The Impact of Web 2.0 Tools to Hone EFL Students' Interculturality

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Abstract

Recently, the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as well as Web 2.0 tools has brought about a paradigm shift in the teaching/learning process from teacher-centeredness into learner-centeredness in which EFL learners are able to cultivate their own intercultural communicative competence (ICC). These mobile devices provide a virtual space that can act as a catalyst to facilitate communication, exchanging messages, sharing knowledge, and interacting with others regardless of geographical boundaries. Stated differently, online platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter enable EFL students to communicate and interact with otherness from divergent linguistic and cultural backgrounds with just a couple of mouse-clicks, thereby bolstering their intercultural communication. To this end, a plethora of studies attempted to investigate the effectiveness of online world in cultivating EFL learners' ICC. Accordingly, the paper at hand endeavored to discuss the effect of social media on ICC by reviewing the most relevant literature.

1. Introduction

Today's technology has shrunk boundaries and made it possible for students to practice their English as a foreign language with native speakers from their home country. The ways in which EFL students communicate have changed tremendously, and this has affected how they approach someone who speaks another language natively. With the advent of Web 2.0 technologies, communication has taken on a new dimension and classroom foreign language instruction has been forced to adopt a new approach.

Unlike Web 1.0, which served as a static and mono-directional platform where students passively received information, Web 2.0 provides students with an interactive and bi-directional platform in which they become more involved and motivated to exchange information, and take part in online negotiation of meaning. There is a growing interest in maximizing the potential of Web 2.0 tools for intercultural learning as it offers new opportunities for interactive pedagogy. In plain terms, the rise of ICTs and globalization has fundamentally united people from everywhere. That is to say, Web 2.0 tools have made it possible for users from all over the world to build individual profiles that accentuate their uniqueness, which has an impact on intercultural learning.

The acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language, which refers to a person's ability to behave in a foreign language in linguistically, socio-linguistically, and pragmatically appropriate ways, is no longer the hub of language education (Council of Europe, 2001). It is instead described in terms of the intercultural communicative competence which is defined as *"the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures"* (Meyer, 1991). Intercultural learning has played a key role in modern language and communication studies, highlighting a change that emphasizes the importance of the interdependence of language and culture and the necessity of preparing students for successful intercultural communication in order to succeed in a global workplace. In order for the speaker to be able to function effectively in the cosmopolitan international society, there is an increasing demand for intercultural awareness and perspectives due to the spread of English as a global language. (Dörnyei, 2014). Moreover, Alfred & Byram (2002) hold that "*in any society which expects its education system to prepare people for living in an internationalized culture and globalized economy, and also for the interaction between people of different cultures within and across national boundaries, the process of tertiary socialization and the acquisition of intercultural competence are clearly desirable*" (Alfred & Byram, 2002)**.**

In light of what has just been said, online courses should be thoughtfully planned and implemented in order to create vibrant, socially and culturally diverse learning communities that engage in multimodal learning and interaction that is

distinctly different from that found in face to face classroom settings. Web 2.0 tools have revolutionized the learning environment of foreign languages. They facilitate online intercultural interaction between students from other cultures as a kind of telecollaboration so as to foster their ICC. The paper at hand, therefore, addresses the following question: Do Web 2.0 tools enhance EFL students' intercultural communicative competence?

2. Literature Review
2.1. Web 2.0 Tools

The world appears borderless thanks to Web 2.0 tools. They are considered as a medium for engagement and authenticity that enables EFL students to enhance their intercultural communicative competence. That is, EFL students can better understand the target culture via interactive online courseware. Moreover, EFL teachers should provide their students with more opportunities to take part in intercultural communication through Web 2.0 tools.

Language learning has evolved in innovative ways due to Web 2.0 tools. They make it possible to communicate face-to-face in real-time through the internet, shifting the emphasis away from written proficiency and toward a wider range of language proficiency that takes into account oral and visual communication.

As far as the advantages of Web 2.0 tools are concerned, many language educationalists agree that:

- *Flexibility:* Participants can attend classes whenever it is most convenient for them.
- *Accessibility:* A class that is not available locally can bring students from other geographical areas.

