Towards an Interculturally-based Syllabus to Develop English as a Foreign Language Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence
The Case of Second Year Students of English at Sheikh Larbi Tebessi University-Tebessa

Vers un programme interculturel pour développer la compétence communicative interculturelle des apprenants d'anglais comme langue étrangère. Le cas des étudiants de deuxième année à l'Université Cheikh Larbi Tebessi – Tebessa

Souhaila FARES [1]
Department of English-University of Abbas Laghrour-Khenchela |Algeria
souhila.fares@univ-khenchela.dz

Nassira BOUDERSA
Department of English-ENS-Assia Djebar-Constantine| Algeria
boudersa.nassira@ensc.dz

Abstract *: This study addresses the embodiment of the intercultural dimension through an interculturally-based syllabus. A quasi-experiment was conducted on a sample of 66 English as a foreign language second-year students at Sheikh Larbi Tebessi University during the academic year 2022-2023. The control and the experiment groups received a pre and a post-test to examine students' Intercultural Communicative Competence development. The results revealed that implementing an ethnocentric-based intercultural syllabus was effective in developing Algerian EFL learners' ICC. In light of the key findings, recommendations are, hence, advanced.*

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence, English as a Foreign Language, the intercultural dimension, ethnocentric-based intercultural syllabus.

Résumé : Cette étude aborde l'incarnation de la dimension interculturelle à travers un programme basé sur l'interculturel. Une quasi-expérience a été menée sur un échantillon de 66 étudiants d'anglais comme langue étrangère en 2022-2023. Les groupes de contrôle et d'expérimentation ont reçu un pré et un post-test pour examiner le développement des compétences communicatives interculturelles. Les résultats ont révélé que la mise en œuvre d'un programme interculturel ethnocentrique était efficace pour développer la CCI des apprenants algériens de l'EFL. Des recommandations sont donc avancées.

Mots-clés : compétence communicative interculturelle, anglais comme langue étrangère, la dimension interculturelle, programme interculturel ethnocentrique.

⁂

In the wake of globalization, English has transcended to prominence as the dominant langua franca on a global scale. As such, this language is no longer tied to its native speakers, as the interrelatedness brought by globalization has created a shift toward

---

[1] Corresponding author: SOUHAILA FARES | souhila.fares@univ-khenchela.dz

reconceptualizing the language in terms of intercultural learning. Accordingly, intercultural communication has profoundly become essential in higher education language teaching and learning across the globe. In actual fact, intercultural communication pre-supposes going beyond mere linguistic and structural language proficiencies to encompass a deep understanding of the cultural dimension embedded within the language for the aim of developing the intercultural competence of non-native speakers. In support of this central point, Wagner, et al. (2018) claimed that, besides linguistic proficiency, a language learner needs also to demonstrate an intercultural communicative competence.

Nowadays, the majority of English syllabi approach the need to cultivate foreign language learners' cultural understanding. This has been addressed by predominantly featuring factual information about American and British cultures. Despite the fact that the English syllabi at the Algerian higher education universities compromise different subjects that can be grouped under language skills' subjects and content subjects, few of them seem to integrate cultural and intercultural elements. More specifically, students are introduced to cultural knowledge in subjects like literature and civilization only. Subjects like American/British Civilizations and Literature are, however, taught through traditional narrations of the history of the American and British people or across an analysis of literary works except for teachers' individual efforts. There has been a dearth of guidance regarding the integration of the intercultural element in designing foreign language syllabi, and what teaching tools, methods and approaches can be used and adopted in foreign language classrooms.

Integrating intercultural components to syllabi should, therefore, exceed the course of the two previously mentioned subjects, namely civilization and literature, to involve other central subjects, where developing learners' intercultural communicative competence can be a central educational objective and where it can be effectively achieved. In this vein, Byram (2004) emphasized that culture learning needs to be experiential as it is less achievable if limited to the confines of theoretically-driven subjects. A central subject like that of Oral Expression offers an excellent and more flexible platform in which intercultural components can be integrated to develop Algerian EFL learners' ICC. Since language learners have almost no chance to practise communication in the target language speaking countries, Oral Expression sessions can better serve students to learn spoken communication, especially if the subject is modelized to match an authentic setting where a variety of intercultural situations can be used and where students can be exposed to several intercultural experiences.

