



*Towards Interculturality in the Algerian Tertiary EFL Classes:
Exploring EFL Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence
Level*

Mebarki Amina Zohra^{1,*}, Chelli Saliha²

¹Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla(Algeria),amina.mebarki03@gmail.com

²Mohamed Khider University of Biskra(Algeria),saliha.chelli@univ-biskra.dz

Received: 03 /09 / 2023

Accepted: 05 /01 / 2024

Published: 20 /01 / 2024

Abstract:

The current study explores the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) level of Algerian EFL learners at the Department of English and Literature at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. It also investigates their areas of deficiency related to this competence in order to contribute to filling the research gap that concerns this issue in the Algerian context. For this purpose, the quantitative method was adopted to analyze the data that was gathered by means of the Intercultural Competence Scale. The findings revealed that the overall learners' level of ICC is beyond the less competent. Moreover, the detailed analysis of the five ICC factors indicated that the participants are more competent in the affective factor than in the other four, in which they manifest a weak level. Concerning their ICC areas of weakness, they demonstrated deficiencies related to important IC knowledge and some IC behavioral performance abilities.

Keywords: *cross-cultural communication ;foreign language teaching ;internationalization of higher education; interculturalcommunication; interculturalcompetence ;interculturalcommunicative competence; intercultural teaching.*

*Corresponding Author

I. INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness among people from different cultures in the present world has emphasized the importance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), making it an essential international ability nowadays. That is because it enables people to become competent communicators across various cultures (Chao, 2014). The importance of this ability has fueled the call for promoting intercultural communication teaching (ICCT) in many fields. Educators worldwide have advocated the development and optimization of ICC in their classes, which is the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with people from other cultures and languages (Fantini, 2020) and to act as a mediator (Byram, 1997) between distinct "communicative practices" (McConachy, 2022) that exist among cultures.

ICC is closely related to foreign language teaching (FLT) as it builds upon the concept of communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2006) that was introduced and studied in this field more than 40 years ago (Fantini, 2020). Concerning its integration, previous works on the implementation of ICCT in the FLT field show that the process has been done most commonly through the integration of culture in various ways in foreign language classes (Huang, 2020). Yet, it is fair to say that interest in intercultural communication has evolved differently across countries due to social and political reasons that exist where ICCT is officially recognized (Croucher, Sommier, & Rahmani, 2015).

Following the same path, and despite the existence of the French language as a second language, Algeria has given exceptional interest to English language teaching and its cultures since it is the international language of the era. The year 2023 marked a historic move toward the internationalization of Algerian higher education through the official adoption of the English language in Algerian universities. The aim is to be internationally open to the educational field and to form interculturally competent students who can navigate the inevitable cross-cultural situations in the current world. However, the teaching of interculturality is often implicit in tertiary education; for example, at the level of foreign language departments, it is often present in the form of cultural teaching in separate theoretical modules. For instance, the students at the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria are introduced to English cultures, mainly British and American, through lectures only. Yet, since direct exposure to the English language and its cultures in Algeria is very rare and because acquiring ICC, as Byram (1997) states, is a complicated process that requires more than traditional language lessons, gaining ICC would be very difficult if teachers relied only on teaching those cultures in ordinary theoretical classes. Hence, educators should integrate ICC into classes that are not based solely on traditional *lecturing*.

However, before engaging in any trial to explicitly integrate ICC- based teaching in EFL classes, it is important to explore EFL learners' ICC level and identify their weaknesses. This will help in understanding their starting level before developing the course materials. Consequently, the present paper provides some insights for Algerian EFL teachers on the ICC level of second year EFL learners in the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria, by examining their ICC strengths and weaknesses. The results may help EFL teachers create their ICC-based lessons by clarifying the ICC needs of the learners. Therefore, in order to reach the aim of the study, the following questions must be addressed:

1. What is the current level of ICC among second-year EFL learners at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra?
2. What are the areas of EFL learners' ICC deficiency?

1. Language and Culture

Being two of the most interwoven aspects of human existence, language and culture have gained scholars' attention and attempts to study and define them over the years. Many scholars have stated that it is hard to provide a clear-cut definition for both aspects (e.g., Corder, 1993;

Denham and Lobeck, 2013; Fasold & Connor-Linton, 2013), and this may be due to their ever-changing and complex nature.

However, this fact did not prevent them from attempting to provide definitions that may clarify them somehow. Language, for example, is generally defined as the primary means of human beings' communication by which they manage their social lives (Kramsch, 1998). It is, as Fasold & Connor-Linton (2013) state, "a finite system of elements and principles that make it possible for speakers to construct sentences to do particular communicative jobs" (p. 9). In other words, it is a communication system that consists of combinations of words and rules to form sentences that serve a particular communication aim.

On the other hand, culture represents the human being's way of life. It differs among the groups of people, and it comprises all what the specific group "thinks, says, does, and makes," along with "its systems of attitudes and feelings," and it is learned and passed through generations (Kohls, 1996, as cited in Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2011, p. 4; Katia, 2013). Culture is also often viewed as a set of norms, beliefs, values, attitudes (Chao, 2014), and symbols that shape the behavior of interacting members of a specific group (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2011).

The special relationship between these two aspects, in which language is a principal tool for expressing culture and culture, in turn, shapes the way language is used (Rabiah, 2012) and viewed, has become a significant area of research in linguistic anthropology. In this field, culture is the knowledge and beliefs that an individual should have to behave acceptably with its members. This particular knowledge is acquired and learned through social interactions (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Therefore, according to Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015), culture is the "know-how" to use the language in daily social interaction that a person has to possess to fulfill his daily tasks. By this, they mainly mean the invisible elements of culture, such as the values, norms, beliefs, rules of etiquette, politeness, directness, and indirectness that bind to a great extent the use of language within a specific group.

2. Culture and Foreign Language Teaching

Since language and culture share this special interrelated and complex relationship, language educators in general and foreign language ones in particular should expand language teaching to include not only the essential language elements like words, spelling, and grammar but also the culture of the language being taught. Hence, in the same way "language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality" (p. 3) in real life, as Kramsch (1998) affirms, language teaching should integrate explicit cultural teaching in all kinds of language classes to ensure real-life-like language teaching.

