

Assessing EFL Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence: The Case of Second Year Students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila, Algeria.

تقييم الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: حالة طلبة السنة الثانية في

جامعة محمد بوضياف بالمسيلة، الجزائر

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Abstract:

This study aims to assess EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence in the English Department at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila, through Chen's and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. Based on the data obtained, the majority of EFL learners possess positive attitudes toward other people from different cultures and have a high level of respect toward others' values and behaviors. Although many show their excitement to engage in intercultural communication, they seem to have a lack of self-confidence to be intercultural communicators, which signifies their low level of intercultural awareness. The findings of this paper would be an important reference for EFL teachers to explore appropriate methods for raising EFL learners' intercultural awareness, helping them become more effective intercultural communicators, and be well-equipped to function successfully with people with different cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Culture, EFL Learners, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Intercultural Awareness, Intercultural Sensitivity Scale.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد بوضياف بالمسيلة من خلال مقياس الحساسية بين الثقافات لشين و ستاروستا. استناداً إلى البيانات المتحصل عليها، فإن غالبية طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لديهم اتجاهات إيجابية و مستوى عالٍ من الاحترام تجاه قيم وسلوكيات الآخرين من ثقافات مختلفة. على الرغم من أنّ الكثيرين يظهرون حماسهم للانخراط في التواصل بين الثقافات، إلا أنّ لديهم نقص الثقة بالنفس، و هو ما يشير إلى أنّ لديهم مستوى منخفض من الوعي بين الثقافات. نتائج هذه الدراسة ستكون مرجع مهم لأساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية لاستكشاف مناهج مناسبة لتطوير وعي متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بين الثقافات، و مساعدتهم على أن يصبحوا أكثر فاعلية و أن يكونوا مجهزين جيداً للعمل بنجاح مع أشخاص ذو خلفيات ثقافية مختلفة.

الكلمات مفتاحية: الثقافة، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، الوعي بين الثقافات، مقياس الحساسية بين الثقافات.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, many researchers in education have shown the belief that the crucial objective of foreign language education is to help and empower learners to communicate appropriately and effectively with people having different cultures. Therefore, teaching and/or learning a foreign language embodies the integration of a variety of cultural elements in language courses. For that reason, promoting interculturality in foreign language education has been recognized globally.

English as foreign language (EFL) learners do not only need to acquire communicative competence but intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as well, to function effectively with people with different cultural backgrounds. In this respect, teaching other cultures can be a beneficial tool for developing interculturality and raising awareness of one's difference, also known as *Otherness*. In fact, the objective of this interculturality is to foster social justice, promote tolerance and respect for *Self* and *Others*, and enhance the state of being open-minded to other cultures.

The majority of EFL teachers, in Algeria, recognize the importance of ICC in foreign language education. Yet, few teachers among them care about the assessment of their students' level of ICC in an intercultural learning process. The problem is probably because many Algerian teachers are hesitant and unsure of how ICC should be assessed: whether language and culture should be tested consecutively or simultaneously, or whether intercultural learning should be tested explicitly or implicitly. Consequently, raising awareness of the target culture (TC) is the vital interest of both teachers and learners to develop more proficient intercultural communication skills, attitudes, and knowledge.

To promote interculturality in Algerian teachers' foreign language classes and improve EFL learners' ICC, the ICC of second year students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of Msila (MBUM) has been examined.

2. The Relationship between Language and Culture

The concept of culture has been given multiple definitions by scholars in all disciplines. The American Heritage English Dictionary defines culture as "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought." Also, culture can be used to denote

civilization, as it can be understood from Tylor (in Jahoda and Krewer, 1997, p18) in his definition:

Culture or civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Culture is an integrated pattern of humans; it reflects all that is related to human life (behaviours, knowledge, values, customs, and traditions) in a particular community.

Language is seen as one of the aspects of culture, but it does reflect the real culture of a particular community as it appears in movies, songs, fashion, literature and other products of arts. In supporting of this claim, Ritlyova (2009, p88-93) defined culture as follows:

The various costumes, values, typical behaviour, attitudes, and the overall approach regarding the way of life that are not only reflected in movies, songs, fashion, literature and in numerous products of arts, but also in everyday use of a particular language e.g. recognized proverbs, common idiomatic expressions or phrases which are characteristics for certain members of society, and which significantly differentiate these people according to their age, level of education as well as their position in society.

