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**The Role of Mastering the English Socio-cultural
Conventions in Intercultural Communication Problems:
The Case of Algerian EFL PhD Students at British Universities**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree
in Sciences of the Language**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

*My precious parents whom without them i would not have been able to
create this work*

My siblings who encouraged me with their support through this whole year

My dear colleagues who helped me and reached out my help as well

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Abstract

The English culture has always been inseparable from its language, yet most of EFL classes do not tend to teach its culture as deeply and thoroughly as it should be. The Algerian EFL system, for instance, is mainly based on teaching grammatical rules and structures of the language to be memorized more than of the socio-cultural contexts and situations to be practiced. Consequently, most of Algerian EFL students do not have high language proficiency levels especially the ones who decide to finish their study abroad. In this research's case, the Algerian EFL PhD students who went to British universities are the main population of the study. Through this work, we will seek to uncover the role of mastering the English socio-cultural conventions in intercultural communications, so it was hypothesized that if teachers raise EFL students' awareness about cultural conventions, cross-cultural communication problems will be reduced. Accordingly, a questionnaire was submitted to twenty students and revealed that although the international experience had a positive impact on the Algerian student's levels of the language, they faced many socio-cultural difficulties. Hence, the Algerian educational system must be enhanced, and EFL teachers must work together with students to achieve better results. Eventually, it was suggested that cultural exchanging programs and adjusting the Algerian EFL curriculum would be very beneficial to reduce this problem.

List of Abbreviations

AWEJ: Arab World English Journal

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

IC: Intercultural competence

ICC: intercultural communicative competence

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign Language

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General Introduction

Introduction

In this research, we will discuss two notions independently: intercultural communication and socio-cultural conventions. While The former is related to when two or more people from totally different cultures encounter in a conversational situation and eventually face certain obstacles, The latter is all about the norms of a certain language (in this case, English) that govern its society and shape its identity from other societies. To a better understanding, we will discuss the role of mastering the Socio-cultural conventions of English in intercultural communications in more depth.

1. Statement of the Problem

The English language has been a target language in EFL classes of Algeria for a long time. It has been nearly taught in the same way at all universities and colleges, that is focusing more on the grammatical and syntactic rules of the language and instructing students to learn them by heart. This methodology of teaching and learning English at all the Algerian educational institutions seemed to be quite satisfactory as long as students are not willing to finish their studies abroad. But if this is not the case, students will face many problems at the target language countries which they did not even know they will be facing.

The main common problem is in the cross-cultural communication phenomenon where students will not be able to understand the social and cultural background of English leading to an interactional breakdown between international students and local citizens. This huge gap in communication makes us notice that the Algerian educational system has been having a missing piece in its teaching methods for all these past decades. It was dealing with the social and cultural conventions of English to make the students dive into, understand, and interact smoothly with the real everyday language in American or English societies. As a

result, language grammar and socio-cultural conventions are two inseparable entities. Therefore, language learning is at once a socio-cultural learning.

2. Objective of the Research

This research is aiming to investigate the role of mastering the socio-cultural conventions of English in intercultural communications. The objective is to reduce cross-cultural communication problems which face many Algerian students in British countries when trying to interact internationally as well as interculturally.

3. Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Would mastering the socio-cultural background of the language help in reducing cross-cultural communication problems?
2. Can EFL students communicate interculturally if they have either a grammatical background or a socio-cultural background of the language only?
3. Are grammar and language conventions both essential in mastering any language entirely?

4. Research Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that if teachers raise EFL students' awareness about cultural conventions, cross-cultural communication problems will be reduced.

5. Research Significance

The value of this research is to help Biskra university EFL students at the English department reach to an advanced level of English with fluent, accurate, and sophisticated mastery of the language that enables them to internationally interact and communicate.

6. Research Methodology and Design

In this research, we are aiming to undertake a descriptive research design through a case study approach in which we will seek to uncover the role of mastering the socio-cultural

conventions in cross-cultural communications of EFL students at British universities both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking.

6.1. Population and sample

In this research, the population is all Algerian EFL PhD students at British universities, and the sample is represented in 20 Algerian EFL PhD students at British universities through a random sampling procedure.

6.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

A semi-structured questionnaire will be put online to a group of Algerian EFL PhD students who study at British universities. The analysis procedures will be descriptively and statistically displayed via charts and discourses

7. Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter will descriptively discuss the socio-cultural conventions of the English language and its importance in avoiding communicating problems. The second chapter will discuss the problems of intercultural communications that face many Algerian EFL PhD students when they engage in conversations with British citizens abroad. The third chapter will be practical through which it will analyze the EFL PhD learners' questionnaire.

Chapter One: Introducing the Socio-cultural Conventions to EFL Students

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Introduction

For a correct and appropriate language use, the notion of the socio-cultural conventions of any language is as important as its grammar rules or even more. Nevertheless, these conventions were neither taught nor applied as they should be in the previous or recent Algerian educational curricula, so it is highly likely to reconsider exposing them to EFL learners through various methods in order to achieve a better understanding of the English language as well as being able to gain cultural awareness, adapt with cultural differences, and confidently interact within intercultural environments. After all, this is the core of teaching and learning languages in EFL classes. In this chapter, definitions of the socio-cultural conventions, culture, and society will be displayed as well as their relation to language. In addition, the researcher will discuss the historical background, developmental changes, and importance of exposing them to EFL classes by giving techniques to facilitate the process of teaching and learning these language norms in the most affective possible way.

1.1. Definitions of Socio-cultural Conventions

The shared and generally accepted rules, traditions, customs, criteria, standards, and norms of a group of people in a certain society is called socio-cultural conventions. This simple definition is more explained by Rescola (2007) when he stated that in a social context, a convention may retain the character of an "unwritten law" of custom (for example, the manner in which people greet each other, such as by shaking each other's hands). Certain types of rules or customs may become law and regulatory legislation may be introduced to formalize or enforce the convention (for example, laws that define on which side of the road vehicles must be driven).

Another definition was stated by Lewis (1969, p. 19) in which he talked about the complexity and depth of the social convention concept although they appear simple, known, and generalized by its community members. He declared the following statement:

A social convention is a regularity widely observed by some group of agents.

But not every regularity is a convention. We all eat, sleep, and breathe, yet these are not conventions. In contrast, the fact that everyone in the United States the United States drives on the right side of the road rather than the left is a convention. We also abide by conventions of etiquette, dress, eating, and so on.

When diving deeply into the meaning and history of the word "convention" itself, we find when Rescola (2007) mentioned that conventions arise and stay the same for a very long period of time because all of its people, their ancestors, and descendants share their explicit agreements, such as promises or contracts. This definition was adopted from Thomas Hobbes's theory of government (1997) as resulting from a social contract.

After the notion of the "explicit agreement of the conventions", a contradicted notion that is called 'tacit agreement' was introduced by John Locke. He claimed that there is no such thing as an explicit agreement within an overt convening because it does not make any sense of understanding. He said "What language would participants in such an agreement employ when conducting their deliberations? We can hardly call a cow a cow and a wolf a wolf" (as cited in Rescola 2007, p. 01).

An example of the different socio-cultural conventions that distinguish a society from another will be illustrated in a comparison between the English and Chinese societies when taking pictures. Edwards (2016) assures that in the old centuries of England, smiling in

pictures was never occurring because they thought that a photograph was a frozen presentation of a person. On the other hand, the Chinese conventions were extremely the opposite because they tended to smile from the beginnings of camera inventions. It was a purely natural socio-cultural convention which could not be changed or manipulated easily.

We can say that the socio-cultural conventions of any society are Conventions are the unspoken, unofficial rules within a particular community that are accepted and followed by members who may not even be aware of them. They are inherited naturally since birth and are passed through generations. Also, it is very hard to change them because they take a long time to change due to their complex and innate nature which comes within native language acquisition itself and the surrounding environment. For example, if you drink a soda, you probably live in a different geographical region of the United States from someone who drinks pop. And if you drink a coke, you live in yet another region. All three words refer to the same thing, a sugary, carbonated drink, but users are influenced in their word choice by the preference of their community (Amberg &Vause, 2010).

1.2. Society and Culture

In the process of investigating the terminology "socio-cultural", it may appear significantly complicated to be understood. However, if we attempt to disintegrate it into units, we will discover that it is composed of two meaningful as well as independent words: society and culture. In this section, the researcher will provide some concepts to a better understanding of these two separate yet interrelated notions.

1.2.1. What is Society?

"The term "society" which came from the Latin word *societas* generally designates persons belonging to a specific in-group. In anthropology, the term is used to refer not only to

a group of people but also to the complex pattern of the norms of interaction that arise among them" (Concept of society, n.d.). This definition reassures the strong bond between society and norms of interaction (socio-cultural conventions) which has been mentioned in the section above.

Moreover, it was discovered by many scholars such as MacIver and Page (1950) that society was defined either functionally or structurally. From the functional point of view, it is defined as a complexity of groups in two-way relationship, interacting upon each other, enabling living beings to carry on their lives and helping each one to fulfill his wishes, as well as complete his interests in relation with his fellows. From the structural point of view, it is the total social history of the way people feel, act, think, and the social rules of institutions they follow.

In order to reassure what has been mentioned, the following two scholars view society from its functional and structural aspects respectively:

According to MacIver and Page (1987), "Society is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behavior and of liberties. This ever-changing complex system we call society. It is the web of social relationships" (p. 45). On the other hand, "Society is the union itself, the organization, the sum of formal relations in which associating individuals are bound together" (Giddings, 1922, p. 13).

According to these definitions, we should not neglect the thought of society being related not only to culture, but also to language because the society, as a whole system of complexity, governs the way we use language. So after all, language is a type of social

behavior. Hickey (2012) mentioned that the study of language and society – sociolinguistics – can be dated to about the middle of the twentieth century. Before that, there were authors who commented on how language use was influenced or indeed guided by socially relevant factors, such as class, profession, age or gender.

1.2.2. The Difference between Society and Community

It is all determined under two main characteristics: size and interaction. To reformulate what has been said, a society is a group of individuals with a common territory and culture interacting with one another. It is built upon interaction between vast networks and high diversity among its members which is the core element of shaping any society that is heterogeneous in nature. In contrast, a community is a group of people living in the same place or having particular characteristics in common. It is built upon involuntary interaction and minimum diversity among its members who share many things in common because of its homogenous nature. In addition, what is generally understood as a key size difference is that a community is smaller than a society, which means that one society consists of different communities such as fishing community, farming community, business community and others (Upen, 2018).

1.2.3. What is Culture?

As simple as the word culture can seem, it actually has very complex and wide meanings because of its nature and the multiple perspectives from which it can be looked at. Generally, it is defined as the knowledge stored orderly at the minds of individuals who have acquired and maintained it in a parallel manner with language acquisition and usage. In other words, it is a homogeneous static bodies of knowledge consisting of accumulated and classifiable sets of thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs (Defining Language and Culture, n.d.).

Now it is clear that culture is presented by the use of language, yet the former is not affected by the latter on any level. Gooedenough (1964) and Williams (1992) explained this concept through the following:

While language may be used as a way to uncover the culture-specific bodies of knowledge, it is not deemed to have any influence on their development or, more generally, on the abstract structures which the information is organised. Thus, the primary role that language is thought to play is representational. In other words, language can only reflect cultural understandings; it cannot affect them.

(As cited in *Defining Language and Culture*, n. d.)

In the previous definition, it was mentioned that culture is presented through language. In this definition, by contrast, the idea of culture acquisition through society will be tackled. Freimuth (2006) said that most qualities about human life are guided by the human genetic code, but not culture because it is socially acquired. In other words, culture is not just about expressing values, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge of people with language. It is also about learning and acquiring all these aspects through the society in which these people live in. Overall, these previous definitions can be synthesized into three short yet direct points:

- Culture is universal among all human groups and even exists among some primates.
- All cultures have to provide for the physical, emotional, and social needs of their members, enculturate new members, resolve conflicts and promote survival for their members.
- All cultures have their own methods of balancing the needs of society in relation to individual needs.

1.2.4. The Big 'C' and Small 'c' Culture

They are two separate categories of culture. According to Lee (2009, p.78) : "The Big "C" culture is the culture which represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society. For Peterson (2004), the culture relating to grand themes, is classified under Big "C" culture which includes the following themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society's norms, legal foundation, core values, history, and cognitive processes. However, the little "c" culture includes the routine aspects of life and encompasses everything as a total way of life. For Lee (2009, p.78), this type of culture is "the invisible and deeper sense of a target culture" including attitudes or beliefs and assumptions. Peterson (2004) defines little "c" culture as the culture focusing on common or minor themes. It includes themes such as opinions, viewpoints, preferences or tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, popular music, and popular issues, and certain knowledge like, trivia, facts, etc. (as cited in Choudhury, 2013, p. 21).