It is worth noting that incorporating culture into foreign language classes requires a specific teaching approach. An approach that clarifies how the students' culture and the use of their language differ from that of the target language. In other words, it deals with how their language use, which is highly shaped, as stated before, by their cultural values, norms, and beliefs, differs from that of the language they are learning. This teaching approach, which has become necessary nowadays (Deardorff, 2014; Middlebury, 2023), is the intercultural communication approach to language teaching.

3. Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication (IC) is the process through which two people from different cultures connect. It happens when the meaning generated by the communication process is related to behaviors from diverse cultures (Asante & Newmark, 1976; Gudykunst, 2002). Many scholars link it to face-to-face communication only (Gudykunst, 2002); however, this is no longer the case currently. The main reason is the advent of the internet, which has been accompanied by an increase in the use of social media over the years. The latter, in turn, was revolutionary in terms of facilitating online communication (Katia, 2013; Middlebury, 2023). Consequently, online communication has become a prominent topic for research in its own right,

and it shares some of the same essential research interests as intercultural communication, such as relations between culture and power, acculturation, integration, and identity. So, even if there is no face-to-face interaction during online communication, this does not mean that culture is not present in that interaction (Croucher, Sommier, & Rahmani, 2015). Therefore, it is clear that the chances of getting involved in intercultural communication interactions are very high nowadays, no matter where the person is. This fact strengthened the call of current trends in international education to prepare students for a globalized life and careers by developing their intercultural communicative competence abilities (Fantini, 2020). That is merely to help them navigate cultural differences when dealing with people from diverse backgrounds.

4. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural competence, transcultural communication, cross-cultural adaptation, and intercultural sensitivity (Chao, 2014; Deardorff, 2015) are all terms used to refer to the same construct, which is ICC. However, the latter is currently the most used term throughout the recent literature (Ruiyang & Hassan, 2022), and it refers to “a complex of abilities (including host language proficiency) that are needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.” (Fantini, 2021, p. 5). That is to say, ICC is the person’s ability to properly interact with individuals who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds than his.

At first, researchers focused on IC to solve cross-cultural communication problems that emerged due to westerners’ interest in working abroad. Then the research of IC expanded to include various contexts such as international business, immigrant acculturation, and cross-cultural training (Sinicrope et al., 2007). This area of research gained so much interest over time and spanned many domains, leading several researchers to try to explain this notion and how it can be measured. Ruben’s (1976) study on understanding and measuring ICC, for instance, was one of the earliest works on ICC. In his work, he presented a behavioral approach to understanding and measuring ICC, which consists of eight dimensions accompanied by observational procedures and rating scales for assessment purposes. Bennett’s (1993) study provided a model to explain IC known as the “Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” (Krajewski, 2011). This model consists of six stages and explains how individuals respond to cultural differences and how their responses develop over time. This model was the basis of many assessment tools that dealt with intercultural sensitivity and cross-cultural competence (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

All the studies that dealt with learning and achieving IC identified similar IC components, mainly attitude and awareness, knowledge, skills, and behavior (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Barrett et al., 2014). They differ only in terms of the model’s shape and the attempt to highlight one component over the other (Krajewski, 2011). Some studies focus on the “communicative nature” of intercultural competence, while others stress the person’s development and adaptation when facing a new culture. Other works focus on empathy and tolerance toward other cultures. All in all, the IC studies attempt to explain the types of skills and abilities a person needs to function in culturally diverse settings and the processes of developing those skills (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

5. ICC in Foreign Language Teaching

The integration of ICC in foreign language teaching (FLT) has been done through different models that deal with many ICC aspects (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Bennett, 1993). Nonetheless, the model provided by Byram (1997) is the most commonly used since it relates directly to FLT. It is particularly notable for introducing ICC teaching as an alternative to communicative language teaching and considering ICC as an extension of communicative competence (Byram, 1997). Byram’s model focuses on language awareness, interaction (skills of discovery and interaction), and a range of communication skills, including “verbal and non-verbal communication”, in addition to the development of “linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies” (Krajewski, 2011).

The model is based on the following components: *Attitudes* include “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (p. 91). *Knowledge* of the person’s culture and social rules and those of people from other cultures. “*Skills of interpreting and relating*”, are related to the person’s ability to explain, link, and interpret other cultures’ events and documents to the ones existing in his culture. “*Skills of discovery and interaction*”, are the person’s capability to learn about new cultures and their practices, along with his ability to manage real time intercultural interaction issues taking into consideration “knowledge, attitudes, and skills”. “*Critical cultural awareness*”, is the skill of examining “perspectives, practices, and products” in the individual’s home culture and in different other cultures.

For the sake of clarifying the theory upon which the instrument used in the present fieldwork is based, the model developed by Chao (2014) is discussed next.

6. Chao’s Model for Higher Education (IC-EFL-S-HE, 2014)

Chao (2014) followed the lead of the most used and referred to ICC models in the field of FLT. She developed a model specific to EFL learners of higher education in Taiwan based on reviewing six published IC scales (Huang, 2020). According to her, it was a result of modifying and integrating several researchers’ theories and factors (e.g., Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2000, 2007; Baker, 2012; Deardorff, 2006) that are related to intercultural competence (Tsai, 2021). She affirms that there is no agreement concerning the IC definition; subsequently, based on her theory review, she presents and bases her model on the following IC definition: “the ability to interact with people of diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds appropriately and effectively.” p. 84. That is to say, to be interculturally competent, one should be capable of interacting with people from other cultures who use different languages than his own *appropriately* and *effectively*.

