning and they had a positive effect on face-to-face oral production- they promoted negotiation of meaning and corrective feedback (Otero, 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the history of linguistic diversity and language education policies since the independence of Algeria. It also deals with incorporating both language and culture in EFL context. In addition to this, the current chapter deals with the goals of teaching the English language and its status in the Algerian educational system. Besides, it tackles the finalities of teaching English in middle school and the learners' global profile achievement. Also, it explores the main teaching methods and approaches in the field of language teaching/learning. It highlights the importance of cultural and intercultural dimensions of foreign language teaching and learning to help learners to learn foreign languages and English language in particular. As a further matter, the present chapter highlights the role of teaching English to middle school pupils. It also targets the distinction between competency and competence in language teaching. Besides, it sheds light on the importance of teaching and learning the target language and its culture hand in hand to empower learners' attitudes, skills, knowledge, and intercultural awareness to compare their own culture to the host one, thus they can interact effectively using the target language (English). Moreover, it deals with the close relationship between language and culture in ESL or EFL and the importance of integrating culture in EFL classrooms to promote learners' intercultural competence. It also deals with the use and integration of ICTs that help teachers to present the target language and its culture inside the classroom and encouraged learners to use ICTs tools such as Emails, Facebook, and Skype to communicate with people around the world.

Chapter Two: Language Testing And Assessment of Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Contexts

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to language testing and assessment of intercultural communicative competence. The current chapter tackles the history of language testing, the phases and stages in which language testing passes through. Also, it deals with the relationship between language testing and language teaching and learning, the historical standpoint of language testing, communicative language testing approaches and its characteristics. Throughout the history of language testing, scholars assume that it is obvious that language testing cannot be isolated from language teaching and learning. The relationship between language teaching and testing is vital and tight (Hughes, 2003). The relationship between testing and language teaching is reciprocal. Several years ago, Bachman & Palmer (1996) note that there was an intrinsic relationship between research in language acquisition, developments in language teaching, and language testing. Language testing both serves and is served by research in language acquisition and language teaching. In addition to this, Bachman & Palmer (1996) argue that language tests are more often used as criterion measures of language abilities in second language acquisition research. Language tests are sources of information about the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Generally speaking, language teachers regularly prepare and design tests to help diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses, assess their progress and assist in evaluating their achievements. Besides, language tests are also, most of the time, used as sources of information in evaluating the effectiveness of different approaches to language teaching. Language tests are sources of feedback on learning and teaching and therefore provide useful input into the process of language teaching.

2.1. Historical View of Language Testing

Tests are designed to measure the learners' knowledge, skills, and abilities in all schooling subjects such as math, history, physics, and language. The ultimate aim of tests is to score the learners and provide them with grades. Testing learners while learning foreign languages is important to test their proficiency in the target language. Back to the history of language testing, Alderson (1981) argues that language testing passed through different phases or stages. Language testing passes through three stages in the history of language named the pre-scientific, the psychometric-structuralist, and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic (Spolsky, 1975). These stages were metaphorically translated by Morrow (1979) into the 'Garden of Eden,' the Vale of Tears, and the 'Promised Land' (Alderson, 1981). Generally, language testing is an arduous field. Throughout history, people have sat for tests to be tested on their capabilities or to establish their credentials (McNamara, 2006). Of course, all types of language testing and tests varied from discrete point multiple-choice tests to tests that not only emphasize meaning and carry out a special communicative task but seek to imitate real-life situations. Achievement tests and test items are the core of language testing which measure the language proficiency or communicative language ability reliably and validly as possible (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Historically speaking, researchers in the field of language testing have agreed that language testing passed through different phases or stages. In this respect, Spolsky (1975) identifies three main stages of language testing, namely, the pre-scientific, the psychometric-structuralist, and the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic. These stages reflect the intentions and theoretical basis for language testing before the emergence of communicative testing. Spolsky (1975) highlights that the 'pre-scientific' era traced back from the Chinese civil service examinations more than two thousand years ago. This period witnessed the use of essays, open-ended examinations, and oral examinations. Fundamentally, testing in that era did not

depend on linguistic theory. In addition to this, the psychometric-structuralist'' era intended to reflect the joint contribution of the structural linguists, who identified elements of the language they wanted to test, and the psychometrics, who produced objective and reliable methods of testing the candidates' control of those elements. Psychometrists suggest objective and reliable strategies and methods of testing, whereas Structuralists identify elements of language to be tested. So, in that era language testing was dominated by criteria for the establishment of educational measuring instruments developed within the traditions of psychometrics (Alderson, 1981). In addition to this, Morrow (1981) calls this approach 'atomistic' due to the assumption that 'knowledge of the elements of a language is equivalent to knowledge of the language. Morrow (1981) states that this approach provided easily quantifiable data for testing, it carried a major drawback (Alderson, 1981). By the 1970s, discrete point testing was no longer felt to provide a sufficient measure of language ability and testing moved into the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic era, with the emergence of global integrative testing. Alderson (1981) argues that global integrative testing, such as cloze tests, which require candidates to insert suitable words into gaps in a text and dictation, provided a closer measure of the ability to combine language skills in the way they are used in actual language use than discrete point tests. Besides, the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach corresponds to the advent of global integrative testing. Most importantly, Alderson (1981) notes:

Testing has not yet recovered from this image of being stubbornly irrelevant to or unconcerned with the language teacher, except for the embodiment in exams which dominate many a syllabus (be it the Cambridge First Certificate or the TOEFL)

(Alderson, 1981, p.5)

Morrow (1981) states that this approach provided easily quantifiable data for testing, but it carried a major drawback. In the 1970s, discrete point testing did not provide a sufficient measure of language ability and testing moved into the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic era, with the emergence of global integrative testing. Alderson (1981) argues that global integrative testing, such as cloze tests, required candidates to insert suitable words into gaps in a text and dictation, providing a closer measure of the ability to combine language skills in the way they were used in actual language use than discrete point tests. The Psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach corresponded to the emergence of global integrative testing.

Communicative language testing/tests should have high content validity. Tests were designed to make judgments about how individuals function in a normal situation outside the test, therefore tests should be as accurate as a reflection of that possible situation (Razmjoo, 2016). The sample or model of language collected and tasks the candidate is called upon to perform should be as representative as possible of the language and skills needed to function in the real-life context. Tests need to be context-specific, for instance, the objective is to test candidates to determine whether their second language ability is adequate or not to undertake a course at a higher education establishment, and design tasks in which the testees will require to perform as part of the course per se. In this respect, Weir (1993) points out that “inauthentic tasks may interfere with the measurement of the construct we seek. Tests of communicative language ability should be as direct as possible and the tasks candidates have to perform should involve realistic discourse processing” (Weir, 1993, p.12).

Face validity is also related to the ‘authenticity’ of tasks. Despite not being universally agreed on, many testers believe that it is easier to gain acceptance for a test that appears to test real-life skills than those which use formats such as cloze, which are not seen

outside the test itself. Employing tasks that the testees might recognize also makes it easier to explain and justify the test to them (Razmjoo, 2016). Accordingly, Morrow (1981) has contributed significantly to the understanding of reliability in language testing, particularly in the context of communicative language tests. Morrow (1981) emphasizes the importance of reliability but also recognizes the unique challenges posed by communicative language testing (Morrow, 1981). Tests of communicative spoken ability should have certain characteristics and should reflect normal utterances and give the candidates chances to initiate. There should also be an element of unpredictability (Razmjoo, 2016). Basically, Morrow (1981) notes that the processing of unpredictable data in real-time is a vital aspect of using language. The final aspect of communicative language testing is that of assessment. Communicative tests should be assessed qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

Generally speaking, a test is designed to measure the individual's performance. In educational settings, tests are particularly designed to obtain specific information about the teaching/learning process. Scholars believe that a test plays a crucial and pivotal role and tends to measure the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as the subskills such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, comprehension, and pronunciation. Brown (1996) defines testing as "A method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area" (Brown, 1996, p.252). According to Bachman & Palmer (1996) view that "A test is a procedure designed to measure and elicit certain behaviour from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p.20). Similarly, Halliday (1966) notes that "Tests are an attempt to construct an instrument for measuring attainment, or progress, or ability in language skills (Halliday, 1966, p.215). Bachman & Palmer (1996) believe that "Virtually all language teaching programs involve some testing" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p.8). Accordingly, language tests help language teachers to collect and analyse significant information about

their teaching practices and learners' learning outcomes. Stakeholders such as teachers, test designers, students, and administrators often agree on the whole process of testing causes great concerns among them. In this respect, Hall (2010) notes that "uncertainties inherent in all language test development" (Hall, 2010, p.321). In this same line of thought, Hughes (2003) indicates that teachers more often than not "harbor a deep mistrust of tests mainly owing to their very poor quality" (Hughes, 2003, p.1). Generally, the ultimate aim and the purpose of language tests in different language teaching and learning remains the same, nevertheless its implementation, design, and content might differ. (Corder, 1973) states:

Language tests are measuring instruments and they are applied to learners, not to the teaching materials or teachers. For this reason, they do not tell us directly about the contribution of the teacher or the materials to the learning process. Tests are designed to measure the learner's knowledge of or the competence of the language at a particular moment in his course and nothing else.

(Corder, 1973, p. 351)

2.2. Types of Language Tests

Before going through different types of tests one has to note that testing, assessment, and evaluation are crucial terms to be distinguished in language teaching and testing. These terms are used synonymously or interchangeably in the field of language testing; indeed, they may, in practice, refer to the same task. Bachman & Palmer (1996) note that when asking for an evaluation of an individual's language proficiency, for instance, a test score is frequently given. This attention to the superficial similarities among these terms, however, tends to obscure the distinctive characteristics of each. In addition to this, Bachman & Palmer (1996)

believe that “an understanding of the distinctions among these terms is vital to the proper development and use of language tests” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 18). Most importantly, it is possible, nevertheless, to classify tests according to a small number of kinds of information being sought. This categorization will prove useful both in deciding whether an existing test is suitable for a particular purpose and in writing appropriate new tests where these are necessary. Basically, Hughes (2003) distinguishes four types of tests that can be mentioned respectively.

2.2.1. Proficiency Test

First, proficiency tests are designed to assess the learners’ abilities in a language regardless of any training they have had in that language. Second, the content of a proficiency test, thus, is not based on the content or purposes of language courses that people taking the test may have followed. Rather, it is based on ‘specification’ of what testees have to be able to do in the language so that to consider ‘proficient’. This latter in some cases of proficiency tests, ‘proficient’ means having enough command of the language for a particular aim and purpose (Hughes, 2003). Third, an example of this would be a test designed to discover whether someone can function successfully as a United Nations translator. Other proficient tests do not have any occupation or course of study in mind and therefore the concept of proficiency is more general. For example, the Cambridge examinations (First Certificate Examination and Proficiency Examination) and the Oxford EFL examinations (preliminary and Higher). Fourth, these tests’ function is to show whether testees have achieved a certain standard concerning certain specified abilities. Such examinations are independent of the teaching institutions and so can be relied on by potential employers to make a fair and just comparison between candidates from different institutions and different countries. Fifth, these proficiency tests have a common objective despite differences in content and level of difficulty, they are not based on courses that testees may have previously taken. Sixth, Hughes

(2003) notes that these tests are beneficial or harmful at the same time since they exercise considerable influence over the method and content of language courses therefore he views these types of tests are harmful rather than beneficial. Mainly, this type of test aims to determine a test taker's preparedness for a specific communicative role (Hamp-Lyons, 1998).

2.2.2. Achievement Tests

In contrast to proficiency tests, most teachers are likely to be responsible for the preparation of achievement tests that are directly related to language courses, their objective is to establish how successful individual students, groups of students, or the courses themselves have been in reaching goals (Hughes, 2003). There are two types of achievement tests which are the final test and the progress test. The former is administered at the end of a course, whereas the latter is administered by ministries of education, official examining boards, or members of teaching institutions in a specific period after finishing the teaching program. The content of these tests has to be related to the courses with which they are concerned, however, language testers among themselves disagree on the nature of this relationship. Some language testers view that the content of a final achievement test should be based directly on a detailed course syllabus or the textbooks and other materials used. This has been referred to as the 'syllabus content approach'. It has a clear appeal since the test only contains what it is thought that the students have in reality encountered, and thus can be considered, in this respect at least, a fair test. The cons are that if the syllabus is badly designed, or the book and other materials are wrongly chosen, then the test's result can be very misleading. Moreover, Hughes (2003) notes that the achievement of performance on the test may not truly indicate the achievement of course objectives. For instance, a course may have as an objective the development of conversational ability, however, the course per se and the test may need testees only to utter carefully prepared statements about their home town, the weather, or whatever. Another course may aim to develop reading ability in German, but the test may

limit itself to the vocabulary the testees are known to have met. Eventually, in each, of the aforementioned examples- all of them based on actual cases- test results will fail to show what testees have achieved in terms of course objectives. Progress achievement tests, as their name suggests, are intended to measure the testees' progress. In this respect, Hughes (2003) indicates that since progress is towards the achievement of course objectives, these tests should relate to objectives, too. So, Hughes (2003) believes that one way of measuring progress would be repeatedly administering final tests, the (hopefully) increasing scores indicating the progress made. Hughes (2003) continues to explain that this may not be 'feasible', especially in the early stages of a course. The low scores obtained would be discouraging to testees and quite possibly to their teachers. Hughes (2003) suggests establishing a series of well-defined short-term objectives and therefore these objectives should make a clear progression toward the final achievement test based on course objectives. Then if the syllabus and teaching are appropriate to these objectives, progress tests based on short-term objectives will correspond with what has been taught, and if not, there will be pressure to create a better fit. So, if it is the syllabus that is defective, it is the tester's responsibility to make clear that it is there that change is required, but not in the test. Besides, more formal achievement tests that require careful preparation, teachers should feel free to plan their quizzes and tests. Quizzes and tests provide feedback on testees' progress and keep them on the right path. In this respect, Hughes (2003) argues that such tests will not form part of assessment procedures and their construction and scoring need not be more rigorous. Nevertheless, they should be seen as measuring progress towards the intermediate objectives on which the more formal progress achievement tests are based. These tests, however, can reflect the particular way that teachers are taking toward the achievement objectives. In addition to this, Gronlund (1977) notes that:

Achievement tests should support and reinforce other aspects of the instructional process. They can aid both the student and the teacher in assessing learning readiness ... monitoring learning progress, diagnosing learning difficulties and evaluating learning outcomes. The effectiveness of testing is enhanced by observing a set of basic principles. ...and by noting the differences between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests

(Gronlund, 1977, p.1)

This means that achievement tests play a prominent role in all kinds of instructional programs. It is the widest method of assessing learners' progress in classroom instruction, and it is an indispensable procedure in individualized and programmed instruction. This test is a systematic procedure for determining the amount a student has learned. Although the emphasis is on measuring learning outcomes, it should not be implied that testing is to be done only at the end of instruction. So, achievement tests are frequently viewed as an end-of-unit or end-of-course activity that is used for assignment course grades (Gronlund, 1977). Eventually, achievement tests are designed to show group or individual progress vis-a-vis the instructional purposes of a specific study or training program.

2.2.3.Diagnostic Tests

These types of testing aimed to identify the testees' areas of strengths and weaknesses. Tests might, for instance, identify the grammatical points that are difficult for the learners and need further teaching. The main objective is to prepare remedial tasks for students who are weak in certain areas and design tests to overcome their weaknesses. Such tests are useful for learners to have good command and performance of the language. Also, they could be very beneficial for individualized instruction or self-instruction. By doing so,

learners will know where gaps exist in their command of the language, they could be directed to sources of information, exemplification, and practice. These types of tests will still require a huge amount of work to produce (Hughes, 2003). According to Harris & McCann (1994), diagnostic tests are used to diagnose individuals' strengths and weaknesses. In addition to this, these tests generally consist of numerous short but reliable subtests measuring different language skills or components of a single broad skill. Based on the individuals' performance on each subtest, testers can plot a performance profile that will show their relative strengths in the various areas tested.

2.2.4. Placement Tests

Placement tests aim to place testees into a particular level in the curriculum which fits their abilities. According to Brown (1996) placement tests usually include a model of the material to be covered in the different courses in the program. So, tests should determine the required material for the testees. In addition to this, Hughes (2003) notes that “ placement tests can be bought, but this not to be recommended unless the institution concerned is quite sure that the test being considered suits its particular teaching program” (Hughes, 2003, p.13). This means that no one placement test will fit and work for every institution. The placement tests which are designed for particular situations prove that they are most successful. Placement tests aim to check the level of students regarding what they have been taught in the program to place them into appropriate groups. Placement tests should be reliable to determine the student's current level of skills and knowledge to place them into a course.

2.2.5. Direct Versus Indirect Tests

On the one hand, a test is said to be direct when it needs the testee to perform precisely the skill which testers wish to measure. In this respect, testers want their candidate to write compositions, so they ask them to write a passage or an essay about particular topics.

If they want them to pronounce a language, they ask them to read texts or pronounce words. However, the tasks and tests designed should be as authentic as possible. Besides, to measure the testees' productive skills (speaking & writing) direct testing is easier to carry out. These productive skills will provide testers with information about testees' abilities in both speaking and writing. Regarding receptive skills (listening & reading), however, it is necessary to get testees not only to listen and read but also to demonstrate that they have done this successfully. In addition to this, direct tests have several attractions. Testers have to be clear about the abilities they are testing and thus the first advantage lies in their relative straightforwardness to elicit behaviour on which to base a judgment. In the case of productive skills, at least the assessment and interpretation of testees' performance is often straightforward. Testers seek to measure the testees' skills through direct tests since these tests involve the practice of skills. Indirect tests aim to assess candidates' abilities which underlie the skills which the testers are interested in measuring. Hughes (2003) distinguishes between direct and indirect testing. The latter seems to offer the possibility of testing a representative sample of a finite number of abilities that underlie a potentially indefinitely large number of manifestations of them. For example, if testers take a representative sample of grammatical structure, they will take a sample that is relevant for all the situations in which control of grammar is necessary. Direct testing is inevitably limited to a rather small sample of tasks, which may call on a restricted and possibly unrepresentative range of grammatical structures. Therefore, indirect testing is superior to direct one and its results are more general. Moreover, Hughes (2003) highlights that the main issue with indirect tests lay in the relationship between performance on them and the performance of the skills in which testers were much more interested tends to be weak in strength and unsure in nature (Hughes, 2003, p.16).

2.2.6. Discrete Point Versus Integrative Testing

Accordingly, Hughes (2003) views discrete point test is of one element in time, item by item, this may include, for instance, a series of items and each testing a particular grammatical structure. Integrative testing requires the testees to combine many language elements in the completion of a task. This might include writing a composition, taking notes while listening to a lecture, dictation, or completing a cloze test passage. Discrete point tests are always indirect, whereas integrative tests tend to be direct.

2.3. Characteristics of Tests

Harris (1969) argues that all good tests have three qualities: validity, reliability, and practicality. Any test that testers prepare must be appropriate in terms of objectives, 'dependable' in the evidence it provides, and 'applicable' to testers' particular situations. To be certain, other test characteristics are also of value, but these three constitute 'sin qua non', without any one of which a test would be a poor investment in time and money. There are five principles of testing and assessment: reliability, validity, authenticity, practicality, and washback.

2.3.1. Reliability

Reliability means that tests scores remain unchangeable. The test cannot measure anything well unless it measures consistency. Tests are not reliable unless the testees are in good physical and mental condition when sitting for the test. Illness, fatigue, and bad mood prevent test-takers from performing well, and therefore they cannot show their best or real performances. So, the test result is not reliable.

Test reliability is affected by several factors. A sampling of tasks is chiefly being among these factors. Generally speaking, the more samples of students' performance are taken, the

more reliable will be their knowledge and ability assessment. This principle explains why testing specialists have tended to support objective examinations because a large number of items (individual measures) may be included in a testing session, rather than essay examinations, where the number of tasks must necessarily be limited. Test reliability will be negatively affected if the conditions under which the test is administered tend to vary and differ from one administration to another (Harris , 1969).

2.3.2. Validity

Gronlund (1977) assumes that validity is the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of assessment. Validity is usually defined as a test that is designed to measure what is claimed to measure. In the same line of thought Weir (1993) notes that validity is better defined as the extent to which a test can produce data, i.e., test scores are an accurate representation of a teste's level of language skills. So, validity lies in the scores of a particular administration of a test rather than in the test itself. Various textbooks use the same statement despite some theorists who argue that this position is oversimplified by the concept of validity as well as the validation process (Lissitz, 2009; cited in Hathcoat, 2013). Moreover, Weir (1993) notes that tests are valid if they measure what they are supposed to measure. In the same vein, Lado (1961, p.,321 cited in Weir, 1993) asks the same question: Does a test measure what it is supposed to measure? If it does, the nit is valid (Weir, 1993). The semantic meaning of validity is debatable in academic discourse. According to Hathcoat (2013), this controversy has a long history even though the contemporary debate appears to come from disagreements about the proper location of validity. One view places validity as a property of score-based interpretations and entailed uses of test scores (Messick, 1989; Kane, 1992; cited in Hathcoat, 2013). (Hathcoat, 2013) argues that validity is central to assessment processes, data-driven decisions, and reporting procedures (Moss, Girard, & Haniford, 2006; cited in Hathcoat, 2013). Validity is viewed differently according to two

schools of thought. On the one hand, there is a position that views validity as an attribute of score-based inferences and entailed the use of test scores. On the other hand, there is a position that views the instrument-based approach as holding that tests are inherently valid or not (Hathcoat, 2013). Validity is multifaceted and different types of evidence are required to endorse any claims for the validity of scores on tests (Weir, 1993). Weir (1993) believes that it is inaccurate to talk about a test such as TOEFL or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as being valid or not. However, it is the result of scores of the test produced by a particular administration of a test on a particular sample of candidates that concern. Gipp (1994) believes that:

Validity is a unitary concept, in the sense that score meaning as embodied in construct validity underlies all score-based inferences. But for a fully unified view of validity, it must also be recognized that the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of score-based inferences depend as well on the social consequences of the testing. Therefore, social values cannot be ignored in consideration of validity.

(Gipps, 1994, p.59).

So, Messick came to see the ‘complementarity’ of the different sources of evidence formerly deemed as separable validities, and therefore he came to be seen as representing a new ‘orthodoxy’ on approaching construct validity as a ‘super-ordinate’ category for test validities (Weir, 1993). In addition to this, Messick (1988) proposes the logical distinctions exist between ‘empirical evidence’ for construct validation, that is, its (1) evidential basis, and its (2)

consequential basis or functional impacts on social systems and values, including unintended, negative effects. Besides, Messick (1988) distinguishes arguments for construct validation based on analysis of (3) test interpretation and of (4) test use. Construct validity is “A mutual verification of the measuring instrument and the theory of the construct it is meant to measure” (Messick, 1988, p.29). Here, tests are designed to examine the psychological trait or construct. All types of validity can be explained a valid test is a test whose content includes all the things that testees have learned, practiced, and trained in class.

2.3.3. Practicality

According to Harris (1969), practicality or usability is a third characteristic of a good test. He notes that:

“Tests may be a highly reliable and valid instrument but still beyond our means or facilities. Thus, in the preparation of a new test or the adoption of an existing one, we must keep in mind some very practical considerations.

(Harris, 1969, p.21).

In this respect, Halliday (1966) argues that these considerations such as economy in test copies, time allotment, and test books and whether these books are reusable. In addition to this, it should be determined whether several administrators and/or scorers will be needed for the more personnel who must be involved in giving and scoring a test, the costlier the process becomes. Closely related to the economy in money and time. So, in writing or selecting a test, testers should be paid attention to how long the administering and scoring of the test will take place. Yet in selecting a short test rather than a longer one, one must proceed with caution. Besides, test usability involves the ease with which the test can be administered. Harris

(1969), poses some questions concerning the ease of administration and scoring. In short, Harris (1969) points out the economy and the ease of administration and scoring of test copies cost, how much time and money administrators or scorers need along the process (Harris, 1969, p.21-22). Similarly, being practical in testing means that if the extent to which the demands of a particular test specification can be met within the limits of time and existing human and material resources, it can be included as practical testing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). To make sure that tests are practical, administrative details should be accounted for such as printed materials, and information about the time allotted for the test. A reasonable time in doing tests, technical issues (equipment), and scoring system and how to report it should be overlooked before doing the test (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). In addition to this, Harris (1969) notes that scoring procedures have significant impacts on the practicality of a given instrument, especially when a large number of testees are involved, thus one needs to know whether the test must be scored subjectively or objectively in nature. Testers may wish to determine whether a standard answer sheet or copy is used. As a result, the papers may be run through a machine. A separate answer sheet will also facilitate hand scoring of the tests, for the scoring of answers made directly in a test book is laborious. Ease of interpretation of tests in the sense that if a standard test is adopted, testers will examine the data provided by the publisher. Practicality is an integral part of the concept of test usefulness and affects many different aspects of an examination. Practicality takes the necessary resources to produce and administer the test in its intended context and use. The practical examination does not place an unreasonable demand on available resources. Analysing the practicality of an authentic assessment will overlook its budget, time of designing, implementing, and scoring the assessment itself, administrative issues, and material resources (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

2.3.4. Authenticity

Authenticity is one of the main principles of language testing refers to how closely tested material matches real-world application of activities in the classroom. Test item or activities parallel real-life application of tasks. Bachman & Palmer (1996) define authenticity as “the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p.23). Several scholars suggest different meanings to authenticity, but they agree that it is the outcome of native speaker’s language production. Authenticity is considered as an important element of language testing (Shakibaei, 2017) .

2.4. Assessing Intercultural Competence

First of all, several scholars worldwide lament the poor job postsecondary institutions are doing in preparing learners for the twenty-first century. Other scholars note that the central responsibility of today’s institutions of higher education is to train students to function more effectively in the integrated world system (Deardorff, 2011, p. 65). Scholars' view to preparing learners to act and communicate effectively in the twenty-first century educational institutions worldwide needs to make efforts to develop learners’ intercultural competence since it very crucial concept to be taught and assessed in foreign language classrooms.

2.4.1. History of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The history of ICC is a rich tapestry that intertwines developments in various academic fields, particularly language education, communication studies, and cultural studies. The notion of communicative competence was coined by Dell Hymes in 1972. It is viewed that ICC was developed by Hymes’ critique of Chomsky's linguistic competence in the anglo-phone world (Byram, 2011). In addition to, Huang (2014), notes that the notion of

intercultural communicative competence originated from Hymes' communicative competence. The concept of intercultural communicative competence is a crucial term in foreign language teaching, and therefore it is widely used. This term does not reach agreement among researchers on what it is and comprises. ICC is debatable and open to discussion among scholars and it was viewed by different researchers as a vital component to be considered in EFL classrooms. Hymes (1972) notes the appropriateness of socio-cultural significance and linguistic utterances in a specific context. Canale & Swain (1980) develop a model of communicative competence that comprises four components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. In addition to this, Domb (2020) notes that Van Ek (1986) has developed a model of 'communicative ability' which comprises six elements:

- **Linguistic competence:** It is known as grammatical competence includes the knowledge of grammar, lexis, syntax, and morphology. Linguistic competence involves the knowledge of the language code (grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling). This competence has five main components as Syntax, Morphology, Lexicon (receptive & productive), Phonology, and Orthography.
- **Sociolinguistic competence** is the ability of learners to recognize the effect of context on strings of linguistic events and to use language appropriately in specific social situations. The social context is where there are some specific norms, values, beliefs, and behavioural patterns of cultures. The social context affects what learners say, when they say it (the time), how they say it (manner: formal or formal language), and to whom they say it.
- **Discourse competence:** stands for the ability to connect sentences coherently and cohesively while speaking and writing. Cohesion and coherence are two

main aspects of discourse competence. Cohesion refers to the form of language, whereas coherence refers to the meaning.