1.2.5. Characteristics of Culture

Although cultures may differ across the countries, they all appear to obtain similar features that gives them uniqueness from other concepts. In the following points, all five characteristics of culture will be shortly mentioned according to Kelly (1987):

- Culture is learned. It is not biological; we do not inherit it. Much of learning culture is unconscious. We learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. The process of learning culture is known as enculturation. While all humans have basic biological needs such as food, sleep, and sex, the way we fulfill those needs varies cross-culturally.

- Culture is shared. Because we share culture with other members of our group, we are able to act in socially appropriate ways as well as predict how others will act. Despite the shared nature of culture, that doesn't mean that culture is homogenous (the same). The multiple cultural worlds that exist in any society are discussed in detail below.
- Culture is based on symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Symbols vary cross-culturally and are arbitrary. They only have meaning when people in a culture agree on their use. Language, money and art are all symbols. Language is the most important symbolic component of culture.
- Culture is integrated. This is known as holism, or the various parts of a culture being interconnected. All aspects of a culture are related to one another and to truly understand a culture, one must learn about all of its parts, not only a few.
- Culture is dynamic. This simply means that cultures interact and change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. All cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system must adjust.

Since culture and society (which together compose the socio-cultural conventions) are proved to have a close relationship, they are also discovered to have a strong relationship with language. Therefore, the following section will be dedicated to exploring the relationship between language as an interest of applied linguistics and the socio-cultural conventions.

1.3. Language Conventions

It is a fundamental assumption in modern linguistics that all languages are governed by rules; whether we put a word in front of or after another word in English is not a matter of choice. For example, native English speakers know that they must always proceed the noun before the verb; in other words, they know the rule. The fact that all native speakers of any common language know how to use it correctly and appropriately makes it even clear that each language has its own rules and conventions to be followed. According to the article of Online English, the term convention is used where there is a generally accepted usage or practice. The conventions of written English include such aspects as punctuation, the layout of a letter or a curriculum vitae, the format of a book. In oral language, there are conventions for formal debates or sermons or speeches of welcome (language rules and conventions, 2009). EFL learners need to learn the conventions of their foreign language, when it is appropriate or inappropriate to use certain words, how to use politeness forms, and so on. The rules of a language are highly resistant to change over time, but conventions can and do change, both over time and from one audience to another.

In other words, language conventions are the common shared rules of a certain society that determine the linguistic meanings of both concrete and abstract things in life. In this sense with the early discussions of linguistic conventions, Hermogenes defends a broadly conventionalist view of a linguistic meaning through which he stated: "No one is able to persuade me that the correctness of names is determined by anything besides convention. No name belongs to a particular thing by nature, but only because of the rules and usages of those who establish the usage and call it by that name" (As cited in Lewis, 1969, p.21).

Nowadays, virtually all philosophers side with Hermogenes. Barring a few possible exceptions such as onomatopoeia, the association between a word and its referent is not grounded in the intrinsic nature of either the word or the referent. Rather, the association is arbitrary. Hence, it is agreed that language is conventional as well as arbitrary.

1.3.1. What is Language?

In general, language is defined as a system of linguistic or non-linguistic communication used by interlocutors to exchange messages through which they express their thoughts, feelings, and needs. To be more specific, a linguistic communication is based on words combined together to form sentences in order to exchange messages through them. A non-linguistic communication, in contrast, is the ability to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, declarations, feelings, and many other abstract concepts (Velez, n.d.).

Another perspective in the definition of language shows that it is not just an abstract thing to communicate with. It is very powerful and plays a significant role in people's lives that it may even change them. Amberg and Vause said: "we usually don't imagine our language as something that might wield power, fuel debate, or even cause conflict. In truth, however, language can operate in all of these ways" (2010, p. 2).

From the above definition, it is clear that language is the core of communication and the reason for many changes in people's lives. It reflects the cultural background and the social state of the individual. The former means that the way a literate person speaks, thinks, understands things and concepts about life is way too different from those of a non-literate person who does not have much experience and knowledge about life. On the other hand, the latter means that the way a person chooses the correct and appropriate words in order to speak

to his friends is different from the other words which are suitable for addressing his teacher, boss, or father because of the variety of the social positions.

1.3.2. The relationship between language and the socio-cultural conventions

It was stated before that people communicate, interact, express their cultures and society status through language use. That is to say, all the socio-cultural conventions are represented by language which is in itself a socio-cultural convention element, and is gradually established by human conventions without any explicit promise. Therefore, language is ruled by convention and works as a representation to reveal what people commonly agree upon, which society they live in, and how much body of knowledge they maintain. Based on their observation, Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) emphasize: Culture and language are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. Culture is the foundation of language

1.3.3. The development of language along with socio-cultural conventions

The complexity of language as a system makes it dynamic and powerful because its development is inherently a process of change. This fact applies to all languages and has some clear, yet many obscure, reasons. One of the unclouded reasons is the developmental change of the socio-cultural contexts in which the individuals grow up. For instance, Lev Vygotsky (1930) have tackled phenomena concerning language development along with and due to socio-cultural changes. He believed that any sudden or long-term change of socio-cultural contexts can highly affect the individual's language reformulation. In addition, these contexts changes do not only affect the verbal aspect of language, but also the non-verbal one

(Language development in socio-cultural conventions, n.d.). Back then, for example, it was socio-culturally forbidden and rude to make direct eye contact with an authority figure, so people used to bow their heads without looking at the high status character. But now, the socio-cultural conventions have changed and people became more open and sophisticated so that the direct eye contact is a representation of a respectful gesture.

1.4. Teaching Socio-cultural Conventions in EFL Classes

The concept of presenting socio-cultural conventions of a given language is built upon teaching that language as a foreign or second language in target language classes first. In this research's case, the English language is the needed language to be discussed. Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has always been developing through generations especially since it has become a lingua franca to be internationally used in several academic and occupational fields. Eventually, English is viewed as a language which gives us access to the world. Some want to study at prestigious English-speaking universities; some want a high flying career with international connections. Others just want a better chance in life and move to wherever the money seems to be, and then again, some just love Hollywood. According to Maxom, There are various reasons why English is the chosen international language:

Many factors contribute to the market for Teaching English as a Foreign Language

The historical factor offers the legacy of the old British Empire that took the language around the world. The political factor gives the current dominance of the USA. Science and technology have developed with English at the forefront. In addition, there's a need for a global language to make international communications smoother, and tools such as the worldwide web truly accessible around the planet.

(2009, p. 9)

The purpose of this whole teaching process is to make EFL students learn English completely through both theory and practice ; They acquire it not only by grammar memorization but also by exposure to socio-cultural conventions to gain as nearly high language proficiency as possible.

1.4.1. Historical Background of Teaching Socio-cultural Conventions in EFL Classes

Since the late 19th century, the incorporation of teaching conventions in EFL classrooms started to come to light and progressively spread its roots over various modes and approaches of foreign language teaching. Kramsch (2006, p. 11) notes "Culture and socio-cultural conventions of any given language have always been integral components of language teaching and learning".

To put it differently, the cultural factor is a vital step in the teaching and learning process of socio-cultural conventions of languages though this was not the case at the time; teachers used to implement the classical linguistic-grammatical competency approach which mainly emphasized on the grammar translation method. The foreign culture was inserted in form of artistic texts and classical Latin and Greek literary works to promote the capacity of communication in the target language. Yet with the earliest 1970, there have been serious thoughts to implement culture in EFL curriculum mainly due to the appearing of the Communicative approach to Language Teaching known as the CLT .This last focused on the crucial social function of language in society and expanded its interest to cover teaching cultural skills equivalently considering it as a "fifth skill".

1.4.2. Development of Teaching Socio-cultural Conventions in EFL Classes

As a reaction to the linguistic competence notion which was introduced by Chomsky (1965), Hymes (1972) proposed what is known as "communicative competence". According to Hymes, delivering information and few aspects of the target language (acquiring linguistic

competence) was not sufficient and has to be propped by an ability to be applied in real communicative settings. This denotes that the main scope of CLT was the reliance on real and authentic teaching materials since it focused on grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competences.

Although its excessive use by scholars and language educators since the 70's, the communicative competence notion revealed some serious obstacles. From the point of view of Byram: " it is neither appropriate nor desirable for learners to model themselves on native speakers with respect to the learning about and acquiring an understanding of another culture "

(As cited in Khemies, 2015, p. 27). As an alternative, Byram came with the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in which he insisted that instead of striving to reach near-native skills of the foreign language use, learners should rather perform as "intercultural speakers". To reformulate what has been said, Gaining Intercultural competence is the capability to perform adequately in target culture (Khemies, 2015, pp. 25-27)

1.4.3. Facilities to expose socio-cultural conventions to EFL Classes

In order to achieve a higher language proficiency and competency, all the levels of the English language must be thoroughly and intensively taught from phonology to semantics and pragmatics. To reformulate the previous, the English language, as a target language in EFL classes, is needed to be exposed from all its facets of grammar rules and socio-cultural conventions which both shape the form and content respectively. There are various materials which teachers can use to ease the process of teaching the target language as fully as possible to make EFL students not just learn it by heart, but also grasp it. The following points will argue the materials that teachers should use so as to support the target language learning process in EFL classes.

1.4.3.1. Authentic Materials

One of the new concepts that has entered the English language teaching in EFL classes in the past few years is the use of authentic materials. According to Calpro journal:

They are print, video, and audio materials students encounter in their daily lives, such as change-of address forms, job applications, menus, voice mail messages, radio programs, and videos. Moreover, these instruments are not created specifically to be used in the classroom, but they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic. (Laniro, 2007, p.01)

In addition, There are two main categories of authentic materials: print and auditory. Some examples of the authentic print materials include street signs, traffic tickets, calendars, magazines, coupons, greeting cards, report cards, and newspapers. On the other hand, some examples of authentic auditory materials include phone messages, podcasts, movies, television programs, radio broadcasts, E-books, videos and DVDs, and audio recordings (Laniro, 2007).

Authentic materials help student bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world. Many students enroll in school to learn or improve a language-related task, such as helping a child with homework or speaking English at work. Others enroll because they have personal long-term goals that involve education, such as becoming an engineer or business owner. In this research's case, exhibiting the socio-cultural conventions as the application part of the English language is the bridging gap between the theoretical part of the classrom and the outside world real language use.

Another contribution was made by Professional Development Magazine (Green, n.d) which asserted that in working with new students, teachers need to identify why students have come to class : "When teachers know their learners' motivations, they can target instruction to

meet those goals. A key way to help learners reach their goals is to use authentic, goal-directed materials." Furthermore, they showed that when teachers used authentic materials inside the classroom, students were more likely to engage in literacy activities outside the classroom and if students express interest in improving nutrition, having them read authentic materials such as food labels inside the classroom should increase the likelihood they will also read those labels at the supermarket.

When it comes to implementing these learning tools, Teachers must know how to incorporate them successfully into instructing processes. It contains some stages :

- Always start with needs assessment: The first step in using authentic materials is identifying students' needs and goals; the key objective is to pinpoint each student's goals.
- Invite students to participate in the process of identifying authentic materials: Teachers can engage students in conversations about the rationale for using authentic materials and ask them to collect and bring authentic materials to class to support their learning goals.
- Collect local materials: students will benefit more from using local authentic materials than using ones that are a different from their culture.
- Use authentic materials in authentic ways rather than traditional school-based ways: it is more beneficial to use a current newspaper to search for relevant information than to use an outdated newspaper to locate proper nouns.
- Assess in authentic ways: Reproducing the tasks is a meaningful way to assess learning because it measures how the student will perform the task in the real world. It measures exactly what the student came to class to learn (Green, n.d.).

1.4.3.2. Role Plays

One of the techniques of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is role play implementations. Role plays are used to allow students to practice speaking in a real conversational situation, experience the unpredictable authentic language use and socio-cultural context, build confidence and fluency, assess progress, and put learning into action. They are often set up to target particular grammar, and to test social interaction skills such as negotiating, interrupting, asking for assistance and making small talk. This English learning technique may be as simple or as complicated as the teacher desires. Also, Verbal instructions, secret messages, gestures and cue cards are all common ways of setting a scene (Gastao, 1995)

This technique should be used by EFL teachers so that they would show the real socio-cultural conventions and different uses of the English language to EFL learners according to the suitable context. Moreover, it will depict the huge distinction between the exterior and interior forms of the language itself; students will realize that learning English as a foreign language is not only a case of memorizing its basic rules in class then go home, but also is a case of knowing how to use these rules in accordance with their right context and being able to read the intentional meaning of the interlocutors whether locally or cross-culturally.

1.4.3.3. Oral Expression Sessions

The Ph.D. researcher, Patricia O'Malley, demonstrated that:

Oral expression is a person's ability to express wants, thoughts, and ideas meaningfully using appropriate syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and phonological language structures. Oral language is important because it provides the foundation for literacy development, it is essential to academic achievement in all content areas, and it is critical for overall success in academic settings. As we know, a great deal of

school success depends upon the student's ability to demonstrate competency through oral communication, such as when answering questions in class or participating in group discussions (n.d. , p.01).