In other words, people in a culture use language that reflects the values of their own culture. The cultural aspects of a particular society are revealed not only in various types of art, but also in the everyday use of language, such as proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

By the same token, Brown (2000, p22) identifies culture as “the way of life, as the context within which people exist, think, feel, and relate to others as the glue that binds a group of people together”, in other terms, culture is the thoughts, traditions, customs, skills, attitudes, and arts that combines and unifies people in a particular group together.

Without culture, language cannot exist, culture and language are axiomatic intertwined, and they are considered two faces of the same coin; in this regard, Kramsch (1998, p3), notes “language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality”, so culture manifests itself through language. Learning a foreign language is based on learning its culture, hence, the process of learning and teaching a foreign language is not related only on learning the linguistic skills (lexis, spelling rules, and grammar, etc.), but also it requires learning the cultural backgrounds of that culture.

2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

Scholars like Byram, Bennett and Guilherme have devoted much effort for more than five decades to develop the concept of intercultural competence (IC). There are innumerable definitions and frameworks, as well as many terms used to describe intercultural competence like intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986), cross-cultural competence, international competence, global citizenship, intercultural effectiveness, cultural intelligence, cultural competence, transcultural competence (Glover & Friedman, 2015).

It has been claimed that the term intercultural competence (IC) has “become inflated with everyone using it for their own particular purposes” (Frederiksen et al, 2000, p2); it must, therefore, be admitted that it is not easy to define “intercultural competence” owing to the fact that people all over the world are gradually becoming aware of the need to understand and deal with the challenges that may arise from cultural encounters. Guilherme (2000) defined intercultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (p297). It is not surprising that this definition focuses more on the ability to communicate and interact efficiently because it is the field of education (language teaching and learning). A foreign language learner needs to work to develop knowledge and insights about different cultures, and promote attitudes of tolerance and respect of the “Other”.

Language, communication and culture are systematically linked, “Culture influences communication. Beyond using language, the study of intercultural communication recognizes how culture pervades what we are, how we act, how we think, and how we talk and listen” (Dodd, 1998). In other words, the use of language results in communication that is effectively influenced by culture which

affects every aspect of human belief and behavior. Fitzgerald (1993, p2) argues that “Communication lies at the heart of international intercultural and interpersonal relations. If we wish to become better at communicating, we must acquire new competencies, skills, and implications, which involve new ways of looking at ourselves and others”. So, Intercultural competence needs to be explained from a communicative perspective. Along the same line, Beneke’s (2000, p108-9) states:

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 own cultural background in interaction with others.

Intercultural communicative competence is an extension of communicative competence, in which the interlocutor could handle intercultural communication successfully by managing the use of one’s own cultural background with others. In the same vein, Chen (2009, p394) writes that intercultural communication competence is “the key to cultivating the ability to tolerate and mutually respect cultural differences”. In other words, he illustrates that this type of efficiency contributes greatly to building an educated, conscious, and peaceful society, he also explains that a global mindset has a significant role in developing intercultural competence, as people understand openness to other cultures, and they can interact between cultures.

Bennett (2009) assumes that the concept of ICC refers to the aptitude to interact with people of the target culture in an effective and appropriate way that does not violate the customs, traditions, and standards of that culture. In other terms, he notes that intercultural awareness cannot be restricted to the language skills and knowledge of culture; rather, it entails the desire to have a deep understanding of the members of the target culture and accepting their opinions and norms.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that the ICC is the ability to understand the beliefs of others, respect their ethnicity and interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural communication.

2.2.1 Models of ICC

Many people nowadays live in multilingual societies. This phenomenon has led to many debates among scholars in various domains, especially in education. Researchers have been trying to find practical solutions for a classroom that includes learners of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. The problem is not only related to linguistic origin, but it tends more toward the issue of the co-existence of multiple cultures that can clash with each other in one place. Byram (1997) has made this clear mainly in his book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (1997), in which he attempts to develop a model regarding cultural differences in foreign language classes.

2.2.1.1 The Byram's Model of ICC

Byram (1997) presents a model of ICC, which, according to him, is abstract, mental, and unrelated to any particular culture. Byram states that despite all its complexities, this proposed model should serve foreign language instructors within specific beliefs, perceptions, and awareness of their role as educators. At the outset, the author provides a detailed analysis of the three aspects (i.e. knowledge, skill, and attitudes) that influence intercultural communication. This model offers clarification and insightful explanation of what ICC is, and to make it easier to assist the progress of its evaluation. This model encompasses five savors involved in successful intercultural communication, these savors are:

2.2.1.1.1 Knowledge (Savoirs)

Byram (1997) describes this factor as the knowledge that an interlocutor has about his own culture and the foreign culture, so it is the knowledge that affects intercultural interactions. Nevertheless, Byram explains that having knowledge is not sufficient in all situations of intercultural communication, so it is a necessity to develop intercultural attitudes and further skills to interpret what may happen in a particular communication.