Her model the Intercultural Competence of EFL Students in Higher Education (IC-EFL-S-HE) (2014) presents four IC dimensions. The first dimension is *Cognitive*; it involves the following types of knowledge: “*Cultural-general knowledge*”, such as shared values and belief principles or general rules. “*Culture-hybrid knowledge*”, like how to surmount complicated intercultural contact. “*Context specific knowledge*” is the “*cultural knowledge*” specific to certain contexts, for instance, “religious meetings, workplaces, and business” p. 88. “*Culture learning knowledge*”, such as perceiving the intercultural learning process and its strategies.

The second dimension is *affective*; it relates to the psychological reactions and the feelings of the person during an IC interaction, like “attitudes, willingness, and motivation” toward the people he is interacting with and their cultures. The third dimension is “*self-efficacy in intercultural situations*”, which involves *self-confidence* when dealing with others as well as proper and successful *self-adjustment* in intercultural interactions.

The fourth dimension is *behavioral*; it encompasses the external demonstration of English as a lingua franca efficiency, such as “fluency, appropriateness, and effectiveness” (p. 88), in addition to the employment of communication strategies like (flexibility in verbal behaviors, non-verbal behaviors, and speech acts) for achieving effective negotiation and mediation during intercultural interaction” (p. 88).

Finally, the fifth dimension, *metacognitive*, relates to the capability to prepare oneself before an intercultural encounter and the awareness of the cultural information used in this interaction. It also involves the ability of the person to reflect on intercultural engagement prior to, during, and after the process.

II. Methods and Materials:

1. Research Design

Based on the aim of exploring and gaining insights into EFL learners' ICC level, the present study adopts an exploratory research design. It also follows the case study research design which is very convenient for pursuing the study's aim of probing EFL learners' ICC level. The case study of this research is second year EFL learners at the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria.

2. Population and Sampling

The population of this study is second-year EFL learners at the Department of English, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria (n= 341). The sample consists of 51 students who were chosen because they were exposed to the prevalent method of teaching culture in the Algerian higher education context throughout their first year. Thus, their ICC level, which is a result of this type of teaching, and their areas of ICC weakness can be detected. Furthermore, at this stage, they are still perhaps at an overall intermediate level in their second-year studies, so exploring their areas of deficiency would be beneficial for a future ICC reinforcement process.

3. Instrument

To meet the study objectives, the Intercultural Competence Scale (ICS) developed by Chao (2014) is used to collect the data. This choice was mainly due to the fact that this scale was designed for a similar context, namely, higher education EFL learners. According to Chao (2014), the ICS is developed based on six well-known and commonly used IC assessment tools. It is also based on the five dimensions presented in Chao's (2014) IC-EFL-S-HE model and contains 30 items. To ensure the validity and reliability of the scale for the present research, it is imperative to pilot it.

4. Piloting of the Instrument

The ICS went through a long piloting process, however; for the sake of the paper's length, it is summarized as follows: First, two experts checked the scale and provided their comments. Then, the researcher, taking into consideration the experts' suggestions, piloted it with 24 students who did not belong to the main sample of the study. The data was analyzed statistically, and the results confirmed the experts' earlier suggestion to omit the two items (item 20: *I can eat what others eat in culturally diverse situations*; and item 23: *I can modify the way I dress when it is necessary in intercultural situations*) in factor (4) "*Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction*").

Their suggestion considered the new context and current testing aims of the study. Therefore, the two items, unlike the remaining ones, do not directly relate to the ICC behavior factor in an EFL-specific teaching context. So, according to the experts, since the current study is probing the ICC level of participants in an EFL learning context for future teaching purposes, it would be better to omit them. Consequently, the whole piloting process resulted in the omission of the two items, with a final Cronbach's alpha of ($\alpha = .93$) for the whole scale and 28 items in the adapted version.

III. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The following results illustrate the EFL learners' ICS scores. The results of each factor are presented separately. Additionally, the scores are interpreted according to the ICC level classification that Chao (2014) provided to explain the results of the ICS (see Appendix).

1.1 Factor (1): Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction

The following table presents the EFL learners' scores of their "knowledge of intercultural interaction":

Table (1)EFL Learners' Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction Results

	SD	D	SlightD	SlightA	A	SA
Item: 1	5,9%	5,9%	19,6%	43,1%	23,5%	2,0%
Item: 2	21,6%	9,8%	49,0%	15,7%	2,0%	2,0%
Item: 3	9,8%	19,6%	25,5%	25,5%	15,7%	3,9%
Item: 4	13,7%	13,7%	15,7%	43,1%	13,7%	0,0%
Item: 5	15,7%	31,4%	15,7%	23,5%	9,8%	3,9%
Item: 6	21,6%	39,2%	29,4%	2,0%	5,9%	2,0%
Item: 7	9,8%	17,6%	19,6%	11,8%	39,2%	2,0%
Item: 8	9,8%	29,4%	41,2%	15,7%	0,0%	3,9%
Item: 9	9,8%	13,7%	29,4%	35,3%	7,8%	3,9%

According to item 1 results, the majority of the learners' responses are positive, with (43,1%) who "Slightly Agree" and (23,5%) who "Agree" that they "know the routine aspects of life in other cultures", which means that the majority's level of this knowledge ranges from partly competent to competent. Item 2 results show that the highest percentage belongs to (49%) "Slightly Disagree" and the second highest belongs to (21,6%) "Strongly Disagree", which means that the majority of the learners' levels range from quite incompetent to less competent in terms of their knowledge of "the rules of non-verbal behaviors in other cultures". For item 3, the results reveal that the majority of the responses are divided between "Slightly Disagree" and "Slightly Agree" with a percentage of (25,5%) for each. This means that the learners' majority level spans from less competent to partly competent in terms of knowing "the visible achievements of cultures such as arts and literature". Item 4 scores indicate that the majority of participants (43,1%) "Slightly Agree" whereas (15,7%) of them responded that they "Slightly Disagree" with the item, which means that the majority's level also spans from less competent to partly competent when it comes to knowing "the rules of verbal behaviors in other cultures".