In the process of examining the Oral Expression syllabus at the English Department, Sheikh Larbi Tebessi- Tebessa University, it has become apparent that there is a notable absence of a long-term vision for integrating the intercultural dimension in language teaching and learning. Hence, the main purpose of the research is to investigate the effectiveness of embedding the intercultural dimension into the oral expression syllabus in cultivating EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. In the light of the above problematic issue, the following research questions are asked:

- What are the key components that should be integrated into the oral expression syllabus to develop Algerian EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence?
- Does the implementation of an interculturally-based syllabus effectively impact Algerian EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence?

To address these research questions, the hypothesis upon which this paper is based is as follows:

- Integrating the intercultural dimension into the oral expression syllabus will develop Algerian EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence.

There is an urgent need to conduct thorough research vis-a-vis the integration of the intercultural dimension in designing ethno-intercultural-centred syllabi in the subject of Oral Expression. This study is a central attempt in designing such syllabi to provide Algerian EFL teachers with the relevant as well as the effective methods, techniques and recommendations to effectively integrate the intercultural elements into the syllabus of Oral Expression, and, thus, make a remarkable contribution in developing and enhancing Algerian EFL learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence.

1. Literature review
1.1. The concept of culture

The nebulous nature of the term culture is associated with its ubiquity in different research disciplines. Despite the fact that there is no consensus (especially in anthropology and sociology) over one straightforward definition of culture, a common understanding of the concept in the field of language education has been advanced. In their dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Richards and Schmidt (2003) define culture as:

> The set of practices, codes, values that mark a particular nation or group: the sum of a nation or group's most highly thought of works of literature, art, music, etc. a difference is sometimes made between 'high' culture of literature and art, and small 'c' culture of attitude, value, beliefs, and everyday lifestyles. (138)

Defining culture in language education is, hence, built upon a clear distinction between big C culture and small c culture. The former refers to the creative and artistic products of a given society including literary works, architecture and music, while the latter applies to a society's core values, beliefs, attitudes and history.

1.2. The synergy of language and culture

The inseparability of language and culture was initially introduced by Whorf (1965) and Sapir (1970). Their long journey in the analyses of Native American languages has come to be known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Whorf (1956) argued that people from divergent cultures think differently because of the differences in their language structure. The strong version of the hypothesis, that is based on the view that (a) language determines our thought (language determinism), has received disapproval on the part of sociologists. However, the diluted form of the hypothesis, which entails that (b) language influences our thought (linguistic relativity), has received wide acceptance and embracement among scholars from different fields upon the fact that language and culture are intertwined (Kramsch, 1998). Kramsch (1998) held the belief that "language is a principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in context of communication, it is bound with culture in multiple and complex way" (p. 3).

Within the same vein, Brown (2000) stressed the symbiotic connectedness of language and culture. He (2000) stated that "language and culture are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 177). Therefore, understanding a language involves an awareness of its culture because language and culture are intricately linked, and the existence of one requires the other. Thus, the integration of the cultural aspects within the teaching of foreign languages cannot only be seen as a necessity; in fact, it is considered as an obligation.

1.3. Tracing the growth of intercultural communicative competence

Considering Foreign Language Teaching and Learning in terms of competences has been associated with Chomsky's (1965) linguistic theory. Matthews (2014) noted that the Chomskyan concept of linguistic competence requires an ideal situation whereby a hearer-speaker produces and understands grammatically correct sentences (pp.12-17). Due to its idealistic nature, Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence has been subjected to criticism. In this scope, Brown et al. (2004) pointed out that Chomsky's narrow-scope view of language emerged in isolation of any given authentic context. The only reference to context is that of a mono-cultural society.
In reaction to Chomsky's linguistic competence, the American linguist and anthropologist Dell Hymes (1966) introduced communicative competence to describe and account for both grammatical knowledge and the ability to use language appropriately within a given social and cultural context. In this respect, Hymes (1966, p. 116) asserted that "the consequences of the relativity of the structure of language depend on the relativity of the function of language". Despite the fact that Hymes did not address Foreign Language Teaching and Learning in his studies, further in-depth studies in the field are built upon his research output.

Hymes' (1966) conceptualization of communicative competence has been elaborated by several researchers including the most acknowledged model of Canale and Swain (1980) to define sub-consequences. The Canale and Swain (1980) model highlights the value of language production (speaking and writing) in enhancing language learning. It posits that producing language stimulates cognitive processes. This latter leads to better understanding and internationalization (Shrum and Glisan, 2016, 14). The communicative competence has also been questioned for its adherence to native speakers' norms with consideration to the native language culture only. Fantini (2005) contended that conventional models of communicative competence, which is based on native speaker-centric paradigms (accounting native speaker's social background), fail to capture the dynamic nature of intercultural communication. Using English as a lingua Franca in cross cultural settings necessitates the incorporation of the intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching/learning contexts. As a result, intercultural communicative competence was introduced.