2.2.1.1.2 Intercultural Attitudes (Savoir Etre)

Intercultural Attitudes are related to an individual's ability to accept the differences, (beliefs, thoughts, norm, etc.), that he/she may encounter in intercultural communication, to avoid any signs of embarrassment or disrespect with people from different cultures.

2.2.1.1.3 Skills of Interpreting and Relating (Savoir Comprendre)

This factor is a combination of the two first factors, Byram clarifies that in order to be successful in intercultural communication, the intercultural speaker should be aware of how to have good attitudes and use his/her prior knowledge to interpret meanings of a conversation in a specific intercultural setting.

2.2.1.1.4 Skills of Discovery and Interaction (Savoir Apprendre/Faire)

The three factors mentioned above are considered a theoretical guide to the speaker to get a positive intercultural interaction. Byram explains that "... the skills of discovery and interaction are the means of augmenting and refining knowledge about the other and knowing how to respond to specific features of interaction with a particular individual" (Byram, 1997, p37). Thus, this factor is a practical guide for the speaker's interactions with other foreign interlocutors to develop awareness about the others, and to have the ability to cope with them, especially in case of misunderstanding or unexpected situations while communicating.

2.2.1.1.5 Critical Cultural Awareness (Savoir s'engager)

The last factor in Byram's model of ICC deals primarily with the educational setting. Byram urges foreign language teachers to promote intercultural awareness; an intercultural speaker should be aware of his/her own culture as well as other cultures and should be open-minded toward foreign cultures, so that respecting, understanding others, and avoiding conflicts and incidents of a cultural clash when communicating in an intercultural setting.

2.3 Intercultural Speaker

From the above-explained factors, it is remarkable that Byram gives a full understanding of how an intercultural speaker should engage and act in intercultural interaction. According to Byram (2000, p10), the intercultural speaker is the person who has the ability:

to see relationships between different cultures, both internal and external to a society, and to meditate, that interprets each in terms of the other, either for [himself] or for other people ... and who knows how to critically or analytically understand that one's own and other cultures.

In the same sense, an intercultural speaker is an individual who communicates in a multicultural environment, and has an extra knowledge of the society's culture in which the speaker engages, interacts, and accepts their viewpoints.

Byram's model admits that an intercultural speaker may go through various stages of adaptation and interaction with the other and that these stages may contain "phases of acceptance and rejection" (*savoir être*) (Byram, 1997, p58). That is to say, Byram's model of ICC might comprise some elements of conflict and contradiction, but the main goal of the "intercultural speaker" is establishing a harmonious relationship with the interlocutor by overwhelming these temporary obstacles. For example, an intercultural speaker may help the interlocutor "to overcome conflicting viewpoints" (*savoir comprendre*) and "negotiate an agreement about places of conflict and accept difference" (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram, 1997). Thus, Byram believes that an intercultural speaker is the person who possesses all the five factors that underpinning his model.

Accordingly, the intercultural speaker is someone who has awareness of cultural variations and has intercultural competence that allows him/her to engage successfully in intercultural communication and interact with people from different cultures, paying attention to cultural differences and respecting their cultural norms and values.

Although Byram's model of ICC gains a lot of attention in the field of intercultural education, as it is considered the most exhaustive and prominent model, some misunderstandings seem to influence Byram's explanation of intercultural competence. For instance, Zarate (2003) notes that a person who is competent in certain situations may be incompetent in other contexts, added to that, competencies are not always standardized with language skills so that an excellent understanding of a foreign language doesn't certainly indicate a good mastery of intercultural competences.

2.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence Assessment

Despite all extensive research efforts, no agreed definition or a practical valid model of intercultural competence exists. It is presumed that the three components; affective, cognitive, and behavioral should be developed for communicating efficiently and appropriately with people from different cultures, this is why (Bennett, 2001; Chen & Starosta, 1996) have classified intercultural competence into three dimensions; affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Chen and Starosta (1996) have proposed to develop elements for the three dimensions of intercultural competence and to develop tools to assess it. They outlined three concepts of intercultural competence, including *intercultural sensitivity*, *intercultural awareness*, and *intercultural adroitness*.