As read from above, Oral expression sessions are very important especially in EFL classes for they help in introducing the structures of the language being learned. Moreover, EFL teachers should know how to take advantage of these sessions to get as better results as they can in order to successfully deliver the socio-cultural conventions of English and reach the goal of felicitous teaching and learning process. In this matter, they can introduce idiomatic expressions, slang expressions, proverbs, poems, short stories, tongue twisters, and other ways to use the language intensively and improve learner's ability for oral communication, use the language for both listening and speaking skills, and develop their proficiency in oral expression. The table below illustrates a syllabus for effective oral expression sessions with varied contents :

Table 1.1 : Oral expression syllabus

| Sessions | Contents | Specific Objectives |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 01 | Listening:Subtitle speeches of foreigners | Development of critical thinking, and problem-solving Abilities. |
| 02 | Speaking:ELT free topics | The physical delivery of speech |
| 03 | Proverbs idioms and citations | To grasp and express effectively feelings and ideas. |
| 04 | Tongue twisters and varied use | To grasp and express effectively feelings and ideas. |
| 05 | Listening: BBC English pods | Use action research to assess the effects |
| 06 | Speaking:oral performance | To fully vocalize, and make contact with a word and to communicate successfully. |
| 07 | Poems | The physical delivery of speech and the dramatization of speech |
| 08 | Listening:short stories Describing Narrating Argumentation | Acquainting the learner with the rationale behind work. |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 09 | Expressions of emotions and opinions | Enable the learner to read to understand |
| 10 | Listening: BBC pods | Production of Speech after listening |
| 11 | Conversations and Hidden words puzzles and crosswords | Grasp and express feelings and ideas. To succeed in college, students |
| 12 | Speaking:free and general topics | Situations will be complemented or reinforced through oral expression |
| 13 | Listening and speaking: songs | Situations will be complemented or reinforced through oral expression |
| 14 | Speaking:ELT questions | To strengthen skills associated with oral expressions,like a conventions, delivery, persuasion, and argumentation. |
| 15 | Roleplay and oral performances | To improve oral performance abilities |

The importance of exposing socio-cultural conventions to EFL students

In this section, the researcher will give her humble understanding about the importance of learning the socio-cultural conventions in EFL classes and what influence it makes on EFL students.

- When EFL students see, learn, and understand the genuine foreign language culture and conventions, their cultural awareness will be raised and they would realize how important it is to appreciate their own culture as well as differentiate and respect other cultures.
- The repeated practice from each session will help EFL students to be perfect language users and raise their level of confidence; they will be able to communicate either locally or internationally without doubts or fears.
- If EFL teachers successfully deliver the core content of each lecture, EFL students will gain a sense of responsibility to spread the cultural awareness themselves and leave an impact on other generations as well, so the process could continue as a cycle.

- Knowing the socio-cultural conventions of any given language can reduce the problems of cross-cultural communications between interlocutors who may be from entirely different cultural backgrounds and help them overcome the cultural obstacles for an ideal conversation.

Conclusion

To conclude, the previous sections have proved that introducing the socio-cultural conventions to EFL students is very crucial in order to enhance the process of teaching and learning in EFL environments. It also showed the necessity of taking this instructing method into consideration on behalf of the Algerian educational ministry. Consequently, EFL Algerian students will have a larger chance of becoming more fluent, more accurate, and more confident in their language use as well as being more aware of the value of culture, and responsible for its expansion in all across the country.

Chapter Two: The Role of ICC in Global Communications

Introduction

2.1. Intercultural Competence: Definitions and Components

2.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

2.2.1. Acquiring Intercultural Communicative Competence

2.2.2. Byram's model of ICC in EFL Teaching

2.2.3. ICC and International Students

2.2.3.1. Ethnocentrism

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2.2.3.3. Bicultural identity

2.2.4. Assessment of ICC

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated for discussing the notion of the intercultural communicative competence, as known as ICC, and its importance in foreign language teaching for reducing intercultural communication problems. Accordingly, the researcher will discuss the elements which an EFL student must learn in order to acquire the ICC and be able to face the different intercultural obstacles when being put in a new cultural environment. Moreover, it is also devoted to give an idea about the instruments of ICC assessment to see the existing abilities an individual has or the potential to develop them. Furthermore, we will give an illustration of a model of ICC in EFL teaching which was made by Byram, one of the main scholars in the field of cultural research, who also coined the terms intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. As a starting point, however, we will provide a short account of information about intercultural competence, as known as IC, by seeking to uncover its meaning and components

2.1. Intercultural Competence: Definitions and components

In the early centuries before the integration of target culture in EFL classes, intercultural exchanges were quite rare and hard to happen because the term communicative competence was not known yet, and cultural differences were not a source of interest or research. In the current centuries, however, cultural diversity as well as intercultural exchange are being recognized as important sources for modern and social life as well as for sophisticated, intelligent and knowledgeable people. As a result, one's own knowledge and interest about attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about various cultures enables him eventually to possess an intercultural competence.

In this sense, Myer (As cited in Berramdane, 2017, p. 18) mentioned that intercultural competence is "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures." This means that having the ability to accept, adapt with, and overcome cultural differences and interacting through understandable communications comfortably is known as the intercultural competence.

Another definition was made by Byram (1997) who asserted that intercultural competence is the individual's ability to interact and communicate across cultural boundaries because he or she mainly has an understanding, respect, and awareness about his own and others' cultures which eventually lead to responding appropriately, effectively, and respectfully when interacting and communicating with other people from other cultural surroundings. This definition shows correspondence with the previous statement, yet it subjoins the necessity of mutual respect and understanding between the interlocutors.

In addition to the reciprocal smooth harmony between interlocutors which is facilitated by the intercultural competence, it also comprises a wide range of behavioral, affective, and cognitive skills that each individual must acquire successfully. In order to evidence this statement, read the following:

Intercultural competence is achieved through a set of skills that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. Cognitive processes imply the understanding of situational and environmental aspects of intercultural interactions and the application of intercultural awareness, which is affected by the understanding of the self and own culture. Affective processes define the emotions that span during intercultural interactions. These emotions are strongly related to self-concept, open-mindedness,

non-judgementalism, and social relaxation. Behavioral processes refer to how effectively and appropriately the individual directs actions to achieve goals. Actions during intercultural interactions are influenced by the ability to clearly convey a message, proficiency with the foreign language, flexibility and management of behavior, and social skills. (Intercultural Competence, 2020)

After the term intercultural competence is defined, we shall move to present its components. According to Deardorff (2006), it is composed of knowledge, skills, internal and external outcomes which both shape the attitudes. The knowledge is about cultural and sociolinguistic awareness; the individual must be aware of his own culture, have knowledge about other cultures 'attitudes and beliefs, and be able to adjust his or her speech for the sake of accommodation. The skills are about listening, observing, and interpreting patiently in order to prevent miscommunications, viewing and identifying the world from other culture' points of view, and finally respecting, appreciating, and admiring other cultures to avoid prejudice or judgments. The internal outcomes include flexibility, adaptability, empathy and ethno- relative perspectives which are made by the previously mentioned knowledge and skills. The external outcomes, on the other hand, represent the visible proof of intercultural competence; they attribute to the individual's observable behavior and ways of communication (As cited in Berramdane, 2017).

In addition, Ruben (1976) identified seven dimensions of intercultural competence:

- Display of respect describes an individual's ability to "express respect and positive regard" for other individuals.
- Interaction posture refers to an individual's ability to "respond to others in a descriptive, none-evaluative, and nonjudgmental way."

- Orientation to knowledge describes an individual's ability to "recognize the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature." In other words, orientation to knowledge describes an individual's ability to recognize and acknowledge that people explain the world around them in different ways with differing views of what is right and true.
 - Empathy is an individual's ability to put himself in another's shoes.
 - Self-oriented role behavior expresses an individual's ability to be flexible and to function in initiating and harmonizing roles. In this context, initiating refers to requesting information and clarification and evaluating ideas for problem solving. Harmonizing, on the other hand, refers to regulating the group status quo through mediation.
 - Interaction management is an individual's ability to take turns in discussion and initiate and terminate interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others.
 - Lastly, tolerance for ambiguity describes an individual's ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible discomfort.
- (pp. 339-341)

2.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Although the two terms appear to overlap in various points, it is necessary to make a distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. According to Byram (1997, p.71), IC refers to "people's ability to interact in their own language with the people from another country and culture," while ICC takes into account language teaching and focuses on "the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (As cited in Lopez-Rocha, 2016, p.107). In Byram's (1997)

view, a person who has developed IC is fully aware of the cultural differences and their importance towards shaping a successful communication, and is intelligibly able to interact with foreigners from cross-cultural backgrounds. On the parallel perspective, a person who has developed ICC is able to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language; communicates effectively, taking into consideration his own and the other person's viewpoint and needs; mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds, and strives to continue developing communicative skills.

As an illustration, ICC may include understanding how gestures and the distance between speakers vary from culture to culture. In fact ICC, which is a key to successful intercultural communication, is considered as an extension of communicative competence. It covers knowledge of other cultures, attitudes to other cultures and the skills of communications with people from other different cultures. According to Fantini (2006), ICC is a set of complex capacities necessary for effective and appropriate interactions with other speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In the general point of view, ICC is more deep and narrow in its nature than IC. Consequently, they both resemble the Iceberg theory which was made by Hall (1976) through which he reasoned that there are some aspects visible above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. The external, or conscious, part of culture is what we can see and is the tip of the iceberg that resembles the IC because it is a general simple aspect through which one sees the observable behaviors, practices and discourse. The internal, or subconscious, part of culture is below the surface of a society and includes some beliefs, values, philosophies, and thought patterns that underlie behavior and are discovered by the acquisition of the ICC which is the narrow complex aspect of culture. An illustration of the cultural iceberg is in the figure bellow:

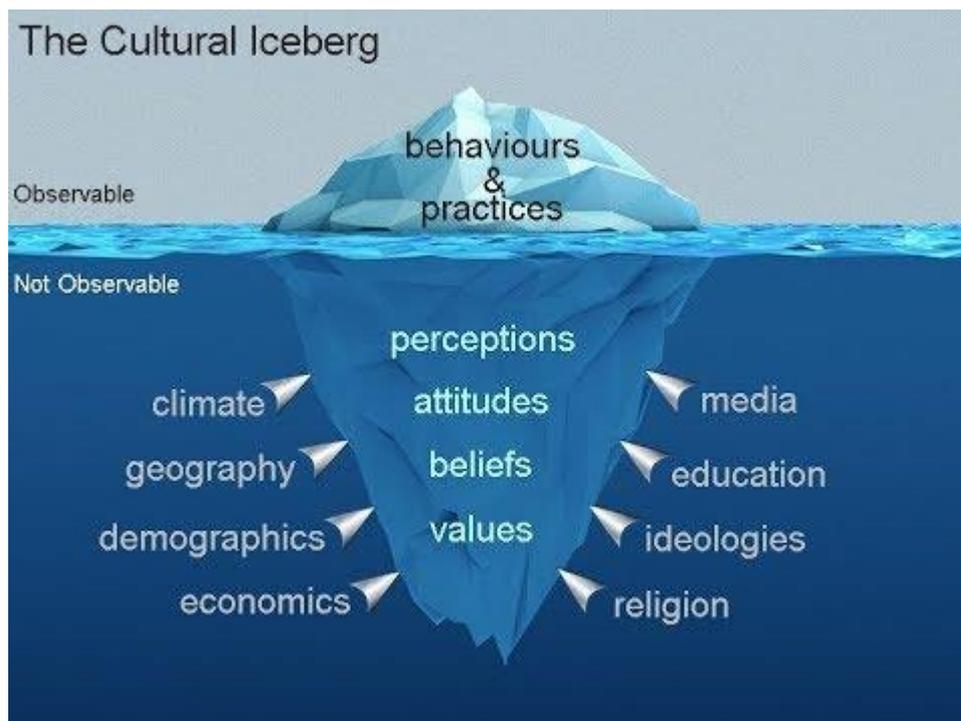


Figure 2.1: The cultural iceberg

2.2.1. Acquiring Intercultural Communicative Competence

In the EFL classrooms, the role of the teacher is to explain how intercultural interactions take place and the different ways based on which the social identities influence these interactions. It is also mentioned at the Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) that the role of the teacher is to combine between the following objectives: " help learners to acquire the ICC needed to communicate in speaking or writing, develop their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and make them interact with one another as complex individuals with multiple identities"(Chaouce, 2016, p.36). That is why the teacher must know how to deliver the needed information through each course. For instance, pragmatics has seen culture in language courses as a preparation for intercultural contact and communication, quite often in specific fields like trade and commerce. Thus, the teacher must know how to spread cultural awareness to his students for it is the fundamental element of the ICC acquisition process. Accordingly, he or she must entirely deliver the knowledge about the target culture and intercultural communications, then make them

practice what they have learned in order to obtain the required skills, and eventually they will gain attitudes as well as desired outcomes of ICC. In addition, Intercultural studies should try to reunite all the separate regions of grammatical structures, socio-cultural background, and foreign language education for the benefit of transcultural communication and interaction.