- *Self-paced Learning:* Learners can learn in their own time and schedule. They are no longer restricted to semesters and rigid timetables.
- *Differentiating learning:* While some learners prefer using multimedia to aid their learning, others prefer reading text-based resources. That is to say, the learning environment is differentiated according to different learning needs and styles.
- *Contextualizing Intercultural Encounters:* This process involves risk-taking, emotional responses, impromptu interactions, and critical thinking skills for increasing self- and other awareness.

Regardless of the physical distance separating users, Web 2.0 tools offer a virtual space where they may keep in touch and feel more connected. Web 2.0 tools have been rapidly gaining popularity in today's global village as they foster the sense of belonging to a larger social network outside of one's own local community. These technologies have made it possible for people to engage and communicate with others from all over the world without being restricted by the constraints of space and time.

2.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural communicative competence is often defined as the capacity to decenter, relativize one's point of view, negotiate meaning, and create relationships during actual intercultural interactions. The intercultural communication aimed at enhancing the students' intercultural

communicative competence, which was defined as the ability that allows foreign language learners to "*function as mediators between their home culture and the target culture and to use the target language as contact language with people who use this language as a first language*" (Risager, 1998). In Byram's words, ICC is the ability:

To see relationships between different cultures- both internal and external to a society – and to mediate; that is, interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. It also encompasses the ability to critically or analytically understand that one's "own and other cultures" perspective is culturally determined rather than natural (Byram, 1997).

Fig.1. Byram' Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997)
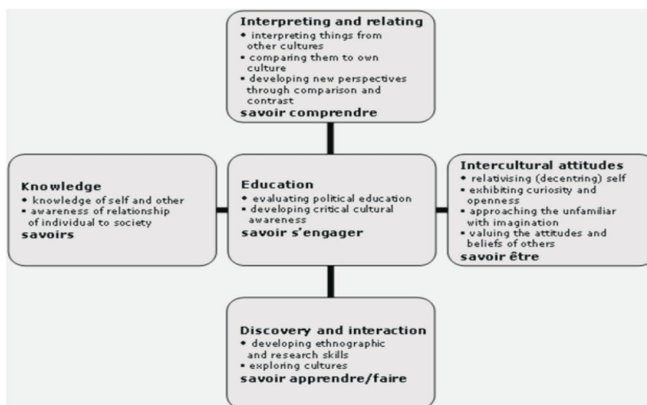
Since Byram's model is intended to help language teachers comprehend and incorporate intercultural competence into their classroom activities, it is included in the majority of definitions of the term. This model includes the key components that affect intercultural communication, namely *attitudes, knowledge* and *skills*: first, **"*attitudes* of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings, beliefs**

and behaviors, a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviors, and to analyze them from the viewpoint of others with whom is engaging" are fundamental for efficient intercultural communication; second, another key cofactor that facilitates intercultural communication is *knowledge*. This latter is divided into two types: the first one refers to "*knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country*", whereas the second one has to do with "*knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels*"; and lastly, two categories of *skills* which are based on the participants' knowledge and attitudes: *Interpreting and relating:* "the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own". *Discovering and interacting:* "the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real time communication" (Byram, 1997).

There are a plethora of studies that examine the impact of Web 2.0 tools and ICTs on enhancing EFL students' intercultural communicative competence. To start with, Uri *et al.* (2012) conducted a qualitative investigation which endeavoured to examine how social media platforms affect the process of intercultural adaption. According to the findings of the interview, social media is used by students to develop, strengthen, and maintain relationships. Discussions and exchanges create a sense of connectivity which is crucial for engaging with citizens of both the host and

the home countries. These relationships are crucial for overcoming prejudices and stereotypes as well as fostering a sense of belonging (Uri et al., 2012). Moreover, Vurdien (2014) conducted a descriptive study that sought to highlight whether social media can bolster EFL students' intercultural competence and autonomous learning or not. The findings showed that students were able to learn about certain facets of the foreign culture in a virtual setting that is conducive to intercultural communication. In order to accomplish that goal, the learning activities gave them the chance to reflect on both their own perspectives and those of their peers. Given that students can create their own learning strategies and proceed at their own pace, social networking appears to be a suitable platform for students to negotiate meaning and develop intercultural knowledge and attitudes. Since there is no peer pressure like there is in face-to-face classes, they are less afraid to express their opinions freely; hence meaningful learning will take place. In the final questionnaire and interview, the majority of participants stated that their learning experience had been fruitful and that it had improved their understanding of customs, lifestyle, hobbies, food, religion, educational patterns and music of their counterparts from the target culture. A number of participants acknowledged that online assignments sparked their inquisitiveness which boosted their desire to find and share relevant knowledge about their own and otherness' worldviews (Vurdien, 2014).

