

Full Length Research Paper

On the assessment of Moroccan EFL university students' intercultural communicative competence: A case study of the Master students of the English Department of Meknes

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Accepted 29 May, 2015

The present study aims at assessing intercultural communicative competence and its development among EFL university Moroccan students. It is meant to investigate the extent to which these students know about the cultural aspects of the target Anglo-American cultures as well as the degree to which their intercultural communicative competence has evolved based on the model presented by Byram (1997) which includes five competencies or savoirs: knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction, attitudes and critical cultural awareness. The results of the study have shown that the Moroccan EFL university students do possess the average necessary needed intercultural communicative competence to be mindful intercultural speakers and act purposefully and appropriately in cross-cultural communication encounters.

Key words: Attitudes, communication, critical cultural awareness, intercultural communicative competence, knowledge, saviors, skills.

INTRODUCTION

Since the mid 1980s, a number of attempts and voices have been raised to adopt 'an intercultural approach' to second language teaching in the hope to prompt teachers and educationalists "to re-examine the basic assumptions of what language does, and what a language course seeks to achieve" (Corbett, 2003: 1). It has been a reaction to the view that the communicative methods to second language teaching generally view the teaching enterprise as attempts to bridge a series of information gaps with the ultimate aim to produce learners with a native speaker-like competence (Corbett, 2003).

The view of the communicative language teaching to language and linguistic development has tended to downgrade culture; however, there have been many serious attempts to integrate culture into the syllabus (Byram, 2001). From this perspective, "The development of intercultural competence is now considered as important as the development of the linguistic, sociolinguistic and discursive components of communicative communication" (Taylor and Weir, 2009: 236).

The ultimate goal of the intercultural communicative competence (henceforth ICC) then to language education is not so much as a 'native speaker competence' but rather an intercultural speaker communicative competence that is different from both a native speaker and a bilingual speaker's competence (Byram, 1997). The ICC includes "the ability to understand the language and behavior of the target community and explains it to members of the 'home' community and vice versa" (Corbett, 2003: 3). In this respect, there is a broad international consensus in the language teaching academia to develop not only the learners' linguistic skills but also their cultural skills and attitudes (Lázár et al., 2007) with a view to create a learning of language that is seen as a valuable means to foster cross-cultural understanding between nations (Fantini, 2007).

Although ICC is in wide use, there is no clear consensus about what it is supposed to mean and contain. Intercultural language teaching and learning redirects the goal of learning by shifting from a narrower focus on linguistic competence towards a more holistic

goal of ICC. Dearsdoiff (2009: 458), in the same vein, cogently defines ICC as “complex abilities that are required to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself”. So learning to communicate effectively and appropriately and trying to avoid sounding like ‘a fluent fool’, to use Brislin and Yoshida’s (1994) appellation, or speaking like a native speaker is the principal aim behind ICC (in Corbett, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

Research problem and purpose of the study

The cultural development of the students, their values, beliefs, attitudes, and most importantly, their intercultural skills are the salient aspects that are under demands of a new globalized education era with a view to produce speakers who are communicatively competent to survive in a ferocious world of economic, social and intellectual communication. However the best recommended approach to yield such results is the one that is based on the observation of the intercultural dimension of teaching and learning enterprise and built on strategies that avoid the analogy of the alien and the different from one’s home culture in an attempt “to ward off the many possibilities of inculcating stereotypical images about the foreign language, its speakers and their culture” (Azhar, 2008: 70).

In relation to the Moroccan context, ELT is nowadays heavily pressured to create highly qualified graduates with intercultural skills, knowledge, attitudes and cultural awareness to purposefully and effectively function in a globalized world as intercultural citizens. Therefore, to make sense of the important ideas regarding the area of ICC, there are two main objectives that can serve as propellers of this study:

1. To discover whether the Moroccan EFL university learners possess the required intercultural skills, knowledge, attitudes and cultural awareness about the differences between their home and target cultures.
2. To assess the extent to which they are able to communicate effectively and purposefully with those who are culturally different from them, and achieve their instrumental and social goals when in different cross-cultural situations.

Research questions and hypotheses

The following are the four research questions that this study sets out to address:

1. Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough knowledge/savoir of EFL culture that enables them to behave adequately and in a flexible way when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations representative of the foreign culture?
2. Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough

know-how/savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire of EFL culture that enables them to use efficiently their intercultural communicative competence as intercultural speakers?

3. Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough intercultural being/savoir-être of EFL culture that enables them to be culturally aware of the target culture minute differences and stabilize their self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation?

4. Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough critical cultural awareness/savoir s’engager to critically evaluate, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products, of their own culture and of other cultures?