- **Strategic competence** is the ability to overcome difficulties and find solutions when a communication breakdown occurs. Strategic competence helps learners to succeed and function well in the flow of communication. Strategic competence motivates learners to cross physical barriers, mental barriers (lack of confidence and anxiety), and linguistic barriers. Teachers should foster their learners with tasks such as comprehension checks, paraphrasing, and conversation fillers to strengthen their strategic competencies.
- **Socio-cultural competence:** enables learners to function effectively while communicating with natives. It helps learners to cope with sociocultural situations while communicating.
- **Social competence:** is about how learners handles relationships. This competence involves three elements as empathy, awareness, and service orientation. Individuals who are empathetic feel and sense people around them, and they are concerned with the individuals who are communicating with them. They are aware of individuals and perceive them from different lenses, adjusting their engagement with whom they are communicating. Social competence includes both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitudes, self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to handle social situations.

(Adapted from Ahmed et al., 2009, p.30)

2.4.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

The history of intercultural communicative competence reflects a growing recognition of the importance of cultural understanding in effective communication. From its roots in anthropology and sociology, through the establishment of intercultural communication as a distinct field, to its integration with language education and adaptation to the digital age, ICC has evolved to address the complex demands of global interconnectedness. Aleidine (2014) views that ICC began to look for a definition of intercultural competence, as one of the undergirding foundations of ICC. Scholars define ICC differently according to each field of study they are belonging to, such as those in social work use the term cultural competence, those in engineering prefer to use global competence, and those in language education use the term intercultural communicative competence or communicative competence (Deardorff, 2011, p.65). Brinkman & Wimk (2007) note that through the massive reading of articles and books published on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence, one came to figure out the wide variety of definitions of the concepts (Brinkman & Wimk, 2007). In addition to this, Fantini (2006) finds a variety of terms applied both within the literature and concerning assessment tools to define intercultural competence there should consider its assessment tools.

As mentioned above, ICC or IC concept is viewed differently among scholars according to their theoretical orientations and interests. Several scholars have used terms such as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), intercultural competence (IC), intercultural awareness (IA), and so forth in their works. The present research adopts the term intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence interchangeably. ICC or IC means the ability to use the English language to interact and communicate effectively with other speakers who are linguistically and culturally different. Byram (1997) defines ICC as “The ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries” (Byram, 1997, p. 7). This

present research adopts Byram's (1997) definition because of its foundational and influential position in studies of ICC.

2.4.3. Elements of Intercultural Competence

Several researchers have explored intercultural competence from their perspectives and understandings (Huang, 2014). Accordingly, ICC incorporates core components such as skills, motivation, and knowledge. First, skills refer to abilities to engage in the behaviours necessary to communicate effectively and appropriately. Second, motivation stands for the desire to communicate effectively and appropriately with others. Third, knowledge refers to our awareness and understanding of learners' needs to be applied to communicate effectively and appropriately (Huang, 2014). In addition to this, Fantini (2006) notes that ICC is not about learning to view the world through others' perspectives, it is a complex phenomenon with multiple components such as :

- Various characteristics;
- Three areas or domains (i.e., relationships, communication, and collaboration);
- Four dimensions (i.e., knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness);
- Host language proficiency;
- and developmental levels

(Adopted from Fantini 2006, p. 12)

According to Williams and Bonita, there are three main components to developing learners' intercultural competence. These are as follows (1) self-knowledge/awareness; (2) experience and knowledge about a particular culture; (3) positive change or action for successful interaction with identified culture (Huang, 2014, p. 98). Moreover, Ruben (1976) identifies seven dimensions of intercultural competence as the following:

1. A display of respect describes an individual's ability to express respect and positive regard for others.
2. While interacting with individuals who are different from us, we should not be judgmental.
3. Orientation to knowledge describes an individual's ability to consider the extent to which knowledge is individual.
4. Empathy is an individual ability to place himself/herself in others' shoes.
5. Self-oriented role behaviour expresses an individual ability to be flexible and to function in initiating roles in harmony. In this context, initiation refers to requesting information and clarification and evaluating ideas for problem-solving. Harmonizing, on the other hand, refers to regulating the group status quo through mediation.
6. Interaction management is an individual ability to take turns in discussion and initiate and terminate interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others.
7. Lately, tolerance for ambiguity describes an individual ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible comfort.

(Adopted from Sinicrope., 2007, p.4)

Furthermore, Byram & Grundy (2002) note that the components of intercultural competence are knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The latter is crucial in developing individuals' intercultural competence because they are part of social identities and cement intercultural competence (Byram & Grundy 2002, p. 11). Attitudes (*savoir-être*) are curiosity, openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures, and belief about one's one. This means the readiness to know about values, and beliefs without assuming that they are the only possible and naturally correct, and to be able to detect how people might be seen from a different angle. Knowledge is not mainly about a specific culture, but rather knowledge of

how social groups and identities function and entail intercultural interaction. If individuals predict with whom they interact, knowledge of that person will be useful. But, if individuals do not predict with whom they interact, their knowledge will not be useful to imagine an interlocutor so that to have an example- a specific country or countries and their social groups- to understand what it means to know something about other people with their multiple identities (Byram & Grundy, 2002 p. 12). The aforementioned dimensions are the building blocks of global competence and promote learners' understanding of the world and empower them to express their views and participate in society (Ramos, 2018). Five decades ago, scholarly research investigated the essence and nature of intercultural competence in which lists of components came to light. Elements of IC are broken down into attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Attitudes include:

- Valuing cultural diversity and pluralism of views and practices;
- respect people who have different cultural affiliations;
- being open to, curious about, and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own;
- being empathic with people who have different cultural affiliations;
- being willing to question what is taken for granted as normal according to previously acquired knowledge and experience;
- being willing to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty;
- willing to seek out opportunities to engage and cope with individuals who have different cultural orientations and perspectives.

The knowledge and understanding which contribute to intercultural competence include:

- understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups;
- awareness and understanding of one own and others' assumptions,

preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination;

- understanding the influence of one language and cultural affiliations on the experience of others;
- communicative awareness, including awareness of the fact that other languages may uniquely express shared or unique ideas that are difficult for others to access through language(s), and awareness of the fact that people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective;
- knowledge about beliefs, values, practices, discourses, and products of people who have particular cultural orientations;
- understanding cultural, societal, and individual interaction, and the socially constructed nature of knowledge processes.

The skills involved in intercultural competence include skills such as:

- multi-perspective is the ability to recognize one perspective and to consider others' perspectives.
- skills in discovering information about other cultural affiliations and perspectives;
- skills in interpreting other cultural practices, beliefs, and values and relating them to one own cultural perspective;
- empathy – the ability to understand and respond to other individuals' thoughts, beliefs, values, and feelings;
- cognitive flexibility is the ability to change and adapt ways of thinking according to the situation or context;
- skills in critically evaluating and making judgments about cultural beliefs, values, practices, discourses, and products, including those associated with cultural affiliations, and being able to be explained by others' views;

- skills in adapting individuals' behaviour to new cultural environments – for example, avoiding verbal and non-verbal behaviours which may be viewed as impolite by people who have different cultural affiliations from their own;
- linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills, including skills in managing breakdowns in communication;
- plurilingual skills to meet the communicative demands of an intercultural encounter, such as the use of more than one language or drawing on a known language to understand another (inner comprehension);
- mediators in intercultural settings need to be skilful in translating, interpreting, and explaining the host's cultural values and attitudes.

(Adapted from Reynolds, 2014, pp. 19-20)

Although attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills are necessary components of intercultural competence, possessing them alone is not enough for individuals to be intercultural competent. ICC components are also vital to be deployed and put into practice through action while intercultural encounters. Individuals often assert attitudes and often acquire knowledge and skills, but they fail to put them into practice while interacting. So, they have to apply their intercultural attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills through actions so that they are to perform well in intercultural exchange. These relevant actions include:

- Individuals seek opportunities to engage with people who are culturally different.
- Interact and communicate appropriately, effectively, and respectfully with people who have different cultural affiliations;
- co-operate with individuals who have different cultural orientations on shared activities and ventures, discussing differences in views and perspectives, and constructing views and perspectives;

- challenging attitudes and behaviours (including speech and writing) which contravene human rights, and acting to defend and protect the dignity and human rights of people regardless of their cultural affiliations.

This last may entail any or all of the following actions:

- expressing opposition when there are expressions of prejudice or acts of discrimination against individuals or groups;
- challenging cultural stereotypes and prejudices;
- encouraging positive attitudes towards the contributions to society made by individuals irrespective of their cultural affiliations;
- mediating in situations of cultural conflict.

(Adopted from Reynolds, 2014, p. 21)

2.5. Models of Intercultural Competence

The literature views that scholars present various models to assess learners' intercultural competence. Models prove to be necessary for learners to be intercultural competent (Deardorff, 2006). In the field of intercultural communication, scholars like Bennett (1993), Byram (1997), and Deardorff (2006) design models to be applied in intercultural educational settings.

2.5.1. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett develops this model as a framework to explain the experience of students he observed over months and sometimes years in intercultural workshops, classes, exchanges, and graduate programs. The model consists of six stages ranging from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Ethnocentrism means that an individual's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way, whereas ethnorelativism means that an individual's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. The first three stages of Denial, Défense, and

Minimization are ethnocentric; they refer to issues related to experiencing one own culture as more central to reality. The last three stages of Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration refer to issues associated with experiencing all cultures as alternative ways of reality (Bennett, 2007). These stages assist learners who move through these stages while interacting with individuals who are culturally different to build perceptual structures due to any stage they experience. Bennett (2007) argues that the DMIS is a culture-general model; when more complex perceptual structures for any culture are established by individuals, they apply to all cultures. For example, perceptual sensitivity vis-à-vis another national culture group permits more sensitivity towards a different generational or sexual orientation group, believing that groups are defined in cultural terms. In addition to this, there is one way to move through these stages; it is not easy for individuals to become more ethnocentric after having reached the ethno-relative stage. Individuals can easily move backward from one ethnocentric stage to another, for instance from Minimization to defence. The DMIS is a grounded theory based on constructivist perception and communication theory. This model assumes that learners construct boundaries of “self” and “other” in ways that guide their experiences in intercultural events.

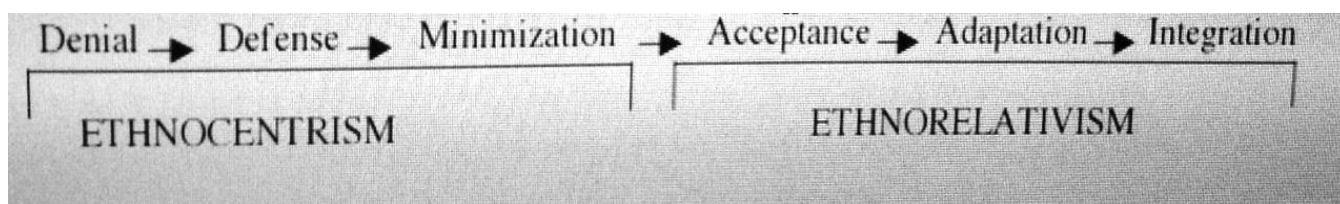


Figure2.1: Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

This model reveals the continuum in the development of intercultural competence moving on stages that sway between acceptance and denial of other cultures. This model helps teachers to determine students' interactions in classroom activities and helps learners to avoid any problems that can occur when they work in groups or express their cultural differences.

2.5.2. Byram's Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence

Byram (1997) views that intercultural communicative competence (ICC) comprises communicative competence and intercultural competence. Learners do not need the ability to construct and understand meaningful utterances (linguistic competence), but they should be aware of to use and understand the utterances in different social contexts (sociolinguistic competence & discourse competence) to communicate effectively (Huo, 2016). Intercultural competence is an addition to communicative competence. Byram (1997) notes that intercultural communicative competence comprises linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence and intercultural competence consists of knowledge, skills of interpreting/relating/discovery/interaction, attitudes of curiosity/openness, and critical cultural awareness. So, learners who want to be intercultural competent need to hold the aforementioned dimensions, therefore teachers need to equip their learners with these dimensions to make them ready for communication with people who belong to the host culture in any location of learning (classroom). Byram's (1997) model of ICC focuses on knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be intercultural competent. The model below attempts to help teachers of English language to enhance their learners' intercultural communicative competence in the 21st century. This model is helpful for learners to communicate effectively and appropriately with learners who possess different culture and background. Byram (1997) views that this model helps learners to be tolerant, non-judgmental, and opened. So, learners

who are intercultural competent possess the necessary skills of interpreting, discovering, and relating the target culture to their own. Learners can develop critical thinking skills which help them to be intercultural aware. It is obvious that learners should be equipped with the necessary attitudes such as openness and curiosity. The model fosters relevant skills such as discovery of the self and other while interacting.

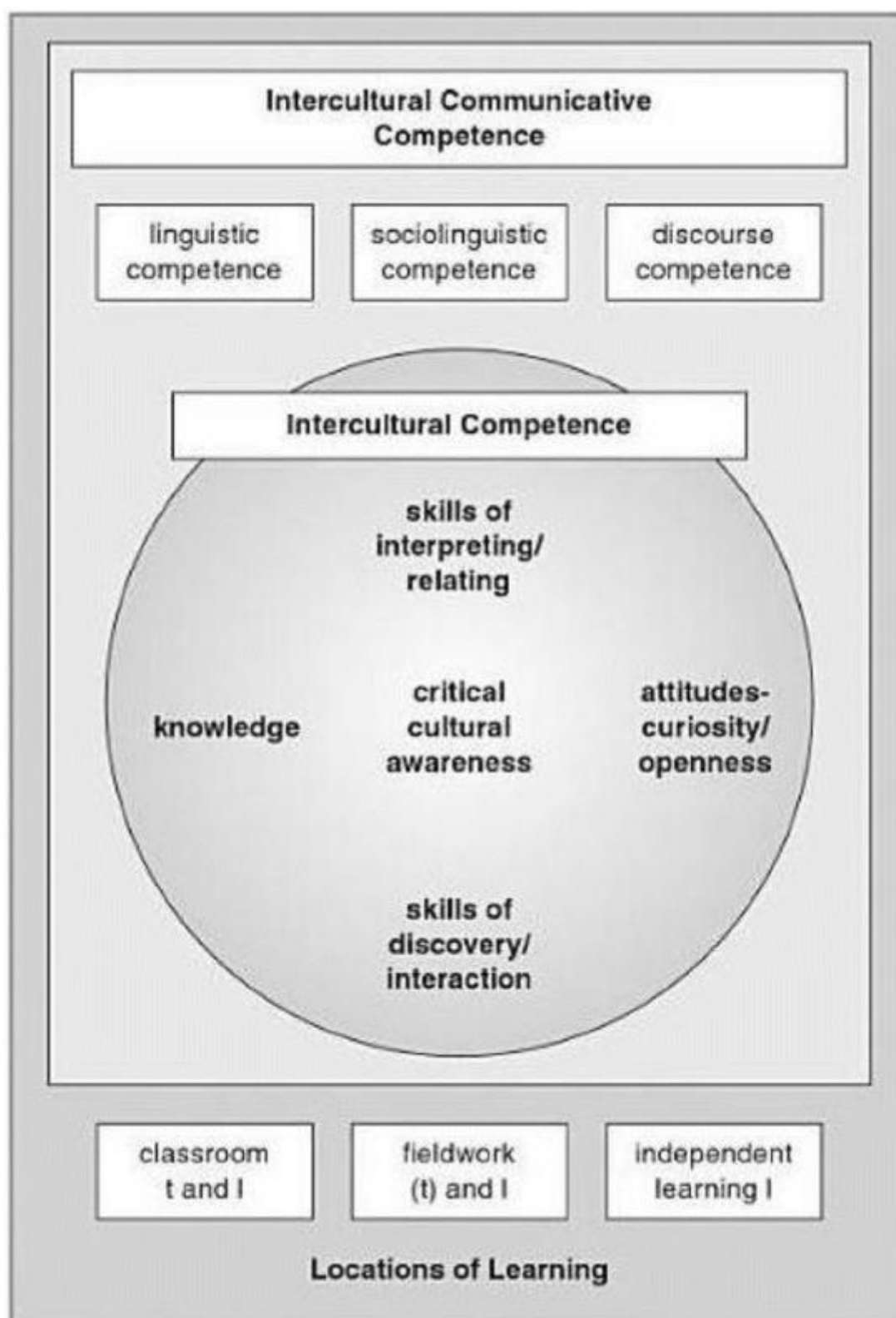


Figure 2.2: Byram Model of Intercultural Competence (Byram, 2009, p.223)

Byram (1997) argues that learners should possess knowledge, attitudes, and skills that help them to communicate appropriately. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence pre-supposes dimensions:

- Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures, and belief about own culture (savoir - être).
- Knowledge: individuals should possess knowledge about social groups, their products, and practices (savoirs).
- Skills refer to the ability to interpret a document or an event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to documents from one's own (savoir comprendre).
- Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge about culture and cultural practices and the ability to use knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time communication and interaction (savoir- apprendre/faire).
- Critical cultural awareness is a set of practices aimed at helping individuals to manage the difficulties that tend to arise during cross-cultural interactions (savoir- s'engager).

(Adapted from Byram, 2008, p. 69)

Byram's model stresses the idea of language learning as a communicative, interactive, and meaningful process. This model describes the factors involved in successful intercultural communication as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions or five savoirs to act:

- ❖ Savoir: knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal.
- ❖ Savoir être: attitudes; relativising self, valuing other.
- ❖ Savoir-comprendre: skills of interpreting and relating.
- ❖ Savoir-apprendre/faire: skills of discovering and/or interacting.
- ❖ Savoir s'engager: political education, critical cultural awareness

(Adapted from Byram, 1997, p. 34).

In sum, according to Byram (1997) intercultural communicative competence requires certain attitudes, knowledge, and skills added to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence. Attitudes include curiosity, openness, and readiness to see other cultures without being judgemental. Byram (1997) notes that:

Knowledge is required of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction .Skills involve interpreting, discovery, and interaction in addition to critical cultural awareness.

(Byram, 1997, p.51)

2.5.3. Deardorff 's Process Model of Intercultural Competence

Deardorff (2006) develops the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (see figure 2.3), which is a continuous process of working on attitudes, knowledge, internal outcomes, and external ones related to intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2006), competence development is a dynamic movement and a process from a personal to an interpersonal level. It becomes crucial for individuals to seek opportunities to reflect and assess the development of their intercultural competence through time. Moreover, Deardorff (2006) notes that critical skills play a vital role in individuals' ability to acquire and assess knowledge, in the sense that critical-thinking assessment could also be an appropriate part of intercultural competence assessment. In addition to this, she argues that attitudes, especially respect are revealed variously in cultures, openness, and curiosity which are the basis of this model and have a great influence on all other aspects of intercultural competence. Besides,

Deardorff (2006) addresses that attitudinal assessment is vital. Furthermore, she believes that “Assessing global perspectives and the ability to understand other worldviews becomes an important consideration as well” (Deardorff,2006, p.68). This model highlights that deep cultural knowledge is a more comprehensive, contextual understanding of culture, involving the historical, political, and social contexts. Any assessment of culture-specific knowledge requires going beyond the conventional surface-level knowledge of foods, greetings, customs, and traditions. Surface cultural knowledge is not adequate for the development of intercultural competence.

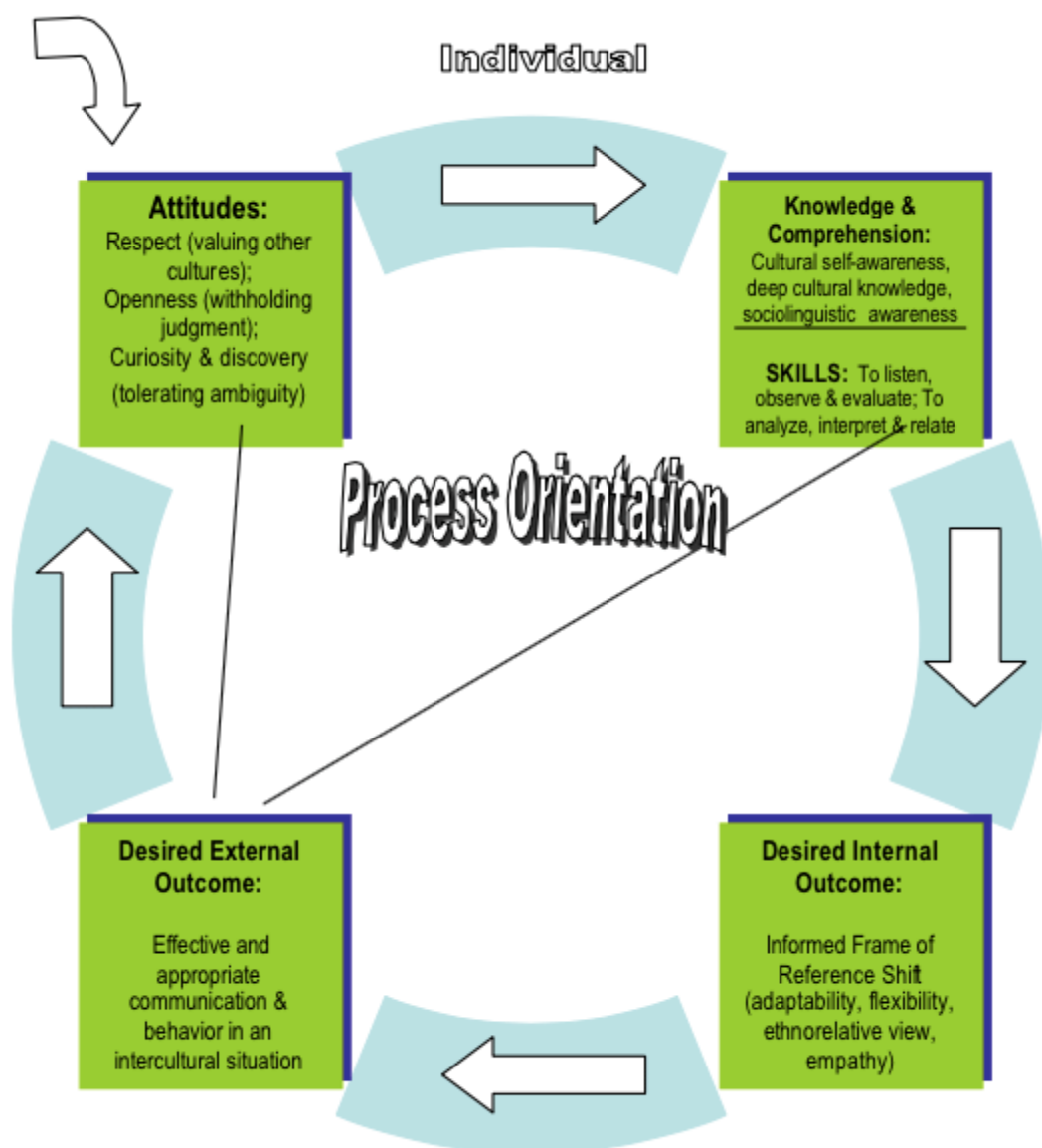


Figure 2.3: Deardorff's Model of Intercultural Competence (2006)

Process Model of Intercultural Competence addresses the crucial constituent elements of intercultural competence:

2.6. Constituent Elements of Intercultural Competence

2.6.1. Knowledge

- **Cultural self-awareness:** articulating how one's own culture has shaped one's identity and worldview.
- **Culture-specific knowledge:** analysing and explaining basic information about other cultures (history, values, politics, economics, communication styles, values, beliefs, and practices).
- **Sociolinguistic awareness:** acquiring basic local language skills, articulating differences in verbal/ non-verbal communication, and adjusting one's speech to accommodate nationals from other cultures.
- **Grasp of global issues and trends:** explaining the meaning and implications of globalization and relating local issues to global forces

2.6.2. Skills

- **Listening, observing, evaluating:** using patience and perseverance to identify and minimize ethnocentrism, seek out cultural clues and meaning
- **Analysing, interpreting, and relating:** seeking out linkages, causality, and relationships using comparative techniques of analysis
- **Critical thinking:** viewing and interpreting the world from other cultures' points of view and identifying one's own.

2.6.3. Attitudes

- **Respect:** seeking out other cultures' attributes; valuing cultural diversity; thinking comparatively and without prejudice about cultural differences
- **Openness:** suspending criticism of other cultures; investing in collecting 'evidence' of cultural difference; being disposed to be proven wrong;
- **Curiosity:** seeking out intercultural interactions, viewing difference as a learning opportunity, being aware of one's ignorance.
- **Discovery:** tolerating ambiguity and viewing it as a positive experience; willingness to move beyond one's comfort zone.

The above knowledge, skills, and attitudes lead to internal outcomes that refer to an individual who learns to be flexible, adaptable, empathetic, and adopts an ethnic-relative perspective.

These qualities are reflected in external outcomes which refer to the observable behaviour and communication styles of the individual. They are the visible evidence that the individual is, or is learning to be, intercultural competent.

(Adopted from Deardorff, 2006)

2.7. The Role of Intercultural Competence in EFL Contexts

Many educationalists have promoted intercultural competence (IC) as an eminent type of competence in foreign language teaching and learning. Over the past few decades, the paramount objective of language teaching and learning shifted from linguistic competence to intercultural competence (Council of Europe, 2001). Significant changes in language learning and teaching involve the cultural dimension as a key component (Atay, 2009). In this respect, Byram & Grundy (2002) argue that it is widely recognized in the language teaching profession that learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but

also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways (Byram & Grundy, 2002, p. 7). The intercultural dimension in teaching foreign languages has gained great concern among researchers and teachers. Kaslioglu (2009) assumes that linguistic, social skills, knowledge, and attitudes assist individuals to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. Nowadays, individuals from different backgrounds and cultures are continuously coming into close contact with each other, it has become necessary for them to acquire how to respond to and cope with the requirements of the globalized era. There is an urgent need to promote EFL learners to be intercultural competent. Educators and applied linguists shed considerable light on how to incorporate IC as part and parcel of EFL teaching (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2006; Corbett, 2003; Deardorff, 2006). According to Byram (1997) ICC is developed in social interaction during the process of communication. EFL learners necessarily have to use a foreign language to learn about and cope with deep, maybe strange, and even conflictive cultural values during the process of meaning negotiation (Byram, 1997). Additionally, Shaules (2007) notes that ICC cannot be promoted by just identifying and learning by heart lists of general facts of surface culture such as tourist places, holidays, historical events, food, etc. It requires a deep and dynamic interactive process of intercultural relationships as individuals from different cultures confront a relatively more abstract level of cultural difference. Learners develop empathy (the ability to look at things from the perspective of our cultural hosts) and learn to build cultural differences better. Shaules (2007) argues that empathy is a natural by-product of successful relationships, and for relationships rather than disembodied cultural awareness as a measure of intercultural success (Shaules, 2007, p.100). In addition to this, Shaules (2007) states “An emphasis on relationship formation reminds us that intercultural learning is an interactive process, one that is context-specific and which engages different elements of the self” (Shaules, 2007, p.7).

2.8. Development of Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching

Undoubtedly, when two people communicate with each other, they do not communicate only for the sake of information exchange but also they see themselves as individuals who belong to a specific social group. For instance, a teacher and a pupil while interacting with each other their social identities are unavoidable because they are part of the social interaction between them. Therefore, in language teaching and learning the term communicative competence takes into consideration that language learners require to acquire not just grammatical competence but also the knowledge of what is appropriate language (Byram & Grundy, 2002, p.9).