Likewise, Liu (2019) investigates the relationship between Chinese residents of Sweden's use of social media and their ICC, thereby describing how social media

affects their ICC. This study analyses how they used social media before Sweden and at the present time in order to accomplish the aforementioned goal. Based on the findings of this study, three conclusions may be drawn to address the research question: *How do social media affect the ICC of Chinese people living in Sweden?* First, if social media popularity and user motivation overlap, it might be possible to develop ICC through social media use in the home country. That is, the prerequisite for ICC development is the intersection between popularity and motivation. Second, the use of social media in contextual social interaction would enhance ICC. The study's final finding is that social media positively promotes ICC, and that this influence is more prominent now than it was before the host nation (Liu, 2019). In the same line of thought, Seyfi & Guven (2016) conducted another descriptive study to investigate how social media use affects how Erasmus students, who go to Turkey for academic purposes, adjust to the target culture, namely Turkish culture. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to conduct in-depth studies within this scope. The research's qualitative and quantitative findings demonstrate that social media is a highly effective tool for fostering intercultural communication. Through social media, Erasmus students were able to communicate easily with strangeness and acclimate to their intercultural assumptions and norms. It can be concluded that social media serves as a catalyst for *"sustainable intercultural dialogue"* (Seyfi & Guven, 2016).

Other language pedagogues claim that EFL students have little chance to interact with members of the target culture which

limits their ability to cultivate their ICC. They acknowledged the key role of Facebook in enhancing interculturality among students. In this vein, Jin (2015), in his study, uses Facebook as a new computer-mediated communication tool in a university classroom-based telecollaborative project between the U.S. and South Korea in order to identify a new opportunity to engage Korean EFL learners in creative ways to maximize target language interactions and develop their ICC. The findings showed that Facebook provides Korean EFL learners with a useful platform for intercultural interactions with members of the target culture. Additionally, Korean EFL learners demonstrate their ability to use the five components of ICC by exhibiting numerous instances that meet Byram's (2000) assessment criteria. According to this study, implementing Facebook in the classroom could be an innovative, creative, and useful technique to encourage intercultural communication between home and host culture. It can be concluded that this cutting-edge Web 2.0 technology may be applied to telecollaborative projects in other universities. This study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of how Facebook may be used in a telecollaborative project to foster EFL learners' ICC as there is scant information on using Facebook as a Web 2.0 tool in telecollaboration (Jin, 2015). Likewise, Clotilde Thomé-Williams (2016) conducted another qualitative study. During the autumn quarter, students engaged in Portuguese-language conversations with Brazilian college students from So Paulo via Skype and a private Facebook group. They were inspired to express their opinions, share their thoughts, and gain

more knowledge from their counterparts as a result of having the opportunity to strengthen their intercultural communication knowledge and skills. They reported on their online interactions every week using a self-assessment grid that allowed them to analyze both the engagement and their own linguistic and intercultural competences. The findings showed that the conversations on Facebook turned out to be very beneficial. Students from both sides would start discussions, inquire for more information on themes that interested them or that they were learning in class, and discuss their weekends, sports, daily activities, etc. The students also claimed that they appreciated the chance to communicate freely with Brazilian classmates. They believed that by highlighting areas that needed more effort, this helped them become more proficient in Portuguese(Clotilde Thomé-Williams, 2016).