The hypotheses then emanating from these research questions are:

- 1) The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough knowledge/savoir of EFL culture that enables them to handle effectively problems that happen in cross-cultural situations.
- 2) The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough know-how/savoir-faire of EFL culture that enables them to be aware of the differences between their ‘home’ culture and the target culture.
- 3) The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough intercultural being/savoir-être of EFL culture that enables them to stabilize their self identities when in cross-cultural situations.
- 4) The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough critical cultural awareness/savoir s’engager to evaluate, interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in their own culture and in other cultures.

The issue at stake which this study seeks to investigate concerns itself with the pre-conceived assumption that the Moroccan EFL university students regardless of the existence of an important and bulky intercultural teaching course material in the university syllabus, tend to be weak or even unable to interculturally mediate and communicate in different cross-cultural communication situations. Their supposedly weak intercultural knowledge, ethnocentric attitudes, weak relating, interpreting, discovering and interacting skills, as well as their weak critical cultural unawareness of the tiny disparities that exist between their home and target cultures is what the above research questions aim at elucidating.

Significance of the study

The present study seeks to be a foundational study in developing a picture of key components of ICC as agreed upon by experts in the intercultural field in an effort to help higher education teachers, teacher trainers,

administrators and supervisors to assess it as an effective and meaningful student outcome with a view to create competent intercultural speakers rather than fluent fools. Specifically, this study explores further what it means to be intercultural competent, the optimum ways to measure it, and the issues involved in such an assessment. It is hoped that this study will not only be able to document consensus on what constitutes ICC, but it will develop some key evaluation questions that can be used by educators in providing direction and a foundation for more in-depth evaluation and assessment of ICC and its globalization and educational goals.

It is also hoped that this study will lay the groundwork for further research on ICC and could be an addition to knowledge in the field of culture studies related to education in Morocco. The use and focus on the culture construct in the EFL syllabus in the Moroccan university English course design shows an important focus on the intercultural education, and an attempt to integrate culture fully in the curriculum would be an opportunity to back up and foster culture tolerance in a country that is open for millennia to different civilizations and still open to others to come.

It is thought that this type of research is relevant for both practitioners and professionals in so far as the results could be used to enhance the easy mediation between the home culture and the target culture(s) to reach what Kramsch (1993) calls the "third place". Therefore, curricular changes may be done to assess the implementation of culture and the extent to which it may train both teachers and students to produce tolerant, mediating reflective community members. Methodological shifts are also to be made to avoid gaps left by the traditional methods to teaching towards ICC in Moroccan classrooms. Ideological stances will be fought in the sense that ICC learning and teaching education shall enhance one's trust in the 'home' culture and foster respect towards the other and his or her culture(s).

Conceptual model of this study

Avoiding the sense of prescription that the 'native speaker' model may entail, a fact that is normative in the communicative language teaching, a new approach to teaching culture in English is preached by Byram (1997), Deardorff (2009), Zarate (1994), Azhar (2008), Kramsch (1993), and Lázár et al. (2007) among others. Byram's (1997) model is adopted here for two major reasons: first because of its use in foreign language education and second as it has been attested to be the most conceptually, full-fledged model to assess ICC (Deardorff, 2009; Risager, 2007; Corbett, 2003).

This model and similar others start from the premise that the goal of language instruction is not to approximate the communicative competence epitomized by the native-speaker model rather the goal is for language learners to become intercultural speakers. Byram's (1997) model

has been conceptualized in terms of the following key competences of the intercultural speaker: Knowledge, Skills of Discovery and Interaction, Skills of Interpreting and Relating, Attitudes, and Critical cultural awareness or political education.

Byram (1997) therefore suggests a systematic approach to teaching the target culture based on the theory of the 'intercultural speaker' "who is capable of meeting the demands of intercultural communication, as an ideal" (Stefanidou, 2009: 2). ICC enables this speaker to interact with foreign language speakers purposefully and appropriately in cross-cultural encounters using the required competencies which make up Byram's (1997) model.

The process therefore of becoming intercultural competent is much more complex than just realizing that there is 'self' (the home culture) and 'others' (the target culture). It requires certain attitudes, knowledge and skills to be promoted, in addition to learners' linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Accordingly, Byram (1997) identifies the following components of ICC within foreign language education:

Knowledge

The knowledge category for Byram (1997: 51) is twofold: the one that contains knowledge about "social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country". The second category, which Stefanidou (2009) calls declarative knowledge, comprises the general processes of societal and individual interaction (Byram, 1997: 51) and complemented by a 'procedural knowledge' of how to act appropriately and effectively in cross-cultural communication situations (Azhar, 2010: 60).

Attitudes

Successful cross-cultural interaction is guaranteed if and only if prejudice and stereotypes are suspended. Attitudes of openness, curiosity and readiness to suspend beliefs about one's culture and disbelief about the target culture with the willingness to put oneself in the shoes of other is what makes an intercultural speaker rather than a mere bilingual or a fluent fool (Byram, 1997).