In language teaching and learning, the intercultural dimension aims to promote learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who can engage with complexity and multiple identities. So, enhancing the intercultural dimension in learners will help them to avoid stereotyping. The intercultural dimension continues to help learners acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing, to construct what they want to say /write incorrectly and inappropriate ways. But, it also develops their intercultural competence which is the ability to ensure a common understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their individuality. Social identities are related to cultures. Someone who is Chinese will acquire that identity through being brought up surrounded by Chinese, unconsciously learning their beliefs, values, and behaviours. This process of socialization is still a simplification because the Chinese have many identities (Eg: a teacher is also a father or a brother, and therefore he or she has not had a fixed identity). So, other identities are hidden in the person with whom they are interacting, even if they do not know what the associated beliefs, values, and behaviours are. Thus, an intercultural speaker or mediator needs to be aware of what it means to be Chinese or a teacher. Knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values are very crucial in

developing learners' intercultural competence and understanding intercultural human relationships. Thus, developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching includes recognizing that the aims are: to enhance learners' IC as well as LC; to make them ready for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people of other cultures as individuals with distinctive perspectives, values, and behaviours; and assist them to see that such interaction is a fruitful experience.

2.8.1. Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching

Hymes (1972) defines communicative competence and identifies the lack of consideration for the sociocultural significance of an utterance in a given context which he calls appropriateness. Canale and Swain (1980) point out that the elements of communicative competence consist of linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Van Ek (1986) adds two more components which are sociocultural competence, i.e the ability to behave in several cultures, and social competence, meaning familiarity with differences in social customs, confidence, empathy, and motivation to communicate with others (Lázár, 2007). Language teaching professionals see intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as an extension of communicative competence. Lázár (2007) states that:

Intercultural communication in the wider sense of the word involves the use of significantly different linguistic codes and contact between people holding significantly different sets of values and models of the world... Intercultural competence is to a large extent the ability to

cope with one's cultural background in interaction with others.

(Lázár,2007, p.9)

Byram and Fleming (1998) note that someone who is intercultural competent holds the knowledge of one or more cultures and social identities and can discover and relate to other people from different contexts for which they have not been directly prepared. Learners of foreign languages should hold constructs to develop successful intercultural communication. These constructs are identified by Fantini (1996) as the following: awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and language proficiency. Besides, he also argues that an intercultural speaker should possess the attributes to communicate effectively: respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interest, curiosity, openness, motivation, a sense of humour, tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to avoid being judgemental.

2.9. Assessment in EFL Contexts

Nowadays, the professional teacher should be aware of learners' ICC assessment to investigate all that is happening in the classroom and whether they are linguistically and culturally competent. In doing so, teachers need to be aware of the different tasks and procedures they implement in the classroom to make sense of progressive learning. Therefore, teachers have a crucial role to implement different modes of assessment to make decisions about learners' performance.

Assessment is used to measure the proficiency of the language user. There are several forms of language assessment and all tests are considered as forms of assessment (e.g: checklist used in continuous assessment; informal teacher observation) which would not be described as tests (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 177). Teachers have to distinguish between language assessment tasks and language teaching tasks. Bachman & Palmer (2010) note that

there is a slight difference between language assessment tasks and language teaching tasks. The primary aim of the latter is to facilitate and promote learning. Whereas, the primary aim of the former is to collect information to help learners make a decision that will lead to beneficial consequences. Assessment is, by definition, the comprehensive process which takes place in the classroom setting during the whole teaching process; it can be undertaken implicitly or explicitly (Bachman & palmer, 1996). Generally acknowledged, assessment is classroom based-tests that take different tools, such as tests, exams, observations, portfolios, and so forth.

2.9. Types of Assessment in Language Classroom

For a long time, assessment has played a vital role in the field of education. Generally speaking, there are several types of assessments in the language classroom. However, the most prominent kinds are formative and summative. These two types are often implemented by teachers to get the learner's feedback and see whether learners are improving or not. Assessment is integral to the education process. Assessment is very crucial for the development of quality education (Black & Dylan, 1998). It is anything that diagnoses the learner's learning and sees their level of understanding by checking the learners' understanding, knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses, and evaluating the effectiveness of the teacher's teaching (Thomas, 2001). In addition to this, assessment is a broad term defined as a process for gaining information that is used for making decisions about students, curricula, programs, schools, and educational policies (Nitko, 2013). In the same line of thought, Sommer (1989) defines assessment as the process of discovering students' identities, assessing their skills, determining their learning requirements, and understanding how they anticipate the learning experience will impact them (Sommer, 1989). Moreover, Brindley (2001) argues

that assessment is the term that refers to a different way to get data about the learners' learning and progress or development.

2.9.1. Formative Assessment

Assessment is vital in the teaching and learning process. In classrooms, formative assessment is often an interactive assessment of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. Formative assessment is the process of assessing learners at the end of the course to develop their skills and competencies so that to check their achievements during the instruction (Brown, 1996). Formative assessment is an on-going process in which teachers sit behind learners to improve their performances and remedy their mistakes (Brindley, 2001). It is generally defined as taking place during a course with the express goal of enhancing learner learning (Torrance, 1998). In addition to this, it is assumed that formative assessment is considered as a key element of the teaching practice and therefore is indirectly concerned with the learning process (Torrance, 1998). Moreover, they argue that formative assessment should be primarily focused on pupil experience, in the sense that it must involve pupils reflecting on what they have achieved and how they have achieved it (Torrance, 1998, p.8).

On the same line of thought, Black & Dylan (1998) suggest that in reality very rarely such activity takes place in classrooms, at least within the context of coursework assessment or teacher assessment. Once the teacher's role becomes formalized, the demands of reliable grading quickly outweigh the potential for providing helpful feedback. Black & Dylan (1998) believe that the core of the activity of formative assessment lies in the sequence of two actions. The first is the learner's perception of a gap between the desired goal and his/her present state (of knowledge, and/or understanding, and/or skill). The second is the action that the learner takes to close that gap so that to reach the desired (Black & Dylan, 1998, p.20). Tomlinson (2014) assumes that formative assessment is a continuous process between

teachers and their learners designed to assist learners to grow as vigorously as possible and at the same time to help teachers contribute to that growth as fully as possible. Formative assessment helps students to show what they know, understand and can do, and therefore it is fruitful for teachers to construct some flexibility into formative assessment. The purpose of formative assessment is to boost learning by checking whether learners are progressing or they need help to progress.

2.9.2. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment means deciding the quality or worth of a student's achievement after the instructional process is completed (Nitko, 2013). Generally speaking, summative assessment or assessment of learning is an appraisal of learning at the end of an instructional unit at a given period to determine whether learning process has happened. Summative assessment involves mid-term exams, final projects, teachers designed tests, standardized tests, and high-stakes tests. Hence, it plays a crucial and pivotal role in ensuring that schools are held to the same standards and that all students perform to expectations regardless of race or socio-economic background. Summative assessment provides teachers with valuable information on what students know and do not know (States, 2018). Assessment of learning has two types or forms in which educators rely on to assess their teaching procedures and students' progress. First, the teacher constructed (informal) is the most common type in EFL classrooms. It can provide data for appraising learners' performance; however, it is vulnerable to bias. This type of assessment is applied by teachers because it is derived from teachers' daily interactions and observations of how students perform and behave in schools. Second, systemic assessment is designed to handle many of the biases that can taint teacher-constructed tools. This form of assessment is known by teachers and students as tests and exams. Standardized assessments have played an important role in schools since 2001 of the 'No Child Left Behind Act'. To sum up, summative

assessment is an ordinary tool designed by school administrators and teachers to determine graduation (success or failure) from one level to the next. Lázár et.al. (2007) insist on the idea that ICC dimensions should be assessed informative way rather than a summative one because the former develops ICC and maintains the learning processes active (Lázár et al.,2007, p.29). ICC covers the three main domains in learning which are behavioural, affective, and cognitive, assessment should focus more on formative evaluation.

2.9.3. Direct vs Indirect Assessment

The review of the literature following intercultural assessment affords multitudinous approaches, paradigms, methods, and tools for teachers and assessors. The aforesaid means of identifying the intercultural progress of language and culture learners are stratified into four main categories “direct methods, indirect methods, discrete, and global frameworks”. This system of categorization does not simply entail that the use of one is sufficient for the challenged process. Nonetheless, it is prudent that both of them complete each other. The first taxonomy embraces learning contacts, portfolios, critical reflection, and performance. The indirect methods include surveys, inventories (Fantini, 2006).

Fantini (2006) provides four types of assessment formats (the figure below showcases the four assessment formats) and insists on the idea that teachers use a variety or combination of formats to assess students’ intercultural communicative competence. Perhaps, intercultural learning is assessed through direct or indirect means. Direct assessment is conducted at a specified period) which directly documents actual learning. Examples include tests, quizzes, portfolios, and project work. Direct assessment is more reliable since it hinges on real observations conducted by the teachers who may apply such a means to assess learners’ interactions and communication about their cultures and the target ones. In this respect, this method is suitable for the assessment of both “know-how” and the intercultural being”. Per contra, indirect assessment formats are not obvious for the learners while they are conducted

and generally are on-going. For instance, teachers observe their learners during class sessions and take notes about their performance relying on pre-established criteria. The whole process of learning is learner-centred and the focus is on how students interact and take part in contact with their teachers and whether they are motivated to ask questions and learn about the target culture. Teachers will gain some data and insights about what areas should be reinforced and which materials can be adapted to engage learners in the process of language and culture learning. Moreover, self-report surveys, interviews, and focus groups are other indirect formats that make learners report their impressions of their learning. Discrete assessment targets specific aspects of learning. For instance, this type of assessment aims at showing whether learners can demonstrate a particular skill of comparing and contrasting education in the target and native culture. Global assessment

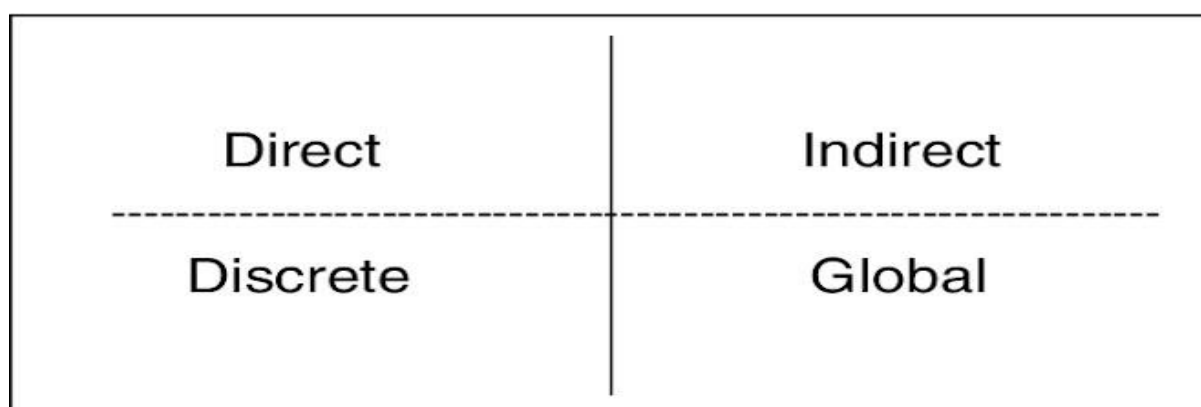


Figure 2: Quadrant of assessment formats (Fantini, 2009)

2.9.4. Dynamic Assessment and Intercultural Competence

It is argued that dynamic assessment (DA) can provide solutions to assess IC. Dynamic assessment is the pedagogical approach to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (STC) of mental abilities and learning (Borghetti, 2015). Learning or development is a collaborative process in which individuals internalize the abilities they practice in collaboration with others

progressively. Individuals move from external mediation to internal psychological ones. External scaffolding is responsive to individuals' real level of development. Individuals can exhibit faculties that they have not fully internalized and thus extending their independent performance and experiencing further development at the same time (p. 3). According to Poehler, dynamic assessment aims to provide researchers and teachers with a qualitatively different way of thinking about assessment from the traditional forms of assessments as understood by teachers (Poehner, 2008). Dynamic assessment is deeply rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of child development in which a parent or a teacher plays an important role in scaffolding while interacting with the child who will develop his/her cognitive capacities (Nazari, 2014). The process of moving from one phase to the potential one is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Nazari (2014) the ZPD is the distance between learners' actual development state and their potential one. The ZPD is an important facet of the sociocultural theory in which it describes tasks that a child cannot do yet alone without the help of an adult, a teacher, or a guide. Undoubtedly, traditional assessment involves just two main aspects; teaching and finally testing and there is no room for the third aspect which dynamic assessment promotes. In dynamic assessment, there is an on-going intervention of the teacher as the mediator of the learning process while and after the final exam (teaching, testing, and then teaching again) (Khaghaninezhad, 2015). Moreover, DA aims at decreasing the number of unsuccessful language learners at the end of the course. Accordingly, Khaghaninezhad (2015) believes that DA is both costly and time-consuming since teachers have to devote remedial teaching sessions. Miraculously, DA has had great results so far, however, most teachers and learners have not experienced its results, yet. (Khaghaninezhad, 2015) states that "DA is described as a subset of interactive assessment that includes deliberate and planned publications teaching and the assessment of the effects of that

teaching on subsequent performance'' (Khaghaninezhad, 2015, p.14). DA has principles rest on four assumptions:

- ❖ Accumulated knowledge is not the best indication of one's ability to acquire new knowledge, although the two are highly correlated.
- ❖ Everybody functions at considerably less than 100 percent of full capacity; therefore, everybody can do better (Vygotsky, 1978).
- ❖ The best test of any performance is a sample of that performance per se, thus, assessment of learning abilities can be accomplished effectively with the use of learning tasks, namely those including teaching-a condition that characterizes school learning.
- ❖ There are identifiable barriers to one 's access to and effective application of one's intelligence. Such barriers involve ignorance, impulsivity, impoverished vocabulary, cultural differences in learning habits, styles, and attitudes, poor self-concept as learners, a host of motivational variables, and inadequate development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and structures. Once removing some of those barriers, one can reveal the ability to function more adequately (Khaghaninezhad, 2015).

2.10. Steps in Assessing ICC

Lázár et al. (2007) note the different moments in which teachers assess their learners' ICC. They present three steps to be followed to assess learners' ICC. At the beginning of any course, it is so important to get information about the learners' experiences and backgrounds. A pre-test is a good method to get specific information based on the learners' experiences and backgrounds. Students' portfolio is adequate methods of assessment. At the end of the course, unit, or learning sequence, teachers need to get information about the different types of knowledge learners acquired. Here, any direct testing method is possible such as multiple-

choice items, matching items, or short-answer items. Second, what to assess, that is to say, the content of the assessment. Third, how to assess in the sense that the ICC profile. For instance, Lázár et al. (2007) in *Mirrors and Windows* book explains how teachers should assess their learners' IC. They provide examples of three dimensions assessed (what), the moment they are assessed (when), and the methods of assessment chosen to assess the learning of Unit 5.

Table2.1: Steps in assessing students' performance and perceptions

When to assess?	What to assess?	How to assess?
Before starting to teach	Knowledge / Savoirs Knowing how / Savoir-faire Being / savoir-être	Self-evaluation -Culture log (5.1a) Portfolio (5.1c) Self-evaluation - profile diagram (5.1b)
Teaching a unit: example adapted from Mirrors and windows Unit 5: All you need is love Before starting to	Being / savoir-être	Survey to assess attitudes on

teach the unit		love (6.1)
During the learning sequence	<p>Knowledge / Savoirs</p> <p>Knowing how / Savoir-faire</p> <p>Being / savoir-être</p>	Use of the portfolio (6.2)
End of the unit	<p>Assessing each ICC dimension separately</p> <p>Knowledge / Savoirs</p> <p>Knowing how / Savoir-faire</p> <p>Being / savoir-être</p> <p>Assessing two ICC dimensions</p> <p>Knowledge / Savoir</p> <p>Knowing how / Savoir-faire</p>	<p>Eight tasks help students to justify, compare, explain, organize, analyze, appreciate and synthesize (6.3.1a)</p> <p>Five tasks helping students to discuss, debate, solve problems and play roles (6.3.1b)</p> <p>Five tasks helping students to compare, write an essay, solve a critical incident and justify (6.3.1 c)</p> <p>One task helping students to identify, describe, compare and analyze (6.3.2)</p>

	Assessing all ICC dimensions	One integrative task (6.3.3)
After teaching the course or textbook	Knowledge / Savoirs Knowing how / Savoir-faire Being / savoir-être	Self-evaluation - Culture log (6.3.1a) Portfolio (6.3.1c) Self-profile - Profile diagram (6.3.1b)

(Adopted from Lázár et al., p.33)

2.11. Assessing the three dimensions of ICC

The literature on assessment in language teaching and testing indicates to design tests one should consider their validity, reliability, and practicality. A test is considered valid if it is designed to measure what it claims to assess. Skopinskaja (2009) claims that “ A test is considered valid if it measures what claims to assess; a test is reliable if the measurement data of assesseees are consistent; and a test is practical if the assessment procedure is economical to administer” (Skopinskaja, 2009, p.139). So, these three qualities are relevant to assess learners’ intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ensure equity while measuring learners’ ICC components. In the field of ICC assessment, it is important to specify the components of intercultural communicative competence while judging or measuring them to make sure the validity, reliability, and validity of tests.

Conclusion

The current chapter deals with testing and assessment of intercultural communicative competence in the EFL context. In addition to this, this chapter highlights different types of language testing applied in by EFL teachers to test their learners. It focuses also on assessment and its core types which teachers rely on to assess their teaching and their learner's learning. Moreover, the present chapter tackles the assessment of intercultural communicative competence and its importance in language teaching and testing. Also, it deals with the definition of intercultural communicative competence and its role in EFL classrooms and the different models of intercultural communicative competence from scholars' standpoints and views. In addition to this, it covers a historical view of language testing and communicative language testing approaches. Features of communicative language testing are also highlighted. This chapter focuses on understanding the concept of testing as well as its types. It emphasizes the term assessment and its different types, steps of assessment, and dimensions of ICC. Testing and assessing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is crucial for several reasons, spanning educational, personal, and societal benefits. Assessing ICC provides an objective measure of students' progress and achievements in intercultural competence, which is essential for validating the effectiveness of educational programme. Assessment helps students to reflect on their intercultural experiences and attitudes, promoting self-awareness and personal growth, understanding their own strengths and limitations in intercultural interactions help students develop greater cultural sensitivity and empathy.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction

The present study aims to explore the assessment of learners' intercultural communicative competence in middle school. This chapter focuses on the field investigation following the objectives of the current study. In the previous two chapters, the researcher reviewed the existing literature on the teaching of culture to develop and assess learners' ICC in FLT (Foreign Language Teaching), including but not only definitions of relevant concepts, teaching culture, assessment and testing, and so forth. This chapter outlines the research design underpinning the study from the selection of methods through to data collection and description of research instruments in the current study. This chapter highlighted the rationale behind using a mixed-method approach (qualitative & quantitative approaches) to collect data. It tackles the choice behind opting for the case study research methodology and the rationale for using the case study. Also, the current chapter discussed the methodological instruments the researcher used to collect data. These tools were: the questionnaire, the structured interview, and the evaluation of the English middle school textbook named "My Book of English" Year Three. The researcher discussed the fieldwork where the selection of the participants to answer the questionnaire at Ketrroussi Mohamed Middle School. The participants' profiles are mentioned below in (table 3.1 & table 3.2). In addition to this, the interview was administered to teachers of English at the middle school so that to back up and enrich the data gathered. Because of the data, the investigator came up with some conclusions about the assessment of third-year middle school learners' intercultural communicative competence. The data collected from the different research instruments utilized in the present study are going to be presented in tabular form (quantitative data) and on commentary paragraphs (qualitative data). The objective of this chapter is to bring to light the steps and tools that the researcher follows during the research journey to contribute to the field of knowledge. The third-year English textbook is described

and evaluated to examine whether it is useful to assess learners' ICC in terms of its content or not. In the current chapter, the researcher set out the research design's building blocks of the research (Grix, 2010). In doing so, the researcher explained his ontological and epistemological positions in this study.

3.1. Philosophical Assumptions

Creswell & Poth (2018) argue that “Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research” (Creswell & Poth, p.47). Any kind of research follows different stages and processes. To begin with the identification of the research topic to data collecting (Grix, 2001). To conceptualize these beliefs, scholars use different and various terminologies: ontologies and epistemologies and paradigms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this respect, Grix (2001) argues that “ontology is the starting point of all research, after which one’s epistemological and methodological positions logically follow” (Grix, 2001, p.59). In the same line of thought Mason (2018) believes that ‘ontology is the essence of things’ (Grix, 2001, p.4). Grix (2001) states that:

Ontology is the image of social reality upon which a theory is based. The claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other

(Grix, 2001p.26).

In short, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and it answers the ‘what’ of any research. Epistemology is one of the core branches of philosophy that is concerned with the theory of knowledge (Grix, 2001). In addition to this, Grix (2001) notes that

“epistemology focuses on the knowledge gathering-process and is concerned with developing new models or theories that are better than competing models and theories” (Grix, 2001, p.27). Epistemology deals with knowledge and the question of what counts as knowledge or evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2. Research Methodology

Generally speaking, any kind of research whatsoever has a strategy to follow. Before explaining my research methodology, it is worth distinguishing between methods and methodology since both concepts are used interchangeably. In addition to this, Schwandt (2007) describes it as a ‘middle path or way between philosophical discussions and methods. Moreover, Kothari (1985) makes a distinction between research methodology and research methods (techniques). The former is understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Whereas, the latter may be understood as all those methods/techniques which are used for the conduction of research (Kothari, 1985). Following an ontological (constructivist) and epistemological (interpretive) standpoints positions, the researcher tends to position himself in this study as a qualitative and quantitative researcher conducting both constructivist and interpretive study (Stake, 2010). The common answer to the question of why researchers conduct qualitative and quantitative research paradigms is because they are interested in words and numbers and their paramount objective is to develop an understanding and an explanation of the phenomenon (Stake, 2010).

3.2.1. Rationale for Using Mixed Method Approach

A research design provides the procedures by which a researcher can collect the needed data for answering the research questions. According to Griffiee (2012), a research design is “an operating model or a blueprint for a research project, which accounts for internal reasoning (causality) and external reasoning (generalizability)” (Griffiee, 2012, p.41).

Therefore, the design of any research must schedule the data required (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), and the way to collect such data (questionnaires, interviews, observations, tests, experiments, etc.), in addition to the participants whom the data will be collected from and how to analyse and discuss the data to answer the research questions. On the one hand, Denzin & Lincoln (2005) assume that qualitative researchers “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). In the same line of thought, Creswell (2002) defines qualitative research as:

An approach for exploring the understanding the meaning individual or groups ascribe to a social or a human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of data.

(Creswell, 2014, p.4)

Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) note that:

We conduct qualitative research because a problem or an issue needs to be explored [...] because we need a complex understanding of the issue” and to understand the context of the problem since we cannot always separate what people say from the place where they say it.

(Creswell & Poth ,2018, p.44)

Quantitative research is regarded as an organized inquiry concerned with numeric data. In this respect, Muijis (2004) argues that quantitative research is essentially about collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon. A mixed-method is used to figure out teachers' perceptions towards the assessment of learners' intercultural competence in middle school. Concerning the research methodology, this research followed a mixed-method approach to gather the necessary data: qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this study, the researcher believes that both paradigms (qualitative & quantitative) are not used interchangeably. For this respect, Neuman (2014) argues that both paradigms are neither mutually exclusive nor interchangeable and therefore the actual relationship between these approaches is one of the isolated events on a continuum of scientific inquiry through graphic and narrative descriptions.

3.3. Fieldwork Investigation

The study was conducted at Ketrroussi Mohamed Middle School in Mostaganem, Mesra. This school is located at the center of Mesra. The reason behind opting for this Middle School was that the researcher is a teacher of English there. So, the participants who take part in this study are third year middle school learners during the school year 2018-2019. The participants are provided with a questionnaire. The researcher conducts the questionnaire that was divided into three main parts. Firstly, the first part addressed learners' knowledge about the target culture (British & American). This part aimed to assess learners' knowledge about the target culture. Secondly, the second part focussed on learners' attitudes towards the target culture. Thirdly, the third part was concerned about the learners' skills of discovering the host culture and the way they compare it to their own. The second instrument of this study was the interview with teachers. The interview was divided into rubrics. The first question was about the teachers' experiences in teaching. Q2 & 3 targeted the teachers' perceptions towards the host culture. Q4 was about ICC meaning and whether the interviewee was familiar with the

concept of ICC or not. Q5,6,7,8 & 9 were asked to investigate whether teachers assess the learners' ICC and if yes, How? And if not, why? The last two questions (Q10 & Q11) aimed to assess learners' attitudes and reflections towards the target culture. The interviewee belongs to different Middle schools in Mostaganem. Both teachers' and learners' profiles are discussed below.

3.3.1. Research Participants

To collect information and gather data to back up the present research English middle school teachers and learners participate in this research. On the one hand, information about the participants' (learners) number, gender, and age are presented below (see table 3.1). The learner's study in the same school, but they did not belong to the same classroom. They were randomly selected from 5 classes. The researcher divided the learners into two groups and scheduled two sessions because it was not possible to gather the learners in one session since they did not study in the same classroom. On the other hand, the teachers who accepted to be interviewees of the current research teach the English language at different middle schools in Mostaganem. The teachers' number, pseudonym, and experience in teaching are presented below (see table 3.2).

3.3.2. Learners' Profile

The learners who participated in this study were 41 males and females. The majority of them are aged between 13 to 16 years old. They study English 4 hours per week. All the participants live in Mesra and its rural areas which implied that all of them share the same cultural backgrounds. Out of 160 learners, 41 were randomly selected, and out of 41 learners, 21 were males and 20 were females (**see table 3.1 below**). The participants were questioned in March 2017 inside the classroom.

3.3.3. Teachers' Profile

The teachers who took part in this research were (11) teachers who teach English at the middle school. The participants were aged between 25 to 50 years old (see table 3.2 below). All came from different areas, but they teach in Mostaganem. Teachers possess different backgrounds. Two teachers teach at Ketrroussi Mohamed middle school where the researcher is working, whereas others teach in different middle schools in Mostaganem. The participants were selected randomly and were interviewed separately in classrooms and others outside the classrooms. The interview was postponed several times due to the participants' engagement in private life and the coronavirus pandemic. Thus, the interviews took place in 2020 and 2021. The interviewees were happy to participate in this study.

3.4. The Research Instruments

For this research, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected employing two research instruments: questionnaire and interview. A questionnaire was designed for the 3MS learners in 2017/2018. An interview was carried out with teachers. In addition to this, other alternative tools such as observation and the 3MS named My Book of English textbook evaluation were used as alternative instruments to back up the current research. The textbook evaluation was based on Xiao's (2010) checklist model. The questionnaire was conducted to highlight the learners' knowledge, attitudes, and skills towards the English culture. The interview aimed to analyse the teachers' attitudes and perceptions on the assessment of learners' ICC. The textbook content analysis highlighted whether cultural aspects are included or not in the syllabus. Since the research spins around the description of the facts as they exist in the real-world situation, the main task was to describe explicitly the cultural content of the third-year middle school "My Book of English".

3.4.1. The Learners' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to the sample population from third-year learners at the middle school. The questionnaire aimed at collecting necessary data from the learners. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section attempts to discover learners' attitudes towards the host culture. The focal point of the second section investigates learners' behaviours towards the target culture. The third section highlights the learners' skills. Data obtained from the questionnaire foreground the learner's knowledge, attitudes, and skills towards the target culture. The learners were afraid because it was the first time for them to come to another class with another teacher. However, the researcher made them at ease when he said to them that you are going to take part in the research as participants. The teacher explained to the participants what they are going to do in English and then he re-explained the instruction in Arabic to make sure that every participant knows his/her task. In the end, the researcher thanked and kissed them by saying good luck and goodbye.