 Byram (1994) originally introduced the term intercultural communicative competence. It is viewed as the expansion of the concept of communicative competence. For Byram (2000), intercultural communicative competence is "the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (Cited in Huang, 2021, p. 56).

Similarly, Bennett and Bennett (2004) defined the term intercultural communicative competence as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 149). In other words, intercultural communicative competence reflects the knowledge and skills of effectively engaging in communication across diverse cultures and demonstrating appropriate behaviours in various cultural settings. Chen (2009) added that tolerance and mutual respect for cultural differences hinges on intercultural communicative competence (p.394). Likewise, Fantini (1997) pointed out that intercultural communicative competence depends on the comprehension and appreciation of intercultural distinctions. This understanding fosters successful intercultural communication and dismantles barriers between different cultures.

1.4. Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

In the context of foreign language education, Byram's 1997 publication has highlighted the link between Foreign Language Teaching and intercultural communicative competence. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence is one of the most cited and acknowledged models since it provides a comprehensive approach to the understanding and the development of intercultural communicative competence. It implies that foreign language education aims to produce an 'intercultural speaker' instead of a native-like speaker. Byram (1997) proposed a framework that includes three key components including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge involves: (1) knowledge of others and (2) knowledge of self. Skills are divided into two categories: (1) skills to interpret and relate and (2) skills to discover and/or to interact. Finally, attitudes entail the ability to relativize one's self and to value others with 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and about one's own' (Byram, 1997, p. 91). By utilizing this practical model, teachers and educators can work towards developing EFL students' intercultural communicative competence in various EFL contexts.

1.5. The Need to Adopt an Interculturally-driven Syllabus

Developing intercultural communicative competence has been acknowledged by scholars and researchers as a core element in the field of language education. Recently, a great deal of syllabi for teaching English as a Foreign Language has accentuated a varied level of importance on augmenting students' cultural knowledge, mainly through the inclusion of correct information about British and American cultures (Algouzi and Alkhiar, 2021, p. 788). Despite the wide acceptance of intercultural learning, its integration in foreign language classrooms remains a serious challenge.

As it has been mentioned earlier, there are no clear suggestions or guidance in how to implement the intercultural elements and develop the intercultural communicative competence in EFL classrooms. Therefore, syllabus design processes should be targeted toward fostering students' intercultural communicative competence. Leask (2009) emphasized this point by insisting on "the incorporation of an intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning processes and support services of a program of study" (p. 210). In simple words, intercultural communicative competence can be developed when syllabi are interculturalized.

This implies that course objectives, content, teaching methods and evaluation modes should all be put into action towards a central educational objective, which is that of developing and promoting foreign language learners' intercultural communicative competence. Currently, internationalization emerges as a response to the pervasive phenomenon of globalization. That is why it necessitates the adoption of an intercultural-based syllabus. Yueh and Copeland (2015) argued that a language syllabus should reflect how cultural differences, empathy, and power issues are emphasized in classroom teaching. They (2015) also emphasized the point that foreign language institutions are in need to adopt intercultural communication courses in different teaching subjects to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence in higher education. In the Algerian higher education context, there is always a concern about the absence of a straightforward syllabus that relevantly and effectively addresses the development of intercultural communicative competence.

2. Methods

In this study, the research methodology employed serves as the framework. Through it, we systematically investigate the pertinent factors influencing the research question.

2.1. Research Aims

The main aim of the present study is to enhance Algerian EFL students' Intercultural Communicative Competence. This is achieved through the incorporation of the intercultural dimension into the Oral Expression syllabus. We believe that this shift in the teaching/learning focus (objectives, content, methods and techniques of teaching, assessment and the like) would greatly help in developing language learners' intercultural communicative competence and would encourage teachers to discard their traditional teachings and shift towards intercultural-based education.

2.2. Research questions

In light of the research aim, the following questions were asked. The questions guide the research investigation towards achieving the research aims.
   a. What are the key components and pedagogical strategies that should be incorporated into an intercultural-based syllabus for EFL learners?
   b. Does an interculturally-based syllabus effectively impact learners' intercultural sensitivity, awareness and ability to navigate intercultural interactions?

2.3. Research Hypothesis

The present research is set to test the following research hypothesis:
   ➢ If we appropriately implement an interculturally-based syllabus in the subject of speaking, we will significantly develop and improve learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence.