Skills

Emphasis is on how students adjust to the requirements of the social and cultural environment of the target culture and mediate in intercultural exchanges. That is, how they integrate experiences in the target language to use efficiently their communicative competence as intercultural speakers (Lázár et al., 2007). Skills for ICC indicate one's practical abilities both for acquiring new knowledge by listening, observing, and evaluating, and

for applying knowledge by analyzing, interpreting, and relating in the new situation (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2007).

Critical cultural awareness

This competence is defined by Byram (1997: 53) as the ability “to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own culture and in other cultures and countries”. This component is obviously related to the other *savoirs* in the model. It stipulates the transparent use and analysis of documents and events pertaining to the target culture and relates them ideologically to one’s own frame of reference in an attempt to find an in-between area of compromise between one’s values, beliefs, and frame of reference and the foreign ones.

Design, method and procedure

The present study is a case study that seeks to investigate and assess the Moroccan EFL university students’ ICC. The design, therefore, used here is of qualitative and investigative nature.

As a matter of fact and given the exploratory nature of the study - assessing the ICC of university students - the data are to be collected using the test as an appropriate measurement instrument. However two main data will be drawn from the results. Knowledge/*savoir* as the first part will yield quantitative data, whereas qualitative data will be drawn from the other parts (two and three) dealing with the two types of skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness respectively.

To assess, therefore, the four dimensions of ICC (knowledge/*savoir*, know-how/*savoir faire*, intercultural being/*savoir-être*, and critical cultural awareness/*savoir s’engager*), it is necessary to base the test on the objectives contained in the four competencies constituting ICC. The statistical techniques used to account for the differences and relations of the students’ level of ICC are: means and standard deviations to assess the first dimension, and frequencies, cross-tabulation and chi-square test of independence to assess the remaining dimensions.

Sampling

Convenience sampling technique or ‘Reliance on available subjects’ as it is called by Babbie (2007: 183) is adopted in this study based on the ground that there was a plan before to select from university students (semester six), but due to the recurrent strikes and even the break they created at the end of the school year it was impossible to take them as a sample. Therefore the alternative that was left is the Master Program students of Applied Linguistics (two classes: first year and second year) Communication in context (2nd year) and Business

and Communication (1st year) and the single class of the professional BA degree students. The sample is also purposive on the basis that these respondents have been chosen because they are BA degree students who had already finished a university syllabus where intercultural communication component had a share of a lion. This last kind of sampling is adopted in the sense that the sample of students chosen for this study does constitute a case for in-depth investigation of ICC level. The purpose therefore “is less to generalize to a larger population than is to gain a deeper understanding of types” (Neuman, 2007: 143). Furthermore, the choice of such a sample is made on the premise that this population has studied English for a sufficient time that might allow them to develop an ICC level that may allow them in turn to mediate and communicate effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural communication encounters.

The research instrument

A test has been defined as “a procedure designed to elicit certain behavior from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual” (Carroll 1968: 46 as quoted in Bachman, 1990: 20). From this definition, it follows that a test is a method whereby inferences about certain behavioral features are to be drawn out with a view to exactly know about and identify the individual. Testing as this definition implies, plays a key role. In fact, most foreign language teaching involves some sort of test or examination.

Bachman (1990: 18) puts it succinctly arguing that “The process of measurement is described as a set of steps which, if followed in test development, will provide the basis for both reliable test scores and valid test use”. So, the intercultural test that is adopted in the present study to assess the variable under study (ICC) calls for a specific definition and distinctively presents the objectives contained in each of its dimensions.

Data collection procedure

In the case of the two Applied Linguistics Master Programs, first and second years, the period for data collection was set between 5th and 6th May, 2011. For the two other Master Programs: First Year Master of Business and Communication and First Year Master of Communication in Context, the data were collected between 7th and 8th May of the year 2011. Therefore the main study was conducted six days after the pilot study.

Instructions have been made clear as the research was for academic purpose and the data to be collected are to be used for research ends with stress on the confidentiality of the answers as no names were required. The respondents were made aware that the results and findings of the present study could be shared as soon it is

finished. After the collection of the tests, the respondents were thanked for their participation and contribution. Thus, out of 108 potential respondents, 61 were able to complete the test and 47 returned blank sheets or were absent or even indifferent to the test. Altogether, 61 valid tests were adopted for data analysis.

RESULTS

Introduction

In the methodology section, details of the general research design, research setting, target population, instrument, considerations for research quality including the issues of validity and reliability, data collection and analysis methods have been articulated. Here, this study shall be devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the data collection tool - the intercultural test - and the four statistical techniques used namely: frequency distribution and percentages, means, standard deviations, cross tabulations, and chi-square tests.