In other description, it is all about the teaching method and what theory should be applied or model should be pursued. In this context, Byram has constructed a model of ICC related to EFL teaching for a better creation of intercultural communication abilities.

2.2.2. Byram's Model of ICC in EFL teaching

Towards an intercultural theory of language education, scholars like Dieter Buttjes and Michael Byram (1997), one of the most renowned scholars in the area of IC, constructed a simplification for foreign language students to gain intercultural communication skills because of their crucial part in combining all the cultural and grammatical skills of language in a non-native cultural environment. His contribution amongst FL teachers comes not only from the fact that he created a new intercultural model, but also because his approach is derived from the field of foreign language didactics

By learning foreign languages, people have the opportunity to become familiar with other cultures. Such insight provides the base for respect and increase tolerance, and contribute to other ways of thinking, broaden pupils' understanding of their own cultural belonging. And in this way pupils' own identity is strengthened.

(Byram, 2005)

Through Byram's model in the figure below, ICC comprises five elements: interpreting skills, interacting skills, knowledge, attitudes, and education. Henceforth, foreign language teachers must help learners acquire competences in all five components in order to communicate interculturally.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | Skills Interpret and relate | |
| Knowledge Of self and other; of interaction | Education Critical Awareness Cultural | Attitudes Relativising self; valuing others |
| | Skills Discover and/or interact | |

Figure 2.2 : Byram's model of ICC

Depending on this model, EFL teachers should be concerned with following goals: to help learners see relationships between their own and other cultures, to help them acquire interest in and curiosity about others, and an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people's perspectives, to help learners understand how intercultural interaction takes place, how social identities are part of all interactions, how their perceptions of other people and others people's perceptions of them influence the success of communication, and how they can find out for themselves more about the people with whom they are communicating (Chaouche, 2016).

2.2.3. ICC and International Students

International students, in this case Algerian EFL students at British universities, tend to face problems of which culture they should follow: their native culture or the one in their new surroundings. Based on the previous, they have a choice of modifying their cultural boundaries and adapting to the culture around them or holding on to their native culture and surrounding themselves with people from their own country. The students who decide to hold on to their native culture are those who experience the most problems in their university life,

but the students who adapt themselves to the culture surrounding them, and who interact more with domestic students, will increase their knowledge of the domestic culture, which may help them to blend in or integrate (Intercultural competence,2020). In this sense, Bennett, M. J. (1993) was very interested in the experience of cultural differences that he made a scale which labeled DMIS: developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. It starts with the state of ethnocentrism , the belief that one's ethnic group is superior to another, reaching to ethno relativism, the acceptance and acknowledgement that other cultures are not inferior but only different from his own, with passing by other stages as the figure below shows :



Figure 1.3: Bennett's DMIS model

Students go through several stages if they are willing to integrate within the new environment:

- Denial of difference is when individuals are not interested in cultural differences as well as experience their own culture as the only “real” one.
- Defense against difference is when individuals are more openly threatened by cultural difference and more likely to be acting aggressively against it.
-

- Minimization of difference is when individuals are likely to assume that they are no longer ethnocentric, when reaching this point of view they generally approach intercultural situations.
- Acceptance of difference is when individuals at this position accept the existence of culturally different ways of organizing human existence.
- Adaptation to difference is when Individuals are able to expand their own worldviews to accurately understand other cultures and behave in a variety of culturally appropriate ways.
- Integrating of difference is when individuals have a definition of self that is not central to any particular culture, allowing this individual to shift rather smoothly from one cultural worldview to another. (retrieved from wikipedia : bennett scale).

Regarding the states through which international students underwent, whether willingly or subconsciously, it depends on their level of the target language, cultural background information, and intercultural competence skills to either be in problems or solve them. Examples of these problems are:

2.2.3.1. Ethnocentrism

One of the problems that could face international students when exposed to a non-native area is ethnocentrism. As was mentioned above, this terminology generally refers to the belief that one's ethnic group is superior to another. Specifically, however, it is a major factor in the divisions among members of different ethnicities, races, and religious groups where they believe they are better than other individuals for reasons based solely on their heritage. Clearly, this practice relates to problems of both racism and prejudice (Examples of Ethnocentrism, n.d.).

When students are put in a situation of a changed culture, language, lifestyle, religion, and other fields, they might feel nostalgic for their mother native leading them to avoid making contacts or interactions. Consequently, this results the student of becoming an ethnocentric individual thinking that his culture is better, easier, and more comfortable than the new one, so it affects negatively on his intercultural communication. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997, p.390) suggested "ethnocentrism is an orientation which is presumed to have an important impact on an individual's communication behavior, particularly when the context of that communication involves people with diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, or regional backgrounds". In relation with the suggestion, there was the necessity for intercultural communication courses to engage students in cultural exploration and awareness in order to lessen the negative effects of ethnocentrism.

2.2.3.2. Culture Shock

Another problem is when students feel unsecure, unstable, and uncomfortable with the situation they are in due to the conflicts of cultural backgrounds, so they have difficulty adjusting with this sudden change leading to what is called a culture shock. This term was first introduced by the Canadian anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (As cited in Wang, 2015, p.72). Wang (2015) asserted that culture shock is feeling anxiety, surprise, disorientation, and confusion when being in a new cultural context. Rogers and Sterinfatt also defined the term by the following: "It is the traumatic experience that individual may encounter when entering a different culture " (1999, p.212).

This definition, though, seems to combine what was mentioned above adding some explaining details:

Culture shock occurs when everything is different, including language, food, currency, values, beliefs, and even traffic patterns, mealtimes and sleep patterns and

so on. You feel like fish out of water, as you lose familiar surroundings. You cannot find the familiar signs and symbols of everyday communication. You feel like acting a role in a play in which everyone but you have a script. (Kohut & Baxter, 1987, p.53)

Yet, these two problems, ethnocentrism and culture shock, can be dealt with if the student wants to integrate within the new society. In fact, there are many ways but one example will be discussed in the following:

2.2.3.3. Bicultural Identity:

By combining definitions of some scholars like Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, (2005), Berry (1997), and Schwartz & Zamboanga (2008), bicultural identity, also called biculturalism, represents comfort and proficiency with both one's heritage culture and the culture of the country or region in which one has settled. It is applicable not only to immigrants who have come from other countries, but also to children of immigrants who – although they are born and raised in the receiving society are likely deeply embedded in the heritage culture at home with their families. It is focused primarily on cultural behaviors such as language use, choice of friends, or media preferences. From this perspective, individuals are considered bicultural if they speak both the language of their heritage cultural context and the language of their receiving cultural context, have friends from both cultural backgrounds, and watch television programs and read magazines from both cultural contexts.

Biculturalism has to be learned because not everyone can be called bicultural. International students, hence, must learn it to be comfortable at both settings, use coping strategies from both cultures, and be able to interact with people from the larger society and from the heritage culture community (Schwartz, 2010). Although it is not that simple,

becoming bicultural has many advantages. The Spanish professor Sebastian Reiche of Navarra university made an article about this matter, he asserted that: "being bicultural is like being a valuable asset in organizations, or an effective cross-cultural communicator due to the multiple cultural perspectives, and generally being more flexible as well as creative in multicultural environments" (Reiche, 2017). In addition, there are available choices for students to select in order to become bicultural. They could either participate in intercultural competence courses, socialize with bicultural individuals, read books about how to adapt biculturalism and become interculturally competent, or use social media with its unlimited sources and devices.

2.2.4. Assessment of ICC

It is without a doubt that the level of ICC increases from before to after the global experience of students. Accordingly, the assessment of ICC is a framework to extract the rate of knowledge, skills and perceptions or attitudes that are changed through the international experience. In other words, it is used to test the observable development in foreign language education; In order to observe the change in students' levels, theories were introduced to measure it. One of the earliest comprehensive frameworks was Ruben's behavioral approach to the conceptualization and measurement of intercultural communicative competence (1976) describing an individual's competence based on observed actions, in which he advocated a behavioral approach to link the gap between knowing and doing, that is, between what individuals know to be interculturally competent and what those individuals actually do in intercultural situations

Ruben (1976) identified seven dimensions of intercultural competence:

- Display of respect describes an individual's ability to express respect and positive regard for other individuals.

- Interaction posture refers to an individual's ability to respond to others in a descriptive, none-evaluative, and nonjudgmental way.
 - Empathy is an individual's ability to put himself in another's shoes.
 - Orientation to knowledge describes an individual's ability to "recognize the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature. In other words, orientation to knowledge describes an individual's ability to recognize and acknowledge that people explain the world around them in different ways with differing views of what is right and true.
 - Self-oriented role behavior expresses an individual's ability to be flexible and to function in initiating and harmonizing roles. In this context, initiating refers to requesting information and clarification and evaluating ideas for problem solving. Harmonizing, on the other hand, refers to regulating the group status quo through mediation.
 - Interaction management is an individual's ability to take turns in discussion and initiate and terminate interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others.
 - Lastly, tolerance for ambiguity describes an individual's ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible discomfort.
- (pp. 339-341)

This framework paved the way for the assessment of ICC because it was made for assessment purposes. Eventually, it was used and developed by many scholars like Byram (1997), and Risager (2007). According to Sadler (1998, p. 45), " there are two types of assessing: qualitative instruments such as scenario-based assessments, and quantitative instruments such as the intercultural developmental inventory, the cultural intelligence

measurements, and the multicultural personality questionnaire". The purpose of these assessments is to improve the students' level of ICC; whenever the students experience intercultural diversities, their ICC degree changes over time to make them eventually more capable of interacting internationally more than the students who never experienced such phenomena. In result, theoretical courses at EFL classes are not efficient for acquiring ICC rather than practicing authentic situations of intercultural communications.

Conclusion

To conclude, these previous sections have assured that ICC is very important in distinct ways including the success of EFL classes, the smoothness and logical sense of global communications, as well as strengthening relationships between teachers and students or international students and interlocutors from across the world. They also showed the value of IC as it is the first step towards a successful international individual with knowledge, skills, and awareness about cultural varieties and how to maintain or when to cross their boundaries. Therefore, these two notions must be taken seriously within target language courses in order to promote EFL students' levels both culturally and at language use.

Chapter Three: Research Findings and Data Analysis

Introduction

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Introduction

The total aim of this research is to discover whether mastering the socio-cultural conventions of English affects global communications and useful in solving intercultural communication problems. In this chapter, the questionnaire questions and the answers of the participants will be displayed, discussed and analyzed in accordance with the hypothesis and in relation to the research questions and research problem; this chapter is about knowing the importance of gaining socio-cultural conventions and the value of international communications to international students.

3.1.The Questionnaire

3.1.1. The Aim of the Questionnaire

The objective of the questionnaire was to discover PhD students' levels at the English language in general and at the socio-cultural conventions in specific. It was also about checking whether they faced problems concerning socio-cultural conventions or intercultural communicative competence breakouts. In addition, this questionnaire may help in extracting the missing element of the Algerian educational curriculum.

3.1.2. Population and Sampling

The sample of this research was given to a group of twenty EFL PhD Students British Universities. These students were randomly chosen because the counted criteria was to see in general their cultural background of English, their experiences abroad, and how they could deal with the problems they faced in relation to their level of the language. In other words, the participants were among the Algerian students with good levels who went to British universities for a will to get their PhD degrees. Although they were hard to reach, the researcher managed to contact fifteen respondents.

3.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire

In order to get valuable information that can lead to better results, the questionnaire was divided into two main sections. The first section treated the English culture and socio-cultural conventions; it is concerned with finding the students' opinions about target culture and the mother tongue's educational system, and in knowing their capacities at using the language both structurally and contextually. On the other side, the second section tackled the role of intercultural competence in intercultural communications; It focuses on discovering the students' background information about intercultural competence and whether they faced problems related to the matter, besides to whether they were able or not able to manage them.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire Analysis

3.2.1. Section One: The English Culture and Socio-cultural Conventions

Item 1. How do you rate your level in English before studying abroad?