2.4.1 Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

Intercultural sensitivity (IS) is the most recognized factor of intercultural communication competence, as it is the central factor to connect intercultural awareness with intercultural skills. According to Bronfenbrenner (1958), the concept of interpersonal sensitivity is the person's ability to differentiate how other people differ in their behavior, insights, or emotions from his own. Correspondingly, Bennett (2001) has defined intercultural sensitivity as the production of reality of accepting the cultural difference that establishes intercultural development. Thus, IS helps the person distinguish, respect, and accept the cultural differences between one's own and others.

Bennett (1986) maintained that intercultural sensitivity consists of six distinct personal characteristics: self-esteem, self-monitoring, empathy, open-mindedness, interaction involvement, and suspending judgment. However, in order to assess intercultural competence, Chen and Starosta (2000) advanced Bennett's development model of Intercultural Sensitivity, and developed the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, which is tested in this paper. Their model of intercultural sensitivity is used to theorize the affective component of intercultural competence, and it includes a person's ability to admit and respect cultural differences through the ability to send and receive sensitive signs before, during, and after intercultural communication. The ISS consists of 24 items

divided into five dimensions which are: Interaction engagement, Respect for cultural differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction enjoyment, and Interaction attentiveness. The IS scale has been acknowledged as the most effective and reliable measurement at present to assessing the emotional dimension of intercultural competence.

Intercultural awareness used by Chen and Starosta (1996) refers to the cognitive component of the intercultural aspect. It is the aptitude to understand other cultures. The authors argue that a person who holds a high level of intercultural awareness is an intercultural competent communicator. Intercultural adroitness refers to the behavioral aspect of intercultural competence. It covers the ability of a person to interact with people from different cultures. Those abilities of intercultural adroitness contain: message skills, interaction management, behavioral flexibility, identity management, and relationship cultivation (Chen, 2000).

3. Methodology of the Study

The objective of the present work is to examine and explore the intercultural communicative competence of EFL learners at MBUM with the aim of increasing sensitivity and awareness towards the local culture and the target one.

3.1 Research Design

This study followed an exploratory research because it helps the researcher gain deep perceptions and a greater understanding of the research work. The method for the current study is a case study. The case study of this research is second year LMD English students at the Department of Letters and English Language MBUM, Algeria. The researcher has opted for this type of research because it seems appropriate for this study since it is an investigation of intercultural communicative competence, which is relatively novel in Algeria.

3.2 Research Participants

The population of this study is second year LMD English students at the Department of Letters and English Language, at MBUM, Algeria. Students [N=80] were randomly selected to be the sample of this study among second year

students [N=120]. The reason behind choosing this case study is due to the fact that second year students at MBUM are learning both American and British literature modules for the first time, and from this perspective, the teacher should work to raise awareness toward American and British cultures. In other terms, second year students at MBUM study the Literary Texts module in their first year, in which it is an introductory course, i.e., they are eased into literature and the literary devices to learn English as a foreign language (language skills, reading skills, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition), but in their second year, they start expanding their perceptions and knowledge to learn other foreign cultures and to be open-minded toward other people whose cultures are different from their own.

3.3 Research Instruments

In order to assess EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence, this study adopted Chen and Starosta's Model (2000) of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) based on the 24 items that touch upon five factors of measuring intercultural sensitivity. The five factors, including:

1. **Factor 01:** (Questions 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24): are intended to target participants' interaction engagement.
2. **Factor 02:** (Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10): are concerned about participants' interaction confidence.
3. **Factor 03:** (Questions 14, 17, and 19): are concerned to probe into participants' interaction attentiveness.
4. **Factor 04:** (Questions 9, 12, and 15): are related to the study of participants' interaction enjoyment.
5. **Factor 05:** (Questions 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20): are intended to examine participants' respect for cultural difference.

This study used SPSS software 17.0 to analyze the data provided by the questionnaire. To make a response to each item of ISS, a five-point Likert scale was used: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=uncertain, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. Students completed the 24-items of ISS in about 30 minutes in class.

The following tables (from 1 to 5) display the 24 items of the five factors of measuring intercultural sensitivity scale that was used in the questionnaire for EFL learners (Chen and Starosta's Model, 2000):

Factor Items	Interaction Engagement
Item 1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 11	I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
Item 13	I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
Item 21	I act naturally in a culturally different group.
Item 22	I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally distinct persons.
Item 23	I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.
Item 24	I have a feeling of enjoyment toward differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

Table N° 1: Interaction Engagement

Factor Items	Respect for Cultural Differences
Item 2	I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.
Item 7	I don't like to be with people from different cultures.
Item 8	I respect the values of people from different cultures.
Item 16	I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
Item 18	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
Item 20	I think my culture is better than other cultures.