It has been attested in the literature background that the understanding of ICC does not only refer to the learner's mere knowledge of facts and figures of the target culture but it does also include different intercultural skills, attitudes and a political education in the form of critical cultural awareness. For these reasons, an intercultural test has been designed to capture the minute aspects making up ICC with a focus on pre-determined objectives translating the different intercultural dimensions and a clear conceptualization of the construct of ICC as is given in Byram's (1997) model. Therefore, this section shall deal with the analysis and discussion of the data obtained from the four sections of the data collection tool used, the knowledge, the attitudes, the skills and the critical cultural awareness.

The intercultural test results

First section: Knowledge component

The intercultural test starts with the knowledge part in conformity with Byram's (1997) model. This part contains sixteen items in number and deals with content knowledge about "social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in the interlocutor's country" (Byram, 1997: 51) combined with both the 'declarative knowledge' (Stefanidou, 2009: 3), which includes the 'general processes of societal and individual interaction' (Byram, 1997: 51) and the 'procedural knowledge' of how to act appropriately and effectively in cross-cultural communication situations (Azhar, 2010: 60).

(A) Objective (a): Historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor

1) The Moroccan-British relations lived a period of

tension during the English occupation of Tangier Bay. For how many years was Tangier occupied?

2) What do you know about the historical Moroccan-British relations?

These two items are meant to assess the historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and the interlocutor's own because the intercultural speaker has to know about events, significant individuals and diverse interpretations of events which have involved both countries and the traces left in the national memory; and about the political and economic factors in the contemporary alliances of each country.

The results show that (96.7%) of the respondents have not been able to answer the first question though it is directly relevant to their culture and history. However, (49.2%) of the same respondents have answered the second question, which is a low score though.

(B) Objective (c): Types of causes of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins

The two items below do in fact translate this objective with a view for the intercultural speaker to know about the conventions of communication and interaction in their own and the foreign cultures, about the unconscious effects of paralinguistic and nonverbal phenomena and about the alternative interpretations of shared concepts, gestures, customs and rituals.

3) When young American or British People introduce their friends to their parents, the friends say (see appendix A for the choices).

4) You are invited by a British friend who is married and has two children. What behavior would you consider culturally appropriate? And why? (see appendix A for the choices).

The results here show that the respondents have a good knowledge about the communication conventions and their unconscious ramifications on the cultural relations between their own country and the countries of others. This can be gleaned through the high percentages scored by the respondents in both questions respectively (90.2% and 77.0%).

(C) Objectives (d) and (e): National memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries

5) What do you know about Stonehenge in Britain?

6) What do you know about the Mayflower Ship now in Boston, USA?

7) What do you know about Volubilis?

8) What do you know about Aid Kebir and when is it celebrated?

The objective of these items revolves around the fact that

the intercultural speaker should know the events and their emblems (myths, cultural products, sites of significance to the collective memory) which are markers of national identity in one's own country as they are portrayed in public institutions and transmitted through processes of socialization, particularly those experienced in schools; and is aware of other perspectives on those events.

The results for this objective illustrate that the score of the two first questions respectively is somewhat low as 70.5% and 80.3% of the respondents did not know the answer; whereas, the score of the following questions (7 through 8) is quite high with 77.0% and 95.1% of the respondents who have given the correct answer.

(D) Objective (f) and (g): The national definitions of geographical space in one's own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries and in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's country

- 9) What do you think the American or the British Governments think about the Moroccan Sahara?
- 10) Great Britain is composed of how many countries?

The aim behind these items is to show how much the intercultural speaker knows about the perceptions of regions and regional identities of landmarks of significance, of markers of internal and external borders and frontiers and how these are perceived by others and how he/she knows about perceptions of space in the other country and their own.

It seems that the knowledge of the respondents of this study in so far as the first question is concerned is expected as 73.8% of them have been able to provide a correct answer to this question; however, the score of the second question shows clearly that the respondents have a poor knowledge of the countries composing Great Britain representing merely half (50.8%) of the total number.

(E) Objective (h): The processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and the interlocutors' country

- 11) What do you know about Harvard University?
- 12) What do you know about the baptizing process in the Christian world?
- 13) What do you know about Alqarawyin University?
- 14) How is a newly born baby given a name in Morocco?

The aim here is to show how much the intercultural speaker knows about education systems, religious institutions, and similar locations where individuals acquire a national identity are introduced to the dominant culture in their society; pass through specific rites marking stages in the life-cycle, in both their own and the other country.

The results presented here reveal the same tendency

as seen in the results found in the items (5 through 8). The scores of questions 11 and 12 are low as 52.5% and 55.7% of the respondents correspondingly have not been able to answer correctly; however, the scores of questions 13 and 14 show an average level in the national history and culture knowledge as 85.2% and 85.2% of the respondents have been able to provide the correct answer.