Table 3.1 : Students' levels before studying abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Excellent | 4 | 27% |
| b. Good | 6 | 40% |
| c. Acceptable | 5 | 33% |
| d. Weak | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

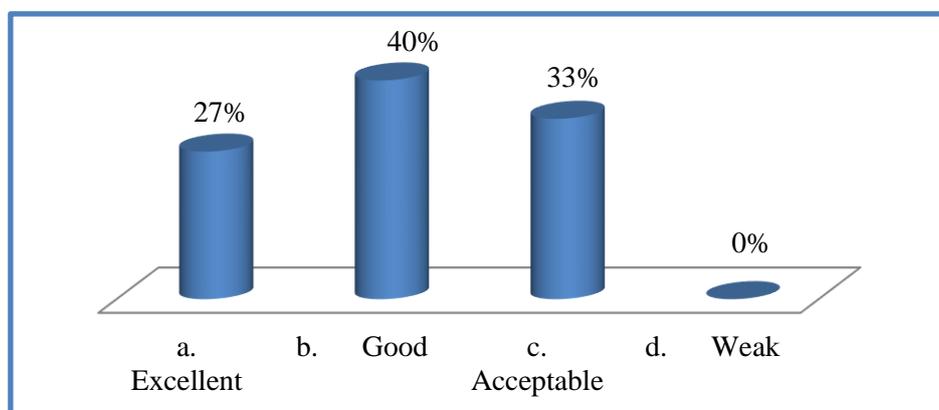


Figure 3.1: Students' levels in the English language before going abroad

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In the table 3.1. and figure 3.1. , the results show that the majority of students (40%) had a good level before studying abroad while the second category (33%) had an acceptable level. This means that the overall levels (73%) of students are between good and acceptable. In contrast, a few students (27%), compared to the other categories, have an excellent level which means that it was quiet hard for them to reach this type of level. In addition, none of them (0%) have a weak level which gives good status to the Algerian educational system.

Item 2. How would you rate your level in English after studying abroad?

Table 3.2: Students' level in English after studying abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Excellent | 6 | 40% |
| b. Good | 7 | 47% |
| c. Acceptable | 2 | 13% |
| d. Weak | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

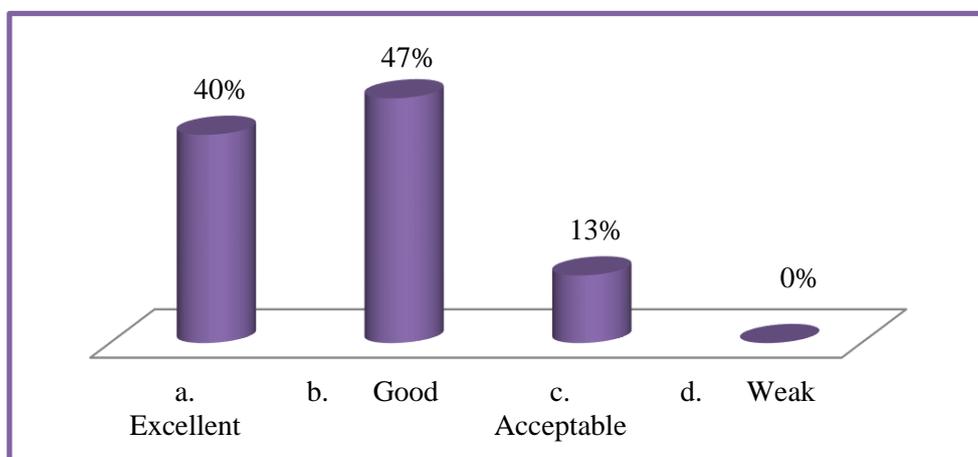


Figure 3.2: Students' level in English after studying abroad

The results in the table 3.2. and figure 3.2. above indicate positive changes regarding their levels. The majority of students (47%) had good levels after studying abroad which is a little better than the first percentage with (7%) advancement. The excellent levels also are noticeably promoted to (40%) which is quite better than the first percentage with (13%)

advancement. This indicates that the international experience changed the students' levels in general to (87%) between excellent and good, and a less percentage (13%) had an acceptable level which is a remarkable positive change from the first percentage with (20 %) positive difference. In addition, none of them (0%) got weak levels as an indication of the good impact that international experience had on their levels.

Item 3. Did you face difficulties while studying abroad?

Table 3.3: Students' difficulties encountered while studying abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Yes | 10 | 67% |
| b. No | 5 | 33% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

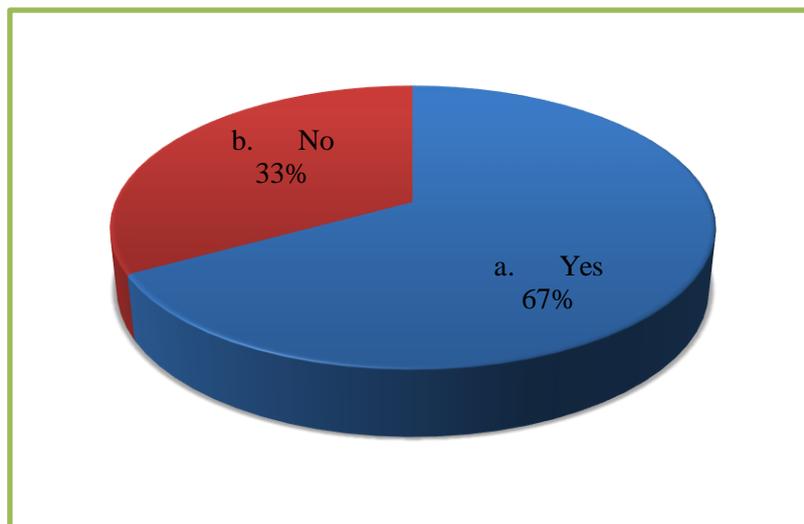


Figure 3.3: Students' difficulties encountered while studying abroad

The table and figure below illustrate that most of students (67%) faced difficulties while studying abroad when only (33%) did not face any problems. If this was related to their levels, the results would be different because the better their level is the less their problems

are. However, this is not the case here which implies that there is something wrong with the way they learned about the language from each aspect.

Item 4. I think the difficulties I had when studying abroad were because:

Table 3.4: Reasons of facing difficulties when studying abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| a. I did not fit with the western society | 2 | 13% |
| b. I did not have an English socio-cultural background | 4 | 27% |
| c. I had a weak English language proficiency | 4 | 27% |
| d. All of them | 3 | 20% |
| e. None of them | 2 | 13% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

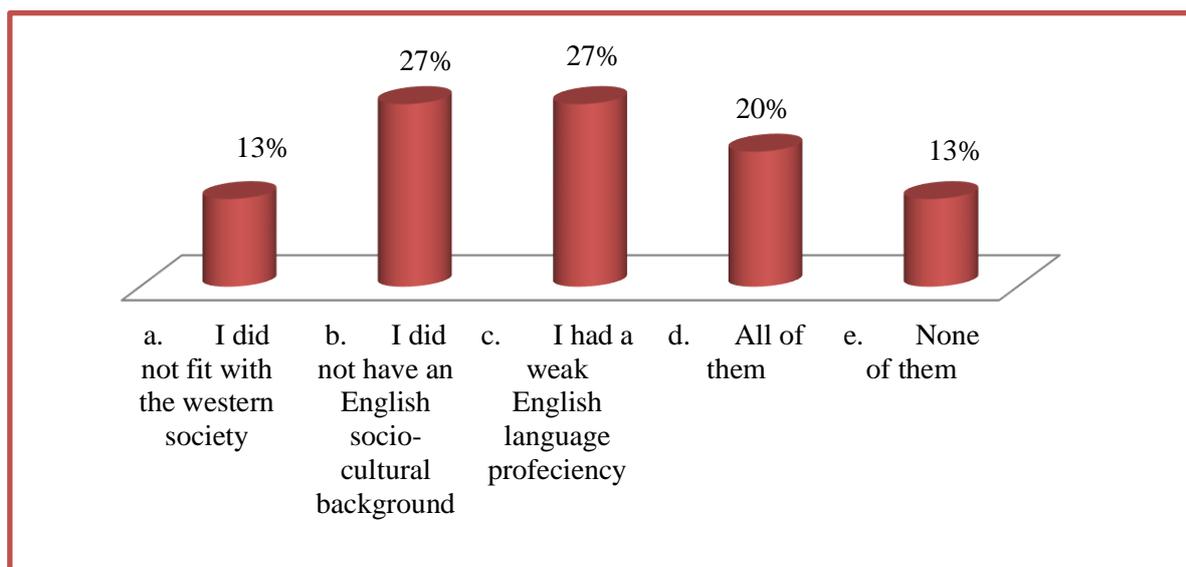


Figure 3.4: Reasons of facing difficulties when studying abroad

These results prove that the two equal pluralities of students (27%) did not have neither a socio-cultural background of the target language nor a high language proficiency. This is clearly related to the methods of both teaching and learning in Algeria; the teaching system of EFL classes is not sufficient when it comes to the target socio-cultural conventions,

Chapter Three: Research Findings and Data Analysis

and the students do not tend to use the language outside the classroom to strengthen their language

proficiency level. On the other hand, a few students (13%) did not fit with the western society mostly because of the cross-cultural overlapping and religious differences. In addition, a small amount of students (20 %) did not have a target intercultural background, did not fit with the western society, and had a weak language proficiency which means they were involved with one or all the previous reasons. The other few amount (13%) did not choose any of the choices which means that there are other reasons but not that influencing on the research hypothesis.

Others

- I find that a real challenge concerning studying abroad is the different educational system.
- Things differ from one person to another. I had difficulties with adopting to a different educational system which is based on critical thinking. We never learn to be critical thinkers in Algeria. I had some intercultural communication difficulties at the beginning of my life in the UK but the adopted to their life quite easily and rapidly.
- I think this depends on the person. We can not give a reason that suits everybody. For me, I faced some academic writing problems because I did not have background in academic critical skills.

The other responses indicate that the educational system differences created a problem for some students especially when it comes to critical thinking abilities. It is true that the Algerian students did not learn much about critical thinking rather than theoretical lessons

only. Another problem was the academic writing skills but this may be referred to the students' own problem because there are theories and practices of academic lessons in Algeria.

Item 5. After facing these difficulties abroad, what do you think was missing in the Algerian EFL teaching system?

Table 3.5: Students' attitude towards the Algerian EFL teaching system

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| a. A concentration on the cultural background of the language | 6 | 40% |
| b. A concentration on grammar rules of the language | 0 | 0% |
| c. A balance between grammar rules and cultural conventions of the language | 9 | 60% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

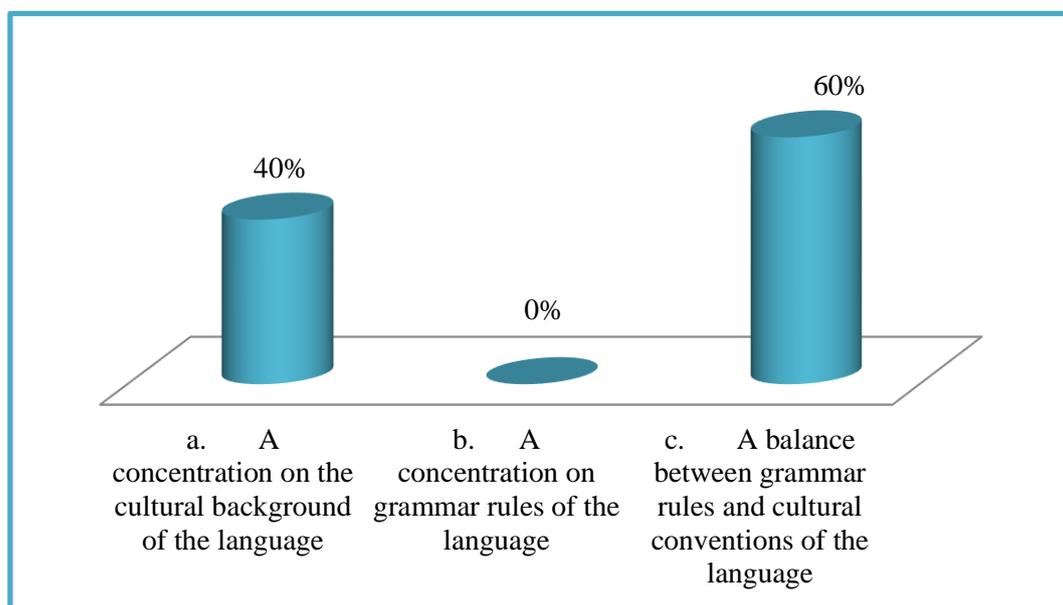


Figure 3.5: Students' attitude towards the Algerian EFL teaching system

The answers of the previous table and figure show that almost students (60%) agreed with balancing between grammar and cultural conventions as the missing point in the

Algerian educational system, and (40%) agreed with the concentration on the cultural conventions on behalf of grammatical rules. This implies the lack of teaching authentic socio-cultural contents and the need for practicing artificial intercultural situations in EFL classes. As expected, there are none (0%) who agreed with concentrating on grammatical rules because they are already well taught and learnt in Algeria.