As it was mentioned before, the questionnaire aims to show tangible data regarding learners' understanding of ICC.

Learners' gender	N= 42	Age
Males	21	13-15 years old
Females	21	13-14 years old

Table 3.1: Learners' demographic information

3.4.2. The Teachers' Interview

In addition to the learner's questionnaire, an interview was administered to the population of teachers who teach at the middle schools. Unlike the learners who were chosen randomly, the teachers were chosen purposefully. The respondents who were interviewed in this study were 11. Criteria employed in selecting the potential respondents were: (a) they were knowledgeable about the syllabus and possess much knowledge about the 3MS level. (b) they were willing to be involved in this study voluntarily. The teachers teach third-year level since the target sample population were third-year level learners. In addition to this, these teachers were familiar with the third-year syllabus and therefore they could help to provide information and collaborate with the researcher. All the teachers have shown their collaboration and did not hesitate to show their interest in contributing with their views and opinions to the current research under investigation. The interview was conducted in 2021 and 2022. The interview was recorded and ranged in time between approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The researcher scheduled to meet the participants face-to-face. Then, the researcher explained to the participants the task and promised them that their names will not be mentioned and they can drop if they do not like to participate in the current study. All the participants agreed to take part in this research and they were so happy.

Middle Schools	Teachers' pseudonym names	Experience in teaching
A	G. A K. H	15 years 5years
B	A.M	5 years
C	B.F	4 years

D	H.N	5 years
	B.H	4 years
E	A.B	5 years
F	Ch. S	5 years
G	M.A	15 years
H	B.Y	25 years
I	A.B	25 years
J	B.M	30 years
K	S. Y	25 years

Table 3.2: Demographic information about teachers

3.5. The Setting

This case study was conducted at Ketrroussi Mohamed middle school where the Learners study. They responded to the questionnaire inside the classroom. The questionnaire was scheduled after an English session and took one hour. The participants did not mention their names and therefore they felt at ease to respond to all the questions. The researcher explained some difficult words using both English and Arabic languages to assist the participants in not skipping any question. Moreover, the interview was held in different settings such as classrooms and teachers' room. The interviewee did not belong to the same middle school and therefore the researcher tried to contact his colleagues on the phone to plan an interview meeting session. Others were contacted via social media platforms (e-mail and Facebook) to take part in this study. While the researcher received their approval, he scheduled a face-to-face meeting and fixed the date and time to meet the interviewee. The researcher explained his objectives to the participants and then asked them for help to contact

their colleagues to participate in this study. The teachers did not hesitate to offer help. The researcher could contact the district's inspector and ask for help so that to call all the teachers to take part in this study, however, the researcher contacted them personally and decided not to take advantage of the inspector as 'gatekeepers' for the researcher wanted to avoid any exercise of power over them which could later affect my relationship with them and compromise the construction of knowledge in the sense that, a teacher could participate just to please the inspector without real interest in this study; therefore, the researcher decided to contact them (Seidman, 2013). In addition to this, during the sampling process, the researcher made sure to avoid 'snares'. First recruiting potential participants who were 'too eager to be interviewed' and trying to convince those who were not interested or showed hesitation (Seidman, 2013). As a novice researcher, assessing my interviewing skills was inevitable and therefore before entering the field, the researcher conducted a pilot study with two colleagues face-to-face. The two interviews went well.

3.6. Conducting Interviews (in the field)

➤ Face-to-Face Interview

Accordingly, interviews were conducted on the authority of the participants' availability first, and mine next. For instance, before each visit or meeting to the field, the researcher tried to schedule featuring the setting, date, and hour of each interview session to allow enough time for reflection between interviews (Seidman, 2013). All the participants preferred meeting them in a setting (classrooms) except three male colleagues who suggest being interviewed outside the classroom on the condition that the place was comfortable for recording.

3.7. Researcher's Role and Exiting the Field

The researcher is a teacher of English at Ketrroussi Mohamed Middle School. The researcher had not taught the learners who participated in the study and answered the questionnaire. The researcher's involvement in the school and his relation to the participants and knowledge of them and therefore the researcher's role must be described as a participant-observer. The researcher worked alone both in the collection and analysis of data. The researcher, as a sole participant-observer, particular and privileged position to do effective fieldwork within this case study context.

3.8. Research Methods

3.8.1. The Case Study

According to research methodologists and social scientists, a case study is a rather complicated approach to define, thus there are copious definitions of a case study. Neither research methodologists nor social scientists could agree on two things: the first is whether to classify it as a research design/method of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For the focus of this study, the researcher opted for Yin's definition. Yin (2014) believes that a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident" (Yin, 2014, p.16). Additionally, Yin (2014) states that:

A case may be the study of an individual, whereby the individual is the primary unit of analysis and information about the relevant individual is collected, and several such individuals or cases might be included in a multiple case study.

(Yin, 2014, p. 29)

Besides, Creswell (2002) defines a case study as “an exploration of a “bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information-rich in context” (Creswell, 2002, p.61). On the one hand, Stake (2010) notes that there are three types of case studies that better fit researchers in any field of study. These case studies are: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An intrinsic case study is undertaken to understand the particular case in question. An instrumental case study examines a particular case to gain insights into an issue or a theory. The collective case study is another type that is also referred to as a multiple case study. This type is undertaken to gain a fuller picture of groups of individual studies. Generally speaking, the case study helps researchers typically observe the characteristics of an individual unit a child, a clique, a class, or a community. The purpose is often to study the issue from different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As far as the current study is concerned, the case is assessing third year middle school learners’ ICC in the digital era. Both case and issue are of paramount importance due to the overall context of the study (Algeria), this is an instrumental case study for the issue matters first. The case study is the most appropriate approach that corresponds with the present research. Particularly, it is useful for studying events and issues related to education in general. Although in this study the researcher intends not to assess the new curriculum, but to assess learners’ ICC.

3.9. The Units of Analysis

Any research needs a unit of analysis for the researcher to back up his/her research questions and hypotheses. It is argued that the unit of analysis determines whether the study qualifies as a case study or not. Accordingly, Stake (2010) asserts that “case study research is not sampling research” (Stake, 2010, p.4). Conversely, selecting the unit of analysis should not

be confused with selecting samples because each process has a different purpose. Patton (2002) asserts that the unit of analysis can be more overwhelming and thus, the researcher first decides on the appropriate units of analysis that is the focus of the study after which, decisions of sampling strategy and sample size become clearer (Patton, 2002). So, to understand how the new curriculum of English (The Second Generation) in Algerian middle schools (the case) encourages the assessment of learners' ICC (the issue) and therefore, the researcher selected the third-year English textbook and two categories of EFL middle school educators and learners as the units of analysis in the present study.

The textbook was the primary unit of analysis in this study because of its status as the main teaching and learning material (resource). The researcher is a teacher of English at the middle school and therefore he is familiar with the English textbook. The initial analysis and evaluation of the teaching textbook led to the foundations of the interview with teachers of English (henceforth participants) about the intended and actual use of the textbook in the classroom. Analysing the textbook before conducting the questionnaire (with learners) and the interview (with teachers) enabled the researcher to familiarise himself with the setting of the study and have an overall idea of the new curriculum and the textbook.

3.10. Data Collection Instruments

For the sake of gathering data, the researcher selected the following instruments to collect data. These tools are:

1. Learners questionnaire
2. Teachers semi-structured interview
3. Textbook Evaluation

Learners (participants) were informed by the researcher on a specific day and time to participate in this research and will respond to the questionnaire. In 2017, the participants responded to the questionnaire with the help of the researcher who explained the words that

the learners did not understand (the teacher translates the difficult words into Arabic language). As for the teachers' semi-structured interview, the researcher called the teachers who were supposed to take part in this research. However, the researcher missed so many of the meeting sessions with the participants because of the participants' engagement and due to the coronavirus. The teachers who took part in this study were aware of the third-year English syllabus and therefore they felt comfortable responding to the interviewer's questions. Concerning the third-year course book evaluation and analysis, the researcher relied on Xiao's model of textbook evaluation.

3.10.1. Learners' Questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire was designed to elicit data on the third-year middle school learners' perceptions of the target culture. The questionnaire attempts to reveal pupils' knowledge, attitudes, and skills while acquiring the target language (English) and its culture in EFL classrooms. In addition to this, the questionnaire tries to reveal learners' awareness while learning the target culture. The questionnaire is classified into three categories that seek to assess learners' knowledge, attitudes, and skills vis-à-vis the target culture. The first part focuses on learners' knowledge of American and British culture and if they (learners) are aware of the similarities and differences between American and British ways of life, education system, geographical location, historic landmarks, and so forth. The second part of the questionnaire is devoted to learners' attitudes towards American or British culture; whether the learners possess negative or positive attitudes towards the target culture(s). The questions posed intend to investigate if the learners are empathetic, tolerant, overt, and respectful towards the other culture. The third part is devoted to learners' skills. The learning skills which are receptive (listening & reading) and productive (speaking & writing) are targeted in this study to investigate if the learners can communicate effectively in English.

3.10.2. Teachers Interview

The interview was carried out with 11 teachers who teach third-year level since they were familiar with the annual program, syllabus, and textbook. All the teachers live in Mostaganem, but they come from different areas (rural and urban) and thus they have different backgrounds. The interview comprises three parts (see Appendix 2) and it was recorded using an ICT tool (smartphone). Part one takes account of question one related to teachers' experience at teaching. Questions two and three are related to the aim behind the integration of culture in the textbook and teachers' perceptions of the culture presented in the textbook. Questions 5,6,7,8 and 9 are about learners' assessment. The last two questions (Q10 & 11) are about learners' attitudes towards the target culture.

3.11. Description of My Book of English (year three)

“My book of English”, a third-year middle school, is an official educational book that has been approved by the Algerian Ministry of Education (Moe) and submitted for third-year learners in all middle schools in Algeria. The book cover has three mandatory parts: the front cover and the back cover, connected by the spine, the front cover is an attractive mixed colourful one with both blue and orange colours, and it contains pictures presenting different cultural backgrounds in Algeria. However, the back cover is fully blue coloured with the logo of the printing press, the price (245,74 dinars) which seems reasonable and ensures that the majority of learners can afford it, and ‘Office National des Publications Scholaires are at the bottom of the textbook. This latter is the only material that both teachers and learners depend upon in and out of the classrooms.

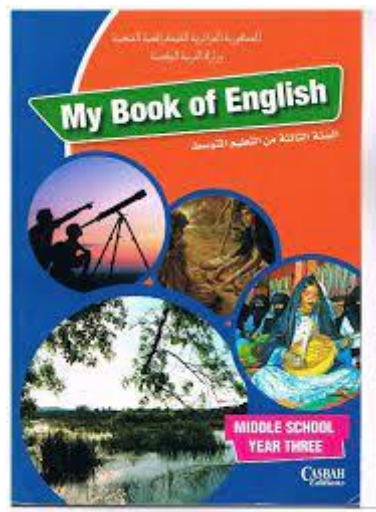


Figure 3.1: The Front Cover of ‘‘My Book of English

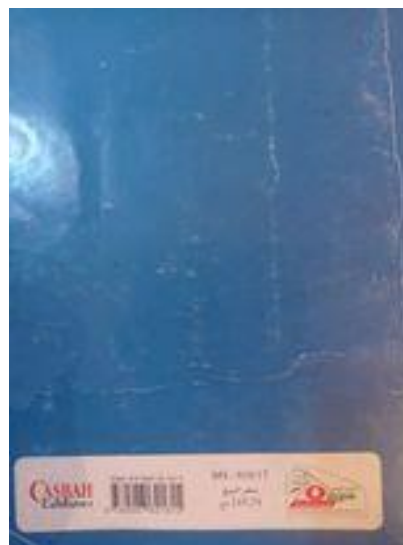


Figure 3.2: My Book of English back cover

3.11.1. Description

“My Book of English” has been designed for methodological bases for third-year middle school pupils. This pedagogical document is the result of the recent Reform in the Algerian educational system. Such teaching material is emphasized in the new syllabus which aims to implement a Competency-Based –Approach as a teaching method in which the learner is at the core/center of the teaching and learning process. The book is comprised of 159 pages and is divided into four units (sequences) and each sequence contains lessons and tasks. These sequences are presented as the following:

- Sequence one: Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality
- Sequence two: Me and my lifestyle
- Sequence three: Me and the scientific world
- Sequence four: Me and my environment

3.11.2. Authors

The authors of “My Book of English” are named respectively, Tamrabet Lounis an inspector of national education and the head of the project, Chenni Abedelfatah is a material designer, Bouzid Tayeb is a university teacher trainer, Smara Abdelhakim is a middle school teacher trainer, and Boukri Nabila is a middle school teacher trainer. The authors designed all middle school textbooks. The textbook was designed by Algerian authors and published by two of the biggest publishing companies Casbah Editions and ENAG Editions, Algiers, Algeria.

3.11.3. The Structure of the Textbook

“My Book of English” year three is composed of four sequences and each sequence contains lessons that are divided into ten parts (sections) that are titles of the lessons. These lessons begin with the announcement of the project sequence and each sequence contains at least seven lessons or more. For instance, I listen and do lesson targets for the learners' listening skills since they listen to a recording text and do the tasks related to the listening text. I pronounce deals with the pronunciation of words and then expression which has a relation with the sequence.” I practice” is a lesson in grammar in which learners deduce the rule and practice it through different tasks designed by the teacher. “I read and do” lesson helps learners to learn vocabulary while reading the text and do tasks according to the text. “I learn to integrate” lesson is done as group work in which learners are divided into groups and write a paragraph about a given topic collaboratively. “I think and write” lesson is about answering the question posed during the announcement of the project and it is done by the learners individually. Sequence one “Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality”, in this sequence the learners will describe their features and talk about their abilities and inabilities. The use of the model verb can, for example: I can play football. This sentence means that the speaker is able to play football (here, learners express their abilities to play, jump, and sing). The use of cannot is to express inability. For instance, she cannot sing. Sequence two “Me and Lifestyles” deals with past habits and ways of eating and clothing (Foreign and source cultures are targeted). Sequence three “Me and the scientific world” deals with Algerian inventors and inventions and scientists around the world. Sequence four “Me and my environment” deals with the national parks or reserves in Algeria and the importance of the country's heritage (see table 3.2. & figure 3.3 below).

Sequences	Titles	Sections
Sequence one	Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality	I listen and do, I pronounce, I practice, I read and do, I learn to integrate, I think and write, now I can, I play and enjoy, I read for pleasure
Sequence two	Me, and Lifestyle	I listen and do, I pronounce, I practice, I read and do, I learn to integrate, I think and write, now I can, I play and enjoy, I read for pleasure
Sequence three	Me and the scientific world	I listen and do, I pronounce, I practice, I read and do, I learn to integrate, I think and write, now I can, I play and enjoy, I read for pleasure
Sequence four	Me and my environment	I listen and do, I pronounce, I practice, I read and do, I learn to integrate, I think and write, now I

		can, I play and enjoy, I read for pleasure
--	--	---

Table 3.3: Textbook Presentation

In “My Book of English” textbook, the sequences presented obtained objectives stated at the beginning of the file, it has been divided into “Communicative and Linguistic objectives”. The former aims at developing listening and speaking skills to enable learners to develop their listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills. Whereas, the latter is divided into subsections concerned with both the language forms and the functions and aims at enhancing learners reading and writing skills.

The textbook is set up with four “term projects” or “sections” each section is composed of: first, the “I listen and do” lesson promotes learners listening skills while doing tasks during the listening phase. “I pronounce” lesson helps learners to pronounce and spell words correctly. Second, the “I practice and my Grammar tools” lesson aims at developing learners' capacities while practicing the language and doing tasks. Third, “I read and do”, “I learn to integrate”, and, “I think and write” lessons promote learners' abilities in reading and writing. Fourth, “Now I can” aims at assessing the objectives that have been achieved Fifth, “I play and enjoy” and “I read for pleasure” tend to integrate the socio-cultural components and quizzes into a fun context. The cultural components are integrated into the textbook throughout the whole sequence.

Sections	Objectives
-I listen and do -I pronounce	Enhance learners' listening skills and spelling
-I practice	Promoting learners' capacities in grammar
-I read and do -I learn to integrate -I think and write	Specify with discovering the language functions
-Now I can	Assessing the objectives achieved
-I play and enjoy -I read for pleasure	Integrate the socio-cultural components into the educational context

Table 3.4: The Objectives of Each Section

MY BOOK MAP

Sequence	Communicative objectives	Language forms	Linguistic objectives	Pronunciation
Sequence 1 Me, my abilities, my interests and my personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing abilities and inabilities Describing personal interests Describing personality features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "can" for ability "can't" for inability Questions about abilities and inabilities (with positive and negative answers) Asking questions about interests and personality Frequency adverbs: "always"/"never" Asking about frequency: "How often ...?" Formation of adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /æ/, /e/ and /a/ Pronunciation of "can" and "can't": /kæn/, /kæni/ and /kænt/ Pronunciation of "s" endings: /ɪz/, /s/, /z/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /æ/, /e/ and /a/ Pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /ɪz/ and /z/ Pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /s/ and /z/ Pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /æ/, /a/ and /e/ Silent letters: "w" and "y"
Sequence 2 Me and lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrating past events, experiences and childhood memories Describing life and lifestyles (past and present) Comparing life and lifestyles (past and present) Devising and selecting relevant interview questions Conducting an interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The past simple tense (review) The past simple tense (with regular and irregular verbs) The past simple tense with "ago" Time marker: "ago" Asking questions using: "How long ago ...?" The semi-modal: "used to" Frequency adverbs "made of" - "made in" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The past continuous tense Contracted/short forms of "be" in the past The past continuous and simultaneous actions Sentence connector: "while" Spelling rules: "V-ing" Requests with: "can" and "may" Relative clauses: the relative pronouns ("who" and "which") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation of the consonant sounds: /f/ and /v/
Sequence 3 Me and the scientific world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrating Describing Organising/sequencing biographical information in chronological order Selecting relevant biographical information Transferring biographical information from one format (ID card) to another (plain text with specific writing rules and mechanics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "must" (strong obligation) "mustn't" (prohibition) "should" (mild obligation) The imperative The present perfect tense The present perfect tense with: "for" and "since" Asking questions with: "How long ...?" The comparative of superiority (short and long adjectives) Discourse connectors: "as"; "because"; "so"; "therefore" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing obligation Expressing prohibition Making recommendations Comparing and evaluating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation of the consonant sounds: /y and /dy/ Silent letters: "p", "w", "h", "q" Intonation in questions
Sequence 4 Me and my environment				

Figure 3.3: My Book of English Map

3.11.4. The Criteria of Textbook Evaluation

Textbooks are designed to serve the needs of fewer experienced teachers. However, the textbook evaluation is done for teachers who are not properly trained on how to choose, adapt, evaluate and use textbooks. This led many scholars to identify extensive criteria to help

textbook evaluators. Byram (2002) argues that: “the components of intercultural competence are knowledge, skills, and attitudes; The role of the language teacher is, therefore, to develop skills, attitudes, and awareness of values just as much as to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country (LIU, 2016, p.482). In other words, teachers’ role is not only bound with developing skills about the language but also its culture. In many language classes, the main cultural topics addressed were food and clothes. A great number of texts addressing cultural content are limited to offering overt, “tourist culture” or teaching abstract and irrelevant facts, which are often presented with bias and consequently do little more than reinforce stereotypes, and exaggerate or misrepresent the culture (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1997; Moran, 2001). Similarly, LUI (2006) states that:

Typical EFL texts fail to engage students while providing limited and unrealistic cultural information. Owing to the importance of cultural contents in textbooks to facilitate the development of intercultural communication competence and the necessity of evaluating the materials, some scholars have proposed criteria and checklists to evaluate cultural contents in the textbook.

(LUI, 2016, p,482)

3.12. Textbook Evaluation Checklist

Researchers believe that evaluation of textbooks is so important in academic research and evaluation should be based on criteria such as the reliability of the source, accuracy, bias, and the authority of the author in order to establish if the textbook is suitable for use in academic research. Evaluating and analysing English middle school textbooks is crucial for

several reasons, spanning educational quality, cultural relevance, pedagogical effectiveness, and alignment with educational standards. Evaluation ensures that the content is accurate and reflects current knowledge and best practices in the field of English language teaching. Textbook evaluation ensures that the material aligns with the national or regional educational standards and curriculum frameworks, helping students achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Analysis of the instructional methods used in the textbook ensures that diverse learning strategies are incorporated, catering to different learning styles and needs. Effective textbooks integrate the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) to provide a comprehensive language learning experience. Evaluating textbooks for cultural content ensures that they include diverse perspectives and representations, promoting inclusivity and respect for different cultures. Analysis helps identify and remove any cultural biases or stereotypes, ensuring that the material is fair and balanced. Textbook evaluation ensures that materials are suitable for students of varying abilities, including those with special educational needs. Evaluation and analysis of textbooks should include content and activities that are relevant to students' lives and experiences, making learning more meaningful and applicable (Harmer, 2007). The following set of textbook evaluation questions are adopted and adapted from Xiao (2010, p. 36).

1. Does the textbook take into consideration the learner's level (in terms of language)?

The language used in the textbook is simple. However, there are difficult concepts, especially in sequence three “Me and the scientific world”. There are words in medicines and inventions that seem beyond the learners’ level. The majority of the learners came from rural areas and even they do not know these concepts and words either in Arabic or in French language and therefore they find it difficult to understand these words. In addition to

this, in sequence four “Me and my environment” there are concepts such as “Bio-diversity” which almost the sequence is about litter, endangered animals, and the preservation of the national parks in Algeria. Concerning listening scripts which the teachers rely on to do the listening lessons seem somehow difficult according to the learners’ level. Third-year middle school learners study the basics of English and therefore the language should match their level so that they can perform and progress gradually.

2. How is the physical appearance of the textbook?

Right from the start, the physical appearance of the textbook from the front page seems attractive to the learners. The textbook’s cover represents topics discussed in each sequence with colourful images. Moreover, the content of the textbook is rich with drawings, photographs, and pictures of famous persons them scientists, writers, inventors, musicians, and philosophers. These colourful photographs, images, and pictures make the learners eager to browse the content of the textbook. Young learners enjoy learning through colourful pictures and images and thus the designers of the book deliberately designed it in that way to motivate and engage the learners in the learning process.

3. Does the textbook focus on language or culture teaching?

Generally speaking, the textbook is language teaching-oriented, and culture is given secondary importance. It is obvious from the topics of each sequence that teaching language has given much more importance than culture, however, this does not mean that the authors neglect to introduce culture in the textbook content. Language and culture cannot be taught separately, but the authors of the textbook focus more on listening, reading, writing, grammar, and pronunciation which seek to develop learners’ skills, and they give little importance to developing and assessing the learners’ ICC. Both the language functions and culture are addressed to develop learners’ language proficiency and ICC.

4. Does the textbook include all types of cultures?

Third-year middle school “My Book of English” textbook includes both big “C” and little “c” such as cultural values, customs, lifestyle, food, and music. However, the authors did not focus on a specific culture. The source culture (Algerian culture) is integrated, but the authors focused only on the Algerian Saharian (Tuagreg, imzed) and Chaoui culture without giving importance to other regions in Algeria. Culture is integrated into the textbook, but there is no culture-specific part in the book in which cultural elements are dealt with in terms of tasks and practices.

5. Is the learners’ cultural background integrated into the textbook?

The Algerian culture is integrated into the textbook and cultural concern was not only on the Algerian culture but also on the Arab and Islamic cultural heritage. Sequence three deals with the Islamic cultural facets as shows the Islamic inventors who changed the world in the field of science and education by stating famous inventors and their inventions. The authors of the textbook have targeted the learners’ cultural background focusing on Algerian food, clothes, customs and traditions, music, and musical instruments such as the “Imzed” culture. Moreover, the authors have mentioned famous Algerian inventors such as Dr. Bouruois, Belkacem Haba, and the little prince Mohamed Farah Djeloud.

6. Does the textbook offer learners the opportunity to their own and the target culture?

The authors of the textbook have targeted both the source culture and the target one. Cultural content is addressed to allow the learners to compare their own culture to the target one. Thus, the learners can distinguish between two cultural variations in terms of values, customs, food, and lifestyle. For instance, food and eating etiquette (p.49) and the Algerian traditional food (p.71), the Algerian games, and the English ones on page 81. So, it is obvious that the learners have the opportunity to compare and contrast the source culture and the target one.

7. Whether it involves any intercultural topics belonging to different cultures from different countries in the world or just English language spoken countries?

“My book of English” textbook involves various topics from different intercultural backgrounds. The authors of the textbook seek to provide the learners with different topics belonging to other cultures such as the Nigerian one in which a person named Enzo introduces himself and talks about the kind of music he likes to listen to and also games he prefers to play with. In addition to this, the learners are asked to read texts about Albert Einstein, the Chinese philosopher Confucius, the Greek philosopher Aristotle, the Turkish writer Al Jaziri, and Ziryab from Iraq.

8. How and to what extent cultural contents are integrated into the English communication Textbook for Algerian learners?

The cultural contents of the textbook “My book of English” year three are integrated into the context of each task either as listening scripts, reading passages, or writing composition accomplished with colourful attractive pictures, during each English class the learners are supposed to either listen, read or write presenting a cultural item. So, the learners by the end of each lesson are asked to produce a piece of writing and present it and this enables them to mobilize their resources which are learned in the classroom to communicate either through writing or speaking.

3.13. Reflexivity

Reflexivity means the researcher’s understanding of his/her interpretation is influenced by his/her background context, experience, and prior understandings of the problem investigated. Also, the researcher used the term reflexivity to suggest that his/her position in this research is central. Reflexivity is necessary in reporting findings in a case study because only researchers know the criteria used for selecting the information to be reported (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In the same vein of thought, Creswell & Poth

(2018) argue that researchers position themselves in a qualitative research study. This means that researchers convey their background (e.g., work experiences, cultural experiences, history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in a study, and what they have to get or gain from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.44). In addition to this, another criterion is the impact of the study on the researcher who was affected emotionally and intellectually by the present study generating new questions to move to further new research. Mills and Birks (2014) define reflexivity as a person's "active process of systematically developing insights...imperative for qualitative researchers to be reflexive" (Mills & Birk, 2014, p.25). Similarly, Spencer-Oatey & Franklin (2009) state that:

It is often extremely helpful if the researchers can reflect on how their interests, values, identities, etc. may influence or bias their research, and question themselves on how they may need to change as people and as researchers, as a result of the research.

(Spencer-Otay & Frankiln, 2009, p.270)

3.14. Trustworthiness of the Study

Scholars argue that any study be it qualitative or quantitative needs to be checked and evaluated according to a set of criteria (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Bryman, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that to establish the trustworthiness of research, researchers should deal with these terms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as alternatives to the quantitative criteria: internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest categorizing the strategies of the aforementioned criteria into three groups according to the lens they represent: the researcher's lens, the participant's lens, and the reader's lens.

3.14.1. Credibility

Merriam (2009) believes that “reality is rather holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing” (Merriam, 2009, p.213). Qualitative and quantitative researchers’ job is to ensure that their findings are sufficiently congruent with reality and therefore credible (Merriam, 1998). Patton (2015) insists that establishing credibility depends entirely on researchers and it entails using several strategies among which are triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer debriefing.