(F) Objective (i): Social distinctions and their principal markers, in the interlocutor's country

- 15) Cite two famous American dishes?
- 16) What is the name given to the skirt worn by the Scots?

The point here is to illustrate what the intercultural speaker knows about the social distinction dominant in the target countries, for example, those of social class, ethnicity, gender, profession, religion - and how these are marked by visible phenomena such as clothing or food, and invisible phenomena such as language variety - or nonverbal behavior, or modes of socialization and rites of passage.

The results obtained here give us a clear idea about our respondents' knowledge of the social distinctions dominant in the target culture. The scores of the two questions respectively are low giving therefore an evidence of the low level again when it comes to the interlocutor's social distinctive features as 54.1% and 62.3% respectively have not provided the proper answer.

It is apparent from the results obtained and computed in IBM SPSS for Windows version 20.0 that the respondents generally speaking have an average level of ICC when it comes to the intercultural knowledge they should possess ($M=9.11$). The Standard Deviation ($SD=2.58$) is another indicator which shows the variability and spread out of numbers showing a concentration of the data points around and close to the mean value (Figure 1). It is a tight variation with scores limited between 8 and 15 and making (71.8%) out of the whole percentage of respondents. This result implies therefore that students tend to have an average intercultural knowledge of their own and the target culture. However, when we scrutinize the results of both the home and the target memory and culture, the Moroccan EFL students tend to have more or less good scores when the questions revolve around home memory and culture for instance in questions 7, 8, 13 and 14 dealing with Volubilis, Alqarawiyin University, Aid Ikbir and the Islamic baptizing process; the respondents scored high with clear percentages (77.1%, 85.2%, 95.1% and 85.2%) respectively.

Second section: Attitudes component

The intercultural test starts, as already mentioned, with the knowledge part in conformity with Byram's (1997) model. The second part deals with the attitudes or the

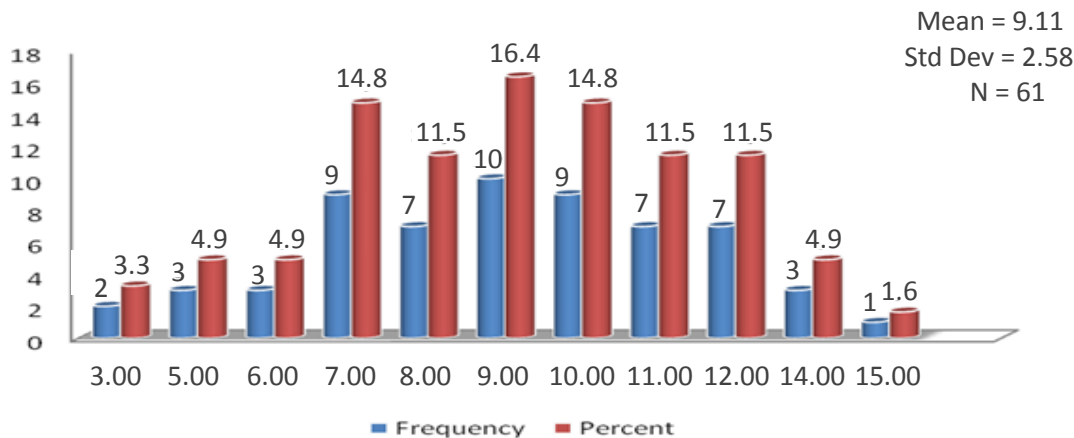


Figure 1. The overall intercultural performance of the respondents in intercultural knowledge.

Table 1. (Q. 17) Our culture is better than both the American and British cultures.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	3	4.9
Equal	50	82.0
Ours is better	8	13.1
Total	61	100.0

‘savoir être’ an intercultural speaker has to have to function appropriately and effectively in a globalised and intercultural world.

This part contains eight items (17 through 24) dealing with the identification of values, evaluation by criteria and finally interacting and mediating between the two world frames either home or target. Attitude is an essential element in the acquisition of knowledge (Deardorff, 2007) and indicates the “curiosity and openness of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others’ meanings, beliefs and behaviors” (Byram, 1997: 34).

(A) Objective (a): Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic of the profitable

The aim here is to illustrate how the intercultural speaker is interested in others’ experience of daily life in contexts not usually presented to outsiders through the media or used to develop a commercial relationship with outsiders; is interested in the daily experiences of a range of social groups within a society and not only those represented in the dominant culture (Table 1).

It is evident from the results presented in the chart that the answer which shows that our culture and the target culture are equal constitutes 82.0% (n=50) of the overall

answers, whereas only 8 respondents for the same question answered that it is our culture that is better constituting thus 13.1%.