2.4. Population and Sampling

In the present study, the population involves second year LMD students at the department of English, Tebessa University. They are all aged between 18 and 22 years old and most of them have studied English for at least eight years. Working with the whole population, which is around 240 students, was an impossible matter due to various reasons. Thus,

drawing a sample that is representative of the whole population was highly required. The adopted sampling technique was non-probability sampling in the form of convenience selection of participants, in which two groups out of six intact groups, were selected. The reason behind this convenience sampling is that it was difficult for the researcher to apply randomization because of second year students' study schedule.

The sample of the study is composed of 66 students. They involved two interact sub-groups, the number of students per each group is 33: experimental group (33 students) and control group (33 students).

2.5. Means of Research

An experimental research design was employed for the purpose of achieving the main aim of the present study. In this design, a pre-test and post-test assessment measures were administered to two-group participants. The ultimate difference is that a treatment (the teaching intervention) was given to the experimental group only. Besides that, three progress tests were assigned to both groups. It is worth mentioning that the teaching intervention took the form of an intercultural-based syllabus whereby an intercultural dimension was integrated encompassing both students' culture and the target culture.

2.6. The Experiment

The experiment was deemed necessary to test the research central hypothesis, with the primary aim of developing students' Intercultural Communicative Competence through adopting an intercultural-based syllabus. The experiment was conducted in the academic year 2022-2023. It started in January and ended mid-May. The subject of Oral Expression was taught twice a week with a total of 3 hours. This has made the overall timeline of the experiment around 48 hours.

Adopting a quasi-experimental design, both the experimental and the control group completed a pre-test in the form of a jigsaw classroom activity whereby each student has a part that targeted one of the intercultural elements. During the experimental phase, the experimental group has undergone a treatment, whereas the control group was taught through the official a syllabus followed by teachers in the English Department at Tebessa University. After having obtained the syllabus of the Oral Expression subject, we advanced an alternative intercultural syllabus for the experimental group. Accordingly, the teaching objectives, content, teaching methods/techniques and the evaluation mode were interculturally-driven to cultivate and develop students' Intercultural Communicative Competence. Integrating the intercultural dimension in the Oral Expression syllabus focused on the intercultural knowledge, the intercultural skills and attitudes.

The multi-dimensional nature of the three last components (knowledge, skills and attitudes) was a substantial challenge, but not an impossible task. The essence of the Oral Expression subject was to emphasize both speaking and listening with a combination of the three components, and thus the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. After the intervention, a post-test was administered to both group who were required to perform an intercultural play.

3.Results

The subsequent segments unveil the results of our investigation. They offer a comprehensive analysis of the impact of adopting an interculturally-based syllabus in developing EFL students' intercultural communicative competence.

3.1. The Pre-test

As mentioned earlier, the pre-test was administered to participants in both groups; experimental and control group. The students' oral products were graded based on a rating scale that indicates their intercultural communicative competence proficiency. This is best illustrated through the following table.

Table 1: Pretest and Post-test's Intercultural Communicative Competence Rating Scale

Elements of IC	Sub-elements	Scale
Intercultural Knowledge	Knowledge of one's culture Knowledge of other cultures	High Low Medium
Intercultural Skills	Interpreting – Relating Discovery- Interaction	High Low Medium
Intercultural Attitudes	Curiosity Openness	High Low Medium

Source : (Byram, 1997)

A holistic rubric that consists of a single scale with all the elements of ICC was used. Through this holistic rubric, we assigned 1-2-3-4-point scale, moving from low to high, to evaluate students' subpar-low-medium-high- performance. The tables that follow represent students' pretest scores for both groups.

Table 2: Scores of the Pretest for the Experimental Group's Intercultural Communicative Competence Rating Scale

Participants	Score				
Student 1	1	Student 13	1	Student 25	3
Student 2	1	Student 14	1	Student 26	2
Student 3	1	Student 15	1	Student 27	1
Student 4	3	Student 16	2	Student 28	1
Student 5	1	Student 17	1	Student 29	1
Student 6	2	Student 18	2	Student 30	1
Student 7	2	Student 19	1	Student 31	2
Student 8	1	Student 20	1	Student 32	1
Student 9	1	Student 21	1	Student 33	1
Student 10	1	Student 22	1		
Student 11	2	Student 23	1		

| Student 12 | 2 | Student 24 | 1 |

The pretest that aimed at examining and assessing the experimental group's intercultural communicative competence revealed scores that, initially, appeared to be on lower end of spectrum. This initial observation suggested that there may be potential for improvements in the students' intercultural competence. The scores that were obtained from the pretest served as a starting point for targeted interventions and tailored instructional content and strategies to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence throughout the course.