In their study, Monika et al. (2020) investigate the impact of Facebook on intercultural communication skills. International students at Kyoto University and Tsukuba University in Japan were the subject of a survey. The findings indicated that the majority of participants use Facebook to learn more about their overseas friends, and that most of these friends are already active users of Facebook. Additionally, it demonstrated that most participants use Facebook as a medium for intercultural communication, information sharing, profiling, and encouraging social engagement. It does improve participants' intercultural communication skills so that interactions with international friends are successful, they adapt more quickly when social media

helps them connect with others in a powerful way, and finally, social media improves their English reading ability (Monika et al., 2020). Another study conducted by Hassan *et al.* (2020) to investigate the effectiveness of using Facebook to increase students' intercultural sensitivity. The findings revealed that most respondents have wholeheartedly immersed in interacting with strangeness. The results also showed that students' exposure to the target cultures via Facebook enabled them to become more aware of and sensitive to their counterparts' perspectives. In essence, this demonstrated effective intercultural competency. The majority of survey participants appreciated otherness' culturally diverse values and behaviors. Their enthusiastic response helped foster belongingness among foreign and local students (Hassan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017) focused on interactions between pairs of students from schools in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain in non-native English and German. The BigBlueButton video communication technology and Moodle Chat were used as learning activities. According to Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017), ICC development greatly improved. Both students and teachers found it a meaningful experience to go beyond the foreign language classroom and engage in real life interaction. Mitchell (2018) also adopted a qualitative approach to investigate the use of *Pinterest* to promote learners' intercultural awareness. Participants (n=28) completed a project in which they explored the target culture via *Pinterest* and then completed a series of reflective activities. They discovered that the visual nature of

Pinterest gave users an insider view into the target culture and allowed users to connect with it on a more deep level, resulting in the development of their intercultural awareness. Natalie Wu & Marek (2018) conducted another emperical study. Three videos about American culture were used in the study which was conducted over a three-month period by college students in the United States. The topics included diversity, snack foods, and gift-giving. The researchers made the decision to ask American students to make the videos in order to deliver genuine content made by American peers expressly to spur intercultural understanding through active social interactions. According to the data, using social media for intercultural communication in this study helped the participants become more interculturally competent, and their experience also implicitly encouraged them to learn more languages. The majority of the participants also discovered that Facebook was useful for collaboration and communication, and that engaging with people from the foreign culture was made possible by the social media platform's global reach (Natalie Wu & Marek, 2018).

As far as the Algerian context is concerned, Mouhadjer (2018) examines the impact of Social Media on EFL students' ICC; students from both universities interact online through the Global Understanding Project, an online partnership between the University of Tlemcen in Algeria and East Carolina University in the United States (videoconferencing, Instant Messaging, Emails and Facebook). This work recognizes intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes as their ICC dimensions, and

these social media technologies are identified as the facilitators of promoting ICC, particularly improving their intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes The study finds that students' ICC in the Global Understanding Project grows as a result of the influence of social media (Mouhadjer, 2018).

Ismailov (2021) adopted a quasi-experimental design involving undergraduate students in Japan (n=112) to find out the effectiveness of an inquiry-based telecollaboration using explicit instruction in experimental group in comparison with traditional instruction in control group. Quantitative findings revealed that students learning in an inquiry-based environment reported increased levels of engagement and confidence toward intercultural communication, even if numerous outcomes on telecollaborative activities and intercultural learning were not statistically different between both groups, namely experimental and control group. Qualitative data also indicated that the experimental group had learned more about the target culture. In other words, the results showed that while allowing students to explore their own culture online could enhance the quality of future intercultural interactions by increasing students' intercultural knowledge. The incorporation of an inquiry-based strategy could have beneficial value in terms of enhancing learner engagement, deeper learning, and confidence in intercultural communication (Ismailov, 2021). Üzüm et al. (2020) conducted a similar study. Through a telecollaborative project involving two teacher training groups from Turkey and the USA, 48 teacher candidates were

recruited for this study to measure their intercultural competency. Accordingly, our study suggests that telecollaboration offers a useful environment for teacher education that enables teacher trainees to engage in first-hand intercultural interactions in order to get ready for their classrooms' ethnolinguistic diversity. In the present study, telecollaboration was found to be a useful technique that allowed teacher trainees to relativize their cultural environment and consider their own situatedness from other people's perspectives. Trainees can negotiate their identities as intercultural speakers and traverse national and cultural boundaries through intercultural telecollaborative projects (Üzüm et al., 2020).