Concerning item 5, the highest percentage is marked by (31,4%) for "Disagree" followed by (23,5) for "Slightly Agree". This means that the majority of learners' levels range from incompetent to partly competent concerning their knowledge of "the cultural stress signs and strategies for overcoming culture shock". The responses to item 6 were somehow negative since the majority (39,2%) opted for "Disagree" and (29,4%) of them for "Slightly Disagree", inferring that their level ranges from "Incompetent to less competent". Consequently, they have weak knowledge about the culture-value approach, which means that they are subject to misunderstanding the attitudes and behaviors of people from cultures that are distinct from their own during an intercultural interaction. Item 7 scores reveal that (39,2%) of learners chose "Agree" while (19,6%) responded with "Slightly Disagree". So, the majority of the learners' levels extend from less competent to competent when it comes to their "knowledge of how historical and socio-political factors influence the attitudes and behavior of people from different cultures".

For item 8, the results indicate that (41,2%) of learners responded by "Slightly Disagree" whereas the second majority (29,4%) responded by "Disagree". Therefore, their knowledge level of "how to appropriately negotiate with people from different cultures in intercultural contexts" ranges from incompetent to less competent. Finally, item 9 results show that the majority of (35,3%) chose "Slightly Agree" and (29,4%) chose "Slightly Disagree", this indicates that the learners' knowledge of "the interactive behaviors common among people of different cultures in professional areas" ranges from less competent to partly competent.

1.2 Factor (2): Affective Orientation to Intercultural Interaction

The following table presents EFL learners' scores of their "affective orientation to intercultural interaction":

Table (2): EFL Learners' Affective Orientation to Intercultural Interaction Results

	SD	D	SlightD	SlightA	A	SA
Item: 10	2,0%	3,9%	3,9%	9,8%	41,2%	39,2%
Item: 11	2,0%	7,8%	9,8%	21,6%	27,5%	31,4%
Item: 12	7,8%	9,8%	11,8%	31,4%	27,5%	11,8%
Item: 13	9,8%	5,9%	3,9%	33,3%	27,5%	19,6%
Item: 14	19,6%	9,8%	9,8%	21,6%	33,3%	5,9%
Item: 15	3,9%	2,0%	9,8%	15,7%	41,2%	27,5%

Based on the results of item 10, the majority responded by (41,2%) for "Agree" and (39,2%) for "Strongly Agree". This infers that they are highly positive when it comes to enjoying communication with people from other cultures, with a level ranging from competent to very competent. Item 11 scores reveal that their answers for this item were highly positive since (31,4%) responded with "Strongly Agree" and (27,5%) opted for "Agree", which indicates that they are "willing to acquire knowledge regarding different world cultures" with levels of competence that range from competent to very competent. Results of item 12 show that the majority of learners (31,4%) picked "Slightly Agree" and (27,5%) went for "Agree" as a positive response to their willingness "to manage emotions and frustrations when interacting with people from different cultures", which infers that their levels range from partly competent to competent.

Item 13 scores indicate that (33,3%) "Slightly Agree" while (27,5%) "Agree" that they are "willing to show their interest in understanding people of other cultures". This means that they are partly competent to competent when it comes to this affective element. For item 14, the results show that the majority (33,3%) answered by "Agree" followed by those (21,6%) who answered "Slightly Agree". This reveals that the learners are also ranging from partly competent to competent when it comes to their willingness "to modify their attitude and behavior to interact appropriately with people of other cultures". Finally, the scores of item 15 indicate that (41,2%) of learners picked "Agree" and (27,5%) responded with "Strongly Agree", so they are highly "willing to communicate with people of other cultures to broaden their worldview". This infers that their levels range from competent to very competent concerning this affective element.

1.3Factor (3): Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations

The table below presents EFL learners' scores of their "Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations":

Table (3): EFL Learners' Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations Results

	SD	D	SlightD	SlightA	A	SA
Item: 16	3,9%	23,5%	27,5%	41,2%	2,0%	2,0%
Item: 17	7,8%	9,8%	21,6%	45,1%	13,7%	2,0%
Item: 18	17,6%	17,6%	19,6%	35,3%	9,8%	0,0%

As it can be seen from the table, item 16 results indicate that the predominant response percentage (41,2%) is that of "Slightly Agree" then followed by "Slightly Disagree" (27,5%), which means that the learners' levels fall between less competent and partly competent when it comes to their ability to "interact with people of other cultures appropriately and effectively". The scores of item 17 reveal that the majority of the participants (45,1%) "Slightly Agree" and the second majority (21,6%) "Slightly Disagree", which denotes that their level ranges from less competent to partly competent concerning their ability to "adjust to living in different cultural contexts". Finally, item 18 results show that (35,3%) of the subjects responded with "Slightly

Agree” and the second highest percentage (19,6%) is that of the learners who chose “Slightly Disagree”. Thus, the predominant level of learners when it comes to their ability to “adjust to the stress of culture shock” is from less competent to partly competent too.

1.4Factor (4): Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction

The table that follows presents EFL learners’ scores of their “Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction”:

Table (4): EFL Learners’ Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction Results

	SD	D	SlightD	SlightA	A	SA
Item: 19	3,9%	13,7%	25,5%	49,0%	5,9%	2,0%
Item: 20	5,9%	11,8%	29,4%	43,1%	7,8%	2,0%
Item: 21	5,9%	33,3%	45,1%	13,7%	0,0%	2,0%
Item: 22	11,8%	5,9%	33,3%	25,5%	19,6%	3,9%
Item: 23	7,8%	17,6%	19,6%	41,2%	11,8%	2,0%

Based on the results of item 19, the majority responded by (49,0%) for “Slightly Agree” and (25,5%) for “Slightly Disagree”. This infers that their level ranges from less competent to partly competent concerning their effective use of “English to communicate with other people of different cultural backgrounds”. Item 20 scores reveal that the subjects’ answers for this item were as follows: (43,1%) responded with “Slightly Agree” and (29,4%) opted for “Slightly Disagree”, which indicates that their level ranges from less competent to partly competent concerning their ability to use “functional languages (e.g., invitation, refusal, and apology) flexibly for achieving appropriate intercultural communication”.