- **Prolonged engagement in the field:** Patton (2015) notes that time is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data. As a researcher, I took time and spent almost one year back and forth between data collection and analysis. This period permitted me to establish rapport and build trust. I did not need to familiarize myself with the site, culture, and context of my study because I am not an outsider. However, getting to know some participants in person before the interviews helped both of us to engage in a less formal interview which added to the construction of knowledge (Creswell & Patton, 2018).
- **Member checking:** This term is considered the most critical technique for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.314). Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants for their feedback on how accurately their thoughts were recorded. Interestingly, some participants offered to answer further questions.
- **Peer debriefing/ critical friend:** Lincoln and Guba (1985) describes the critical friend as ‘a devil’s advocate’ because the role of the critical friend here is to push the researcher by asking hard and challenging questions about the methodology and interpretations of the

study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During my data analysis and particularly the interviews I discussed my interpretations with a friend who is a doctoral student (Ph.D.) at Christ Church University, London. This critical friend shares the same background as me and she is familiar with my topic of research as well. Thus, feedback from her (oral and written comments and questions), allowed me to step back and look at some findings and interpretations from different angles.

3.14.2. Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is concerned with the extent to which findings can be transferred to other settings or groups. In the same line of thought, Lincoln and Guba (1985), argue that to determine that the study is transferable it has to have a thick description which means the research report has to give enough details about the people in the study and the settings in which the study took place (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). In addition to this, Creswell and Miller (2000), assume that a thick description is to give the readers sufficient details that let them feel that they have experienced or could experience the events being described in the study. Therefore, the researcher provided a thick description of the context, the setting, and the participants in this study.

3.14.3. Dependability

Scholars agree on the idea that dependability refers to the stability of data through time and over conditions. As Patton (2015) argues that dependability is concerned with the logical process the researcher undertook throughout the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (2009) insist that credibility and reliability are closely related because the validation strategies of the former can, to some extent, ensure the latter. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that further to the strategies of credibility adopting an audit trail through which the researcher maintains track of and documents all their decisions, reflections, and thoughts (i.e. journaling and

memo writing) in an accessible manner to external reviewers who will act as auditors (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Bryman, 2016).

3.14.4. Confirmability

As a trustworthiness strategy, confirmability entails making explicit how findings and their interpretations are not overtly influenced by the researcher's values (Bryman, 2016; Patton, 2015). Accordingly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that confirmability refers to neutrality which is the potential for congruence between two or more people regarding data accuracy, relevance, or meaning.

3.15. Ethical Considerations

For a long time, scholars argue that in any scientific study or research researchers have to consider awareness of ethical issues which is part of the quality of research and thus the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; 2009; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Interviews are powerful, they affect people; and according to Patton (2015) a good interview evokes thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience not only of the interviewer but also of the interviewee (Patton, 2015, p.495). So, the need to prevent actual and potentially harmful consequences researchers can cause is central to ethical research (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012).

Generally speaking, in any academic research challenges can be anticipated before access to the field, which give the researcher enough time to find out possible ways to manage them (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Holliday (2013), stresses that getting ethical approval is by no means a guarantee that the researcher will not face ethical issues. As Patton (2015), notes that challenges may arise on-the-spot or after data collection has finished. These challenges are considered to be more difficult to handle because it depends heavily on the researcher's judgment of what is right and wrong and their ability to navigate through ethically and legally challenging

situations. In addition to this, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2018), argue that among other ethical issues that can arise while data analysis and interpretation, the researcher can encounter the risk of being 'over-selective' regarding what parts to include (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 648). In other words, Merriam (2009), assumes that researchers can exclude data that contradicts his/her views intentionally or unintentionally.

Therefore, in this research, the researcher considered all the possible issues that may harm the participants in any way before stepping into the field. First of all, to make sure that the participants have enough time will accept to be my interviewee and participate in the study, the researcher contacted the participants to get their consent via social media (E-mail, Facebook, and Messenger) for at least two weeks ahead of the agreed date and time of the face-to-face interview. This allowed participants enough time to consider their participation and ask any questions about the study, their roles, anonymity, voice recording, and confidentiality. Patton (2015), believes that researchers should give time to their participants before conducting their interviews. Thus, the researcher allocated time before interviewing to go through both forms and for them to ask questions.

3.16. Participants' Safety

Patton (2018), states that participants share their views, opinions, and information about a given topic or study with researchers when they are promised confidentiality. Accordingly, research participants can reveal information or share opinions with the researcher that they did not intend to if the researcher does not promise confidentiality (Patton, 2018, p.495). Debates about ethics in social research tend to focus on the risks and pitfalls which can harm participants in all possible ways and to avoid them (see Hammersley and Traianou, 2012; Patton, 2015; Bryman, 2016).

3.17. Reciprocity

Scholars suggest that to encourage participants to take part in research, researchers should give some material rewards. However, material rewards can threaten the quality of data, and participants may participate in research just to get paid and do not give importance to the study, in the sense that paying less attention to the information they provide, saying what they think is expected of them rather than what they think (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). According to Cohen et al. (2018) Reciprocity means giving or giving back something to the participants in the research in return for their participation (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018, p. 137). Researchers have an ethical responsibility to pay their participants for the time and effort they provide to their study be it through material reward (i.e. cash, gifts, vouchers) or other alternatives (i.e. educational advice) (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018).

At this stage it is worth mentioning that participation in this study was free, that is to say when approaching participants, the researcher did not offer any kind of reward or compensation. However, at the end of the interviews, some participants asked me some questions about teaching the English language at middle school, some asked me for help when they need it, and some asked for educational advice, especially for novice teachers. Also, to ensure reciprocity and avoid any misunderstanding, the researcher promised participants a copy of the thesis, this cash alternative, as Patton (2015) states can install a deeper sense of reciprocity (Patton, 2015, p.500).

Conclusion

Eventually, this chapter highlights all the stages and phases the researcher followed during this current study. First of all, the researcher figured out the rationale behind using both qualitative and quantitative research methods and the reason why he positioned himself as a qualitative and quantitative researcher. The researcher also highlighted the ontological and epistemological positions in the current study. In addition to this, the researcher presented the participants in this study and described their profiles for the sake of giving a clear idea about them. Moreover, the research instruments that the researcher selected to back up the research questions, test, and verify the hypotheses. To collect data, the researcher introduced the tools such as the learners' questionnaire, the teachers' semi-structured interview, and the textbook description. In doing so, the researcher clarified and explained the steps followed while administering the learners' questionnaire and also the interview with the teachers. Face-to-face interviews as access to the fieldwork. Here, the researcher narrated all that happened during the process of questioning the learners and interviewing the teachers. Besides, the researcher justified the choice of the case study method to explore how the issue of ICC is addressed in Algerian middle schools. Following this, the researcher described and justified the choice of semi-structured interviews and a document (textbook) as data sources followed by a thorough outline of the stages of the fieldwork. The units of analysis in this study and the researcher's role were discussed. Fundamentally, the present chapter tackled the fieldwork investigation and the setting where the researcher conducted the practical work. The current chapter also focused on the description of the textbook 'My Book of English' in which the researcher gave a full description of all the chapters (sequences) and the lessons presented to the learners. Generally speaking, the researcher provided a detailed explanation (description and account) of the current study's design.

Chapter Four: Research Findings And Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter aims to shed light on research findings and data analysis of the instruments that the researcher opted for to collect the data in the present thesis. The tools used to gather data were the questionnaire, the interview, and the evaluation of the third-year middle school textbook called My Book of English year three. This study investigated the representation of culture-related content for third-year middle school students in Algeria. Textbooks play a vital role in the teaching and learning continuum. Textbooks are undoubtedly the most popular teaching materials used in foreign language classes. Therefore, it is highly significant that textbooks include the essential elements of language and culture and that they correspond to learners' needs, cultural background, and level of linguistic proficiency. Accordingly, it is vitally important to help teachers choose the most appropriate ones for their classes. This chapter aims at defining both the concepts of textbooks and evaluation and then presents the main aim behind using the textbook in foreign language teaching. Moreover, it sheds light on the process of selecting and evaluating the contained cultural aspects and identifying the checklist used.

4.1. Analysis of Cultural Representation in The Textbook

4.1.1. Textbook Presentation

The textbook 'My Book of English' year three is designed for pupils aged between 13 to 15 years old. Right from the beginning, the first glance at the front cover of the textbook one can come up with the idea that the theme of the textbook is the learners since it starts with the possessive adjective "My". The authors of the textbook tried to stimulate the learners' interests and engage the learners in the learning process. The artwork of the textbook features

four images (top & bottom right) that can be interpreted from a cultural perspective. Both images represent cultural diversity in Algeria in which cultural practices are more emphasized than, for instance, cultural products (Moran, 2002).

The second feature common to both images is the gender representation; the main characters represented are Chaoui (top) and Tergui (bottom) females who are meant to offer knowledge about the traditions of their regions while positioning the viewer for a detached observation of the situation (Gray, 2010, p.58). The first image shows two Chaoui young girls wearing traditional Chaoui clothes and jewelry and playing El kroud (game associated with Chaoui females) indoors surrounded by traditional pottery. The structure of the second image denotes more interesting information about the Tergi society. The woman is shown playing the imzad (a musical instrument crafted and played by women only) while the men – seated behind her- are listening, a position of power and prestige that can be associated with religion as well. The selection of this image can be interpreted as an attempt to oppose the idea that Muslim women and particularly in the southern regions are oppressed and voiceless. The image shows that Muslim women are talented, appreciated, and respected. The visuals on the cover of the textbook seem merely decorative, but they were carefully selected to attract the learners' interests.

Another feature, which is common in all middle school English textbooks, is that the authors of the textbooks addressed the learners in the Arabic language in each textbook in the introduction. The authors choose the phrase “Dear learner” to attract the learners and make them aware of what is expected of them regarding their personal and language skills development.

4.1.2. Representation of Culture in The Chapters (Sequences)

Before discussing how culture is represented in the analysed sequences of the textbook, it is important to mention that the word ‘culture’ is used in all four chapters of the

textbook. Be it the local culture (Algerian culture) or the target one. As aforementioned the textbook contains four sequences: sequence one “Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality”. Sequence two “Me and lifestyle”. Sequence three “Me and the scientific world” and sequence four “Me and my environment”.

A- Sequence one ‘Me, my abilities, my interests, and my personality

This sequence is concerned with a person's profile as is mentioned on page 11. The learners listen to Enzo who is introducing himself (name, age, nationality, hometown, country, and interests) and the learners fill Enzo's profile. The learners are discovering who is this person. Where is he from? Where does he live? What are his interests? Generally speaking, sequence one focuses on both little “c” and big “C” cultures. In other words, the sequence sheds light on music and geography. The objective of sequence one is to enable the learners to communicate with their friends be they Algerians or foreigners. More precisely, this sequence is full of cultural aspects. For instance, on page 12, the learners are introduced to two different novels and a fable story related to the target culture while the learner is meant to listen to an interview and tick the right answer. Basically, on page 13, learners are asked to fill a teenager's profile that BBC radio has been conducting with. This profile was followed by an image of an African teenager and a map of Niger as a sign for the mother country of the teenager. Thus, this will lead the learners to compare and contrast the Nigerian culture with the Algerian one.

On page 24, there is an Algerian map and musical instruments in which the learners are going to match each musical instrument with the suitable region or area known for the kind of music. The musical instruments are named in the Algerian vernacular and translated into the English language to help the learners know them in both languages. So, task one on page 24 aims to introduce to the learners the musical instruments and in which regions they used them to play, that is to say, in north, west, east, or south of Algeria since each region is

known for the kind of music and musical instruments played by the musicians. In addition to this, on page 25, in task three the learners are going to know three different kinds of instruments and they will classify them into string instruments, wind instruments, and percussion instruments.

On page 26, task six presents different pictures in which musicians hold different musical instruments so that the learners are going to underline the correct name of each musician. In the following task number 7 is a dialogue between two learners who are going to ask each other about their interests in music and the musical instrument they prefer to play with. This kind of task aims to develop the learners' ICC and allow the learners to develop their abilities oral and writing skills.

On page 27, there is a short e-mail written by Maria to both Karim and Nadia to tell them about her interests in Nature. Maria mentioned the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu which is a UNESCO World Heritage site as her preferable place to visit with her classmates in their free time. The learners are asked to work in pairs and try to spot the mistakes Maria made while writing her e-mail and correct them together. This task aims to familiarize the learners with teamwork, exchanging information about Maria's culture to have broad cultural knowledge.

Furthermore, page 30 includes four interrelated tasks, task one is a kind of bibliographical note about an Algerian "little prince" named Mohamed Farah Djeloud who managed to stand out from the 3,5 million candidates after being listed among the 240 finalists in Dubai. 'A Little Prince' title indicates an Algerian child who was awarded the Arab Reading Challenges Prize. In task number two the learners reread the text about 'The Little Prince' to fill the reading notes about him. Task three is continuous to task 2 in which the learners fill the gaps about the 'Little Prince'. In task four the learners are asked to work in pairs to find out the mistakes committed by each learner and discuss them. This kind of

practice is “learner-centered” that focuses on the learners’ cultural awareness that can be shown in their perceptions and understandings even though it is a concern with their own culture.

Pages 34 and 35 respectively are about the Imzed’ which is the Tuareg musical instrument that represents Tuareg (south) culture. It has been presented in both a picture and two passages “text 4 and text 5”. In the first text entitled “Save the Imzed” and the second one “Dar Imzed”, the learners are asked to read text 4 and to answer the questions below the passage then to move to text 5 and fill the bibliographical notes with the missing information, after that, in page 36, the learners had to go back to page 35 to reread the text number 5 to match the pictures presented to their captions properly. This type of practice helps the learners to enlighten their cultural knowledge so they would be able to compare and contrast the different cultural aspects.

On page 40, the learners are asked to follow a given layout and write a poster about “Dar Imzed” then formulate a paragraph. Page 43 presented quotes from famous wise men and their sets of values and beliefs. These pages promote the learners to develop not only the ability to write but also to reflect on their own culture, and raise their willingness to be more flexible, tolerant, and overt towards other cultures and values.

Page 44 is specified with “The Intangible Cultural Heritage” that has been introduced to learners as “the oral traditions” and intended to teach them about the various aspects of culture. Followed by tasks, task 14 is a kind of questionnaire in which learners ask each other as a way to know more about their personalities of one of them such as, if they can get angry easily. For instance, Both tasks 15 and 16 are concerned with learners’ descriptions of their mates with the appropriate given adjectives according to the answers given in task 14.

B- Sequence two “Me and My Lifestyle”

This sequence focuses on deep culture mainly through the use of cultural values, customs, and lifestyles that came up from different races and cultures. The cultural aspects are presented in the forms of dialogues, authentic pictures, and interviews between the target language native speakers. Starting with page 48 (task 1), which presents sets of sentences taken from an interview made up between the English girl Jenny and her grandmother concerning the ‘grandparents’ day’ yet, they talk about the lifestyle that the grandmother used to live. So, the page shows the picture of a farmhouse where Jenny’s grandmother was born and lived. Here, the learners listen to the interview about Jenny and her grandmother who was talking about life in the past, then the learners had to correct the mistakes while they were listening to the interview. This kind of practice helps the learners to obtain easily the cultural background information of the target culture.

On page 49, there is a task and it is an interview that learners have to complete and reorder its missing parts, the interview is about Yorkshire dishes and lifestyles. In addition to this, the following task on page 50, introduces a comparison between the customs nowadays and those used in the past according to both Jenny and her grandmother.

On page 51, there is an uncompleted dialogue between the girl Jenny and her grandmother in which the learners have to listen to the dialogue and select the options given. Page 53 represents two boxes each one containing a list of clothes that both Jenny and her grandmother used to wear at school. Moreover, on page 55, the learners were asked to reorder the jumbled exchanges that Jenny and her grandmother mentioned in the dialogue, and therefore the learners are supposed to gain some knowledge about factual information that relates to the English lifestyle.

Moving to page 66, the page presents a task in which the learners are going to read a web article entitled ‘Djemila: The Roman ‘Cuicul’ describing the Algerian cultural heritage.

The learners are required to formulate questions according to the answers provided. On page 69, three pictures of Algerian traditional dresses are presented and the learners are asked to match each one with its origin.

On page 71, the textbook authors provide pictures of Algerian traditional dishes such as ‘couscous, kora, etc, and the learners are asked to write the name of each dish under the suitable image. On page 73, the learners are asked to read a passage concerning a journey in Setif visiting the historical monuments and fill in the bibliographical notes and answer some comprehension questions.

Respectively, pages 77, 78, and 79 provide pictures of old Algerian cities. In task 1, the learners are asked to compare these cities now and 100 years ago, and to display photos and old postcards of both Setif and Constantine. On page 81, the learners are supposed to discover the traditional Algerian games in task 1, which asks them to write the name of each presenting picture, each picture shows childhood memories of Bousaada.

C- Sequence three ‘Me and the scientific world’

This sequence deals with both Arab Muslim and European scientist and their inventions and discoveries. The aim behind this sequence is to help learners know about a scientist in the world in general and Algerian ones in particular. This sequence presents famous figures and also unknown ones to allow the learners to discover that everywhere in the world there are scientists who use their minds to discover and create things for the benefit of the human being. In this sequence, the authors targeted both national (Algerian) scientists and their discoveries to help the learners to know them and talk about them and their discoveries when interacting with others who do not belong to the Algerian culture. These famous figures are Muslim or Europeans representing big “C” cultural aspects. The aim behind this is to encourage the learners to reflect on their own culture as well as the international one.

However, in this sequence, the authors neglected the little “c” culture such as beliefs and values, and they targeted the surface culture.

The present sequence introduces the cultural aspects, from page 92, task 5 which represents a biography about an Islamic famous philosopher. The sequence aims at teaching the learners the cultural contents and the language pronunciation.

On page 99, two different scientists possess different cultural backgrounds. These scientists changed the world through their theories and inventions. The learners are asked to read the scientists’ biographies and fill the bibliographical notes with the appropriate information then answer the questions provided that aim at exploring the origins of some inventions such as “Camera”.

On page 101, the learners are asked to write the names of the ancient surgical instruments under the pictures given, this kind of task aims at promoting the learners’ knowledge about the ancient inventions and treats the big “C” cultural aspects. Moreover, on page 106, the learners are supposed to design a brochure in the English language about “Islamic Scientific and Cultural Heritage” which includes a historical introduction (a text accompanied by a timeline), biographies of eminent Muslim scientists, and text describing inventions, innovations, and discoveries in various fields, accompanied with a layout presented in the following page 107 which is meant to help the pupils to write the introductory text. This task focuses on the “History” that reflects the cultural background and the big (C) cultural aspects.

D- Sequence Four: Me and My Environment

The last sequence presents numerous bibliographical notes that associate with the danger of pollution that aims at raising the learners’ awareness of vital and national environmental issues and seeking a change in their attitude towards these issues, this goes with the big “C” cultural aspect under the geography column. In detail, beginning with task

one on page 113 introduces an interview that has been conducted by BBC radio with a UNESCO representative concerning biodiversity in Algeria. In this task, the learners are supposed to tick the box of the name of each national park. This aims at raising the learners' cultural knowledge of Geography.

On page 115, the learners have to listen to a recorded radio to fill gaps in a passage and to explain what Biosphere means. Similarly, on page 118 (Task 20), the learners are asked to make a dialogue about Biodiversity in Algeria. This kind of task aims at checking the learners' understandings and perceptions and to test their cultural knowledge about Biodiversity in their country.

In addition to this, on page 122 (Task 39), the learners have to listen to BBC interviews and fill the gaps of an uncompleted recommendation that concerns what schoolchildren do to raise awareness of the litter problem in Algeria. This task aims at raising socio-cultural awareness among the learners.

Page 136 (Task 15) is about the linking of each animal with its homeland in the geographical map through the use of the information introduced in task 17. This task aims to raise the learners' international knowledge of Geography.

Big “C” Culture	Source Culture	Target Culture	International Culture
Music	02	0	01
History	03	01	01
Geography	10	04	03
Education	01	02	01
Social system	03	04	01
Total	19	11	7
%	51.35	31.42	17.22

Table 4.1: Analysis of the big “C” cultural aspects included in the textbook adopted from (Xiao. J, China 2010, p: 36)

Small “c” Culture	Source Culture	Target Culture	International Culture
Cultural values	01	04	01
Daily routines	00	05	00
Lifestyle	08	05	00
Holiday	00	01	00
Food	03	02	00
Customs	03	07	00
Total	15	24	01
%	37.5	60	2.5

Table 4.2: Analysis of the small “c” cultural aspects included in the textbook adopted from (Xiao. J, China 2010, p: 36)

Task 10. I listen to the BBC Radio interview (Part 1) and fill in the first part of each teenager's profile.



PROFILE

1. Personal Information

(Please write in block capitals.)

First Name:

Last Name:

Nationality:

Country:

Age:

Sex: *(Please write M for male & F for female.)*



Task 1. I use arrows to show the geographical location for each musical instrument. Sometimes, there are many possible locations for the same instrument.




Task 2. I work with a group of partners. We compare our answers and correct each other.

Task 10. I work with my partner and we correct the mistakes in the email.

This message has not been sent.

Send	To...	karim&nadia@XYmail.com
	Cc...	
Account *	Subject	re: interests



Dear Karim, Dear Nadia,

You asked me about my interests. Well, nature always is number one on the list of my interests! I go always to the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) at weekends with my classmates. The Andes are superb in spring! There are flowers everywhere. We have picnics always at this time of the year but in winter it's cold always. So, I get never far from my village.

How about the place where you two live? Are there mountains? Do you go hiking? Please, find attached a picture of Machu Picchu.

Love,
Mana

27



Bibliographical Notes

- * Main title:
- * Subtitle:
- * Original title:
- * Author:
- * Source:
- * Type of document:
 - press article
 - excerpt from a book
 - web article

Save the Imzad The Last Four Imzad Players

"The imzad is for the Tuareg what the soul is for the body," said Hadj Moussa Akhamok in 2003 when he offered me an imzad.

Imzad is a one-string fiddle or violin played with a bow. Because of modern life the imzad, and all the culture that goes with it, is dying. Only a few old ladies who can play this ancestral instrument are still alive. They are dreaming of transmitting their knowledge to the whole world. (...)

Tuareg culture can continue to exist thanks to these women's perseverance (...). The "Save the Imzad" association aims at contributing to the preservation of the imzad as an expression of culture and identity.

Farida Sciall,
"Les 4 dernières joueuses d'Imzad".
(Adapted translation from French)
www.imzadanzad.com



I read for pleasure.

1. Wise quotes by wise people

Aristotle (*Greek philosopher: 384 BCE – 322 BCE*)

1. "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."
2. "Good habits formed at youth make all the difference."
3. "The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead."



Confucius (*Chinese philosopher: 551 BCE – 479 BCE*)

1. "You cannot open a book without learning something."
2. "He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger."
3. "To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge."



Albert Einstein (*Famous physicist: 1879 – 1955*)

1. "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."
2. "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."
3. "The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination."



person.

JENNY (PRESENT)		GRANDMA (PAST)	
<input type="checkbox"/> formal clothes		<input type="checkbox"/> formal clothes	
<input type="checkbox"/> casual clothes		<input type="checkbox"/> casual clothes	
<input type="checkbox"/> leggings	<input type="checkbox"/> jeans	<input type="checkbox"/> leggings	<input type="checkbox"/> jeans
<input type="checkbox"/> long dress	<input type="checkbox"/> blouse	<input type="checkbox"/> long dress	<input type="checkbox"/> blouse
<input type="checkbox"/> shawl	<input type="checkbox"/> headscarf	<input type="checkbox"/> shawl	<input type="checkbox"/> headscarf
<input type="checkbox"/> clogs	<input type="checkbox"/> hat	<input type="checkbox"/> clogs	<input type="checkbox"/> hat
<input type="checkbox"/> beret	<input type="checkbox"/> cap	<input type="checkbox"/> beret	<input type="checkbox"/> cap

Task 10. I listen to part (3) of the interview again and check my answers. Then, I work with my partner and we correct each other.

Task 11. I match each item of clothing mentioned in the interview (Part 3) with its corresponding picture.

	<input type="text" value="beret"/>	
<i>Queen Elizabeth II</i>	<input type="text" value="blouse"/>	<i>Queen Elizabeth II</i>
	<input type="text" value="shawl"/>	
	<input type="text" value="cap"/>	
	<input type="text" value="hat"/>	
	<input type="text" value="headscarf"/>	
	<input type="text" value="clogs"/>	
		

Task 5. I answer my partner's questions about my grandparents' old days.

My partner: When and where was your grandmother/grandfather born?

Me:

My partner: How many were they in the family?

Me:

My partner: Can you tell me a little more about the place where he/she lived?

Me:

My partner: Did they have a bathroom?

Me:

My partner: How did they cook their meals?

Me:

My partner: Did they use to help with the housework?

Me:

My partner: How often do you tidy your room?

Me: (I use: "always", "never", "every weekend", "once a week" in my answer.)

Task 6. I change roles with my partner and we act out the dialogue again.

Task 7. I listen to part (2) of the grandmother's interview and number each bubble in the correct order. The first answer is given.

(.....) That sounds reasonable, young lady. This is what I call a healthy diet.



(.....) Tell me, grandma, what did you use to eat in those days?

(.....) Porridge at breakfast. Oh, I hated it! And Yorkshire pudding with roast beef on Sundays. Everyday meals consisted of boiled potatoes with gravy, meatballs, kidney pies and brown bread. We had homemade cookies with the afternoon tea. The family used to gather around the table, in the kitchen. Mum used to serve dad first, and then us. We weren't allowed to put our elbows on the table or talk with our mouths full. We didn't have the right to leave the table before the meal was over. No such things as hamburgers or pizza on the table, of course!

(.....) I don't like fast food, grandma. I sometimes eat a cheeseburger when I go out with friends but I often have a vegetarian meal. You know, salads and rice with vegetables.

Question: How long ago did Roman Emperor Trajan found Thimgad (Timgad) in Algeria?

Djemila: The Roman "Caeset"

I visited Algeria for the first time **thirteen years ago**, in the spring of 2004 to be more precise. Djemila (60 km northeast of Setif) was the first of the great Roman cities on my itinerary. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site **thirty-six years ago**. Roman Emperor Nerva, who ruled from 96 to 98 AD, founded the city **about two thousand years ago**. The major buildings that survive today include the temple of Emperor Septimus Severus, the Grand Baths, the theatre and the Triumphal Arch. 20,000 people lived in the city in the 3rd century AD. During its history, the city was badly damaged by earthquakes until finally it was abandoned **fifteen centuries ago**.

© <http://www.algeriaemb.org.au/FORGOTTENTREASURESOFALGERIA.htm>

1. a) I visited Algeria for the first time **thirteen years ago**.
b) How
2. a) Djemila was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site **thirty-six years ago**.
b)
3. a) Roman Emperor Nerva founded the city **about two thousand years ago**.
b)
4. a) The Roman city was abandoned **fifteen centuries ago**.
b)

Task 2: I work with my partner. We read again "My Grammar Tools (1)" and correct each other's questions.



Roman theatre, Djemila

Task 7: I match each women's traditional dress with its corresponding regional origin.



traditional dress from Djelfa & Boussada ("Jobba Nall")



traditional dress from Constantine ("katefa mahrouja")



traditional dress from Setif ("benouar Stail")

Task 13. I write the name of each of these traditional Algerian dishes in its corresponding box: *Tunng bread* ("taguella"), *Algerian pancakes* ("ghraïel, haghric, kassa"), *couscous* ("taam, naama, kusks, berbaucha"), *Algerian stuffed flatbread* ("mahjouba, mhgib) - traditional bread beans/chickpeas dish ("dohere foul/ homous"), *traditional crushed-bread and vegetables dish* ("baumalires, batout, zvil).