Table N° 2. Respect for Cultural Differences

Table N° 3. Interaction Confidence

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Factor Items	Interaction Confidence
Item 3	I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 4	I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
Item 5	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 6	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 10	I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.

Factor Items	Interaction Enjoyment
Item 9	I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 12	I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
Item 15	I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.

Factor Items	Interaction Attentiveness
Item 14	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 17	I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
Item 19	I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.

Table N° 4. Interaction Enjoyment

Table N° 5. Interaction Attentiveness

4. Results of the Questionnaire for Students

The following tables (from 6 to 10) demonstrate the results of the questionnaire for students and an illustration of the highest percentage that has been recorded in each item of ISS.

Items	Interaction Engagement					Total
	SA	A	Un	D	SD	
Item 1	24	22	16	10	8	80
Item 11	16	14	22	16	12	80
Item 13	26	29	12	7	6	80
Item 21	12	13	19	21	15	80
Item 22	12	13	15	25	15	80
Item 23	19	28	12	11	10	80
Item 24	28	25	10	9	8	80

Table N° 6: Results of EFL Learners Interaction Engagement Assessment

According to the findings of learners’ assessment of their interaction engagement, 24 learners (30%) out of 80 participants “strongly agree” with item 01; “I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures”, and 22 learners also “agree” with the statement, whereas 16 of them are “uncertain” about their opinion. Moving to item 11, the majority of students (22 / 27.5%) are “uncertain” to either tend to wait or not before forming an impression of culturally distinct counterparts. The highest percentage goes for item 13 where learners reacted positively (36.25% “strongly agree, and 32.5% “agree”). 21 of learners “disagree” about item 21 with a percentage of 26.25%, and 25 (31.25%) of them “disagree” about avoiding situations where they will have to deal with culturally distinct persons. Also, 28 of students (35%) responded that they “agree” to show their culturally-distinct counterpart their understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues and 35% of learners “strongly agree” with item 24. This indicates that most of the students a feeling of enjoyment toward their culturally-distinct counterparts when interacting with them.

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Items	Respect for Cultural Differences					Total
	SA	A	Un	D	SD	
Item 2	6	7	12	27	28	80
Item 7	7	5	13	29	26	80
Item 8	34	31	5	6	4	80
Item 16	28	32	8	7	5	80
Item 18	6	9	11	28	26	80
Item 20	11	12	7	26	24	80

Table N° 7: Results of EFL Learners Respect for Cultural Differences Assessment

Students' assessment of the second factor "Respect for Cultural Differences" indicated that 28 (35%) of students "strongly disagree" about the statement of item 2 "I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded", while 29 (36.25%) of learners "disagree" and 26 of them "strongly disagree" about item 7. In addition to that, a high number of students (34/ 42.5%) replied that they "strongly agree" with respecting the values of people from different cultures, added to (32/ 40%) of students who "agree" with item 16. Concerning item 18, 28 students (35%) responded that they "disagree" with the statement "I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures", and 26 students (32.5%) also reacted negatively "disagree" with item 20. Thus, it is remarkable that EFL students accept and respect the values, behaviours, and opinions of other people from different cultures.

Items	Interaction Confidence					Total
	SA	A	Un	D	SD	
Item 3	10	12	12	25	21	80
Item 4	24	22	13	11	10	80
Item 5	9	12	14	24	21	80
Item 6	19	27	21	7	6	80
Item 10	9	10	20	22	19	80

Table N° 8: Results of EFL Learners Interaction Confidence Assessment

From the results shown in table 8, it seems that item 3 recorded the highest percentage of 31.25% of students who "disagree", and a percentage of 30% has been recorded for those who "strongly agree" with it item 4 which says that they find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. The next item number 5 indicated that 30% of students "disagree" with it, while 27 of them (33.75%) responded that they "agree" with the statement of item 6 "I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures".

Finally, a percentage of 27.5% is the highest percentage has been recorded for those learners who “disagree” about feeling confident when interacting with people from different cultures. It is clearly obvious that the majority of students have the feeling of lack of confidence when interacting with their culturally distinct counterparts.