That the black and white cultures are equal is an answer that constitutes 68.9% and which 42 of the respondents preferred. However surprisingly, 14 of the respondents opted for the answer that the white culture is better, constituting 23.0% of the overall answers (Table 2).

(B) Objective (b): Interest in discovering other perspectives or interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices

The objective behind these two items is to demonstrate that the intercultural speaker does not assume that familiar phenomena - cultural practices or product common to themselves and the other - are understood in the same way, or that unfamiliar phenomena can only be understood by assimilating them to their own cultural phenomena; and is aware that they need to discover the other person’s understanding of these, and of phenomena in their own culture which are not familiar to the other person.

The results from Table 3 show how the respondents view the ‘other’ culturally conceptualizing about their own

Table 2. (Q. 18) Black American culture is inferior to White American culture.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	3	4.9
Equal	42	68.9
White culture is better	14	23.0
Black culture is better	1	1.6
Others	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

Table 3. (Q. 19) How do both Americans and British people view the Moroccan culture?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	9	14.8
Backward culture	10	16.4
Rich	10	16.4
Valid Appreciated	11	18.0
Different	13	21.3
Other answers	8	13.1
Total	61	100.0

Table 4. (Q. 20) How do both Americans and British people view Ramadan as a religious practice?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	14	23.0
Neutral	5	8.2
Healthy	6	9.8
Hard to fast	7	11.5
Undecided	10	16.4
Weird	7	11.5
Respect it	12	19.7
Total	61	100.0

culture. The majority which constitutes 21.3% has decided that the other considers their culture as simply different showing no cultural attitude; however, 18.0% of them see that their culture is appreciated by the others.

From Table 4, it was observed that 19.7% of the respondents think the others respect Ramadan as a religious practice. Nevertheless, pretty impressive is the percentage of the blank answers (23.0%) that has been given to this item with a notable percentage (16.4%) of those who have not been decisive about the cultural merits of Ramadan.

(C) Objective (c): Willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one’s environment

The results from Table 5 show that 45.9% of the respondents do not consider the Americans and the British people urbane and sophisticated when they compare them to their own people; however, 34.4% do actually view the Americans and the British people’s culture as modern in comparison to their own culture with unnoticeable percentages of the other answers (no

Table 5. (Q. 21) Do you consider both the Americans and British people urbane and sophisticated when you compare them to your own people?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	6	9.8
Neutral	2	3.3
Yes	21	34.4
No	28	45.9
Undecide	4	6.6
Total	61	100.0

Table 6. (Q. 22) Do you wish you would talk the way Americans do?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	1	1.6
Yes	34	55.7
No	26	42.6
Total	61	100.0

Table 7. (Q. 23) Would you wear a Scottish kilt (skirt) if you happen to visit Scotland because you were asked to participate in a national cultural festival there?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	3	4.9
Yes	34	55.7
No	24	39.3
Total	61	100.0

answers, neutral and undecided answers respectively).

From Table 6, it was observed that 55.7% of the respondents have chosen to sound and behave like Americans showing their internal feeling of imitating the others as they see them urbane and sophisticated in the way they look and speak; however, in the previous question, they have the tendency not to view American people sophisticated and urbane when compared to their own. A schizophrenic attitude is displayed on the part of the respondents who reject something at the surface but wish deep down to adopt it.

(D) Objective (e): Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and nonverbal communication and interaction

The aim here is to uncover the idea whether the

intercultural speaker notes and adopts the behaviors specific to a social group in a way in which they and the members of that group consider to be appropriate for an outsider; the intercultural speaker takes into consideration the expectations the others may have about appropriate behavior from foreigners.

The results from Table 7 illustrate that 55.7% of the respondents show their willingness to wear a kilt though it is not part of their culture; an act that symbolizes ethno-relativism and openness on the part of the respondents. However, 39.3% of them see it as a weird practice that has nothing to do with their culture, and even one of the respondents said "I am a man" connecting the wearing of skirt to gender roles in society and how the looks and the roles are perceived within each society, the Moroccan and the Scottish.

Another aspect of tolerance and ethno-relativism on the part of the respondents is shown clearly in this item - smiling and shaking the hands of a Jewish. It was observed that 96.7% of the respondents have agreed to smile in the face of a Jew and shake his/her hands, showing thus both religious and racial tolerance on their part (Table 8).

Third section: Skills component

The third component of Byram's (1997: 52) model of ICC comprises two types of skills. The first type of skills is seen as a competency "to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own". The intercultural speaker thus shall be able to detect conflicting and ethnocentric tendencies and try to appropriately and effectively use them to mediate between the two cultures. The second type which is the discovery and interacting skills is seen as an ability "to acquire knowledge of the culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction". These competences are required "when the intercultural speaker has none or only partial knowledge of the foreign culture and has to establish and negotiate an understanding of a new cultural environment under the constraints of prevalent circumstances" (Stefanidou, 2009: 4).