Others

- Maybe some extra cultural and social content was needed in our lessons but what was more needed is critical thinking.
- What I think really missing are the renewal of the conventions of teaching English in Algeria and the collaboration between teachers in forming a good English language speaker and writer

Item 6. Did you have a socio-cultural background of the English language conventions before going abroad?

Table 3.6: Students' socio-cultural background of the English language before going abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Yes | 4 | 27% |
| b. No | 11 | 73% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

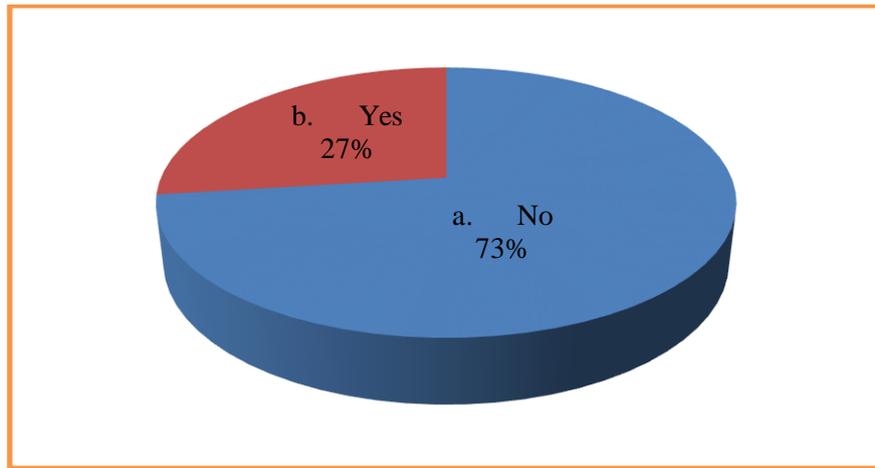


Figure 3.6: Students' socio-cultural background of the English language before going abroad

Although the findings bring to light the fact that a small amount (27%) had a socio-cultural background of the language, a big amount of students (73%) did not have them which confirms what was analyzed in the previous results.

Item 7. Did your cultural background of the English language affect your language proficiency and intercultural communication skills when you went abroad?

Table 3.7: The effect of the cultural background of English language on language proficiency and intercultural communication skills

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Yes | 11 | 73% |
| b. No | 4 | 27% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

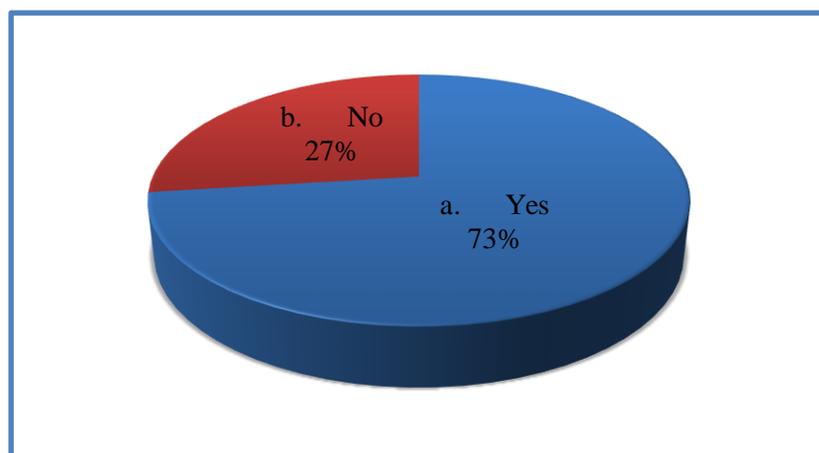


Figure 3.7: The effect of the cultural background of English language on language proficiency and intercultural communication skills

The table and figure above illustrate that a huge quantity of students (73%) found that their cultural background did affect on their language use and global communicative skills, and only (27%) selected the opposite choice. It is still not clear whether the impact was positive or negative, but this shows that gaining the English cultural background is important and useful if it is taught well.

Students' justifications for "Yes"

- I think i've developed a good skills in both English language and the culture of the British people as well as other nations as my interaction is with people from different backgrounds.
- Positive. It is essential to have at least few pieces of information about the native speaker's mentality and way of communication. I was learning these by myself at home and sometimes they've been brought up in courses by teachers which was great. This knowledge really helped me a lot with my communication skills and the way I transmit my messages.
- It was positive. The socio-cultural schemata I developed in Algeria helped me know the appropriateness of what I say, when I say it and more importantly to behave in a judgment-free way.
- The impact was indeed positive.
- The impact varied from positive to negative depending on the situation
- Good
- The answer is no

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- Positive
- I had a conversation with my British chair of studies on using the word of course in oral discussion. Once, he gave me a kind of proposition on my work and I replied with " of course I will do" . He said I understand that you are respecting my viewpoint because I know you. However be careful of using Of course. Try to use Yes instead. This of course could be understood by another teacher as a way of underestimating his opinion, or a way of saying indirectly I know this and I am not waiting for you to tell me. Believe I was a kind of astonished and I realised that this is one of the causes behind not having a solid cultural background in English.
- Positive. The cultural background allowed me to assess my use of the language when dealing with native speakers.
- The impact was positive because it allowed me to understand the other person's perspective from a non-ethnocentric lens.
- I would say negatively. Feeling like not knowing enough about it would hold me back from communicating more.

According to these answers, it was noticed that they have something in common: when the effect of having a background information about target culture on language is positive, it leads to a better language use, and when it is negative, it leads to problems concerning language use. Furthermore, this negative influence may even cause inner issues such as the lack of confidence and culture shock. In other words, this confirms the previous analysis about the importance and necessity of knowing the cultural background of the target language before transferring to the target environment.

Item 8. To what extent do you agree on teaching the English socio-cultural conventions and grammar rules in the Algerian EFL curriculum equally?

Table 3.8: Students' opinions on teaching the English socio-cultural conventions and grammar rules in the Algerian EFL curriculum equally

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Agree | 13 | 87% |
| b. Neutral | 2 | 13% |
| c. Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

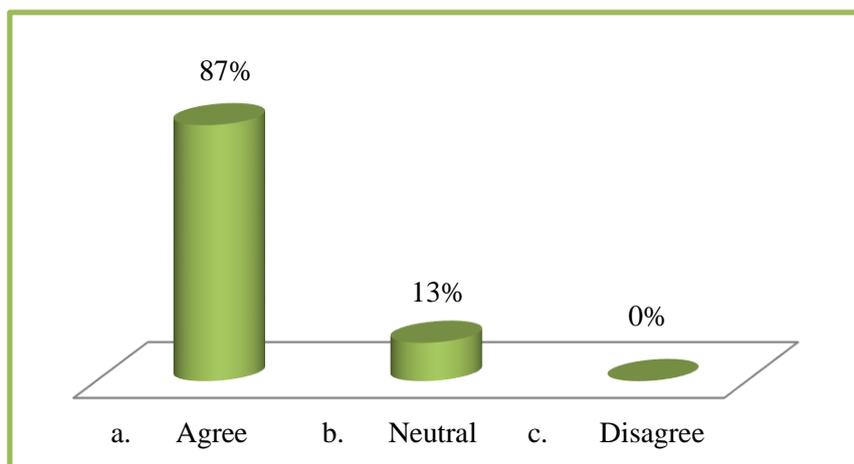


Figure 3.8: Students' opinions on teaching the English socio-cultural conventions and grammar rules in the Algerian EFL curriculum equally

The outcomes present that most of students (87%) agreed with teaching the English socio-cultural conventions and grammar rules in Algerian EFL curriculum equally and (0%) disagreed with it. This is because students found out about their necessity only after going abroad and facing different sorts of communicative obstacles. Hence, it assures the idea of reconsidering about the Algerian educational system concerning EFL curricula and courses. However, (13%) were completely neutral maybe because they had no problems concerning the matter or they are content with the current system.

Item 9. How do you consider the role of the exposure to the socio-cultural conventions of English?

Table 3.9: The role of the exposure to the socio-cultural conventions of English

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Crucial | 12 | 80% |
| b. Optional | 3 | 20% |
| c. Not needed | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

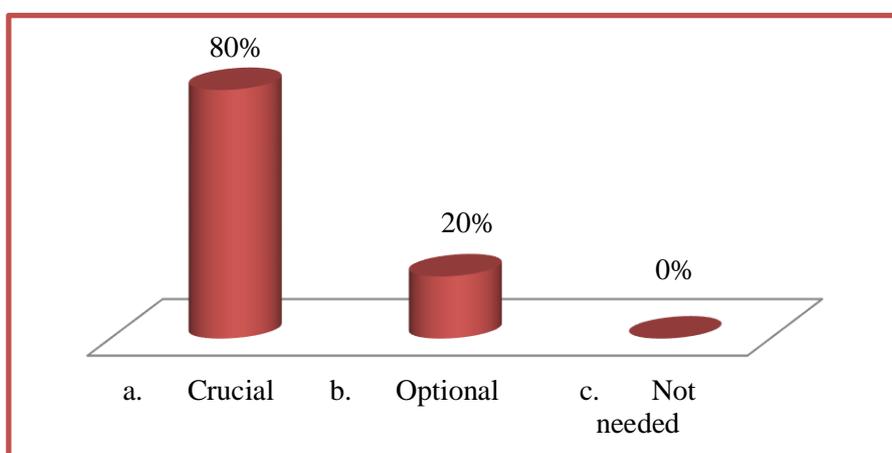


Figure 3.9: The role of the exposure to the socio-cultural conventions of English

The answers overhead display that when only (20%) chose the optional status, (80%) realized about the cruciality of the exposure to socio-cultural conventions of English, and no one (0%) declared that it is not needed.

Item 9.1 If it is crucial, it is because:

Table 3.9.1: Students' reasons

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--|--------------|------------|
| a. It raises your socio-cultural awareness | 3 | 20% |
| b. It helps you integrate within the western societies | 2 | 13% |
| c. It reduces your miscommunications with | 2 | 13% |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| native speakers | | |
| d. All of them | 8 | 54% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

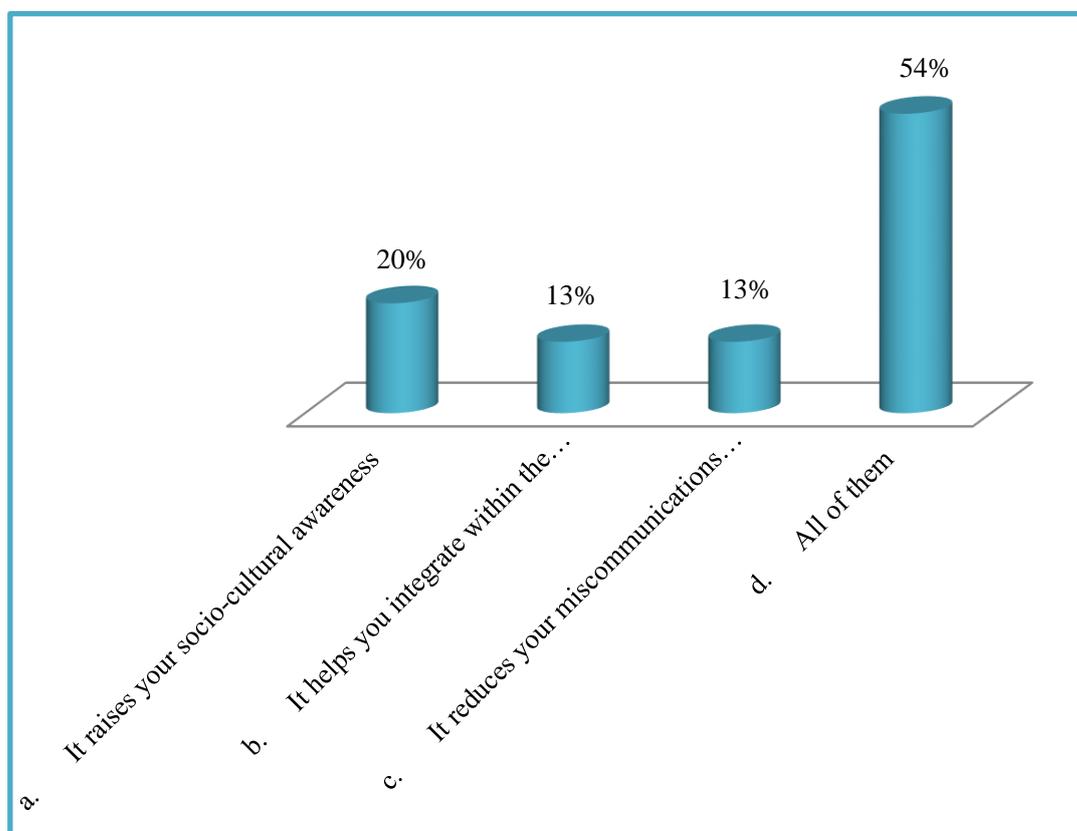


Figure 3.9.1: Students' reasons behind the role of the exposure to the socio-cultural conventions of English

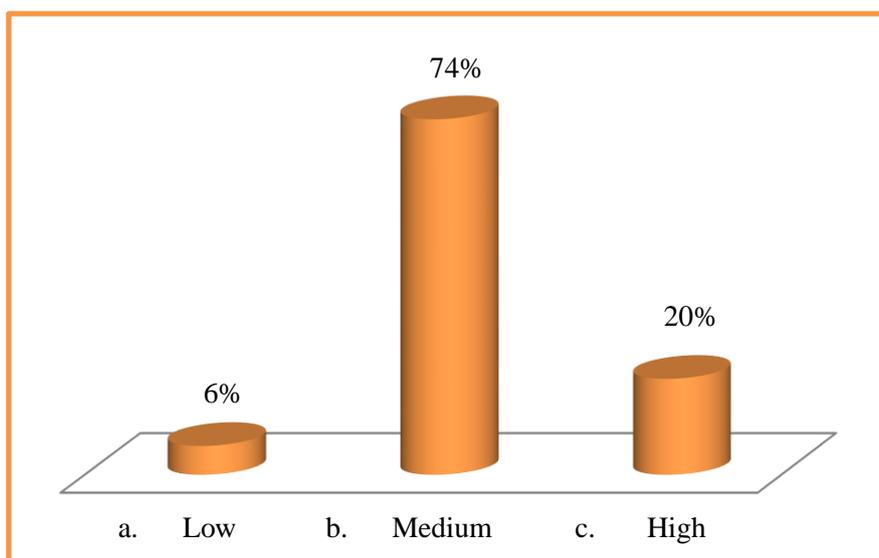
When asked about the reason of importance of the socio-cultural conventions, a few students (20%) said it is because it raised their socio-cultural conventions. The other two equal quantity of students (13%) were between the integration with the western societies, and reducing miscommunications with native speakers. Yet, the other half of students (54%) chose all the previous reasons meaning that it is very crucial for the international experience.