Items	Interaction Enjoyment					Total
	SA	A	Un	D	SD	
Item 9	21	25	6	17	11	80
Item 12	20	23	15	12	10	80
Item 15	21	24	20	8	7	80

Table N° 9: Results of EFL Learners Interaction Enjoyment Assessment

As presented in table 9, 25 (31.25%) out of 80 students answered that they “agree” with item 9 “I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.” A considerable number of 23 students (28.75%) replied that they “agree” to getting discouraged when they are with people from different cultures. Also, 24 students with a percentage of 30% responded that they “agree” with item 15 which says “I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures”. So, students show their feelings of disappointment, discouragement, and uselessness when being in intercultural communication.

Items	Interaction Attentiveness					Total
	SA	A	Un	D	SD	
Item 14	22	28	12	10	8	80
Item 17	33	28	8	6	5	80
Item 19	9	17	25	18	11	80

Table N°10: Results of EFL Learners Interaction Attentiveness Assessment

As shown in table 10, the statement “I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures” recorded the biggest percentage of 35% on the category “agree”, on the other hand, a notable percentage of 41.25% was achieved by the students who replied that they “strongly agree” with trying to obtain as much information as they can when interacting with people from different cultures. Furthermore, a considerable number of students (25/ 31.25%) responded that they are “uncertain” with item 19 of being sensitive to their

culturally distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during their interaction. This reveals that students pay attention when interacting with people having different cultures, at the same time, they try to obtain information about them as much as they can.

5. Discussion of the Questionnaire's Findings

With regard to the results of the questionnaire's findings, the majority of participants claim that they are open-minded and possess positive attitudes and optimistic views toward their culturally distinct counterparts during their intercultural interaction. Perhaps, this positive outlook is maybe because EFL learners are keen on engaging in intercultural interplay when they can communicate with people in other cultures, in which people speak fluently in English, or maybe they like to discover and have more knowledge of other cultures.

Moreover, the biggest number of students affirms that they respect the values and behaviors of people from other cultures. That is probably because students are aware of the importance of being open-minded and perceiving things in various ways to respect others' cultures to avoid intercultural clash due to misunderstanding or miscommunication. This is why (Chen & Starosta, 1996) note that the affective perspective of ICC which is represented by IS refers to "the subjects' active desire to motivate them to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures", so the more cultures students learn and understand, the more respects and acceptance they would pay to other people from different cultures.

Furthermore, results indicated that students possess a positive response toward enjoying when interacting with people from different cultures, as being in intercultural communication open doors to discover and bridge the gap of lack of awareness of other cultures, as well as the difference between their own culture and that of others creates a sense of enjoyment among them, however, a considerable number of students proclaim that they sometimes feel powerless to carry on in intercultural communication, and have a lack of confidence when interacting with their culturally distinct counterpart. The reasons behind those negative attitudes are perhaps due to the fact that EFL learners are unable to talk

spontaneously in front of people from different cultures, or possibly they have less knowledge of others' cultures, and this makes them unable to find what to talk about. Those reasons affect their attitudes and result in a feeling of embarrassment, discouragement, uselessness, and lack of self-confidence when engaging in intercultural communication.

Although students show a high degree of being observant and sensitive when interacting with their culturally distinct counterparts, they try to obtain as much information as they can in order to extend their knowledge and broaden their horizons about others' cultures different from their own.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has attempted to assess EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. The results obtained, through a questionnaire adopted from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), reveal that the majority of EFL students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila possess a high level of respect toward their culturally distinct counterpart, as well as they hold positive attitudes and understanding that lead them enjoying to get engaged in interacting with people from different cultures. Nevertheless, the data obtained also disclose that a considerable number of EFL learners do not have a full ability to engage in intercultural communication due to the problem of lack of self-confidence that hinders their readiness to talk in front of people from different cultures and this would be due to their low level of intercultural awareness. In addition to that, the students demonstrate a high level attentiveness, curiosity, and interest in intercultural interaction and this approves the findings of the intercultural sensitivity scale.

It needs to be pointed out that more studies are needed in future research to further explore ways and methods of raising EFL learners' intercultural awareness. Since the data obtained show that most EFL learners have positive attitudes toward other cultures, yet they have a lack of ability to be intercultural communicators, which can be interpreted that their level of intercultural awareness requires development. Thus, teachers of English, mainly those who teach literature, should consider integrating culture in their classrooms, paying attention to how teach culture to EFL learners, and what to teach them, besides, they should highlight the importance of intercultural awareness in foreign

language teaching and learning, so that teachers will succeed in improving the EFL learners' intercultural awareness, and their ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures.

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