(A) Skills of interpreting and relating

Objective (a): Identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origin: The aim here is to see whether the intercultural speaker can 'read' a document or event, analyzing its origins/sources, for example, in the media, in political speech or historical writing-and the meanings and value which arise from a national or other ethnocentric perspective (stereotypes, historical connotation in texts) and which are presupposed and implicit, leading to conclusions which can be challenged from a different perspective.

From Table 9, the value of 39.3% is a clear proof that

Table 8. (Q. 24) Reaction towards the Jewish friend.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	1	1.6
Smile and shake hands	59	96.7
Smile and not shake hands	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

Table 9. (Q. 25) Muslims are actually not tolerant.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	6	9.8
Neutral	1	1.6
He's wrong	26	42.6
He's wrong but	24	39.3
He's right	2	3.3
He's right but	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

Table 10. (Q. 26) How would you treat a racist friend?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	4	6.6
Neutral	1	1.6
Be a racist	6	9.8
Respect and tolerate	12	19.7
Respect and explain	38	62.3
Total	61	100.0

Table 11. (Q. 27) The inappropriate behavior of a foreign colleague.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	6	9.8
Tolerate him	33	54.1
Ask and complain	22	36.1
Total	61	100.0

the respondents are religiously tolerant and are ready to accept and explain their point of view to the others and show them that it is wrong to stigmatize other religions; however, the value of 42.6% is alarming in so far as the respondents' answers seem to doom the speaker who is

obviously intolerant when they are to show their tolerance as a strategy to remedy the state of intolerance manifested by the speaker.

As seen from Table 10, the higher percentage (62.3%) of the respondents in their answer to this question is another additional proof that the respondents are tolerant and ready, as already said, to respect and even to explain the reason of conflict, uproot its source and even suggest solutions to positively influence the racist friend's future behavior.

Objective (b): Identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present: The objective here is to demonstrate how the intercultural speaker can identify uses of misunderstanding (for example, use of concepts apparently similar but with different meanings or connotations use of genre in inappropriate situations; introduction of topics inappropriate to a context, etc) and dysfunctions (for example, unconscious response to unfamiliar non-verbal behavior, proxemics and paralanguage phenomena, over-generalization from examples, mistaken assumptions about representativeness of views expressed); and can explain the errors and their causes by reference to knowledge of each culture involved.

The results from Table 11 show that 54.1% consolidates and backs up clearly the previous results from items 1 and 2. The respondents demonstrate their open-mindedness by not reacting in a racist way. The inappropriate behavior on the part of the foreigner does not in any case push the respondents to react back inappropriately, a proof of their tolerance, acceptance and non-judgmental attitude.

The respondents to this item do show plainly with a percentage of 68.9% that they are flexible and liable to change their behavior when criticized by a foreigner. Such a behavior therefore shows undoubtedly the awareness of the respondents to the particularities of the intercultural context where they work as they are to be flexible to change their behavior when in a cross-cultural communication situation (Table 12).

Objective (c): Mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena: The aim here is to give an idea about how the intercultural speaker can use their explanations of sources of misunderstanding and dysfunction to help interlocutors overcome conflicting perspectives; can explain the perspective of each and the origins of those perspectives in terms accessible to the other; can help interlocutors to identify common ground and unresolvable differences.

From Table 13, the results of this item show evidently the respondents' readiness to admit that it is possible to accept that they are different in comparison to other cultures in so far as chronemics are concerned, and the percentage speaks for itself (77.0%). The results shown in Table 14 do back up the previously presented

Table 12. (Q. 28) Considering changing one's behavior after having been criticized.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	4	6.6
Neutral	1	1.6
Consider changing my behavior	42	68.9
React differently	14	23.0
Total	61	100.0

Table 13. (Q. 29) Problem of chronemics cross-culturally.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	7	11.5
Neutral	1	1.6
Part of our culture	47	77.0
Do not care	5	8.2
Not part of our culture	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

Table 14. (Q. 30) Solving a religious misunderstanding.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	12	19.7
Better not to interfere	3	4.9
Clarify the misunderstanding	43	70.5
Back up the Indian	3	4.9
Total	61	100.0

results. The results thus show how and to what extent the respondents are ready to mediate between religions and cultures with a high and obvious percentage (70.5%). The act of clarification of the misunderstanding is a proof of ethnorelativism on the part of the respondents.