Table3: Scores of the Pretest for the Control Group's Intercultural Communicative Competence Rating Scale

Participants	Score				
Student 1	1	Student 13	2	Student 25	1
Student 2	1	Student 14	1	Student 26	3
Student 3	2	Student 15	3	Student 27	1
Student 4	1	Student 16	3	Student 28	2
Student 5	1	Student 17	1	Student 29	1
Student 6	3	Student 18	1	Student 30	1
Student 7	2	Student 19	1	Student 31	1
Student 8	1	Student 20	2	Student 32	2
Student 9	1	Student 21	1	Student 33	1
Student 10	1	Student 22	2		
Student 11	1	Student 23	1		
Student 12	1	Student 24	1		

Before delving into statistical analysis, the pretest results show that participants in both groups, experimental group and control group, have a limited intercultural knowledge and skills. Their attitudes seem to be notably influenced by their respective culture. To guarantee the homogeneity assumption, these results were processed in SPSS ver.25 as sketched in Table 4 above.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the Two Groups' Pretest

Participants' group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental Group	33	1,3636	,60302
Control Group	33	1,4545	,71111

By performing a straightforward calculation, we observe that the difference in the means is 0.09. This shows that before the teaching intervention, one can notice that there is no statistically meaningful discrepancy.
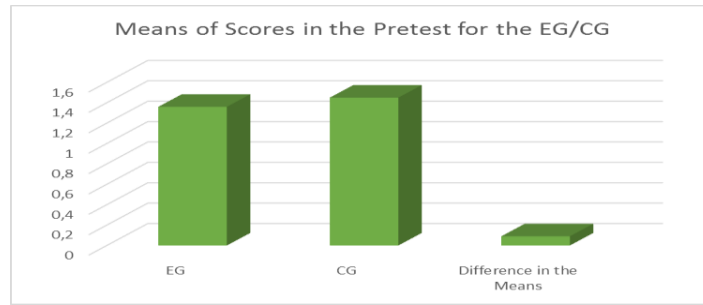
Figure 1. Means of Scores in the Pretest for the Experimental and Control Group

When comparing the means and the standard deviations (SD) between the two groups, we notice that the mean score of the experimental group (**n=33**) is **1.36** with a Standard Deviation **SD= 0.60**, whereas the mean score of the control group (**n=33**) is **1.45** with a Standard Deviation **SD=0.71**. Consequently, the mean ranks of the pretest scores of both groups are approximately within a similar range. This indicates that the **EG** and the **CG** have a fair homogeneity at the level of Intercultural Communicative Competence. The null hypothesis **H0** which entails that the mean rank of the experimental group is close to the mean rank of the control group in the pretest is, hence, supported and confirmed. That is to say, there is no statistical difference with regards to the pretest results of both the experimental group and the control group.

The independent-samples t-test was used for the reason that we have two distinct intersecting samples of individuals (control and experimental groups). Upon employing the independent-samples t-test is SPSS, we received the subsequent results.

Table 5: Independent Samples T-test for the Pretest Scores

Independent Samples Test

	Group	N	T	Df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
					t-test for Equality of means		
Pretest	Experimental Group	33	-,560	64	,577	0.09	,10497
	Control Group	33		62.336			,12379

 In the current pretest, the calculated level of significance p-value is **0.57** which exceeds **a=0.05**, affirming that the two groups are roughly at the same level of ICC and, therefore, there is no statistical difference between the two groups. This establishes good conditions for accurately measuring the progress in the EG's level of ICC and attributing any positive or negative alternations. As revealed in the table above, the absence of distinctions between the two groups is evident as the significance level is greater than 0.05 (sig.> 0.05). These results strongly validate the pre-test's efficacy in setting suitable conditions for the implementation of the teaching intervention.

3.2.   The Progress Test

To examine and evaluate whether the intervention has had a positive effect on the development of students' intercultural communicative competence, a progress test was conducted over the time of the treatment. Therefore, three progress tests were

administered at the end of each instructional unit to examine and measure changes in participants. It is worth noting that both of the experimental and the control group simultaneously undertook the progress tests. These progress tests were aligned with the course objectives to harmonize with the three intercultural dimensions, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes. In that order, each progress test covered one of the ICC dimensions. The results obtained in the progress test were processed in SPSS Ver.25. The results indicate that the highest mean score for the experimental group, after the teaching intervention, was on the ICC component of attitude (**m=3.1818**) and the lowest mean score was noted on knowledge (**m = 2.6364**). By contrast, the control group scores ranged between (**m=1.60)** and (**m=1.42)** respectively.