1



2



3



4



5

mortar
(matrea)

6

4.2. The learners' questionnaire data analysis

1. The three Dimensions of Analysis

Attitudes

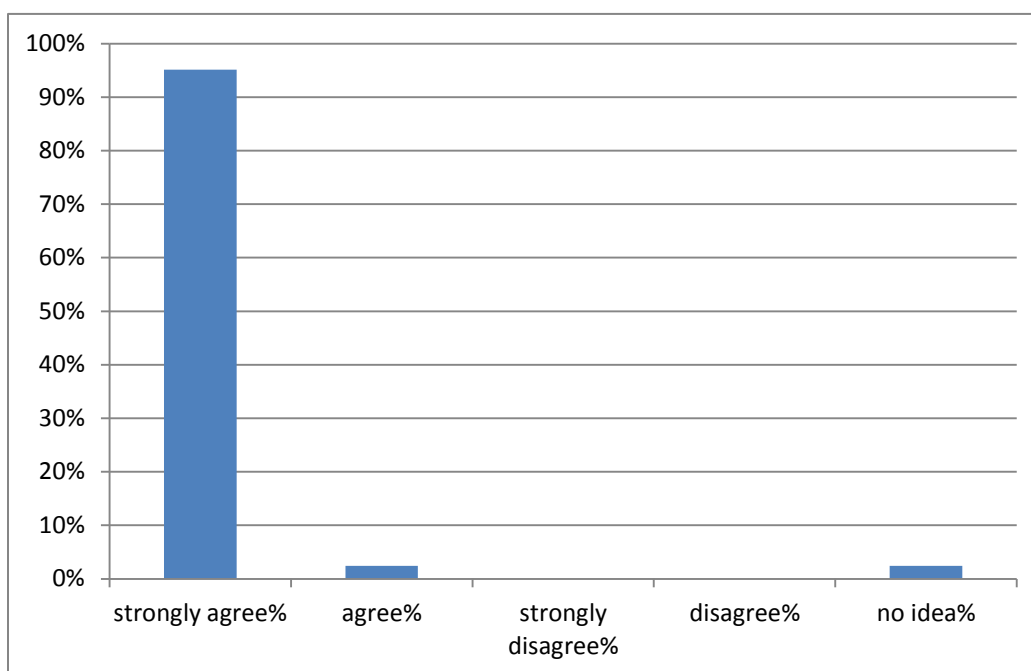


Figure1: Learners' attitudes towards the target culture

1) Attitudes

Questions about the respondents' attitudes on the notion of otherness in general and the Americans and British in particular. Respondents' answers show openness towards the other cultures in questions: Q 2(61%), Q3(66%), and Q9(41%). Questions related to accepting the American and British customs show positive attitudes such as Q4(56%) and Q10(56%) and Q11(66%). However, a contradiction occurs at the level of tolerance and stereotyping. For instance, in Q5: dating boys and girls from Great Britain rates 41% and only 22% show tolerance towards girls who wear short skirts, 39% also show intolerance towards girls who smoke or drink alcohol, and 22% for Americans and British who eat pork. This contradiction in the latter questions justifies the respondents' positive attitudes towards their own culture

about (95%). Generally speaking, data obtained show that the participants' intolerance is affected by religion, especially questions about eating pork and girls who drink alcohol and smoke.

2. Knowledge

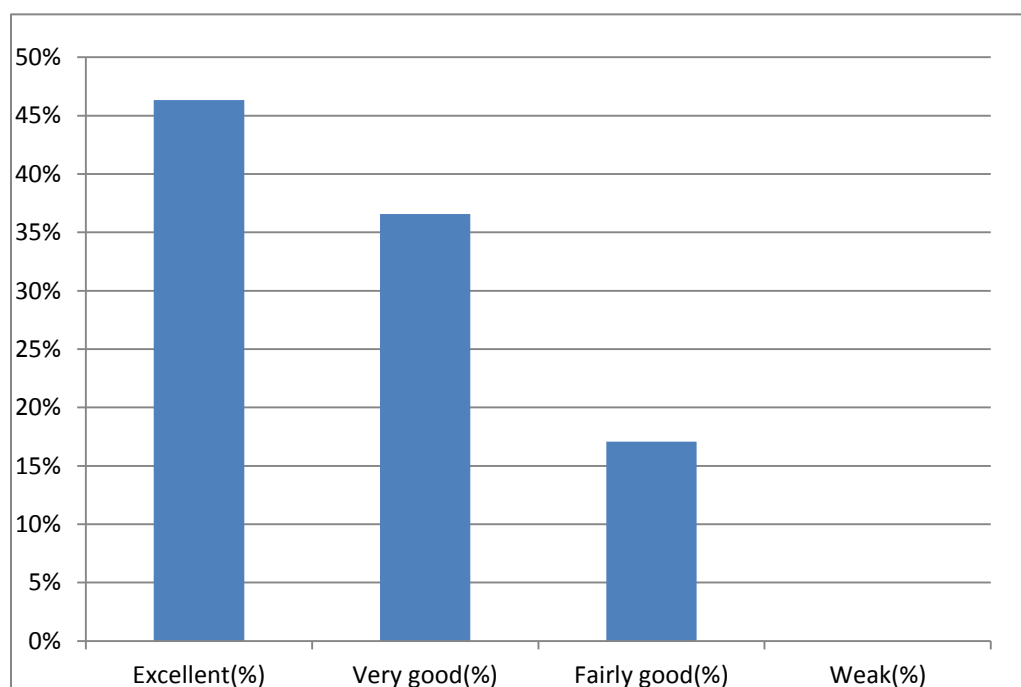


Figure 2: Learners' knowledge of the target culture

2) Knowledge

The table above showed that more than 45% of the participants' responses possess general knowledge about foreign cultures. They can distinguish between educational and political systems in both countries. For instance, 88% of the participants know that the USA is a republic, whereas Great Britain is a monarchy. So, the participants can distinguish between

monarchy and republic countries. They knew that a monarchy is ruled by a king or a queen, but a republic is governed by a president. In addition to this, 83% of the participants' answers indicate that they can identify both currencies and flags of each country (G. Britain and USA). Next, 73% of the participants' responses showed that they knew about both countries' educational systems. The participants knew that there are governmental schools and non-governmental ones. Also, they possessed slight knowledge about the social life in both countries. Only 2% of the participants' answers about greeting an American or a British when meeting him or her for the first time. The greeting for Muslims is in Arabic (As-salamu alaikom which means peace be upon you). Most Muslim men do shake hands or hug, but most Muslim women do not shake hands or hug men. Therefore, the participants' responses to this question were weak because they were not familiar and did not have enough knowledge about Foreign etiquette.

Skills

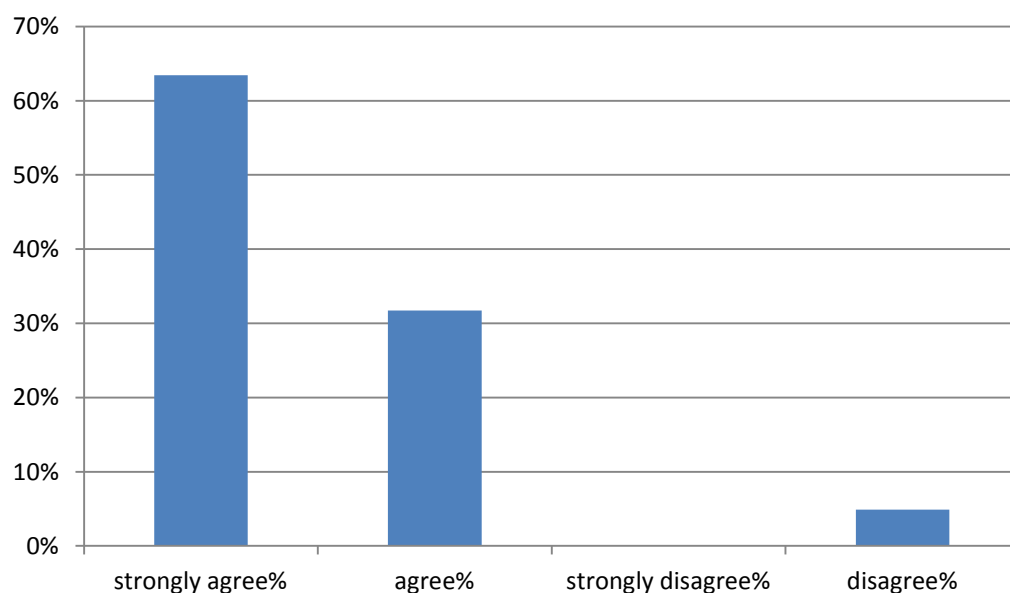


Figure3: Learners' skills to acquire the target language and culture

3) Skills

The respondents' responses showed that they possess both basic receptive and productive skills. On the one hand, more than 60% could communicate via oral or written messages. The percentage for writing the email, listening to a song, and reading a passage ranges between 63% and 73% respectively. On the other hand, pupils' pronunciation of long words is weak. Very few pupils encounter difficulties while communicating in English. Concerning translation, only 15% of the participants were not able to translate a passage from English into their mother tongue. While 59% could do so.

4.3. Discussion

The questionnaire's first category is knowledge, participants' responses showed that they possess enough knowledge about educational systems in both the USA and the UK. Participants did not know that in the USA and the UK, education is not free like in Algeria. Also, they identified that in terms of political systems the USA is a republic, but The UK is a monarchy. In addition to this, they knew that a republic is presided over by a president, whereas a monarchy is ruled by a king or a queen. In terms of social relationships, participants seemed unable to know if it is possible to kiss an American or a British for the first time. Participants' knowledge about the USA and UK education and political systems are highly rated. Moreover, concerning their skills, participants seem that they were skilful in both receptive and productive skills. However, they are not able to translate passages from English into their mother tongue. Also, they show that they were weak in pronunciation, especially when they pronounced long words. Moreover, participants' attitudes towards the American and British cultures seemed to be intolerant, and narrow-minded, but they were respectful and proud of their origins.

4.4. Analysis of Interviews

4.4.1. Interview transcription

Interviewer: Hello, dear teacher, I am inviting you to answer my questions concerning my research entitled assessing learners' intercultural competence in EFL. Bear in mind that I am going to record your voice. However, your name will not be mentioned.

Interviewee (A.M): You are welcome with pleasure.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching English at the middle school?

Interviewee: I have been teaching English in middle school for five years.

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects integrated into the three Ms, my book of English textbook?

Interviewee: Yes, there are some Algerian aspects and other culture or cultural aspects.

Interviewer: According to you, what is the aim behind integrating culture in three MS My Book of English?

Interviewee: Integrating culture or cultural aspects in English or third-year level is to invite learners to exchange cultural aspects or to exchange culture in general.

Interviewer: According to you, what is meant by Intercultural Communicative competence?

Interviewee: I guess that, it is the competence or the knowledge or the ability to inter-communicate or to exchange between two or three or more cultures.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learner's knowledge of the English culture?

Interviewee: Well, I assess learners' knowledge of English culture based on information or culture, or let's say, information related to the country so that they compare their culture to the other, explore the new one, ask them about vocabulary, about landmarks, about people, about everything related to the other, or clothes, something food, anything which represents the difference between their country or the other country.

Interviewer: Which aspects of culture, I mean, knowledge, attitudes, and skills do you consider when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?

Interviewee: Well, I take into consideration landmarks, historic events, let's say skills, hobbies or activities in alternative activities, and anything related to what other people from other countries practice every day, or in cultural ceremonies or something.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' skills in interpreting, comparing, and discovering the English culture?

Interviewee: Well, I assess my learners' skills, as you said, interpreting, comparing, and discovering through pictures and asking questions about the other culture. Well, I show them a picture, I ask them about the landmarks, I ask them about what is on the picture, food, clothes, anything which is related, and so on and so on.

Interviewer: What do you measure first? Lexis, grammar, pronunciation, knowledge about the target culture, skills, and attitudes?

Interviewee: Well, I guess that the first thing I should pay attention to with my learners is knowledge about the target culture which involves lexis. So when my pupils gather a good amount or a good quantity of words that are related to the culture, I should take care of their grammar so that they form sentences related to some pronunciation, of course. And then I pay attention to attitude skills which are built on what was told before that.

Interviewer: According to you, what type of assessment is more appropriate to assess the Learner's Intercultural Communicative Competence formative or summative? Why?

Interviewee: I think that the suitable type of assessment that is more appropriate to assess learners' ICC is the Summative assessment. Why? Because pupils or learners need some time to learn about the culture. It's not a matter of one lesson or two about grammar, accents, culture, clothes, about food. Everything will not take one or two lessons or sessions.

So I think that we should leave that I should leave the assessment to test or exam to evaluate or to assess learners' families of all that they have learned about the international cultural communicative culture.

Interviewer: According to you, which attitude or attitude do your learners have when teaching English culture? Negative or positive?

Interviewee: I think that they have already shown a positive one because they have that enthusiasm to explore the world and to know about other people, their color of skin, their hair, the beauty of the world, another way of living, other food, everything else.

Interviewer: How is their attitude reflected?

Interviewee: Well, according to what I have seen since I have started teaching well, I guess that some pupils show their funny commands or they laugh when they hear about or they hear a British accent because it seems something difficult or different from the earth. The culture is different, so it creates something funny for them. Besides, I guess that this behaviour of being surprised or that they have liked the show about the other world or the other country, British country or British world, in general, creates some curious behaviour in them. So they try always to act like British people. They imitate some expressions in English and et cetera.

Interviewer: So, I am very happy to have you as my interviewee. Thanks for your contribution to answering my questions.

Interviewee: Thank you very much for your time and thanks for the attention that you gave.

Interviewer: Hello, I am inviting you to answer my interview questions because I am researching assessing learners' intercultural communicative students in the digital era.

Interviewee (Mo.Ab): You are welcome.

Interviewer: First, how long have you been teaching English at the middle school?

Interviewee: I have been teaching English at a middle school for nine years.

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects integrated into the three Ms. My book of English textbooks?

Interviewee: Yes, of course, there are.

For example, ah ah ah concerning sequence number two, I suppose we speak about music and junior culture. For example, in some Algerian cities, like in Tamanrasset, such as some music, like, et cetera. Also, we speak about British culture in sequence two. Yes, we have the dialogue between Jeannie and Her grandma. They speak about the old day's lifestyle in the past.

And we know that there is a difference between what happened in the past and what happens now. Yes, we speak also about Queen Elizabeth. Okay. Can we move to the next question, please?

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects, according to you, what is the aim behind integrating culture in three Ms, my book of English textbook?

Interviewee: yes, of course, there are cultural aspects that are integrated into the 3MS textbook.

Interviewer: What is the aim behind integrating culture in the third MSN book of English textbooks?

Interviewee: Of course, there is the aim. When the learner learns a language, he doesn't only learn the language, we learn about the language. He learned the culture. Of course, because culture goes together with language. They go together.

Interviewer: According to you, what is meant by intercultural communicative competence?

Interviewee: Mmmmm..... Okay, what is meant by intercultural competence? I think that here is the ability to communicate with other people from all over the world, from people who have different cultures, different attitudes, everything.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' knowledge of the English culture?

Interviewee: There are different skills, such as listening, even in reading, I give them a text about English culture. Even in writing, they write about English culture.

Interviewer: Which aspects or aspects of culture, knowledge, attitudes, and skills do you consider when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?

Interviewee: Of course, when preparing my test exams to assess my learners, I take into consideration knowledge. Of course, because they are learning a language, I assess their knowledge.

They can use the language in writing, reading, speaking, of course, in different skills, such as producing while producing, if they can learn, if they can produce a piece of writing, a piece of dialogue sorry, everything if they can produce it. Yes or no.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learner skills in Interpreting, comparing, and discovering the English culture?

Interviewee: Of course, we assess them through different skills. In assessment, we have what are now tests, even exams. We give them a text, okay? Reading comprehension, mastery of language, and even in writing, we ask them to write, as I said before, to complete a dialogue, to produce an interview, oral or writing.

Interviewer: What do you measure first? A. grammar, b. lexis c. Pronunciation d. knowledge about the target culture e. skills f. attitudes.

Interviewee: Well, generally I measure knowledge about target culture, lexis, grammar, pronunciation, and other skills. According to you, what type of assessment is more

appropriate to assess learners' ICC formative or summative, and why? I think that all of them, are very important and they are appropriate to assess the learners' ICC formative and assessment. They go because they go together, okay? Because from time to time we have the formative assessment. Even in the post, when we finish, we have some tip assessments. This is why I think that they go together. They are both important.

Interviewer: According to you, which attitude do your learners have when teaching English culture? Negative or positive?

Interviewee: What? ah...ah... I think that my learners always show positive attitudes, it's positive because they like English. They like English, even English culture. They like it. Even the teacher of English prefers the English teacher to the other teacher.

Interviewer: How is their attitude reflected?

Interviewee: Pupils are always okay, and happy while learning. And even after, when we finish the lesson, they are always happy. They feel okay. How to say it? They always feel they feel excited. Okay. They love English. They like it so much.

Interviewer: So, thanks for your time and for answering my interview questions, if you have any suggestions or anything to say, you are welcome.

Interviewee: Thank you, my friend, for this interview. I am very happy to participate with you in this project, and I hope I wish you all the best.

Interviewer: Hello, dear teacher. I am inviting you to answer my questions about my thesis entitled assessing Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in Digital Era.

Interviewee (Am. Ab): ah.... You are welcome.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching English at middle school?

Interviewee: I have been teaching English since middle school, since 2017.

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects integrated into the three ms My book of English textbook?

Interviewee: Yes, there are many cultural aspects integrated into the three ms in my book and English textbook.

Interviewer: according to you, what is the aim behind integrating culture in three ms, my book of English?

Interviewee: If we consider that there are these cultural aspects integrated, we can say that, according to me, the aim and the objective of this integrated culture are to give learners, I don't know what more information about different cultures when we know that as Algerian and what is integrated into this book? There are many cultures and different cultures in this book.

Interviewer: According to you, what is meant by intercultural communicative competence?

Interviewee: For me, intercultural competence is the ability to communicate with learners who have different languages effectively.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' knowledge of the English culture?

Interviewee: Yes, there are many parts, there are many manners. How to assess our dear learners? For me, for example, I try to focus on the knowledge of the English culture by giving them how we say I provide them with the short text which has a link with the English culture, American culture, Scottish or I don't know what.

By the way, they can learn more information. They have more information about this English culture.

Interviewer: Which aspects of culture, knowledge, attitudes, and skills do you consider when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?

Interviewee: Yes, here in this question, I try to give importance to knowledge and skills when preparing for my test and exam.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' skills in interpreting, comparing, and discovering the English culture? When given the short stories of text learners here, they are

going to interpret this text. After that, the order step will be comparing our culture and this new culture for them. And finally, they are going to discover a new culture and a new knowledge of English culture.

Okay, what do you measure first? A. Lexis, b. grammar, c. pronunciation, d. knowledge about the target culture, e. skills of interpreting, comparing, discovery, or attitudes? For me, I focus on, first of all, Lexis and pronunciation.

Interviewer: According to you, what type of assessment is more appropriate to assess the learner's intercultural Communicative competence formative or summative? and why?

Interviewee: Here.... ah are not the same. We can say they are appropriate to assess our dear learners well because we can assess our learners through time and at the same time when we speak about summative, we can assess them at the end of, for example, a lesson or sequence maybe, or test. After doing a test.

Interviewer: According to you, which attitudes do your learners have when teaching English culture? Negative or positive?

Interviewee: We can say that there is a negative and positive one. Why? Because according to me. When we have in this case. We can say that this attitude of learners is positive. When we find that some learners are so excited to have or to learn more and more about this new culture or this new English culture and we can say that negative there are not the majority but a minority who neglect it. We can say neglect this English culture because of many. How do we say that's it?

Interviewer: How is their attitude reflected? Their attitude is reflected generally by their facial expression or by silence. I find that in the classroom there is a silence that is surrounding. So this is it. That is it.

Interviewer: So thank you for taking your time and answering my interview questions. If you have any addition, you can call me whenever you like.

Interviewee: I want to give not advice, but I want that our responsible try to give more importance to English. And especially I want to advise on the curricula of the first, 2nd, third and fourth year. Just to give you no information and anecdotes it happens to me that in a lecture, in a session I taught a second year, and the next session I taught a third Ms.

So it was the same lesson. It was the same lesson. So, what is the aim of this? Why do we do this lesson? Especially the lesson on pronunciation concerning the final/ s/ it was the lesson of the final/ s/.

So, I thought the second year, the final/ s/ lesson, the final/ s, / the pronunciation, and the third year also I taught them the lesson of the final/ s/. What can we do in this lesson either in the second or in the third year? And thank you.

Interviewer: You are Welcome.

Interviewer: Hello dear teacher, I am researching assessing learners' intercultural communicative competence in the digital era, and therefore I am inviting you today to answer my questions.

Interviewee (G.A): Hello, nice to meet you. Thanks for having me.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching English at middle school?

Interviewee: I have been teaching English at the middle school for about 14 years.

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects integrated into the three ms My Book of English Textbook?

Interviewee: concerning level Three my Book of English Textbook this book is rich in cultural aspects, especially in sequences one and two, talking about different aspects of Algerian and other different countries in culture in general.

Interviewer: According to you, what is the aim behind integrating culture in three ms My Book of English Textbook?

Interviewee: In my point of view, the aim behind integrated culture is to make our learners aware of different regions or parts of Algeria, because there is a great difference between the west, the east, the north, and the south and make them aware of others culture to convey a message for the interruption, for example.

Interviewer: According to you, what is meant by intercultural competence?

Interviewee: According to me, intercultural competence is to enable our learners to communicate with others who hold different traditions or values, et cetera.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' knowledge of the English culture?

Interviewee: During my interaction with my learners, asking them questions about other cultures, I came up with an idea that our learners have poor knowledge of the English culture since they live in rural areas.

Interviewer: Which aspects or aspects of culture, knowledge, attitudes, and skills do you consider when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?

Interviewee: When preparing for our tests and exams, we consider the different aspects of culture, knowledge, attitude, and skills to assess our learners.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' skills in interpreting, comparing, and discovering the English culture?

Interviewee: For example, when giving them a text about British culture, we let our learners interpret this target culture and compare it to theirs. And in the end, to discover this new culture.

Interviewer: What do you measure first?

Interviewee: I measure first lexis, grammar, pronunciation, knowledge about the target culture, skills, and attitudes.

Interviewer: According to you, what type of assessment is more appropriate to assess the learner's ICC, formative or summative, and why?

Interviewee: I think both formative and summative assessments are very important or appropriate to assess the learners' ICC because the formative assessment is for learning, whereas summative is of learning.

Interviewer: According to you, which attitude do your learners have when teaching English culture? A negative or positive one?

Interviewee: My learners have a positive attitude when teaching English culture because I discovered that they are curious. They are always curious when they learn about a new culture.

Interviewer: How is their attitude reflected?

Interviewee: My learners are always motivated when they learn about new people, about a new culture, or discover new people or cultures.

Interviewer: I am very happy to have you as my interviewee and bear in mind that your name will be not mentioned, but if you have any comments or anything you want to add, you are welcome. You're welcome. I'm so pleased to be a participant, to collaborate and invest.

Interviewer: Hello dear teacher, I am conducting research which is entitled assessing Learner's Intercultural communicative competence in the Digital Era and therefore I am inviting you to answer my questions.

Interviewee (Ch. S): Hello, you are welcome.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching English at middle school?

Interviewee: I have been teaching English at middle school for five years.

Interviewer: Are there any cultural aspects integrated into the three Ms, my book of English textbook?

Interviewee: Yes, there are several cultural aspects integrated in third year Ms, my book of English textbooks, especially in sequence. One person's profile of Ensu from Nigeria is introducing himself, talking about his interest in music, and also it is integrated into sequence two" Me and my lifestyle". Talk about Jenny from the UK, talking about her grandmother's lifestyle and her lifestyle nowadays.

Interviewer: According to you, what is meant by intercultural competence?

Interviewee: According to me ICC is the ability to communicate and act appropriately and effectively across cultural differences.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' knowledge of the English culture?

Interviewee: The teacher can assess learners' knowledge throughout observation inside the class using checklist service portfolios, journals, self-evaluation reports, and a collection of written products and projects.

Interviewer: Which aspect or aspects of culture, knowledge, attitudes, and skills do you consider when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?

Interviewee: When preparing a test or exam to assess the learners, the teacher should consider both knowledge and skills. For instance, concerning knowledge, the teacher gives his learners text about the Algerian -lifestyles in the past and her learners will apply what they have seen about the British lifestyle, like the example of Jenny and her grandmother's lifestyle.

Interviewer: How do you assess your learners' skills in interpreting, comparing, and discovering the English culture?

Interviewee: My assessment is based on the ability of my students to interpret themselves, others, and the world. We may focus on the knowledge that learners perform, and interact with and their written product as well.

Interviewer: What do you measure?

Interviewee: First, I measure the knowledge about the target culture skills, then Lexis, and after that, grammar and pronunciation. The last one is about attitudes.

Interviewer: According to you, what type of assessment is more appropriate to assess the learners' ICC, summative or formative? Why?

Interviewee: Formative assessment is more appropriate because it is a long-life process and every day we are learning more to achieve development and cultural competence. Interviewer:

According to you, which attitude do your learners have when teaching English culture? Negative or positive?

Interviewee: According to me, my learners possess both negative and positive attitudes toward the English culture. Some of them enjoy learning about this new culture, whereas others, I feel get bored. They don't like to learn about this topic or this old-fashioned lifestyle. They like what is new, or they like to hear about new fashion clothes.

Interviewer: How is their attitudes reflected?

Interviewee: It is reflected throughout their facial expressions, and their curiosity when asking about other cultures to know more.

Interviewer: Thanks, the dear teacher for your cooperation and contribution to my study. And if you have extra words to say, you are welcome.

Interviewee: Thank you so much for this interview. It's so an interesting topic.

Interviewer: Hello dear teacher, I am researching Assessing learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Digital Era, and therefore I am inviting you today to answer my questions.

Interviewee (K. H): You are welcome. It is a pleasure.

4.4.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Teachers' interviews

1) Teachers' teaching experience at middle school

Teachers who participated in the present research teach English at middle school. Their experiences range from 5 to 25 years. All of them were full-time teachers at middle school, thus they were familiar with the curriculum and syllabus of the third-year level. This helped both the researcher and the teachers during the interview day to gain data about the topic under study.