Mobile Instant Messaging (MIM) has gained a lot of popularity in the field of language learning, but few studies explicitly address how students perceive it or its effects on acquiring and developing linguistic, cultural, and intercultural competencies. Madden & Foucher (2020) conducted an exploratory study to investigate students' perceptions of using WhatsApp in the project. According to research, WhatsApp is regarded as useful, common, and preferred tool for telecollaborative projects. Students increased their vocabulary, refined their grammar, and learned about religion and homosexuality. However, other students believed that smaller groups would be more productive than a common WhatsApp group since interactions could get out of control. Due to a lack of understanding on some issues and an unwillingness to consider alternative viewpoints, this can create an uncomfortable and reserved environment (Madden & Foucher, 2020).

Bailey & Gruber (2020) conducted another experimental study. Results showed that it is beneficial to implement virtual exchange projects that encourage students to think about and broaden their understanding of these ideologies. They also show that partnering students with international students rather than native speakers of the language may have a positive impact on their anxiety levels and communicative skills. The findings demonstrated the usefulness of creating virtual exchange programs that encourage student reflection and awareness-raising of these ideas. At the conclusion of the project, participants reported feeling more at ease speaking the foreign language. As a result, the experiment also implies that connecting students with international students rather than native speakers of the target language has the potential to improve students' conversational skills and minimize anxiety levels. Future research would vary the groups across more than two nations and incorporate a problem-based task that the teams could tackle cooperatively (Bailey & Gruber, 2020).

Litvinova et al. (2021) conducted a descriptive study in which they attempted to find out how representatives of a non-linguistic specialization feel about IC through online learning is the main goal of this study. Semi-structured interviews with students in the online learning programs for the medical and language disciplines were done to gather information. The findings demonstrated that students with non-linguistic specialties are in fact less aware of and motivated to boost their ICC in online learning. A number of solutions were put forth to address this issue, including using the online environment, providing additional online materials, participating in international online events and exchange programs, and raising awareness of interculturalism by disseminating information in an educational institution's online environment (Litvinova et al., 2021). Shadiev et al. (2021) conducted another study which concentrated on fostering students' knowledge sharing, intercultural communication skills, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) proficiency . In order to create an authentic and immersive intercultural learning environment, 360-degree video technology was used. Students used this environment to create content in English that was relevant to their culture and traditions, share content with partners from the other culture, and reflect on their intercultural learning. Interviews, tests, observations, and questionnaires were used to gather the data. The study generates three primary conclusions. The results demonstrated that intercultural learning activities assisted by 360-degree video technology enhanced students' EFL proficiency, intercultural communicative competence, and knowledge sharing. The paired sample t-test results revealed a significant difference in five dimensions of ICC between the pre- and post-test. The findings imply that all five components of ICC were developed by the participants. Students' intercultural knowledge, attitudes, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness have all improved accordingly (Shadiev et al., 2021).

Recently, language educators have emphasized the pivotal role of integrating telecollaboration projects in their EFL classrooms so as to cultivate their learners'

ICC. For example, Casañ-Pitarch et al. (2020) carried out an experimental study to determine whether a telecollaboration project would enhance students' ICC or not. Students worked on a project that involved developing a blog on the subject of "*Sustainable Development Today.*" Most of the tools used for this project were Google Apps, including *Classroom, Hangouts, Blogger, Drive,* and *Docs.* Students were subjected to pre-/post-test prior to and at the end of the implementation of telecollaboration project. These tests were designed to gauge students' English language proficiency and ICC. The students who took part in this virtual exchange program improved their ICC (Casañ-Pitarch et al., 2020). Similarly, Toscu (2021) conducted a reflective study about the implementation of a telecollaboration project between EFL learners in Turkey and native or non-native speakers of English in the USA. The main purpose of the project was to help the participants to develop their ICC via Web 2.0 tools. Therefore, the participants were engaged in activities by which they could share their points of view about cultural differences, thereby broadening their intercultural knowledge. The results unveiled that telecollaboration projects are crucial to cultivate EFL students' ICC (TOSCU, 2021). Moreover,

Shen (2021) investigates the potential of the online ICC training model and focuses on how online instruction can be established at the four teaching stages of attitude formation, knowledge acquisition, skill practice, and reflection. Attitude formation is a pre-class activity to spur learners' inquisitiveness. In the stage of knowledge acquisition, different kinds of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are selected as teaching resources for students to learn the key concepts and theories for the course. Skills practice requires students to make full use of WeChat or Bulletin Board System (BBS) to have online intercultural encounter, in this process students practice both their linguistic and intercultural communicative competence. The last stage offers the teacher and students the option to reconsider their teaching and learning processes and move to the next circle of teaching stages. The outcomes of both quantitative and qualitative examination indicated that using online instruction may be a useful strategy for enhancing students' ICC both now and in the future (Shen, 2021). In light of what has just been reviewed, the aforementioned existing studies are summarized in the table as follows:

Table 1. A Summary of Existing Research

Author (s)	Year	Title	Web 2.0 Tool	Method	Results
Uri et al.	2012	The Impact of New Media on Intercultural Communication in Global Context	Social Media	A qualitative study: interview	Social media developed and increased the relationships between EFL students and otherness, thereby enhancing their ICC.
Vurdien	2014	Social networking: Developing intercultural competence and fostering autonomous learning	Social Media	A descriptive study (a questionnaire/ interview)	Students were able to learn autonomously about certain components of the target culture.
Jin	2015	Using Facebook to promote Korean EFL learners' intercultural competence	Facebook	An empirical study	Facebook provides Korean EFL students with a useful platform for intercultural interactions with members of the target culture.
Seyfi Guven	2016	Influence of new media on intercultural communication : an example of an Erasmus student	Social Media	A descriptive study	Social media is an effective tool that fostered Erasmus students' ICC.
Clotilde Thomé-Williams &	2016	Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Portuguese through Skype and Facebook	Skype / Facebook	A qualitative study	Students were able to initiate discussions and inquire for information in intercultural interactions.
Kohn Hoffstaedter &	2017	Learner agency and non-native speaker identity in pedagogical lingua franca conversations: Insights from intercultural telecollaboration in foreign language education.	BigBlueButton video communication technology / Moodle Chat	A qualitative study	Both teachers and students found Web 2.0 tools a meaningful experience through which they go beyond EFL classroom into authentic interculturality.
Mitchell	2018	Pinterest: A vehicle to promote cross-cultural awareness in an introductory Spanish course	Pinterest	An exploratory study	The use of Pinterest gave EFL students an insider view into the target culture, thereby enhancing their intercultural awareness.
Natalie Wu & Marek	2018	Developing intercultural competence via social media engagement in a language learning framework	YouTube Videos (diversity/ snack foods/ gift-giving)	An empirical study	Using YouTube videos was useful for increasing EFL students' ICC.

Mouhadjer	2018	Social Media and its Impact on Intercultural Communication	Social Media: Video Conferencing/ Instant Messaging / Emails/ Facebook	An empirical study	Social media did bolster EFL students' ICC.
Liu	2019	Impact of social media on Intercultural Communication Competence of Chinese People living in Sweden	Social Media	A qualitative study	Both popularity of social media and motivation can enhance EFL students' ICC. Contextual social interaction is a prerequisite for ICC development.
Monika et al.	2020		Facebook	A qualitative study	Most students use Facebook as a medium for intercultural communication, information sharing, profiling and encouraging social engagement.
Hassan et al.	2020	Facebook for Intercultural Communication: The Foreign Students' Experience	Facebook	A quantitative method (survey)	EFL students' exposure to the target culture via Facebook enabled them to become more aware of and tolerant to differences.
Madden & Foucher	2020	The Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences	Mobile Instant Messaging (MIM)/ WatsApp	An exploratory study	EFL students increased their vocabulary, refined their grammar and learned about religion and homosexuality.
Uzum et al.	2020	Using telecollaboration to promote intercultural competence in teacher training classrooms in Turkey and the USA	Telecollaboration	An empirical study	Telecollaboration offers useful environment for teacher education in terms of developing their ICC.
Bailey & Gruber	2020	Challenges and other feedback: Integrating intercultural learning in the Digital Age	Virtual Exchange Programs	An experimental study	It is beneficial to implement virtual exchange projects that encourage students to think about and broaden their understanding of different worldviews. Connecting students with international students rather than native speakers of the target language has the potential to improve students' conversational skills and minimize their anxiety levels.
Casañ-Pitarch et al.	2020	Enhancing Language and Cross-Cultural Competence through Telecollaboration	Google Apps: Hangouts / Blogger / Drive / Docs	An experimental study	EFL students in the experimental group improved their ICC.