Results of item 21 show that the majority of learners (45,1%) picked “Slightly Disagree” and (33,3%) preferred “Disagree” which are somehow negative responses about their ability to “develop appropriate interactive strategies (e.g., directness, and face-saving) to adjust to the different styles of intercultural communication”, which infers that their levels range from incompetent to less competent. Item 22 scores indicate that the majority of the participants (33,3%) “Slightly Disagree” while (25,5%) preferred to “Slightly Agree” that they “can change my verbal behavior (e.g., speed, accent) when it is necessary in intercultural situations”. This means that their levels range from less competent to partly competent when it comes to this behavioral element. Finally, the scores of item 23 indicate that (41,2%) of learners picked “Slightly Agree” and (19,6%) responded with “Slightly Disagree”, so their levels in terms of being able to “change their non-verbal behavior (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) when it is necessary in intercultural situations” are between less competent and partly competent.

1.5Factor (5): Display of Intercultural Consciousness

The following table presents EFL learners’ scores concerning their “Display of Intercultural Consciousness”:

Table (5): EFL Learners’ Display of Intercultural Consciousness Results

	SD	D	SlightD	SlightA	A	SA
Item: 24	5,9%	9,8%	15,7%	17,6%	25,5%	25,5%

Item: 25	7,8%	35,3%	35,3%	15,7%	5,9%	0,0%
Item: 26	19,6%	41,2%	27,5%	7,8%	3,9%	0,0%
Item: 27	7,8%	29,4%	35,3%	17,6%	7,8%	2,0%
Item: 28	13,7%	31,4%	25,5%	21,6%	5,9%	2,0%

In item 24, the results reveal that the majority of the responses are divided between “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” with a percentage of (25,5%) for each. This means that the learners’ majority level extends from competent to very competent in terms of their ability to “not generalize a person’s behaviors as representative of a particular culture”. Item 25 results show that the highest score is also shared between “Disagree” and “Slightly Disagree”, with a percentage of (35,3%) for each, which means that the majority of the learners’ level ranges from incompetent to less competent in terms of their preparation “before any intercultural contact”.

Item 26 scores indicate that the majority of participants (41,2%) “Disagree” whereas (27,5%) of them responded that they “Slightly Disagree” with the item, which means that the majority’s level falls between incompetent and less competent when it comes to realizing “the cultural knowledge they apply to intercultural interaction”. Concerning item 27, the highest percentage is marked by (35,3%) for “Slightly Disagree” followed by (29,4%) for “Disagree”. This means that the majority of learners’ levels range from incompetent to less competent concerning their ability to “sense how their cultural background influences their attitudes and approaches to managing emerging problems during intercultural communication”. Finally, item 28 results show that the majority of (31,4%) chose “Disagree” while (25,5%) opted for “Slightly Disagree”. This indicates that the learners’ ability to “sense that the answers other people provide during intercultural communication often reflect their own values and beliefs” ranges from incompetent to less competent.

1.6 Descriptive Statistics of the Five Factors

To clarify the findings of the study more, the following table presents the descriptive statistics of the five factors together. The results are ranked in the table from the highest means, the average value of the answers (Andrade,2020), down to the lowest. The table also presents the standard deviation of items, which indicates “what the average scatter of values is, around the mean” (Andrade,2020, p. 1).

Table (6): Descriptive Statistics of the Five Factors

Factor	M	SD	Rank
Affective Orientation to Intercultural Interaction	3,34	,86	1
Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction	2,29	,84	2
Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations	2,24	,98	3
Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction	2,11	,79	4
Display of Intercultural Consciousness	2,01	,93	5
ICC Total Score	2,40	,70	/

The results indicate that “*Affective Orientation to Intercultural Interaction*” received the highest mean (M=3,34) with a standard deviation of (SD=,86), which infers that the overall level of learners in this factor is slightly above the “partly competent” level according to Chao’s (2014) ICC level classification. In the second rank came the “*Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction*” factor with (M=2,29) and (SD=,84), implying that their overall level in this factor is slightly above the “less competent” level.

The *Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations* factor followed in third place with (M=2,24) and (SD=,98), also denoting that they are slightly above the “less competent” level. Then, in fourth rank, the “*Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction*” factor with (M=2,11) and (SD=,79), this means that their level is also slightly beyond the “less competent” level; however, it is less

than the previously mentioned two factors. Finally, in the fifth and last position, the “*Display of Intercultural Consciousness*” factor with (M=2,01) and (SD=,93) indicates that the learners are at the “less competent level” concerning this subconstruct. The ICC total score that groups the scores of the five factors implies that the overall ICC level of EFL learners is somehow beyond the less competent level.

2. Discussion of the Findings

The answers to the research questions: “What is the current level of ICC among second-year EFL learners?” and “What are the areas of EFL learners’ ICC deficiency?” are provided below based on the interpretation of the obtained results.

2.1 EFL Learners’ ICC Level

According to the current findings and as an answer to the first question, the ICC level of Algerian second year EFL learners at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra is beyond the less competent level. Therefore, based on Chao’s (2014) six-level scale, their level can also be interpreted as being near the average. Which is somehow an acceptable level; however, aiming at developing it more in the future will be beneficial to them to decrease misunderstandings and communication breakdowns in future intercultural interactions if they possibly occur. Concerning its sub-constructs, the EFL learners self-assessed their ICC positively in the affective orientation, then negatively on behavioral performance, self-efficacy, intercultural knowledge, and intercultural consciousness. To better understand their level, a detailed discussion of the ICC five factors’ results is provided next.

2.2 EFL Learners’ Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction

With regard to the overall scores of the five factors, EFL learners’ intercultural communication knowledge is ranked in the fourth position, indicating that they are slightly beyond the less competent level, which is somehow weak on a scale of six. Thus, this proves the absence of ICC-based teaching in Algeria. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the findings of this factor correspond with those of Stambouli and Sarnou (2023), in which “*Knowledge of Intercultural Interaction*” was ranked lower than the other factors manifesting a weak level of the participants. Hence, it is better to understand their areas of weakness by detailing the results obtained from this factor’s assessment.