When comparing means and Standard Deviation between the two groups on the set of the three intercultural dimensions, we notice that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group (see table 6).

Table.6: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the EG and CG Progress Tests

	Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	The Experimental Group	33	2,6364	1,08450	,18879
	The Control Group	33	1,6061	,86384	,15037
Skills	The Experimental Group	33	2,9091	1,07132	,18649
	The Control Group	33	1,4545	,66572	,11589
Attitude	The Experimental Group	33	3,1818	,72692	,12654
	The Control Group	33	1,4242	,61392	,10687

A sample t-test was used to ascertain the notable difference between the experimental and the control. The results of the t-test are presented in the table below (Table 7).

Table 7: Independent Samples T-test for the Progress Tests' Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	3,155	,080	4,269	64	,000	1,03030	,24136
	Equal variances not assumed			4,269	60,951	,000	1,03030	,24136
Skills	Equal variances assumed	8,636	,005	6,625	64	,000	1,45455	,21957
	Equal variances not assumed			6,625	53,506	,000	1,45455	,21957
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	,418	,520	10,611	64	,000	1,75758	,16563
	Equal variances not assumed			10,611	62,256	,000	1,75758	,16563

The independent sample t-test table presents a comprehensive analysis of the progress test scores across three distinct areas: Knowledge, skills and attitude. For each of these areas, two separate tests were conducted; assuming equal variances and not assuming equal variances. As shown in Table 7, there are differences between the two groups, for sig. is less than 0.05 (sig. < 0.05) in all progress tests. The significance levels (sig) for knowledge, skills, and attitude in the independent samples t-test are all extremely low, each registering at 0.000. This indicates that there are highly meaningful distinctions in performance across the three tests.

These results strongly suggest that the variations in performance are not likely due to chance, but rather they reflect genuine disparities in competence and attitude levels. The mean differences observed in the independent samples t-test provide valuable insights into the extent of variation across the knowledge, skills, and attitude domains. As far as knowledge is concerned, there is an average difference of 1.030 points between the experimental and control group. Similarly in skills, the mean difference is 1.45 points, while in attitude; the mean difference is notably higher at 1.75 points. These findings suggest that there are substantial disparities in performance levels across these three crucial areas. Considering these mean differences in conjunction with the significance levels indicates the efficacy of our teaching intervention and its positive effect on enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence.

3.3. The Post-test

After undertaking the treatment, the post-test was used to measure changes in terms of students' intercultural communicative competence. The post scores have undergone the same procedure as in the pretest.

Table 8: Scores of the Post-test for the Experimental Group

Participants	Score				
Student 1	1	Student 13	2	Student 25	4
Student 2	3	Student 14	3	Student 26	4
Student 3	4	Student 15	3	Student 27	3
Student 4	1	Student 16	4	Student 28	1
Student 5	4	Student 17	2	Student 29	1
Student 6	2	Student 18	4	Student 30	2
Student 7	2	Student 19	2	Student 31	4
Student 8	4	Student 20	4	Student 32	3
Student 9	3	Student 21	2	Student 33	3
Student 10	3	Student 22	4		
Student 11	4	Student 23	3		
Student 12	4	Student 24	3		

The table above depicts students' scores in the post-test for the experimental group. It provides a visual standpoint that there has been a progress. This is an encouraging sign that reflects the fact that the teaching intervention has effectively contributed to the development in the experimental group's intercultural communicative competence level.

Table 9: Scores of the Post-test for the Control Group

| Participants	Score				
Student 1	1	Student 13	1	Student 25	1
Student 2	1	Student 14	2	Student 26	1
Student 3	1	Student 15	1	Student 27	4
Student 4	1	Student 16	1	Student 28	1
Student 5	2	Student 17	1	Student 29	1
Student 6	1	Student 18	1	Student 30	3
Student 7	1	Student 19	1	Student 31	1
Student 8	1	Student 20	1	Student 32	1
Student 9	2	Student 21	3	Student 33	1
Student 10	1	Student 22	1		
Student 11	2	Student 23	1		
Student 12	1	Student 24	2		

The scores that were obtained in the post-test reveal that the experimental group realized remarkable progress. However, no improvement was noted regarding the control group since they have been taught using the usual teaching (course contents, teaching methods and techniques). The results that we garnered in the post-test were subjected to SPSS that generated Table 10.