Ismailov	2021	Virtual exchanges in an inquiry-based learning environment: Effects on intra-cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence	Inquiry-based Telecollaboration	A quasi-experimental research	Experimental group demonstrated increased levels of engagement and confidence towards intercultural communication.
Shadiev et al.	2021	Exploring the Impact of Learning Activities Supported by 360-Degree Video Technology on Language Learning, Intercultural Communicative Competence Development, and Knowledge	360-degree video	An experimental study (tests/ questionnaire/ interview/ observation)	360-degree videos technology enhanced EFL students' language proficiency, ICC and knowledge sharing. The paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference in five dimensions of ICC between pre-/ post-test.
Litvinova et al.	2021	Developing Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Online Learning	Online Learning	A qualitative study (semi-structured interview)	Students with non-linguistic specialties are less aware of and motivated to boost their ICC in online environment.
Toscu	2021	Dos and Don'ts of an Effective Telecollaboration Project	Telecollaboration Projects	A reflective study	Telecollaboration projects are crucial to cultivate EFL students' ICC.
Shen	2021	An Investigation of Learners' Perceptions of an Online Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) Training Model State of Art	Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) / WeChat /	An action research	Using an online instruction is a useful strategy for enhancing EFL students' ICC both now and later on.

Source: Belmamoune (2022)

3. Method

In order to address the research question, the researcher adopted the documentary sources method to collect pertinent data for this study. She analyzes previous studies as well as other online information sources so as to find out the effectiveness of using Web 2.0 tools in enhancing EFL students' intercultural communicative competence. The use of questionnaires or interviews, from the researcher's perspective, is less fruitful than this method. She evaluates documents that include data about the phenomenon she sought to investigate. By so doing, the researcher accessed data from a variety of sources, including a review of the existing literature that is currently available in journal publications.

4. Results and Discussion

The study at hand is an invaluable asset for intercultural communication instruction as it presents innovative methods and techniques used by a plethora of language experts and pedagogues to enhance EFL students' ICC. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience, EFL teachers become more cognizant of how to integrate

interculturality into their classrooms. Thanks to Web 2.0 tools that enable EFL learners to interact with native speakers of the target language.

As far as the review of the existing research is concerned, it is worth mentioning that Web 2.0 tools have a beneficial value in terms of cultivating EFL students ICC. In a number of studies (e. g. Jin, 2015; Mouhadjer, 2018; Hassan et al., 2020; Ismailov, 2021; Shadiev et al., 2021), after participating in the virtual exchanges via Web 2.0 tools, EFL students' hasty judgments and stereotyped perceptions of the target culture—which had primarily been developed by the media—were dispelled, and these technologies gave them the chance to interact with foreigners and develop their intercultural awareness and sensitivity. They also developed a greater interest in their own cultures, and this excitement could be shown in their desire to keep in touch with their counterparts. They increased their self-awareness of their mother culture, national values, ethnicity, religion, gender…etc. as a result of their increased curiosity about the target culture and its speakers. Thus, they gradually opened up to oddness and were ready to put aside stereotypes, prejudice, preconceptions, culture shock, and even hate against others. Additionally, Web 2.0 technologies promoted critical thinking skills as they were frequently required to defend their own perspectives and reflect on others'. They also mentioned that how social media helped them become more culturally aware of and sensitive towards otherness which was helpful while they were learning how to handle stress and the fear of the unknown as well as how to endure ambiguity. Furthermore, they could

learn to be more adaptable in how they dealt with cultural dissimilarities and more successful at sustaining a pleasant emotional state in spite of impediments. To cut it short, instead of relying solely on the use of conventional textbooks, language educators and researchers are urged to adopt innovative instructional methods and techniques that involve the use of Web 2.0 tools to bolster their EFL students' ICC in today's global village.

5. *Conclusion*

Nowadays, EFL instructors should take advantage of Web 2.0 tools and incorporate them effectively into their classrooms. Native speakers are now more easily accessible and able to participate in telecollaboration projects. It can be concluded that Web 2.0 technologies are considered as facilitators of intercultural communication through which EFL students are able to interact and negotiate meaning with strangeness. They become open-minded and adapt to different cultural norms and values, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and cultural shocks. Furthermore, EFL students get in-depth insights into their counterparts' worldviews, and that tolerating differences and suspending prejudices.

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