It is apparent from the results that the learners’ level ranges from partly weak to very weak in the knowledge items N° (2, 5, 6, 8). Hence, their deficiency relates to the cross-cultural knowledge that concerns the rules of non-verbal behaviors and that of the culture-value approach, which helps in understanding the attitudes and behaviors of people across cultures. Their weakness also pertains to knowledge about cultural stress, the appropriate strategies to deal with culture shock, and how to negotiate with people in IC encounters.

2.3 EFL Learners’ Affective Orientation to Intercultural Interaction

Concerning this subconstruct, the findings reveal that the EFL learners positively self-assessed their *affective orientation* more than the remaining factors; thus, it ranks first. The results match those obtained from other studies in Algeria, namely Haddaoui (2019) and Djaija and Bacher (2022), who used the Chen and Starosta (1998) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, which probes the affective dimension of ICC. Their results indicated that the EFL learners also positively self-assessed themselves in this factor, which is fundamental in ICC (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Concerning the remaining dimensions, their ranks differed among other studies outside Algeria (Chao, 2014; Hunag, 2020; Tsai, 2021).

The attentive look at the results reflects the learners’ good level, which extends from partly competent to very competent. Their positive affective ability includes curiosity as well, since the items denote the meaning of attitudes of curiosity and openness. Especially the last

one, which deals with willingness “to communicate with people of other cultures to broaden their worldview”, received high positive scores. Hence, this implies that their *affective* ability corresponds to what Byram (1997) thinks are essential features one should have in this factor. He states that the affective elements should not be only positive; they also need to include attitudes of “curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviors.” P.34. In all terms, the current results and those of the already mentioned Algerian studies, in addition to others from outside Algeria (Chao, 2014; Hunag, 2020; Tsai, 2021), suggest that the *affective* factor is high and positive everywhere nowadays. That is likely due to the interconnectedness of the modern world. The widespread use of social media, along with the availability of movies, series, and TV shows from different cultures, has contributed to the development of familiarity and positive feelings towards individuals from different cultures.

2.4 EFL Learners' Self-efficacy in Intercultural Situations

This factor deals with the participants' confidence in IC encounters and ranks in the third position with a level that is somehow beyond the less competent, which is low. In other studies, self-efficacy also proved to be low. Haddaoui (2019) stated that her participants reflected a reasonable degree of confidence, whereas Djaija and Bacher (2022) indicated that learners exhibited a lack of confidence concerning engagement in IC situations. Thus, the results correspond with those of the current study in this factor.

However, a detailed look at the scores of this factor indicates that the majority of responses were measured as partly competent by learners, which resonates more with the findings of Haddaoui (2019). Therefore, it can be said that the learners in this study also have a reasonable degree of self-efficacy in IC situations. That is, in the first place, they somehow think that they have confidence when it comes to adjusting to living in different cultural contexts. Moreover, they have confidence in their ability to interact cross-culturally appropriately and effectively. Finally, they are confident that they have the ability to adjust to cultural stress. This confidence level can be attributed again to the sum of information and familiarity gained through social media and the different kinds of TV shows from diverse cultures.

2.5 EFL Learners' Behavioral Performance in Intercultural Interaction

Despite ranking in the second position, the “*behavioral performance*” scores of the subjects reflect a level that is partly above the “less competent”. Unfortunately, the present results cannot be compared with others from the Algerian context due to the fact that the existing studies did not probe this factor. Nevertheless, it can be said that the present findings again prove the absence of ICC-based teaching in the Algerian context. They also reflect the outcome of the information-based instruction in the EFL classes (Personal Communication (2016); (2023)), as learners do not have the opportunity to develop their IC behavior and communication competences in such a type of teaching.

Nevertheless, a detailed look at the results of this scale may help in comprehending the learners' areas of deficiency in this factor. It may also provide background information about the behavioral performance in IC for other Algerian studies in the future. The subjects demonstrated two areas of deficiency that were very apparent and one that was hidden. First, based on item 21 scores, the majority manifested a partly weak level. That is to say that their deficiency relates to adjusting to different communication styles cross-culturally through the use of “appropriate interactive strategies (e.g., directness and face-saving). This area of deficiency corresponds to the one they manifested in the *Knowledge* factor, which relates to cross-cultural knowledge concerning the culture-value approach (item 6: “incompetent” level). The latter sets the basis for understanding how people cross-culturally communicate and what their communication styles are. Hence, this proves their need to nourish this important area.

Second, concerning the learners' ability to "change their verbal behavior (speed, accent...) when necessary in IC situations", they exhibited a "less competent" level. Interestingly, this result contrasted with theirs in the *knowledge* factor, in which they demonstrated a "partly competent" level. Thus, this finding indicates that learners may have a considerable amount of knowledge concerning verbal behaviors in other cultures, which they fairly get from social media, digital shows, their university culture lectures, and books; however, they do not know how to apply it in real-life ICC situations. So, this deficiency needs special focus and practice through explicit IC teaching.

Third, learners manifested a "partly competent level" in item 23 concerning their ability to modify "non-verbal behavior (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) when it is necessary in IC situations". Contrastingly, they showed the opposite in the IC knowledge related to non-verbal behavior with a "less competent" level; hence, learners did not consider the real challenge they may face in real-life IC encounters concerning this ability. Misusing non-verbal behavior may cause communication breakdowns and even conflicts among interlocutors since IC non-verbal use is not only about the simple, automatic, everyday use of ordinary gestures. It is, in fact, culturally conditioned; some cultures are alike in terms of its use, and others are very distinct from each other and may understand the normal non-verbal behavior in one culture as an insult in theirs if used. Thus, it can be said that the learners' ability to adjust their non-verbal behavior in IC situations may somehow be low and not as they manifested.