Table 10: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the Two Groups' Post-test

Participants' group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Experimental Group	2,9091	33	1,04174
Control Group	1,3636	33	,74239

Unlike the obtained results in the pretest, one can easily note that there is a significant difference between the mean ranks of the EG and the CG as far as the post-test scores are concerned. Subsequently, the difference in the means has reached (**1.54**).

Figure 2: A Bar Graph Comparing the Mean Scores for the Two Groups' Pretest and Post-test
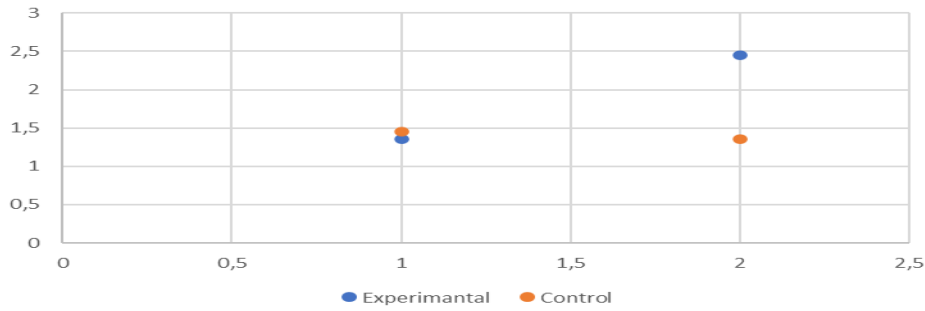
Upon comparing means and standard deviations (SD) of the two groups, it has become evident that the experimental group had a mean score (**n=33**) of (**2.90**) with a Standard Deviation (**SD= 1.04**), while the control group (**n=33**) exhibited a mean score of (**1.36**) with a Standard Deviation (**SD=0.74**). The obtained results in the pretest demonstrate that there is no statistical difference between the two groups: control and experimental. On the contrary, the mean ranks of the post-test's results in both groups reveal that there is a statistically significant difference. The independent-samples t-test was used given that we have two distinct non-overlapping samples of participants (control and experimental). Upon employing the independent-samples t-test is SPSS, we uncovered the following results.

Table 11: Independent Samples T-test for the Post-test Scores

| | | | **Independent Samples Test** | | | | |
| | | | | t-test for Equality of means | | | |
	Group	**N**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**
Post-Test	**Experimental Group**	33					
			6,940	64	,000	1,54545	,22268
	Control Group	33					

Significance at the p=.05 level

The results that are demonstrated in Table 11 above display the experimental and control groups independent sample t-test of the post-test scores. This kind of statistical test is used to confirm that there is a statistical difference between the experimental and the control group. In the current follow-up post-test, the computed t-test score registers at (**6.94**) and the level of significance P-value is (**0.000**) which is less than (**0.05**). As mentioned before, the mean ranks in the post-test assume that there is a significant difference among the two groups in which the experimental group's participants scored more than the control group. Therefore, the null hypothesis **H0** positing no statistically significant difference between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the development of their ICC in the post-test is rejected. This means that the teaching intervention with the experimental group provides positive results in terms of developing Algerian EFL students' intercultural communicative competence.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The research experiment was designed to confirm the central research hypothesis and to address the main research question that centers around the effectiveness of incorporating the intercultural dimension in the oral expression syllabus. The main purpose behind that is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence. Upon analysing the experimental results, it is evident that the progress observed within the experimental group is conspicuously ascribed to the incorporation of interculturality as an instructional modality. Conversely, the control group evinced a state of relative stasis, due to the rigid way of teaching that can be referred to as a theory-driven instruction. The previous descriptive as well as critical analysis of the data indicate that a positive progress is clearly observable after weeks of systematically implementing an intercultural-based syllabus or course into the subject of Oral Expression for Algerian EFL students of second year.

Students' intercultural communicative competence is positively enhanced. A strong and relevant interpretation of this result can be the fact that participants in the experimental group have developed a self-perception of the ICC issues, and they started adjusting and embracing new intercultural stands. Approaching teaching from an intercultural perspective in the Oral Expression syllabus remarkably contributed to cultivating students' ability to understand cultures, including their own, and, therefore, use this knowledge to successfully communicate in an intercultural setting wherein they conveyed a disposition of respect and tolerance towards both native and target cultures. In line with this central and critical point, in their analytical evaluation of English syllabi, Yueh and Copeland (2015) discussed the embodiment of the intercultural communication through course syllabi and its key role in developing students' ICC.