Section Two: The Role of Intercultural Competence in Intercultural Communications

Item 10. How much is your knowledge about Intercultural competence?

Table 3.10: Students' knowledge about Intercultural

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Low | 1 | 6% |
| b. Medium | 11 | 74% |
| c. High | 3 | 20% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

**Figure 3.10:** Students' knowledge about Intercultural competence

The plurality of student's intercultural competence awareness is medium (74%) as the previous graph and table illustrate, and a lesser quantity (6%) have a low account of information whereas the high is estimated to be (20%). According to these results, it seems that students have already studied about intercultural competence before transferring abroad quite sufficiently

Item 11. What type of intercultural problem did you face abroad?

Table 3.11: Type of intercultural problem encountered abroad

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------|------------|
| a. Ethnocentrism | 1 | 6% |
| b. Bicultural Identity | 5 | 33% |
| c. Culture shock | 3 | 20% |
| d. All of the above | 2 | 14% |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| e. None of the above | 4 | 27% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

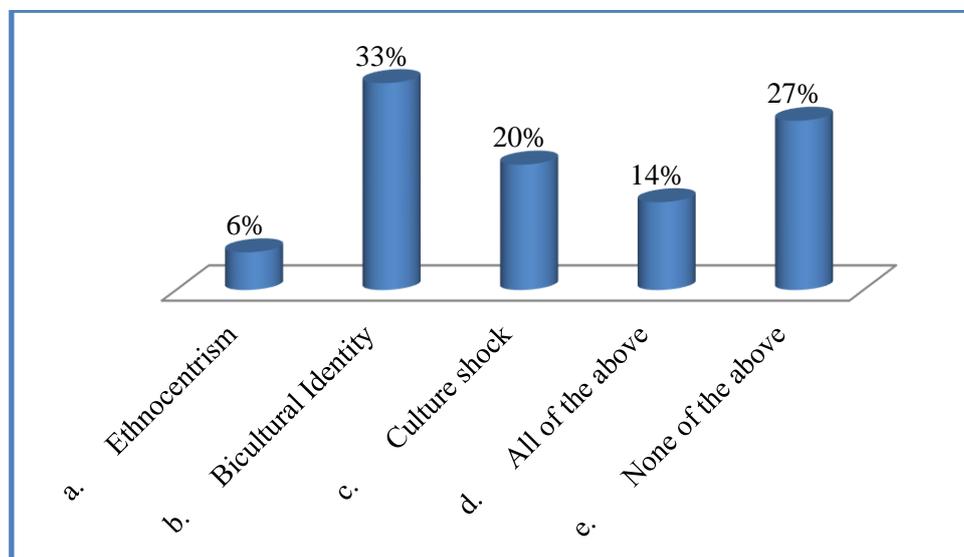


Figure 3.11: Type(s) of intercultural problem(s) encountered abroad

The answers offer that most students were struggling with acquiring bicultural identity in order to be proficient with the target language (33%) as well as with culture shock (20%) which means that they were not ready for such a sudden total environmental change. In addition to that, a few students (6%) experienced ethnocentrism and a small quantity (14%) suffered from all of them. On the other perspective, a remarkable quantity that needs to be taken into consideration (27%) did not experience such phenomena maybe because they belong to the group who have a high intercultural competence level.

Item 12. If the answer is none of the above, please state the type of your problem.

- My problem was some hardships in finding myself within their culture without affecting mine.

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- Based on my current experience as a researcher, I would say cultural problems that are related to academia. Let's say for example the culture of writing English is different.
- May be sometimes the lack of vocabulary or pronunciation.

After reading the students' other problems, it is found that they are related to integrating within the new culture, and using productive skills like the lack of vocabulary and pronunciation. As was mentioned earlier, it is a fact that most of Algerian students do not use the English language outside the classroom to strengthen their skills. Although it may not affect them in their EFL environment, it may highly affect them in the target language authentic settings.

Item 13. How often did you face Intercultural communicative problems?

Table 3.13: Frequency of facing intercultural communicative

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Always | 3 | 20% |
| b. Sometimes | 6 | 40% |
| c. Rarely | 5 | 33% |
| d. Never | 1 | 7% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

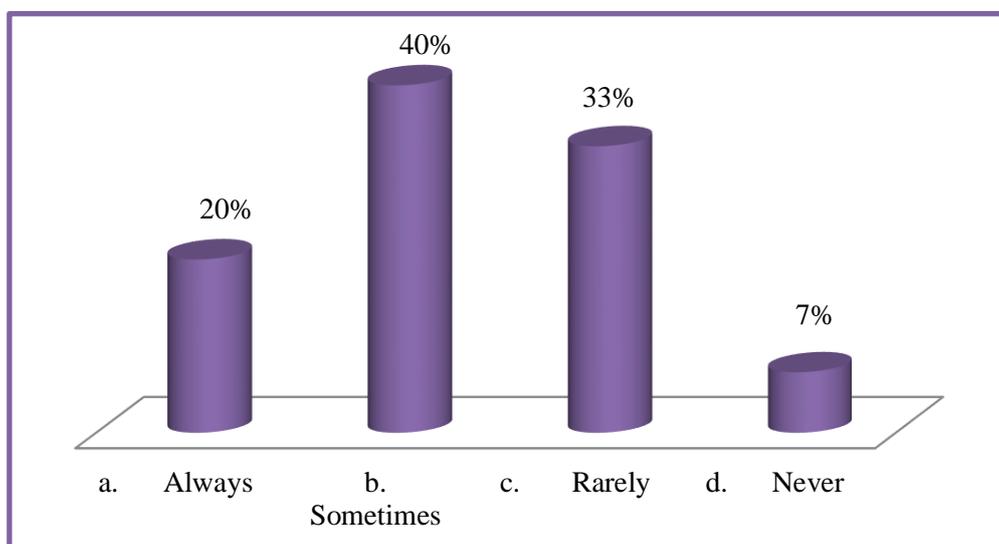


Figure 3.13: Frequency of facing intercultural communicative problems.

The average outcomes of the frequency of facing intercultural communicative problems vary between rarely (33%) and sometimes (40%) among students. On the contrary, only (7%) approved to never experiencing such difficulties while (20%) claimed to have always been tackling with problems. These results appear to match with the students' levels of intercultural awareness because the more high their level is, the less their problems are.

Item 14. Describe briefly what was the most difficult intercultural situation did you face and how were you able to manage with it

- -When I tell people here I'm from Algeria, somehow they hear it as "Nigeria" then sometimes ask "why are you not black then?".
- I'm always associated with the Middle East just because I speak Arabic. I always defend the view that Maghrebi and Middle Eastern people are different.
- The colonial history of my country is always the first thing people pick up on when I tell them I'm Algerian like "oh, you were colonised by the French and you speak French, right?"
- When I speak English, people seem to pay attention to my accent and how clear it is. They always like to guess where I am from based on my accent.
- Some British accents are hard to understand.
- Meeting some Middle Eastern people and always having the infamous debate about how Maghrebi Arabic variety is hard to understand and that our Arabic isn't the "real" Arabic. And many more examples that I couldn't recall at the moment.
- I have not faced any significant difficulties in intercultural situations.
- The religious beliefs and the way of dressing up as a female.
-

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- It is mainly due to what we call 'common sense' or 'logic'. The Algerian common sense is really different from the western which sometimes puts us in strange situations because they cannot relate to some points when we explain.
- British people tend to be straight to the point that you would think they are rude sometimes. If they want to say no they say it. This is a bit different from us, Arabs, who prefer to avoid confrontation.
- I was stopped by the police while driving, he misinterpreted my use of the gear. He was thinking I was drunk so I had to re-explain the situation in order for him to let me go.
- When, for example, me and my British housemate are exchanging jokes and I playfully intend to slap her back or punch her arm. This has made her feel uncomfortable a couple of times and she explained that she wasn't expecting that; I felt awkward as well and I did not know what was the problem back then . The tension, I think happened because she comes from a culture where personal boundaries are highly taken into consideration in one's social relationships. Coming from an Algerian background, I did not expect that to cause a misunderstanding, on the contrary, pushing her away or slapping her arm was , in my ethnocentric perspective, a friendly manifestation of humour or a sign of affection that is quite normal between friends. After we openly talked about it, we discovered that it was a cultural misunderstanding and we both worked it out.
- Communicating with natives , but i tried my best to well understand what i was trying to find
-
-

- I think the only problem i faced was feeling inferior to westerners, i do not know whether i already had the feeling before or it just started when i was trying to adapt to the new environment; however, i am still trying to manage it.
- Ramadan
- One time I felt that I wasn't able to find the right words to explain what I was looking for to the salesman. The good thing is that I had a friend with me who helped me with finding the right words.

After reading these incidents carefully, it is found that most of the problems are related to either cultural boundaries, religious principles, ethnic varieties, or accent use. When the problem of the accent is put under light, it is recalled that the Algerian EFL system taught English without focusing on teaching the different accents of the language. As a result, this was a problem for many students in which they could not grasp the natives' words or capture the rapidity of their utterances.

Item 15. Do you think that Algerian teachers are well informed about intercultural competence teaching models?

Table 3.15: The Algerian teachers' awareness of the intercultural competence teaching models

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Yes | 4 | 27% |
| b. No | 11 | 73% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

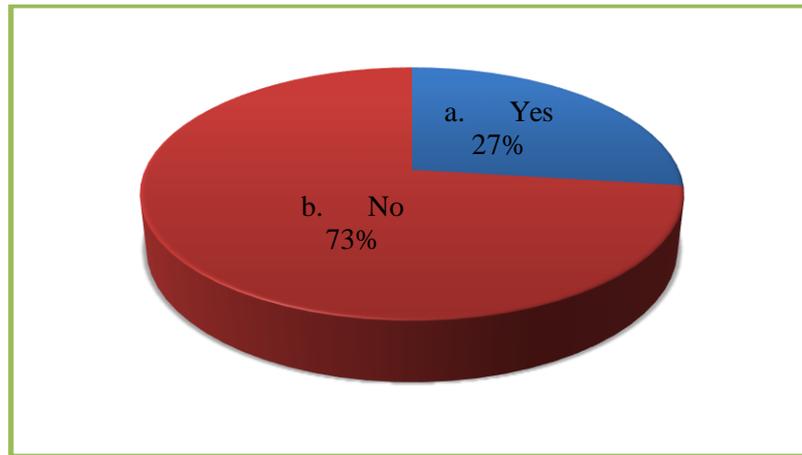


Figure 3.15: The Algerian teachers' awareness of the intercultural competence teaching models

As the above answers display, it is estimated that a huge amount of students (73%) claim that Algerian teachers do not know much about the intercultural competence teaching models, yet only (27%) declared the opposite. Apparently, based on their difficult cross-cultural situations students were able to realize much more about the Algerian teaching methods as well as their insufficient learning styles.

Item 16. Did you study about the intercultural competence at any level of your study in Algeria ?