This judgment is supported by the low level they exhibited in item 21 (partly weak). The latter measures their ability to adjust to different communication styles, found cross-culturally, through the use of "appropriate interactive strategies". The ability referred to in this item also includes the ability to use non-verbal behavior correctly, along with other elements, according to the communication style of the person's interlocutor. For example, one cannot use direct eye contact with someone who is culturally conditioned to use an indirect communication style in all communication contexts or just in certain ones, depending on the culture his interlocutor belongs to. So, developing the ability to use proper non-verbal behavior also requires good knowledge of the culture-value approach, in which they manifested an "incompetent level" (item 6).

2.6 EFL Learners' Display of Intercultural Consciousness

Regarding the "display of intercultural consciousness", it is ranked in the fifth position, indicating that EFL learners are "less competent" in it, which reflects a weak level on a scale of six. The results of this subconstruct also cannot be compared with others from the Algerian context since the existing studies did not deal with this factor. However, it is also crucial to have a detailed interpretation of the sub-scores to obtain an understanding of the students' level in this factor and to consider their ICC areas of weakness. Furthermore, the results of this factor may also provide a background for other Algerian studies in the future concerning this factor.

It is apparent from the results that the learners' level ranges from "incompetent to less competent" in the consciousness items N° (25, 26, 27, 28), implying that they lack preparation before having IC interactions since the majority was split. Some reflected an "incompetent" level, whereas others manifested a "less competent" one (item 25). The findings also reveal the learners' weaknesses in IC self-monitoring and reflection items (items 26, 27, and 28), which, according to Chao (2014), they test this ability "before, during, and after intercultural contact" (p. 101). Hence, they are weak in one of the most crucial abilities of IC, which includes realizing "the cultural knowledge one applies to intercultural contact", "sensing how the cultural background influences the attitudes and approaches to help manage emerging problems during intercultural communication", and "sensing that the answers other people provide during intercultural communication often reflect their own values and beliefs." (Chao, 2014, ICS). However, in contrast to these results, the findings of item 24, which presents another facet of IC self-monitoring and reflection, indicate that learners were aware of the negative impact of overgeneralizations in IC situations since their scores reflected the "competent to very

competent level". Thus, the areas of deficiency in this factor also provide strong evidence for the absence of ICC-based teaching and the learners' need for its application.

2.7 EFL Learners' ICC Areas of Weakness

The following notes present a direct answer to the second question of the study: What are the areas of EFL learners' ICC deficiency?

EFL learners' areas of ICC weakness:

- Appropriate preparation before IC interactions.
- Cross-cultural knowledge related to non-verbal behaviors.
- Knowledge related to the culture-value approach (which helps in understanding the attitudes and behaviors of people across cultures).
- Knowledge about culture shock and how to deal with cultural stress.
- Knowledge about solving problems in IC communication (negotiation).
- Behavioral adjustment to cross-cultural communication styles.
- Verbal behavior adjustment (speed, accent, etc.) in IC in real-life situations.
- Proper non-verbal behavior usage in IC real-life situations.
- "Self-monitoring and Reflection":
 - Recognition of the cultural knowledge one applies in IC communication
 - Reflection ability of one's own cultural background and its relation to attitudes and solving IC problems.

IV. Conclusion

The present exploratory study investigated the current ICC level of second year EFL learners and their areas of deficiency at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. The research was carried out with the ICS developed by Chao (2014) and revealed that the total ICC level of EFL learners is beyond the less competent level. However, when it comes to its sub-constructs, their levels are as follows: In the affective factor, they demonstrated a level between the partly competent and competent levels. It is the highest level they attained compared to the other dimensions, in which they were weak, ranging from less competent in the *display of IC consciousness* to slightly above "less competent" in the three factors of *behavioral performance*, *self-efficacy in IC situations*, and *IC knowledge*.

Concerning their deficiency areas, the participants demonstrated remarkable weakness in *IC knowledge* and *behavioral performance* factors. First, regarding *IC knowledge*, their areas of deficiency are related to non-verbal behaviors, the culture-value approach, culture shock, how to deal with cultural stress, and how to "solve problems" in IC communication (negotiation). Second, their weakness in *behavioral performance* is related to appropriate preparation before IC interactions, cross-cultural adjustment with the different communication styles, verbal and non-verbal behaviors in IC real-life situations, and "self-monitoring and reflection". The latter relates to the recognition of applied cultural knowledge in IC communication and the ability of the person to reflect on his cultural background and its relation to attitudes and solving IC problems. It should be mentioned that the findings of this study about the ICC level of EFL learners and their areas of weakness highlight the need for an explicit integration of ICC-based teaching at Algerian EFL tertiary education to help develop their ICC level. Finally, the researcher hopes that the results of the present paper will help future researchers and EFL teachers understand the current ICC level of Algerian EFL learners through the case of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. Furthermore, the researcher also hopes that this work will benefit EFL teachers in the process of creating ICC-based lessons by understanding the learners' areas of deficiency.