In fact, the traditional teaching methods or tendencies that disregard the integration of the intercultural dimension were the major reason behind the low results of the control group. Their communication shows no appreciation of cultural differences. Barriers, including a less understanding of otherness, prejudice and ethnocentrism, hinder students' intercultural interactions. The main aim of this research was to advance a teaching course/syllabus that is interculturally-driven (objectives, contents, method of teaching, method of assessing) with the overall aim of shifting the teaching and learning practices and move towards internalization as a mandatory pre-requisite in nowadays' higher education world-wide.   The introduction of a course that is interculturally oriented is for the major aim of developing Algerian EFL second year students' intercultural communicative competence at EL-Sheikh Larbi Tebessi University.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was an empirical attempt to highlight the importance of integrating the intercultural dimension in the English syllabus of Oral Expression to develop students' Intercultural Communicative Competence. The results of this study revealed that second year EFL students at Tebessa University achieved a remarkable progress after being exposed to an Oral Expression interculturally-based syllabus; students made use of their intercultural knowledge and skills to develop self-critical outlook.

In advancing towards an interculturally-based syllabus, several key recommendations emerge. Subsequently, it is highly recommended for Algerian policymakers to prioritise the

integration of the intercultural competence within the EFL educational framework. To be exact, syllabus designers are required to emphasize the incorporation of the intercultural dimension into the course of Oral Expression syllabus, in particular, and the English syllabi of various subjects, in general. This study also revealed the need of reinforcing teachers' training by providing them with an interculturally-driven syllabus or even some pedagogical implications and practical suggestions about how to integrate the intercultural dimensions into EFL teaching and learning. Moreover, using a pattern-based strategy, students should be sensitized about the intercultural communication issues. It is also highly recommended for teachers to ask students to keep portfolios so they, themselves, can mark their progress toward becoming intercultural speakers.

Bibliographical references

ALGOUZI, s. & eLKHIAR, a. 2021. An ethnographic approach to developing intercultural awareness: A case study of EFL learners at Najran University. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 117. doi: 10.17507/tpls. 1107.04.

ALPTEKIN, C. 2002. Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. ELT Journal, 56(1), doi: 10.10 93/elt/56.1.57.

BENNETT, J.M. and BENNETT, M.J. 2004. Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to Global and Domestic Diversity. In D. Landis, J. Bennett, & M. Bennett (Eds), Handbook of Intercultural Training, Sage Publications.

BROWN, G., MALMKJÆR, K. & WILLIAMS, J. 2004. Performance and competence in Second language acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BROWN, H.D. 2000. Principles of language learning and teaching. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

BYRAM, M. 1997. Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

BYRAM, M. 2000. Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning. London: Routledge.

BYRAM, M. 2004. Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning. London: Routledge.

BYRAM, M. and MORGAN, C. (1994). Teaching-and-learning language-and-culture. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

CHEN, G.-M. and AN, R. 2009. A Chinese model of Intercultural Leadership Competence. In D.K. Deardorff, (ed.). The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHOMSKY, N. 1965. Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Boston: MIT Press.

FANTINI, A. E. 1997. New Ways in teaching Culture. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Inc.

HUANG, L. J. D. 2021. Developing intercultural communicative competence in foreign language classrooms—A study of EFL learners in Taiwan. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, https: //doi .org / 10 . 1016 /j.ijintrel.2021.04.015

HYMES, D. 1966. Two types of linguistic relativity. In Bright, W. Sociolinguistics The Hague: Mouton..

KRAMSCH, C. J. 1998. Language and Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LEASK, B. 2009. Using formal and informal curricula to improve interactions between home and international students. Journal of Studies in International Education, 13(2),. doi10.1177/102831 53083 2978 6.

MATTHEWS, D. 2014. Pragmatic development in first language acquisition. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

RICHARDS, J.C. and SCHMIDT, R.W. 2003. Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. London: Pearson Educational Limited.

SHRUM, J. L., & GLISAN, E. W. 2016. Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction (5th ed.). Boston: Cengage.

WAGNER, M., PERUGINI, D.C. and BYRAM, M. 2018. Teaching intercultural competence across the age range: From theory to practice. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

WHORF, B. L. 1956. Language, Thought and Reality. New York: Willey.

YUEN, H. S., & COPELAND, K. D. 2015. The embodiment of intercultural communication through course syllabi. Intercultural Communication Studies.