Table 3.16: Studying about the intercultural competence in Algeria

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Yes | 10 | 67% |
| b. No | 5 | 33% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

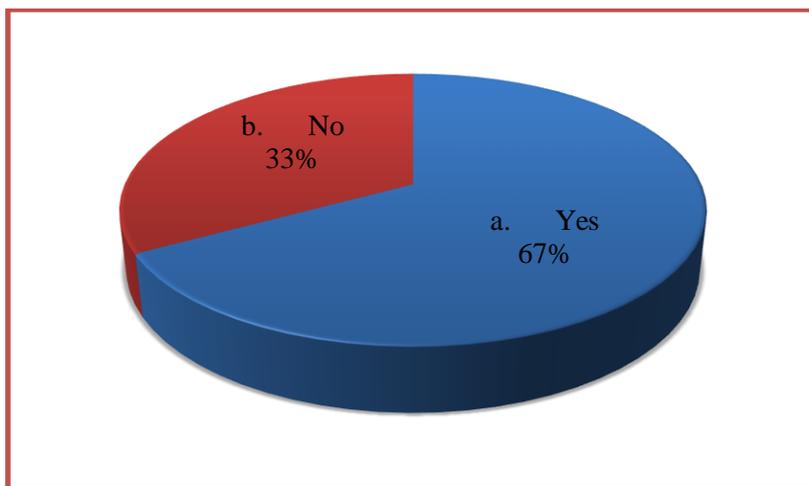


Figure 3.16: Studying about the intercultural competence in Algeria

As the calculations offer, the students who are acquainted with intercultural competence in Algeria (67%) seem to be more than the ones who were not dealt with such concept (33%). Even though the amount of the ones who know it is higher than the ones who do not, it is normal to question about why they faced such problems. This may leads to one or all of these possible reasons: the students' misuse of the information, the teachers' misdelivery of the information, or a lack in the curriculum contents.

3.1.Discussion of the Results

The questionnaire's results revealed that even though Algerian students faced difficulties related to language proficiency level and cultural differences, the international experience had a positive impact on their level of the language. Also, it was conducted that the Algerian educational system has a lack of balance between grammar rules and socio-cultural conventions of the English language; so if students are willing to study abroad, it is important to have a wealthy background information about socio-cultural conventions of the target language from a well-made curriculum. Moreover, it was found that most of Algerian teachers have an insufficient datum account about intercultural competence, so as most of Algerian students do not take advantage of EFL courses outside the classroom as they should

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be. Consequently, it is crucial for EFL students to have an intercultural competence awareness through an accurate delivery by EFL teachers in order to avoid communicative obstacles. In other words, the Algerian teachers and students should work in parallel in order to uplift the EFL courses results.

Conclusion

This chapter was about the practical part of this research. It included a description of the population and sampling, the questionnaire, data analyses, and summary of the findings. The results have confirmed the research hypothesis and answered the research questions of this study. They have proved that cross-cultural communication problems will be reduced if teachers raise EFL students' awareness about cultural conventions as it was hypothesized ; they also confirmed that mastering the socio-cultural background of the language could help in reducing international communication problems, and EFL students could be able to communicate globally if they possess both a grammatical and a socio-cultural background, which are essential in mastering any language, as the research questions stated.

Recommendations and Implications

Because it is necessary to teach culture simultaneously with its language, it is essential for the Algerian educational system to shape its curriculum regarding cultural matters wisely and intelligently as well as deliver the information by EFL teachers perfectly in order to send highly eligible candidates for the global practice. This research was conducted to diagnose students' beliefs concerning this issue, and it was realized that the EFL educational system is not as concentrated as it should be. Hence, we can recommend some pedagogical implications

Firstly, it is a fact that Algeria is a third world country so this explains why everything related to it is always a step ahead of the other developed countries. But this does not mean that we should not try to flourish it starting by enhancing the educational field in general and the TEFL domain in specific. To put it differently, what could be more helping in this process is the cultural exchanging programs. The edutrav.org is the official website of the program since 1999 which promotes for supporting diversity and cultural awareness for students, so they get the chance to study and live in a foreign country within a volunteer foreign family.

Secondly, the EFL curriculum must include more practice sessions of the language so students can increase their productive and perceptive skills; it also must include authentic materials to make students aware of the different contexts with their suitable utterances. In other words, the curriculum needs to be improved for the better in order to achieve more qualified EFL students who are able to use the language tightly at any place with everyone.

Finally, this exploratory research might be a piloting study for further researches related to cultural studies' impact on EFL learners' mastery of the language. Other research

Chapter Three: Research Findings and Data Analysis

related to this one can also shed light on different ways of teaching foreign cultures in a way that can enhance learners' awareness about their own culture.

General Conclusion

This research was concerned with investigating the role of mastering the socio-cultural conventions of English in intercultural communications, especially when it comes to Algerian EFL PhD Students at British Universities. According to literature, misunderstandings and negative situations tend to happen when individuals do not have or are not interested in cultural awareness and cultural differences. Therefore, it is very important for them to be aware of the change in the surrounding settings to be eventually able to manage these kind of misunderstandings. Another reason of the negative situations during international conversations is when each individual act or speak according to his own perspective, so it mostly leads to breakdowns and even conflicts between them. Consequently, culture and language are inseparable because the former is the key to understanding and using the latter, so cultural studies were integrated within foreign language teaching courses for their massive importance in the teaching and learning processes.

The main objective of this research was to know the role of mastering the socio-cultural conventions of English in intercultural communications. We investigated whether Algerian students were able to deal with environmental changes and cultural differences at British universities, and whether they had enough mastery of the English language before transferring abroad. We also discovered what impact did the international experience make on the students' language proficiency level as well as their mental state. Moreover, we figured out about the importance of acquiring intercultural competence and developing intercultural communicative competence in reducing global miscommunications. The research was conducted by administering a semi-structured questionnaire to 15 Algerian EFL PhD students at British universities.

Chapter Three: Research Findings and Data Analysis

This study was divided into three chapters. The first two ones were devoted to theoretical background, and the third one to data analysis. The first chapter provided information about the benefits of exposing socio-cultural conventions to EFL learners and the various methods that could help in a better teaching and learning process of the language conventions. The second chapter was dedicated for discussing the concept of intercultural competence and its role in global communications as well as solving conversational issues between interlocutors. The third chapter included the descriptive and statistical data analysis of the questionnaire.

The objective of the questionnaire was to discover PhD students' levels at the English language in general as well as at the socio-cultural conventions and intercultural communication in specific. In addition, it was to discover the types of problems they faced, how they were able to manage them, and whether they affect on their foreign language knowledge account. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that although students faced stumbling concerning language use and cultural varieties, the international experience left an affirmative influence on their level and communicative capacities. In result, it was found that students must obtain prior knowledge about the socio-cultural conventions, acquire intercultural competence, and be aware of the fact that cultural varieties play a huge role in making successful conversations. Furthermore, the results revealed that the Algerian educational system has a lack of balance between grammar rules and socio-cultural conventions of the English language which is a serious problems that needs to be considered. Therefore, students and teachers must work together to formulate better EFL learners that are capable of using the language skillfully at any setting.

To conclude, EFL teachers need to raise the intercultural awareness to their students as well as try to put them in touch with authentic materials as much as they can. EFL Students,

on the contrary, have to realize that relying on EFL courses only is not enough so they have to work harder and practice on using the language through different surroundings with different people.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This research aimed at investigating the role of mastering the English socio-cultural conventions in intercultural communications. The results revealed that gaining background information about socio-cultural conventions, and acquiring intercultural communicative competence would enable EFL students to use correct and suitable language in accordance with its context. However, we find it is necessary to acknowledge some limitations that we assume could help with related research.

The first limitation is the number of respondents. Although the number twenty is already small and not enough to generalize the findings, we were able to contact only fifteen of them. We found about how their experience went although it is not enough to speak in general, so we figured that it would have been better if we had administered the questionnaire to a larger number of students in order to achieve more accurate results.

The second limitation is the absence of additional data collection methods. The online questionnaire was a good way to collect data but it was not enough by itself to obtain as accurate results as possible. As a result, we found that it would have been more accurate if we had done interviews with native teachers about the way they teach, the courses they include, the materials they use, and the curriculum they follow in order to guide EFL teachers and students more deeply to the core of the problem.

As a result, we suggest that it would be more favored if related studies include more respondents for a similar questionnaire. We also suggest that further researches about the same topic should be taken into consideration. We also suggest the idea of diversing data collection methods in order to obtain better findings.

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Appendices

Appendix N° 01 :

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Department of Foreign Languages

Section of English

A Questionnaire for Algerian EFL PhD Students at British Universities

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is an attempt to gather information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We direct this questionnaire to investigate ‘The impact of Mastering the English Socio-cultural Conventions on Intercultural Communication Problems : The Case of Algerian EFL PhD Students at British Universities’. Therefore, we would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions by ticking (√) in the appropriate answer(s) at the corresponding box(es), and by making full statement(s) whenever necessary. Be sure that the answers you provide will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you for your time, effort and collaboration.

Section One : The English Culture and Socio-cultural Conventions

Q1. How do you rate your level in English before studying abroad ?

a) Excellent b) Good c) Acceptable d) Weak

Q2. How would you rate your level in English after studying abroad ?

a) Excellent b) Good c) Acceptable d) Weak

Q3. Did you face difficulties while studying abroad ?

a) Yes b) No

Q4. I think the difficulties i had when studying abroad were because :

I did not fit with the western society

I did not have an English socio-cultural background

I had a weak English language profeciency

All of them

None of them

Others.....
.....

Q5. After facing these difficulties abroad, What do you think was missing in the Algerian EFL teaching system ?

A concentration on the cultural background of the language

A concentration on grammar rules of the language

A balance between grammar rules and cultural conventions of the language

Others.....
.....

Q6. Did you have a socio-cultural background of the English language conventions before going abroad ?

a)Yes b) No

Q7. Did your cultural background of the English language affected your language profeciency and intercultural communication skills when you went abroad ?

a)Yes b) No

If the answer is yes, was the impact positive or negative ?.....

Q8. To what extent do you agree on teaching the English socio-cultural conventions and grammar rules in the Algerian EFL curriculum equally ?

a) Agree b) Neutral c) disagree

Q9. How do you consider the role of the exposure to the socio-cultural conventions of English ?

a) Crucial b) optional c) Not needed

If it is crucial, it is because :

It raises your socio-cultural awareness

It helps you intergate within the western societies

It reduces your miscommunications with native speakers

All of them

Section Two : The Role of Intercultural Competence in Intercultural Communications

Q10. How much is your knowledge about Intercultural competence ?

a) Low b) Medium c) High

Q11. What type of intercultural problem did you face abroad?

Ethnocentrism

Bicultural Identity

Culture shock

All of the above

None of the above

Q12. If the answer is none of the above, please state the type of your problem

.....

Q13. How often did you face Intercultural communicative problems?

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Always | |
| Sometimes | |
| Rarely | |
| Never | |

Q14. describe briefly what was the most difficult intercultural situation did you face and how were you able to manage with it

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q15. Do you think that Algerian teachers are well informed about intercultural competence teaching models?

- a) Yes b) No

Q16. Did you study about the intercultural competence at any level of your study in Algeria ?

- a) Yes b) No

Thank you for your time, effort and collaboration

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف دور اتقان الاتفاقيات الاجتماعية و الثقافية للغة الانجليزية في التواصل بين الثقافات, و يكون هذا بمعرفة المشاكل و الصعوبات اللغوية التي واجهت طلبة الدكتوراه الجزائريين في الجامعات البريطانية. من اجل ذلك تم جمع بيانات بتقديم استبيان لعشرين طالب, و قد تم افتراض ان مشاكل التواصل بين الثقافات ستتقلص بشكل ملحوظ اذا قام الاساتذة الجزائريين للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية برفع مستوى الوعي للطلاب الجزائريين. كشفت نتائج الاستبيان ان الطلاب واجهوا مشاكل لغوية و ثقافية نتيجة لنظام التعليم الجزائري الذي كان يفتقر لتدريس الاتفاقيات الاجتماعية و الثقافية للغة الانجليزية بشكل متساوي مع قواعدها, كما و كشفت انه على الطلاب الجزائريين ان يتعاونوا يدا بيد مع الاساتذة للوصول الى المستوى المطلوب للغة الانجليزية حيث يكون هذا باستعمال الطلبة للغة خارج ميدان الدراسة و على الاساتذة ان يجمعوا معلومات كافية حول الكفاءة الثقافية و طرق تدريسها بشكل صحيح ,بالاضافة الى وجوب تعديل المنهاج الدراسي للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية بتدريس قواعد اللغة و اتفاقياتها الاجتماعية و الثقافية بشكل متساوي. و بالتالي تدل هذه النتائج على ان الاساتذة يحتاجون لارشادات لتعليم الثقافة الاجنبية بطريقة تعزز الوعي الثقافي المحلي لدى الطلاب.