2) Teachers' perceptions of English culture

Intending to gain insights into the way middle school teachers of English teach the English language and its culture for third-year middle school learners, questions 2 and 3 are devoted to that. Questions about this part are about teachers' perception of teaching English culture. Although the teachers who took part in this study possessed an Algerian cultural background and values, they were overt towards the English culture. They assume that culture and language are inseparable. Teachers insisted on the integration of English culture at middle school. For instance, one of the participants (A.M) believed that integrating culture or cultural aspects in English or third-year level is to invite learners to exchange cultural aspects or to exchange culture in general. Another participant (Mo. Ab) noted that there are cultural aspects integrated into three Ms. My Book of English to help the learners to know about the British culture and way of life. Generally speaking, language and culture should be taught together since language is part of the culture. Kramsch (1993) agrees on the idea that language and culture could not be separated from each other and the presence of language determines the presence of culture and vice-versa.

a. What is Intercultural communicative competence:

What is meant by ICC, teachers who are experienced were not familiar with the concept, however through discussions with the researcher during the interview they could

grasp the meaning and tried to define it. According to an interviewee's ICC is defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural differences. This definition seemed vague for the researcher who asked the participant to clarify the word across cultural differences which meant to communicate with people who are different from us in terms of language, culture, attitudes, and behaviours. In the same line of thought, another participant (G.A) defined ICC as "according to me, intercultural competence is to enable our learners to communicate with others who hold different traditions or values, et cetera. In this respect, Byram (1997), defines intercultural competence as "Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviours; and relativizing one's self" (Byram, 1997, p.10). In the same vein, Deardorff (2006), defines ICC as the "ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 80).

b. Assessment of culture

Concerning assessing culture, participants agreed that it is somehow difficult to assess their learners' knowledge about the target culture because they were not trained to do so. However, most of them declared that they provide their learners with text and questions about the target culture and see if they are knowledgeable or not. Then, they ask them to compare the target culture to theirs. The participant (A.M) said, "Well, I assess my learners' knowledge of English culture based on information or culture, or let's say, information related to the country so that they compare their culture to the other, explore the new one, asking them about vocabulary, about landmarks, about people, about everything related to the other, or clothes, something food, anything which represents the difference between their country or the other country". Another participant (Ch.'s) believed that assessment of culture can be done inside the classroom by observing and asking the learners questions and giving them

homework. The participant declared that “teacher can assess learners’ knowledge throughout observation inside the class using checklist service portfolios, journals, self-evaluation reports, collection of written products and projects”. Deardorff (2006) insists that before assessing ICC, one should define the concept first. Then, he/she prioritizes which aspect(s) to be assessed. Is it the individual, the curriculum (program), or the organization? The participants agreed that they assess knowledge about the target culture first. For instance, the interviewee (Ch.’s) said, “When preparing a test or exams to assess the learners, the teacher should consider both knowledge and skills. For instance, concerning knowledge, the teacher gives his learners text about the Algerian -lifestyles in the past and her learners will apply what they have seen about the British lifestyle, like the example of Jenny and her grandmother's lifestyle”. Another interviewee (Mo. Ab) answered “Of course, when preparing my test exams to assess my learners, I take into consideration knowledge. Of course, because they are learning a language, I assess their knowledge. They can use the language in writing, reading, speaking, of course, in different skills, such as producing while producing, if they can learn, if they can produce a piece of writing, a piece of dialogue sorry, everything if they can produce it. Yes or no”. Most of the participants agreed that formative assessment is more suitable and efficient to assess the learners’ ICC. According to them, this time helps both teachers to assess their teaching and learners’ acquisition of ICC. For example, an interviewee (Ch.S) declared that “Formative assessment is more appropriate because it is a long life process and every day we are learning more to achieve development and to cultural competence”. However, another interviewee (G.A) said that both formative and summative assessments are very important. In this respect, the interviewee said “I think both formative and summative assessments are very important or appropriate to assess the learners' ICC because the formative assessment is for learning, whereas formative assessment is for learning”.

C. Learners' attitudes towards ICC

All the participants noted that their learners showed positive attitudes while learning about a new culture be it native or foreign, i.e, if they are from the western regions of Algeria, they are very excited to discover that the east or south of Algeria. Or the foreign target culture presented in the textbook be it American or British. This meant that learners are ready and overt to learn about any new culture. In this respect, an interviewee (A.M) said: "I think that they have already shown a positive one because they have that enthusiasm to explore the world and to know about the other people, their colour of skin, their hair, the beauty of the world, another way of living, other food, everything else". For the same line of thought, another interviewee (Mo. Ab) declared that: "What... ah...ah... I think that my learners always show positive attitudes, it's positive because they like English. They like English, even English culture. They like it. Even the teacher of English, they prefer English language teacher". So, when learners like the English language and its culture and their teachers who teach English. Learners showed their attitudes through facial expressions (smiles) and curiosity. An interviewee (G.A) said that learners have a positive attitude when teaching English culture because I discovered that they are curious. They are always curious when they learn about new culture". So, this showed that learners are motivated and ready to discover new cultures. Here, the researcher noticed the importance of motivation in Second Language Acquisition.

Conclusion

Finally, this chapter attempted to shed light on the discussion of findings and data gathering analysis. The researcher used the aforementioned tools to prove or disprove the hypotheses suggested in the current research. First of all, the researcher began to analyse the learner's questionnaire and considering the participants' responses to back up the research questions. The questionnaire aimed to assess the learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the target culture introduced in the textbook *My Book of English* year three. Then, the researcher described and analysed the third-year middle school English textbook to investigate whether the textbook designers introduced both learners' own culture and the target culture. The researcher sought to reveal whether the textbook that is the only document for learners to learn from was useful to assess their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the culture presented in the textbook. In addition to this, the researcher interviewed eleven middle school teachers to highlight if they assess their learners' ICC through focusing on the three main dimensions knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are the cement of ICC. In this chapter, the researcher tried to answer the abovementioned research questions and also verify the hypotheses suggested. Eventually, data showed that middle school teachers need to be familiar with the concept ICC and which strategies and methods suit to assess learners' ICC progress in EFL classrooms. So, teachers need to attend workshops, seminars, and travelling abroad to enhance their teaching methods and strategies. They also make contacts and interactions with teachers from other countries and especially who teach and assess learners' intercultural communicative competence in order to cope with 21st challenges in this interconnectedness world.

Chapter Five : A Suggested Toolkit for ICC Assessment

Introduction

The previous chapter has shown that Algerian middle school learners possess enough knowledge about the British and American cultures. Data obtained from the learners' questionnaire revealed that third year middle school learners hold positive attitudes towards foreign cultures, in the sense that they are curious to know about people who belong to another culture. Additionally, data showed that learners have the skills that help them interpret the host culture and compare it with their own one. However, data gained from the teachers' interview showed that teachers of English need continuous professional development in ICC in order to encourage their learners' progress in this global interconnected world where intercultural skills are crucial. The present chapter focuses on assessing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which is crucial in the 21st century, both at personal and institutional levels. At the personal level, indicators of ICC encompass personal values and skills, interpersonal relationship building, intercultural knowledge and sensitivity, and global issue awareness. Institutions play a vital role in promoting ICC development, and their success can be evaluated through indicators at the country level, within schools, at the curriculum development level, and in teacher education programs. To effectively assess ICC, incorporating authentic digital resources, performance-based assessments, and digital portfolios have emerged as innovative approaches. Digital portfolios, in particular, offer several benefits, including comprehensive assessment, reflective practice, and authentic assessment. However, challenges related to technological access and authenticity must be considered. This chapter explores the design, implementation, challenges, and implications of using digital portfolios for assessing Algerian learners' ICC. Additionally, it addresses the implications for middle school textbook designers and suggests approaches for teaching and assessing ICC in the Algerian context.

5.1. Indicators for Assessing ICC

Assessing intercultural communicative competence at both the personal and institutional levels is essential to gauge the effectiveness of intercultural education. These indicators provide insights into learners' growth, development, and proficiency in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). Here are some indicators to consider when assessing learners' ICC development. Indicators are divided into two categories: personal and institutional (Deardorff, 2006).

Personal indicators comprise a set of questions addressed to individuals and are divided into four categories (Deardorff, 2006). Personal values and skills, interpersonal relationship building, intercultural knowledge and sensitivity, and global issues awareness. Institutional indicators are a set of questions addressed to individuals: country level, school level, curriculum development level, and teacher education level.

5.1.1. Personal Indicators

Personal indicators reflect the learners' attitudes towards their own culture and the host one. These indicators can include respect, empathy and open-mindedness towards the host culture. So, teachers can assess these indicators relying on the following questions.

5.1.2. Personal values and skills

1. Are learners able to demonstrate empathy and respect towards individuals from different cultural background?
2. Do learners exhibit willingness to challenge their own cultural assumptions and biases?
3. How effectively do learners manage ambiguity and uncertainty in intercultural interactions?
4. Are learners able to adapt their communication style to accommodate different cultural norms and expectations?

5. Do learners demonstrate open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from different cultures?
6. Are learners open to discovering new aspects of their identities?

5.1.3. Interpersonal Relationship Building

1. How well do learners engage in active listening during intercultural reactions?
2. Are learners able to establish rapport and build trust with individuals from different backgrounds?
3. Do learners effectively manage conflicts and misunderstandings in intercultural communication?
4. Are learners able to collaborate and work effectively in multicultural teams?
5. How well do learners demonstrate cultural sensitivity in their verbal and non-verbal communication?
6. Are learners sensitive to others?

5.1.4. Intercultural Knowledge and Sensitivity

Intercultural knowledge and sensitivity are fundamental components of developing learners' ICC (Karwacka-Vögele, 2012). Intercultural knowledge involves understanding different cultural norms, values, beliefs, and communication styles. This awareness helps learners recognize and appreciate cultural diversity. Sensitivity contributes to the development of authentic relationships by demonstrating respect for diverse perspectives and fostering a sense of trust and mutual understanding (Karwacka-Vögele, 2012). In this respect, intercultural knowledge and sensitivity are the main indicators that help teachers assess their learners' progress in intercultural communication (Karwacka-Vögele, 2012). These indicators can guide educators and learners in identifying areas of improvement. Intercultural knowledge and sensitivity indicators assist learners to demonstrate an awareness of their own cultural

background and biases. In addition to this, they help learners to understand the importance of cultural diversity and recognize and respect cultural differences in values, customs, and traditions.

1. Are learners aware of and knowledgeable about different cultural practices, customs, and traditions?
2. Do learners possess a basic understanding of cultural dimensions and their impact on communication?
3. Are learners aware of their own cultural identity and its influence on their interactions with others?
4. Do learners recognize and navigate effectively cultural differences in intercultural communication?
5. Are learners able to adapt their communication strategies to meet the needs of diverse cultural contexts?
6. Are learners flexible to see different values as they are in the context of another cultural filter (not from their own perspective)?
7. Are learners able to gather information about their roots and try to overcome any narrow local or national standpoints at the same time?
8. Do learners strive to broaden their horizons?
9. Do learners feel comfortable in different cultural settings?
10. Do learners enhance intercultural communication?
11. Are learners able to communicate with others using their ways of expression?
12. Do learners work on common projects?
13. Do learners develop their own tolerance of ambiguity?
14. Do learners look for solutions, instead of focusing on problems?

5.1.5. Global Issues Awareness

Global issues awareness refers to understanding and knowledge of significant challenges, concerns, and problems that affect the entire world or a large part of it. These issues often transcend national boundaries and impact people ecosystem on global scale, for instance, learners have to be aware about biodiversity loss and therefore learners should be aware of global issues. Here are some questions that can assess learners' ICC in terms of global issues awareness:

1. Are learners knowledgeable about global issues such as climate change and human rights?
2. Do learners demonstrate an understanding of the interconnectedness of different cultures and societies?
3. Are learners aware of the impact of globalization on cultural diversity and intercultural communication?
4. How effectively do learners engage in discussion and debates on global issues from a multicultural perspective?
5. Do learners actively seek opportunities to engage with global issues and contribute to positive change?

5.2. Institutional Indicators

Institutional indicators are used to assess an organization's or institution's effectiveness in promoting intercultural communicative competence among its members. These indicators help measure how well an institution is fostering intercultural learning, inclusivity, and diversity (Deardorff, 2006). Institutions play a crucial role in fostering ICC among their members. In fact, there are several ways which help institutions to develop their members' ICC. Institutions offer courses in various languages in order to assist their members gain linguistic skills that are essential for communication across cultures. Institutions can do this through language learning programs. In addition to this, institutions should organise

intercultural communication courses which help learners understand the nuances of different cultures and communication styles. Study abroad and exchange programs help learners to get first –hand experience in a different cultural setting and enhance learners’ understanding and adaptability. Institutions should organise seminars and workshops focusing on promoting learners’ intercultural skills and awareness. Intercultural skills and awareness provide practical strategies for effective communication (Deardorff, 2006). Cultural celebrations and events help learners learn about and appreciate different cultures. Providing resources and support for members from different cultural backgrounds and offer training on intercultural competence.

5.2.1. Country Level (national level)

1. Does the country promote and support intercultural education and cultural diversity in its educational policies and framework?
2. Are there government initiatives and programs to foster intercultural understanding and competence among learners and educators?
3. Are there opportunities for collaboration and exchange between educational institutions from different cultural backgrounds within the country?
4. Are we actively promoting international solidarity within our institution?
5. Are we exploring innovative approaches to foster coexistence and cooperation with other cultures?
6. Are we actively working towards sustainable living in multicultural societies by promoting understanding, respect, and dialogue among different cultural groups?
7. Are we encouraging cross-fertilization, where individuals and cultures learn and benefit from each other?
8. Are we fostering cultural relativism by promoting the equality of cultures and ensuring non-discrimination?

9. Do we actively support diversity and pluralism, avoiding discrimination and exclusion while embracing the creative use of pluralism and mutual acceptance of diversity?
10. Are we facilitating interaction between different groups of people through joint learning programs or by addressing intercultural questions and conflicts through negotiation?
11. Do we endorse the development of new collective identities, such as European citizenship or global citizenship?
12. Are we encouraging cultural hybridization, where values, attitudes, and ways of living together benefit from cultural pluralism?
13. Are we fostering collaborative learning approaches that encourage leaning together and from each other, such as project work and cooperative learning methods?
14. Are we developing assessment tools and indicators for self-evaluation and self-directed improvement specifically designed for educational institutions?
15. Do we offer cultural activities that promote diverse cultural expressions and contribute to fostering tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect?
16. Do we provide opportunities for children and young people to engage and interact with their peers from different cultural backgrounds, both in educational settings such as schools and youth clubs?
17. Are we actively promoting cooperation and networking in the field of education, including facilitating student exchanges and partnerships at all educational levels?
18. Are we actively supporting and promoting intercultural programs and exchanges that are relevant to our educational context?
19. Are our regulations and policies designed to facilitate intercultural exchanges, including visas requirements, work permits, and residence permits?
20. Do we empower young people to actively participate in democratic processes, enabling them to contribute to the promotion of core values?

These institutional indicators can serve as a framework for assessing an institution's commitment to and effectiveness in promoting ICC. By utilizing these indicators, institutions can work to create a more inclusive and intercultural competent environment for their members.

5.2.2. In Schools

Indicators at the school level are used to assess how well a particular school is fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) among its students and creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment. These indicators help measure the school's commitment to promoting intercultural awareness, respect, and effective communication. Here are some school-level indicators that can assess learners' ICC:

1. Are Algerian pupils involved in hosting foreign pupils as part of intercultural exchange programs?
2. Do Algerian pupils demonstrate respect for the cultural identity of our learners?
3. Do Algerian teachers provide learners with the necessary cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills to prepare them for active participation in society and foster respect, understanding, and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious groups and nations?
4. Do Algerian teachers encourage the empowerment, commitment, and contribution of all pupils, parents, and staff to improve the school environment?
5. Do Algerian authorities promote the engagement of teachers, school management, and students in intercultural experiences both within and outside the school?
6. Do teachers promote culturally responsive governance and management?
7. Do Algerian authorities foster responsible and inclusive decision-making processes?
8. Do teachers create an atmosphere of trust, ownership, and shared responsibility among all stakeholders?

9. Do teachers involve parents from ethnic minority backgrounds in school activities and collective decision-making processes?
10. Do teachers provide opportunities for cooperative learning, open group discussion, and experimental activities that encourage interdependence rather than competition and hierarchy?
11. Do teachers actively promote diversity in the development of our institution?
12. Do teachers implement site-based management practices that foster local problem-solving, culturally responsive decision-making and measures that support diversity?
13. Do schools prioritize values clarification, team building, dialogue, and mutual understanding among its members?
14. Do teachers create an intercultural, mixed, and integrated school environment to reduce social distance between learners from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?
15. Do teachers form diverse teams, including learner, staff, and parent representatives, to address governance and management issues?
16. Do teachers encourage student participation in representative councils, governing bodies, and mediation teams to address conflicts?
17. Do teachers actively promote student involvement in democratic and responsible decision-making processes?
18. Do teachers empower stakeholders to identify and eliminate institutional discrimination, as well as hidden forms of prejudice and marginalization?
19. Do teachers provide counselling, pastoral care, and student development service to address conflicts, discrimination, peer pressure, frustration, and related issues?
20. Do teachers actively work to promote segregation, both overt and hidden, by avoiding the enrolment of ethnic minority students in special classes?
21. Do teachers consider the hidden curriculum, school ethos, organizational culture, and school life as indicators of institutional quality?

22. Do teachers employ self-analytical and reflective methods for continuous institutional improvement?
24. Do teachers incorporate multiple sources of input in internal decision-making processes?
25. Do teachers promote global access to institutional life based on principles of democracy and human rights?
26. Do teachers encourage learners to explore diverse issues such as attitudes towards fellow students, the overall atmosphere in the school, and informal aspects of the curriculum?
27. Do teachers provide opportunities for learners to develop their intercultural competence?

These school-level indicators can help educators and school administrators assess their progress in promoting ICC and inclusivity within their educational institution. Schools that actively address these indicators contribute to the development of students who are culturally competent and well-prepared for a diverse world.

5.2.3. At Curriculum Development Level

Indicators at the curriculum development level are used to evaluate how well educational institutions and curriculum developers are incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) into their educational programs. These indicators help ensure that the curriculum effectively promotes intercultural awareness and competence among students (Byram, 1997). Integrating intercultural communicative competence at curriculum level involves embedding intercultural learning and skills development into the educational experience. Curriculum designers should include ICC objectives and clearly define this concept in the curriculum. Intercultural learning objectives encompass understanding cultural diversity, developing empathy, and improving communication skills across cultures (Deardorff, 2006). By embedding ICC into the curriculum, institutions can prepare students to navigate and contribute to an increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse world. Here are some curriculum development-level indicators:

1. Do we prioritize topics in the curriculum that consider the multilingual context of education?
2. Do we actively promote learner-oriented teaching and learning methods, such as explorative learning, project-oriented learning, role plays, and learning to negotiate positions and views?
3. Do we develop methods to address otherness and difference in an inclusive and constructive manner?
4. Do we encourage learners to develop loyalties that extend beyond their home and nation?
5. Do we provide students with opportunities to interact with individuals from diverse needs, interests, abilities, and cultural backgrounds?
6. Is intercultural education included as an objective in the curriculum at all levels of formal education? Do we promote non-ethnocentric curricula based on the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism, and cultural relativism?
7. Do we create specific intercultural learning situations, such as encounters with the unknown, to foster understanding of cultural differences?
8. Do we promote the understanding of cultural differences within a meaningful context, encouraging learning from differences and embracing multi-perspectives?
9. Is the curriculum flexible enough to allow schools to adapt it to local needs, conditions, and cultural specifics?
10. Can the curriculum be extended to include alternative and private educational provision without compromising the core curriculum and overall coherence of education delivery?
11. Do we teach the social skills and competencies necessary for democracy learning, such as the ability to participate in public debates and resolve conflicts?

12. Does the curriculum provide opportunities for multicultural delivery, intercultural communication, and exposure to other countries?
13. Do we assess academic achievement in citizenship-related subjects like civics, history, social studies, and political sciences?
14. Do we value intercultural encounters and promote experimental learning situations facilitated by non-formal education, such as exchanges, visits, and projects?
15. Does the curriculum include specialized modules, training programs, and cross-cultural topics with "European" content?
16. Do we develop tools to encourage students to apply independent critical skills, including critically reflecting on their own responses and attitudes towards other cultures?
17. Are school and family-based exchanges incorporated into the curriculum?

These curriculum development-level indicators ensure that educational programs are designed to foster intercultural competence among students and prepare them for a diverse and interconnected world. Curriculum developers and institutions can use these indicators to assess and improve their efforts in promoting ICC.

5.2.4. At Teacher Education Level

Indicators at the teacher level are used to assess how well educators are fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) among their students and creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment. These indicators help measure teachers' commitment to promoting intercultural awareness, respect, and effective communication (Karwacka-Vögele, 2012). Developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) involves a combination of in-class and out-of-class strategies that teachers can employ to enhance students' understanding and skills in interacting across culture. Teachers should integrate ICC in lesson plans. For instance, teaching greeting, food etiquette and table

manners will help learners learn how to greet people who belong to another culture. Also, they will learn about different table manners. Here are some teacher-level indicators:

1. Are teachers trained to show sensitivity and awareness of intercultural issues?
2. Are teachers encouraged to develop empathy towards others?
3. Are teachers trained to be effective and fair in dealing with intercultural encounters?
4. Do we support trainees' productivity and constructive engagement in intercultural contexts?
5. Are teachers encouraged to translate their individual practices into actions that contribute to shaping societal practices?
6. Do trainers organize training sessions that focus on diversity, social sensitivity, cultural responsiveness, and quality requirements as part of staff development programs?
7. Do trainers provide professional training for teachers that addresses proactive goals, such as building a learning community, as well as responsive needs, such as conflict resolution?
8. Do trainers foster intercultural competence through both initial teacher training and in-service training?
9. Do trainers prepare teachers to develop teaching materials that enhance culturally responsive education?
10. Are teachers equipped across different subject areas with methods and resources that support deliberative learning, critical understanding, teamwork, conflict management, and particularly when teaching controversial and sensitive issues?
11. Do trainers train teachers to ensure safe learning conditions for all students?
12. Do trainers provide trainees with educational strategies and working methods to effectively manage situations related to discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism, and marginalization?

13. Are teachers trained to resolve conflicts peacefully?
14. Do trainers encourage trainees to handle difficult situations that may arise in informal and interpersonal encounters, such as verbal threats or sexual intimidation?
15. Do teachers promote reflective teaching and support their self-development as a means of ensuring quality in education?
16. Do trainers ensure school-based teacher training to address specific issues relevant to the local community, such as cultural specifics, community development, or other training needs?
17. Do trainers develop the skills necessary for teachers to update their professional competence to cater to diverse learning groups?
18. Are teachers provided with new media skills to facilitate student participation in online collaborative learning and collective knowledge building?
19. Do trainers prepare teachers to gradually implement and evaluate non-cognitive, values-related, and citizenship education goals?
20. Are teachers trained to assess students' previous cultural and social experiences and address their specific learning needs, such as language and civic competencies, and social distance?
21. Do teachers develop quality-assurance instruments inspired by education for democratic citizenship, considering the intercultural dimension?
22. Are teachers trained to motivate learners to collaborate with others in making personal and environmental changes?

These teacher-level indicators are essential for assessing the effectiveness of educators in fostering ICC and creating inclusive learning environments. Teachers who actively address these indicators contribute to the development of students who are culturally competent, open-minded, and well-prepared for a diverse and interconnected world. Assessing the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among Algerian middle school learners can

be achieved through a variety of lesson plans that incorporate activities designed to evaluate their understanding and skills in engaging with foreign cultures. Below are suggested lesson plans that target different aspects of ICC, such as knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. The researcher suggests some lesson plans that may help middle school teachers to prepare lessons to develop and assess learners' ICC.

Lesson Plan 1: Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

Learning Objective: To develop students' awareness and sensitivity towards different cultures and assess their ability to recognize cultural differences.

Activities:

Warm-Up Discussion: Ask students to share any experiences they have had with people from different cultures. What did they learn from these interactions?

- **Cultural Comparison Activity:**
- Divide students into small groups and assign each group a different country (e.g., Great Britain, France, Japan, Brazil).
- Each group researches their assigned country's cultural practices, traditions, and social norms.
- Groups present their findings to the class, highlighting differences and similarities with Algerian culture.
- **Reflection activity:**
- Ask students write a short communicative production (email-paragraph- article-dialogue) reflecting on what they learned about the foreign culture they researched. Ask them to consider how they might feel and act if they visited that country.
- **Assessment**
- Evaluate presentations for accuracy and depth of cultural understanding.

- Assess reflection essays for insights into students' attitudes towards cultural differences and their ability to reflect on intercultural experiences.

Lesson Plan 2: Intercultural Communication Skills

Objective: To assess students' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural settings.

Activities:

- **Role-Playing Scenarios:**
 - Create scenarios where students must navigate a situation involving cultural misunderstandings (e.g., a miscommunication in a restaurant abroad).
 - Students role-play these scenarios in pairs or small groups, practicing appropriate communication strategies.
 - Students role-play these scenarios in pairs or small groups, practicing appropriate communication strategies.
- **Debrief and Discussion:**
 - After each role-play, discuss as a class what strategies were used to resolve the misunderstanding and what could have been done differently.
- **Intercultural Dialogue:**
 - Set up a virtual exchange with a partner school in a different country. Students prepare questions about the foreign culture and engage in a video call or written exchange with their peers abroad.

5.3. Incorporating Authentic Digital Resources

The educational landscape in Algerian middle schools is grappling with a notable deficiency in digital resources, particularly in the realm of assessing learners' ICC. Despite the increasing importance of digital literacy in the modern world, many middle schools in Algeria lack the necessary tools and technologies to adequately evaluate and enhance students' ICC

skills. The scarcity of computers, reliable internet access, and updated software hampers the integration of digital assessment methods. This digital divide poses a significant challenge as it restricts students from developing essential skills required for effective communication and information handling in today's interconnected society. Furthermore, the absence of digital resources in Algerian middle schools impedes the creation of a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Traditional assessment methods often fall short in evaluating students' ability to navigate the digital landscape, critically assess information, and communicate effectively in digital formats. The limited exposure to digital tools also inhibits teachers' ability to incorporate innovative teaching techniques that could foster ICC development. Addressing this deficit requires a concerted effort from educational policymakers to invest in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development that integrates digital resources seamlessly into the learning process. By doing so, Algerian middle schools can better prepare their students for the demands of the digital age and equip them with the necessary skills for success in a globally connected world. It is crucial to incorporate authentic digital resources into the Algerian curriculum for Algerian middle school learners to assess their ICC development in the digital age. These resources will greatly help teachers to assess their learners' ICC and enhance the learning experience by providing learners with real-life examples of language use and cultural contexts. Authentic digital resources such as online articles, podcasts, videos, and social media platforms will help learners communicate effectively with foreigners. These resources provide benefits for learners. Firstly, they offer exposure to genuine language use, enabling learners to develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions in real-world context. This exposure will help learners develop proficiency and acquire a more natural and authentic communicative style. Additionally, incorporating authentic digital resources exposes learners to diverse perspectives and cultures, fostering their intercultural understanding. Algeria middle school

learners can access content from English-speaking countries and engage with different cultural norms, practices, and perspectives. This exposure promotes empathy, tolerance, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. Moreover, authentic digital resources encourage learners to engage actively with the language and culture. Learners can interact with the content through commenting, sharing opinions, and participating in online discussions. Learners will not only enhance their language skills but also develop critical thinking and communication abilities in an authentic digital environment through interactive experience. To incorporate authentic digital resources effectively, teachers can curate a collection of reliable and age-appropriate online materials aligned with the English curriculum. Teachers can select resources that reflect the learners' interests, incorporate contemporary topics, and cater to different learning styles. They can guide their learners on how to evaluate the reliability and credibility of online sources to ensure they engage with accurate and trustworthy information (Fong & De Witt, 2019). These resources should be accompanied by thoughtful pedagogical activities. Teachers can design tasks that require learners to analyse, interpret, and reflect on the content they encounter. In this respect, learners can write summaries or opinion pieces based on online articles, create multimedia projects showcasing their understanding of cultural practices, or participate in online debates and discussions. Overall, incorporating authentic digital resources into the English curriculum for Algerian middle school learners is vital in the digital age. These resources assist teachers to create engaging and dynamic learning experience that promote language proficiency, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and digital literacy.

5.3.1. Digital Portfolios

Assessing learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is crucial in the Algerian educational context to prepare students for the globalized world of the 21st century. Digital portfolios offer an innovative and effective assessment tool that allows for a

comprehensive evaluation of students' intercultural competence (Barlow & Irvine, 1998). Digital portfolios offer a promising approach to assess Algerian learners' ICC in the 21st century. By providing a comprehensive and reflective assessment tool, digital portfolios enable teachers to evaluate students' intercultural competence and guide their potential development. Implementing digital portfolios requires careful planning, technological access, and professional development for teachers. Incorporating digital portfolios into the assessment framework can contribute to nurturing culturally competent and globally aware Algerian learners.