References

- Andrade, C. (2020). Understanding the difference between standard deviation and standard error of the mean, and knowing when to use which. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 42(4), 409-410.
- Asante, M. K., & Newmark, E. (1976). *Intercultural Communication*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.
- Barrett, M., Byram, M., Lázár, I., Mompoin-Gaillard, P., & Philippou, S. (2014). Developing intercultural competence through education (Pestalozzi series No. 3) (J. Huber & C. Reynolds, Eds.). Council of Europe.
- Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Chao, T. (2014). The Development and Application of an Intercultural Competence Scale for University EFL Learners. *英語教學 English Teaching & Learning*, 4(38), 79–124.
- Croucher, S. M., Sommier, M., & Rahmani, D. (2015). Intercultural communication: Where we've been, where we're going, issues we face. *Communication Research and Practice*, 1(1), 71-87.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2014). Some thoughts on assessing intercultural competence. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
- Denham, K. E., & Lobeck, A. C. (2013). *Linguistics for everyone: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Djaidja, A., & Bacher, A. (2022). Assessing EFL Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence: The Case of Second Year Students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila, Algeria. *Rufuf Journal*, 10(1).
- Fantini, A. E., & Tirmizi, A. (2006). Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence. Paper 1. World Learning Publications.
- Fantini, A. E. (2020). Reconceptualizing intercultural communicative competence: A multinational perspective. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(1), 52–61.
- Fantini, A. E. (2021). *Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Necessary Ability for All*. SIT Digital Collections.
- Fasold, R. W., & Connor-Linton, J. (2013). *An introduction to language and linguistics* (6th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Mody, B. (2002). *Handbook of international and intercultural communication* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Haddaoui, S. (2019). An investigation into Foreign Language Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence: Case of First year students at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine. Setif 2 University. *Revue Des Sciences Sociales*, 16(1).
- Huang, S. C. (2020). Development of College Students' Intercultural Competence Through Learning Languages Other Than English – Positive Effect and Improvement on Intercultural Knowledge. *課程與教學季刊*, 23(4), 127-152.
- Katia, S. (2013). The necessity of Intercultural Communication for a peaceful world. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, 8, 172–188.
- Krajewski, S. (2011). *The next Buddha may be a community: Practising intercultural competence at macquarie University, Sydney, Australia*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kramsch, C., & Widdowson, H. G. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.
- McConachy, T. (2022). Pragmatic Awareness in Intercultural Language Learning 2022. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Pragmatics* (p. pp. 766 - 787). Cambridge University Press.
- Middlebury Language Schools. (2023). Why Is Intercultural Communication Important?, Middlebury Language Schools for International Studies: <https://www.middlebury.edu/language-schools/blog/language-learning-why-intercultural-communication-important> (consulted on 16/06/2023).
- Rabiah, S. (2012). Language as a Tool for Communication and Cultural Reality Discloser. 1st International Conference on Media, Communication and Culture “Rethinking Multiculturalism: Media in Multicultural Society” organized by Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (November, 2012), Indonesia.
- Ruiyang, R., & Hassan, H. (2022). Trend in the Study of Intercultural Competence: Bibliometric Analysis by Citespace. *Social Science Journal*, 12(2). Res Militaris. resmilitaris.net
- Sinicope, C., Norris, J. E., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and assessing intercultural competence: A summary of theory, research, and practice (Technical report for the Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project). *Second Language Studies*, 26(1).
- Tsai, C. K. (2021). Exploring College Students' Intercultural Competence Following a “Study Away from Home” Program. *Hwa-Kang English Journal*, 26, 29-54.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Wintergerst, A., & McVeigh, J. (2011). *Tips for Teaching Culture: Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication*. Pearson Education, Inc.

Appendices

Appendix (1)

**Intercultural Competence Scale Original Form
Intercultural Competence Scale (ICS)**

5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = slightly agree;
2 = slightly disagree; 1 = disagree; 0 = strongly disagree

Factor 1: Knowledge of intercultural interaction

Item 1: I know the routine aspects of life in other cultures (e.g., cuisine and customs).

Item 2: I know the rules of non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.

Item 3: I know the visible achievement of cultures, related to the facts and knowledge of world civilizations (e.g., arts, literature).

Item 4: I know the rules of verbal behaviors in other cultures.

Item 5: I know the signs of cultural stress and strategies for overcoming culture shock.

Item 6: I know how to use the culture-value approach to understand the attitudes and behaviors of people from different cultures.

Item 7: I know how historical and socio-political factors influence the attitudes and behavior of people from different cultures.

Item 8: I know how to appropriately negotiate with people from different cultures in intercultural contexts.

Item 9: I know the interactive behaviors common among people of different cultures in professional areas.

Factor 2: Affective orientation to intercultural interaction

Item 10: I enjoy communicating with people from different cultures.

Item 11: I am willing to acquire knowledge regarding different world cultures.

Item 12: I am willing to manage emotions and frustrations when interacting with people from different cultures.

Item 13: I am willing to demonstrate my interest in understanding people of other cultures that are unfamiliar to me.

Item 14: I am willing to modify my attitude and behavior for interacting appropriately with people of other cultures.

Item 15: I am willing to communicate with people of other cultures to broaden my worldview.

Factor 3: Self-efficacy in intercultural situations

Item 16: I am confident that I can interact with people of other cultures appropriately and effectively.

Item 17: I am confident that I can adjust to living in different cultural contexts.

Item 18: I am confident that I can adjust to the stress of culture shock.

Factor 4: Behavioral performance in intercultural interaction

Item 19: I can effectively use English to communicate with other people of different cultural backgrounds.

Item 20: I can use functional languages (e.g., invitation, refusal, and apology) flexibly for achieving appropriate intercultural communication.

Item 21: I can develop appropriate interactive strategies (e.g., directness and face-saving) to adjust to the diverse styles of intercultural communication.

Item 22: I can change my verbal behavior (e.g., speed, accent) when it is necessary in intercultural situations.

Item 23: I can change my non-verbal behavior (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) when it is necessary in intercultural situations.

Factor 5: Display of intercultural consciousness

Item 24: I do not generalize a person's behaviors as representative of a particular culture.

Item 25: I am well prepared before any intercultural contact.

Item 26: I can realize the cultural knowledge I apply to intercultural interaction.

Item 27: I can sense how my cultural background influences my attitudes and approaches to managing emerging problems during intercultural communication.

Item 28: I can sense that the responses other people provide during intercultural communication often reflect their own values and beliefs.

Remark: The original items N° 20 and 23 (item 20: *I can eat what others eat in culturally diverse situations*; and item 23: *I can modify the way I dress when it is necessary in intercultural situations*) were deleted based on a piloting process. Details of this process can be obtained from the researcher.

Appendix (2)

The ICC levels in the Intercultural Competence Scale (Chao, 2014, p. 102)

Point	Explanation
5 =	<i>I strongly agree with this statement. (Very competent)</i>
4 =	<i>I agree with this statement. (Competent)</i>
3 =	<i>I slightly agree with this statement. (Partly competent)</i>
2 =	<i>I slightly disagree with this statement. (Less competent)</i>
1 =	<i>I disagree with this statement. (Incompetent)</i>
0 =	<i>I strongly disagree with this statement. (Quite incompetent)</i>