5.3.2. Benefits of Digital Portfolios for Assessing ICC

Digital portfolios offer numerous benefits for assessing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among students. They leverage technology to create dynamic, interactive, and comprehensive records of students' learning experiences, reflections, and growth. Digital portfolios can be accessed from any device with internet connectivity, allowing students to work on and reflect on their portfolios at their own pace and convenience. Digital tools offer easy ways to organize and update portfolios, ensuring that students can systematically document their learning and intercultural experiences. Digital portfolios can be accessed from any device with internet connectivity, allowing students to work on and reflect on their portfolios at their own pace and convenience. Digital tools offer easy ways to organize and update portfolios, ensuring that students can systematically document their learning and intercultural experiences (Abrami & Barrett, 2005).

5.3.3. Comprehensive Assessment

Digital portfolios help teachers to have holistic view about their learners' progress during the academic year. As a result, digital portfolios are helpful for teachers to assess their learners' ICC development by showcasing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a

collection of their creative writing (artefacts such as, poems, songs, plays, and stories), reflections, and evidence of intercultural experiences (Griva & Ifigenia, 2018).

5.3.4. Reflective Practice

Portfolios encourage students to engage in reflective practice, enabling them to critically evaluate their intercultural experiences, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for further development (Griva & Ifigenia, 2018). Portfolios are an effective tool for encouraging students to engage in reflective practice. They provide a structured way for students to collect, organize, and reflect on their work over time, allowing them to see their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for future learning (Zubizarreta, 2009). Here's how portfolios can foster reflective practice. By compiling a portfolio, students regularly document their learning experiences, assignments, and projects. This process encourages them to think critically about what they have learned and how they have learned it. Many portfolios include reflective entries where students must describe their thought processes, challenges faced, and lessons learned from specific tasks. This structured reflection helps deepen their understanding of their own learning (Zubizarreta, 2009).

5.3.5. Authentic Assessment

Digital portfolios facilitate the assessment of real-world, authentic intercultural interactions and communication, as students can include multimedia artefacts, videos, or online collaborations that demonstrate their intercultural competence (Barlow & Irvine, 1998). Authentic assessment is a powerful approach for assessing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among middle school learners, including those in Algeria. Authentic assessments are designed to evaluate students' skills and competencies through real-world tasks that reflect genuine communication scenarios. Teachers can design activities such as:

Role-playing and simulations, cultural portfolios, intercultural projects, and reflective journals.

5.4. Assessment Approaches for ICC in The Classroom

Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the classroom requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond traditional testing methods. Effective assessment of ICC involves evaluating not only language proficiency but also cultural awareness, sensitivity, adaptability, and effective communication in diverse cultural contexts (Deardorff, 2009).

5.4.1. Performance-Based Assessments in EFL Classrooms

Performance-based assessments are an effective approach to assess learners' language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in EFL classroom (Fong & De Witt, 2019). These assessments enable learners to use English in meaningful and authentic tasks allowing them to demonstrate their language skills in real-life communication settings. These types of assessment provide a more comprehensive and holistic view of learners' abilities, going beyond simple knowledge recall and evaluating their application of language skills in context.

Performance-based assessments involve tasks such as, role-plays, oral presentations, debates, group discussions, and project-based assignments. These tasks require learners to actively use the language, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and engage in real-life communication. Learners are given opportunities when engaging in these tasks by expressing their ideas, negotiate meaning, and adapt their language use based on the communicative context. Performance-based assessments also encourage collaboration and cooperation among learners. Group projects and interactive tasks promote teamwork, problem-solving, and the development of social communication skills. Moreover, performance-based assessments

provide learners with immediate feedback and the opportunity for self-reflection, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and monitor their achievements.

Research has shown the benefits of performance-based assessments in EFL contexts. Researchers found that online collaborative tasks promoted social and cognitive collaboration among future language teachers, enhancing their language proficiency and intercultural competence (Ducate & Arnold, 2006). Investigations on the self-directed use of technology for language learning outside the classroom and found that performance-based assessments encouraged learners to actively engage with digital resources and develop their language skills autonomously. Incorporating performance-based assessments requires careful planning and design (Calandra & Rich, 2015). Teachers need to align assessment tasks with learning objectives, provide clear instructions, and establish criteria for evaluation. Rubrics and scoring guidelines can be used to ensure fair and consistent assessment practices. Additionally, technology can be leveraged to enhance assessment performance-based assessments, such as using video recordings for oral presentations or online platforms for collaborative projects. By implementing performance-based assessments in EFL classrooms, teachers can assess learners' language proficiency and ICC more authentically and effectively. These assessments promote active engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and the development of communication skills necessary for real-world learning.

5.5. Challenges and Considerations

Technological Access: Ensure equitable access to technology and necessary support for students to create and maintain their digital portfolios, considering potential disparities in digital resources among learners (Griva & Ifigenia, 2018).

Authenticity and Ethical Considerations: Address issues of authenticity and integrity in portfolio submissions to ensure that students' work represents their own

experiences and efforts. Educators should also provide guidelines on ethical considerations, such as respecting intellectual property and cultural sensitivities (Griva & Ifigenia, 2018).

5.6. AN ICC-Focused Guide To Middle School English Textbook: Designing A Middle School Textbook To Enhance Learners' ICC Development And Assessment

In the 21st century, Algerian middle school textbook designers have a crucial role in promoting intercultural understanding and competence among learners. To create inclusive and comprehensive textbooks, it is important to include content that represents both foreign and local cultures. Introducing Algerian middle school learners to both local and foreign cultures is crucial in the 21st century for several reasons. Firstly, exposure of learners to foreign culture fosters a sense of global citizenship among them and helps them to understand their places in the world. Learners will appreciate cultural diversity. Secondly, Algerian learners will interact with people from different cultural backgrounds in today's interconnected world. Introducing learners to foreign cultures makes them ready for global engagement whether in academia, business, or personal relationships. Thirdly, understanding both local and foreign cultures enhances learners' cross-cultural communication skills. It enables them to navigate diverse communication styles, adapt to different cultural norms, and engage effectively with individuals from various backgrounds. Fourthly, exposure to diverse cultures can open up a career opportunity in international business, diplomacy, tourism, and different fields where intercultural competence is essential. This approach enables students to develop a broader perspective, appreciate cultural diversity, and foster intercultural communication skills. Including foreign cultures in textbooks allows students to explore different cultural perspectives, traditions, and customs. Exposure to diverse cultural content broadens students' horizons, enhances their knowledge of global cultures, and promotes respect and empathy towards others. By incorporating examples from various countries and

regions, students gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of different cultures and the importance of intercultural dialogue. Additionally, it is essential to integrate both local and foreign cultures into the textbooks.

Algerian middle school students should have the opportunity to learn and appreciate their own cultural heritage, traditions, history, and values. By incorporating local content, students develop a sense of identity, pride, and a stronger connection to their own cultural roots. This integration also helps in fostering cultural diversity within the classroom and promoting a positive self-image among students (Deardorff, 2006).

Teaching and assessing learners' ICC within the Algerian middle school curriculum requires a comprehensive approach. Textbook designers should consider incorporating instructional strategies that promote active learning, critical thinking, and reflection. Opportunities for students to engage in collaborative projects, role-plays, and real-world scenarios can enhance their intercultural communication skills and understanding (Deardorff, 2006). Assessment methods should also align with the goals of ICC development. Beyond traditional forms of assessment, such as written exams, designers should consider incorporating performance-based assessments, portfolios, and group projects that allow students to demonstrate their intercultural competence in practical contexts. This approach enables educators to evaluate not only students' knowledge but also their ability to apply intercultural skills in real-life situations.

To ensure the effectiveness of these efforts, continuous professional development for teachers is vital. Training programs should focus on enhancing teachers' intercultural competence and providing them with the necessary pedagogical strategies to effectively teach and assess ICC. Collaborative learning opportunities, workshops, and seminars can empower teachers to create inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms that foster intercultural understanding and competence among students. Incorporating both foreign and local cultures

into Algerian middle school textbooks and adopting appropriate teaching and assessment practices aligned with ICC development are crucial steps in preparing students for the diverse and interconnected world of the 21st century.

5.7. Suggestive Approaches of Teaching and Assessing Learners' ICC in The Algerian Context

The researcher tries to suggest approaches of teaching and assessing Algerian middle school learners' ICC in the 21st century. These suggested approaches may help teachers to develop learners' ICC and make them ready for connecting and contacting people from different cultures.

5.7.1. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Adopt a pedagogical approach that recognizes and values students' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. Incorporate culturally relevant materials, examples, and perspectives into lessons to promote a sense of identity and connection to students' own culture.

5.7.2. Intercultural Exchanges: Organize intercultural exchanges or partnerships with schools or students from different cultural backgrounds within Algeria. This provides opportunities for students to interact with peers from diverse cultures, share experiences, and develop cross-cultural understanding.

5.7.3. Language Learning and Cultural Competence: Integrate language learning with the development of intercultural competence. Teach students not only the language skills but also the cultural nuances, customs, and values associated with different languages to foster intercultural communication skills.

5.7.4. Project-Based Learning: Engage students in project-based learning activities that require collaboration, research, and interaction with different cultures. Assign projects that explore cultural topics, traditions, or global issues to encourage critical thinking and intercultural understanding.

5.7.5. Dialogue and Debate: Create a classroom environment that encourages open dialogue and respectful debate about cultural differences and global issues. Provide space for students to share their perspectives, challenge assumptions, and develop skills for constructive cross-cultural communication.

5.7.6. Assessing Intercultural Competence: Design assessment tasks that measure students' intercultural competence. This may include performance-based assessments, reflective journals, group discussions, or cultural presentations that allow students to demonstrate their ability to navigate and communicate effectively in diverse cultural contexts.

5.7.7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment: Incorporate opportunities for students to reflect on their own cultural identities, biases, and assumptions. Encourage self-assessment and self-reflection to enhance students' awareness of their own intercultural competence and areas for growth.

It is important to note that these approaches should be adapted and contextualized to the specific needs, resources, and educational context of Algeria.

5.8. An Immersive Experience Of An Algerian Middle School Teacher of English in 21st Century In EFL Classroom

Algerian middle school English classrooms in the 21st century should integrate ICTs such as: tablets, mobile phones, and computers that can provide an immersive and dynamic experience for both teachers and learners aiming to develop and assess intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with a focus on a foreign culture be it British or American and the local one. In a 21st century EFL classroom focuses on developing middle school learners' ICC. In a such classroom the environment is likely to be dynamic, interactive, and technology-driven.

The researcher tries to suggest an immersive description experience of a teacher (X) in the 21st century. First of all, the classroom is designed with modern technology such as smartboards, interactive displays, and a reliable internet connection in which each learner has access to a personal digital device (laptop, smartphone, or tablet) creating a digitally inclusive environment. The teacher begins by introducing the concept of British or American culture, emphasizing its diversity and rich historical background. Teaching British or American culture to Algerian middle school learners can be engaging and informative experience. Visual aids, multimedia presentations, and online resources are displayed on interactive whiteboards using laptops. Students explore various aspects of British culture, including traditions, customs, literature, and daily life. For instance, the teacher (x) starts with an introduction to British culture exposing the learners to key objectives of British culture. Warming-up the learners by showing them images of iconic British landmarks and monuments like (Big Ben and Tower Bridge). Also, famous figures in literature such as, William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens. Then, the teacher asks them about these landmarks and famous figures in the British literature. After that, the teacher chooses a landmark or a famous figure and provides the learners with information about the chosen landmark or famous figure. The teacher records information about the chosen landmark or famous figure relying on the internet to download the scripts and asks the learners to download by giving them the link. So, the teacher plans the tasks and asks the learners to use the link where they find the tasks and do them online. Once they finish, they send it to the teacher who is going to assess the tasks using multimedia board in which all learners' answers are shown on the screen as feedback. Another possibility, after getting information about famous landmarks and figures, the teacher may contact another teacher from different school in Algeria or abroad, but not native English speaking countries. For instance, countries in which English language is taught as second language and ask learners to access the internet

and exchange information about their own landmarks and famous figures with the other learners.

Tablets and laptops facilitate virtual tours of iconic British landmarks, museums, and historical figures and sites. Students can explore these places through interactive apps and websites, providing a virtual first-hand experience of British culture. The teacher guides discussions about what students discover during these virtual tours, encouraging them to share their thoughts and observations.

Mobile phones and tablets can be utilized for language learning apps that focus on British English vocabulary, pronunciation, and colloquial expressions. Students engage in language exercises that simulate real-life conversations, helping them not only improve their language skills but also understand the nuances of intercultural communication. Computers enable collaborative online projects that connect Algerian students with British students through video conferencing, emails, or shared documents.

Joint projects could include researching and presenting aspects of each other's cultures. This collaborative approach enhances language skills, promotes cultural exchange, and allows for the practical application of intercultural communication. Using computers and tablets, students engage in digital storytelling projects. They create multimedia presentations or short videos that reflect their understanding of British culture. This activity encourages creativity, critical thinking, and effective communication in a digital format, aligning with the goals of intercultural communicative competence. Mobile phones and tablets can be employed for interactive quizzes and assessments. Platforms or apps that support real-time quizzes allow teachers to gauge students' understanding of British culture and identify areas for improvement. This type of assessment is more engaging for students and provides instant feedback. The teacher organizes virtual cultural exchanges with British schools, facilitating live interactions between Algerian and British students. This real-time communication via

video conferences helps students apply their intercultural communication skills in authentic contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural similarities and differences. By leveraging digital tools and resources, this immersive experience not only enhances language skills but also empowers students to navigate and communicate effectively in a globalized world. The integration of tablets, mobile phones, and computers transforms the traditional classroom into a dynamic space where intercultural communicative competence is actively developed and assessed.

Conclusion

Assessment of learners' ICC is among the knottiest fields that still pose intricate problems for researchers as well as teachers on how to assess learners' ICC in this digital age. For this process to be tailored, the researcher suggests a toolkit for ICC assessment that may help teachers to assess their learners' ICC at personal and institutional levels is essential in the 21st century, and digital portfolios offer a valuable tool for this purpose. The personal indicators of ICC success, such as personal values and skills, interpersonal relationship building, intercultural knowledge and sensitivity, and global issues awareness, contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who can navigate diverse cultural contexts. At the institutional level, indicators at the country, school, curriculum development, and teacher education levels ensure the promotion of ICC within the educational system. The incorporation of authentic digital resources, performance-based assessments, and digital portfolios enhances the assessment process by providing comprehensive, reflective, and authentic evaluation of students' intercultural competence. Designing and implementing digital portfolios require careful consideration of artefact selection, reflection and self-assessment, multimodal representation, and the development of appropriate rubrics and criteria. Challenges related to technological access and authenticity must be addressed to ensure equitable and reliable assessment. The implications of digital portfolio assessment extend beyond the classroom. In addition to this, the researcher proposes that middle school textbooks designers can take cues from this approach to incorporate intercultural content and promote ICC development through diverse and inclusive materials. Moreover, adopting suggestive approaches such as culturally responsive teaching, intercultural exchanges, and project-based learning can effectively foster ICC in the Algerian context. By embracing the use of digital portfolios and implementing appropriate teaching and assessment approaches, Algerian educators can prepare students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and

diverse world, where intercultural competence is an essential skill for success and meaningful engagement. Moreover, the researcher believes how 21st century classrooms should be equipped with digital materials to help teachers to work in comfortable EFL classrooms.

General Conclusion

The notion that foreign language learning exclusively occurs within the confines of language classrooms has become an oversimplification that fails to capture the intricacies of the learning process. While it is undeniable that these educational settings remain formal environments where learners routinely receive instruction on targeted linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, the evolving landscape of globalization has reshaped the boundaries of instructional methodologies within novel frameworks and parameters. In today's technology-driven world, learners are no longer confined to homogeneous communities defined solely by language, norms, and traditions, as they navigate interconnected networks influenced by diverse cultural influences. Learners of English actively participate in global gatherings, including online communities renowned for their embrace of cultural diversity and pragmatic approach driven by shared goals and interests. These virtual platforms extend to broader online communities that shape the entire virtual landscape. In this context, the success of learners' intercultural journey hinges on the dynamic interplay between classroom instruction and online interactions. Moreover, this process is enhanced when teachers expand their perspectives beyond conventional understandings to embrace the new dimensions of intercultural learning. In essence, the effectiveness of intercultural education in language classrooms is realized when online socialization transcends theoretical and mythical interpretations and becomes the focus of rigorous assessment procedures.

This research aims to assess the current levels of intercultural communicative competence among Algerian middle school students. This evaluation provides insights into their abilities to effectively communicate and interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, both locally and globally. Assessment helps identify specific areas where students excel in intercultural communication and areas where they may need improvement. This information guides educators in tailoring instructional strategies to address the needs of

individual learners more effectively. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of students' ICC, assessment data can inform the development of curriculum and educational programs that prioritize intercultural competence development. This ensures that educational initiatives align with the evolving needs of students in a globalized world. Assessing ICC prepares Algerian middle school learners for active participation in a globalized society. By fostering intercultural competence, students are better equipped to navigate diverse cultural contexts, promote cross-cultural understanding, and contribute positively to their communities and the world at large. In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural competence is valued by employers across various industries. Assessing learners' ICC helps prepare them for future career opportunities by equipping them with the skills necessary to thrive in diverse work environments and collaborate effectively with colleagues and clients from different cultural backgrounds. Overall, assessing Algerian middle school learners' ICC serves as a foundational step in promoting cultural awareness, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and preparing students to become informed, empathetic, and globally competent individuals.

Assessing Algerian middle school learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) can be approached through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, incorporating both formative and summative assessments. Here are several strategies that can be employed. Teachers should administer surveys to gauge students' awareness of different cultures, including their beliefs, values, customs, and traditions. Questions can assess knowledge of diverse cultural practices and sensitivity to cultural differences. Assess students' language proficiency in the target language(s) through standardized language tests, focusing on their ability to communicate effectively in intercultural contexts. This can include reading, writing, speaking, and listening assessments. Design tasks or role-plays that require students to engage in interpersonal communication with peers from different cultural backgrounds. Evaluate their ability to negotiate meaning, demonstrate empathy, and adapt their

communication style appropriately. Develop rubrics that outline specific criteria for assessing intercultural competence, such as openness to cultural differences, ability to empathize with others, and willingness to engage in cross-cultural dialogue. Use these rubrics to evaluate students' performance in various tasks and activities. Encourage students to reflect on critical incidents or encounters they have had with individuals from different cultures. Have them analyse these incidents, identify cultural misunderstandings or challenges, and propose strategies for effective cross-cultural communication. Implement peer and self-assessment processes where students evaluate their own intercultural competence development and provide feedback to their peers. This promotes reflection and self-awareness while fostering a collaborative learning environment. Encourage students to compile a portfolio of their work related to intercultural communication, including written assignments, projects, reflections, and multimedia artefacts. Evaluate their progress and growth in intercultural competence over time based on the contents of their portfolio. By employing a diverse range of assessment methods, educators can gain valuable insights into Algerian middle school learners' ICC development and tailor instructional approaches to better support their intercultural learning goals.

Designing middle school textbooks to effectively assess learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the Algerian context requires careful consideration of various criteria. The textbook should include culturally diverse content that reflects the experiences, perspectives, and traditions of Algerian society as well as other global cultures. This can include readings, stories, and multimedia materials that expose students to different cultural contexts and encourage them to explore cultural similarities and differences. In addition to this, it should incorporate authentic materials such as authentic texts, videos, and audio recordings that provide real-world examples of intercultural communication. These materials should represent a range of cultural contexts and situations relevant to students'

lives, helping them develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. Textbooks should include tasks and activities that require students to engage in intercultural communication and collaboration. These can include role-plays, group discussions, problem-solving activities, and project-based learning tasks that encourage students to interact with peers from different cultural backgrounds and apply their intercultural communication skills in practical contexts. Provide teachers with support and professional development opportunities to effectively implement the textbook and support students' development of ICC. This can include training on intercultural communication pedagogy, resources for integrating cultural content into lessons, and strategies for facilitating intercultural learning experiences in the classroom. By incorporating these criteria into the design of middle school textbooks, educators can create effective learning materials that support the development of learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Algerian context.

Continuous professional development (CPD) plays a crucial role in helping teachers develop their teaching and assessing of learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in several ways. Continuous professional development programs provide teachers with opportunities to learn and implement effective pedagogical strategies for teaching ICC. This includes strategies for creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments, facilitating intercultural communication in the classroom, and integrating cultural content into curriculum and instruction. These programs offer training and support in developing assessment practices that accurately measure learners' ICC. Teachers learn how to design authentic assessment tasks, develop rubrics for evaluating ICC skills, and use formative assessment techniques to monitor students' progress in intercultural learning. CPD programs help teachers enhance their own cultural competence, which is essential for effectively teaching and assessing ICC. Teachers learn about different cultural perspectives, develop empathy and understanding towards cultural diversity, and reflect on their own biases and

assumptions that may impact their teaching practices. Also, they equip teachers with digital literacy skills necessary for integrating technology into the teaching and assessment of ICC. Teachers learn how to use digital tools and resources to facilitate intercultural communication, connect with diverse cultural communities online, and create multimedia learning experiences that promote ICC development. Continuous professional development plays a vital role in supporting teachers' growth and development as they strive to effectively teach and assess learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in diverse educational contexts.

Limitations are part of any research and any researcher cannot escape them. The current research deals with the assessment of learners' intercultural communicative competence in the digital age. The researcher does not find enough research papers in the Algerian context, especially about middle school learners, and therefore it is a challenge in the field of applied linguistics. Also, the researcher faces some obstacles while conducting the teachers' interviews. Some teachers quit for the reason that they refused to record their voices. Others apologize for having no idea about the topic and could not collaborate.

This research can significantly contribute to the field of didactics by advancing our understanding of how to effectively teach and assess learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). Conduct research to identify the most effective pedagogical strategies for teaching ICC in diverse educational settings, considering factors such as cultural context, student demographics, and learning objectives. Conduct studies to validate the reliability and validity of assessment tools and instruments designed to measure learners' ICC, considering factors such as cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and alignment with learning outcomes. Examine the role of teacher cultural competence in promoting students' ICC development, including the effects of teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours on classroom dynamics and learning outcomes. Collaborate with interdisciplinary teams of researchers, educators,

policymakers, and community stakeholders to co-create knowledge and promote research-to-practice translation in the field of ICC education.

The researcher recommends for future research in the field of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) education. Longitudinal studies help to investigate the long-term effects of ICC education on students' language proficiency, cultural awareness, and intercultural communication skills. Follow cohorts of learners over an extended period to track their ICC development from middle school through secondary education and beyond. Cross-Cultural Comparisons will help compare ICC education programs and practices across different cultural contexts to identify commonalities, differences, and culturally specific factors that influence students' ICC development. Explore how educational approaches vary in response to cultural diversity, language policies, and socio-political contexts. Effective strategies for supporting teachers' professional development in the area of ICC education, including the impact of CPD programs, teacher training initiatives, and collaborative learning communities on teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and instructional practices related to ICC. Future research may examine the impact of education policies and curriculum frameworks on the implementation of ICC education in schools, including the integration of ICC standards, learning objectives, and assessment criteria into national and regional education policies. Investigate innovative approaches to curriculum development that prioritize ICC education and align with current trends in intercultural education research and practice.

In conclusion, this research journey into the realm of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) education has been both enlightening and transformative. As I reflect on the complexities of teaching and assessing ICC in the Algerian middle school context, I am reminded of the profound importance of cultivating cultural awareness, empathy, and effective communication skills in today's interconnected world. Beyond mere linguistic proficiency, ICC empowers learners to navigate diverse cultural landscapes with respect,

curiosity, and understanding. Through this research, the researcher has come to appreciate the multifaceted nature of ICC education, which extends far beyond the confines of language classrooms to encompass broader socio-cultural contexts and digital landscapes. It is a journey marked by continuous learning, adaptation, and collaboration, where educators play a pivotal role in guiding students towards intercultural understanding and global citizenship. In essence, the journey of ICC education is a testament to the transformative power of education itself – a journey that transcends borders, bridges cultures, and shapes the hearts and minds of future generations. The researcher's collective efforts in this field may serve as a beacon of hope, inspiration, and progress, guiding us towards a brighter, more interconnected future for all.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview for Middle School Teachers of English

Hello dear teacher(s),

I am inviting you to answer my questions with regard to my research entitles: Assessing Learners' Intercultural Competence in EFL Context. Bear in mind that I am going to record your voices, however your names will not be mentioned.

1. How long have you been teaching English at the Middle school? Teachers' experience
2. Are there any cultural aspects integrated in the 3 MS My Book of English textbook?
3. According to you, What is the aim behind integrating culture in 3MS My Book of English textbook?
Teachers' perceptions towards English culture
4. According to you, what is meant by intercultural competence?
5. How do you assess your learners' knowledge of the English culture?
6. Which aspect(s) of culture (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) do you take into account when preparing your tests and exams to assess your learners?
7. How do you assess your learners' skills (interpreting, comparing, and discovering) of the English culture
8. What do you measure first ,
a-lexis
b- grammar,
c-Pronunciation
d- knowledge about the target culture;
e- Skills
f- Attitudes? ? Assessing culture
9. According to you, what type of assessment is more appropriate to assess the learners' ICC, formative or summative? Why? Assessing culture
10. According to you, which attitude do your learners have when teaching English culture, a negative or positive one?
11. How is their attitude reflected? Learners' attitudes

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear pupils,

This questionnaire is set to know your knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards learning English. The current questionnaire seeks to gather data about pupils' intercultural competence assessment. Thank you very much for your cooperation in advance.

Pupils : Male Female

Knowledge		Excellent	Very good	Fairly good	Weak
1	I am able to locate where Great Britain and U.S.A are situated				
2	I am able to identify whether Great Britain and U.S.A are States or Monarchies				
3	I am able to identify both Great Britain and U.S.A flags and currencies				
4	I am able to identify historic monuments of Great Britain and U.S.A				
5	I am able to identify whether both Great Britain and U.S.A are governed by a President, King or Queen				
6	I am able to identify whether in both Great Britain and U.S.A education is obligatory or not				
7	I am able to identify whether in both countries education is free or not				
8	I am able to identify whether in both countries there are public and private schools				
9	I will kiss an American or a British the first time I meet him or her				

Skills		Strongly agree	agree	Strogly disagree	disagree
1	I can have friends who speak English				
2	I am able to communicate in English				
3	I can write an email in English				
4	I can have friends who speak English				
5	I am able to listen to a song in English				
6	I am able to understand some words while listening to a song in English				
7	I can read a passage written in English				
8	I can translate a passage from English into my mother tongue				
9	I am able to pronounce long words in English (e.g. Irresponsible)				

	Attitudes	Strongly agree	agree	Strongly disagree	disagree	No idea
1	I am lucky to have been born in my country					
2	I like to meet people from other origins and cultures					
3	I think that all peoples should have the same rights regardless of their country of origin					
4	If I had the opportunity to live in Great Britain or U.S.A , I would be happy					
5	I like dating boys or girls from Great Britain or U.S.A					
6	I do not tolerate girls who wear short skirts					
7	I do not tolerate girls who smoke or drink alcohol					
8	I do not like British and American people because they eat pork					
9	I accept my friends regardless of their origins and cultures					
10	I respect the opinions of British and American people					
11	If I travel to U.S.A or Great Britain , I will respect their customs					