(B) Skills of discovery and interaction:

Objective (a): Elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena: The aim here is to give evidence for the fact that the intercultural speaker can use a range of questioning techniques to elicit from informants the allusions, connotations and presuppositions of a document or event and their origins, sources, and can develop and test generalizations about their shared meanings and values (by using them to interpret another document; by questioning another informant; by

Table 15. (Q. 31) Discovering how the others view your culture.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	15	24.6
Asking them directly	29	47.5
Using the internet and media	3	4.9
Reading books	2	3.3
Others	12	19.7
Total	61	100.0

Table 16. (Q. 32) Asking about the other's identity.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	32	52.5
Asking about his/her origin	14	23.0
Asking about race	2	3.3
Asking about culture	8	13.1
Others	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

consulting appropriate literature) and establish links and relationships of hierarchy, of cause and effect, of conditions and consequence, etc.)

The results from Table 15 show the way the respondents prefer to use to discover how the others view their culture. About 47.5% of them therefore have chosen to ask directly the others preferring face-to-face method to gather information about their culture.

Objective (b): Identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations: The point here is to make clear the idea that the intercultural speaker can 'read' a document or event for the implicit references to shared meanings and values (of national memory, of concepts of space, of social distinction, etc.) in particular to the culture of his/her interlocutor, or of international currency (arising for example from the dominance of western satellite television). In the latter case, the IS can identify or elicit different interpretations and connotations and establish relationships of similarity and difference between them. It is clear from Table 16 that 52.5% have no idea about how to ask others about the significance of their identity as related to their place of origin (America in this case). However, 23.0% of them have chosen to ask about identity by connecting it to geographical origin.

Objective (c): Identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances: The aim of this item is to clearly show

Table 17. (Q. 33) The couscous case.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	8	13.1
Stop him and ask him to wash	19	31.1
Explain to him later	14	23.0
Explain without hurting him	18	29.5
Don't mind	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

Table 18. (Q. 34) What is knowledge, skills, and attitudes?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	14	23.0
Knowledge	14	23.0
Skills	2	3.3
Attitudes	1	1.6
Knowledge and skill	13	21.3
Knowledge and attitudes	6	9.8
All	11	18.0
Total	61	100.0

how an intercultural speaker can use his/her knowledge of conventions of verbal and non-verbal interaction (of conversational structures; of formal communication such as presentations; of written correspondence; of business meetings; of informal gatherings, etc) to establish agreed procedures on specific occasions, which may be a combination of conventions from the different cultural systems present in the interaction.

The results from Table 17 do show that 31.1% of the respondents have opted to stop the guest while eating. This group has chosen to stop the guest and ask them to wash their hands because it is a culturally related table manner that should be observed as it relates to their being Moroccans and Muslims. However, the second group (29.5%) has opted for the explanation of the particularities of that table manner (washing hands before eating couscous) to the guest insisting though on the tactful way of doing it.

Objective (d): Use in real time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture, taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other: The objective here is to illustrate how the intercultural speaker is able to estimate

Table 19. (Q. 35) Which means do you think best gives you a true image of the American-Moroccan relations quality of relationships?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
NA	15	24.6
Reference books	29	47.5
Newspapers	1	1.6
History books	11	18.0
Experts	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

his/her degree of proximity to the language and culture of his/her interlocutor (closely related cultures; cultures with little or no contact or little or no shared experience of international phenomena; cultures sharing the 'same' language; cultures with unrelated languages) and to draw accordingly on skills of interpreting, discovering, relating different assumptions and presuppositions or connotations in order to ensure understanding and avoid dysfunction.

From Table 18, it was observed that 23.0% of the respondents have demonstrated that they think they need only knowledge of the target culture to function in the host countries and be able to mediate in cross-cultural communication situations. However, surprisingly enough is the percentage (23.0%) of the undecided. They have no idea whatsoever that they are to be equipped with to represent their countries abroad.

Objective (e): Identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society: The objective is to discover how the intercultural speaker can use sources (for example, reference books, newspaper, histories, experts, lay informants) to understand both contemporary and historical political economic and social relationships between cultures and societies and analyze the different interpretations involved.

The results from Table 19 show clearly that the majority of the respondents (47.5%) do evaluate the Moroccan American relations by using reference books. A fact that testifies to the desire of these respondents to know about the others' culture, however, the means used is not enough.

Fourth section: The critical cultural awareness

This section shall be dealing with the cross tabulation of the main relevant categorical variables to hypothesis-test of their associations with a view to reveal students' level of ICC concerning the critical cultural awareness component. It is worth noting here that Objective (a) which is to identify and interpret explicit and implicit

Table 20. Crosstab of Q (25) Interfaith dialog and Q (26) A racist friend.

Variable	Interfaith dialog				Total		
	NA	Neutral	He's wrong and explain	He's right and explain			
NA	Count	4	0	0	0	4	
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Neutral	Count	1	0	0	0	1	
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
A racist friend	Be a racist	Count	1	1	2	2	6
	% within A racist friend	16.7%	16.7%	49.10%	16.7%	100.0%	
Respect and tolerate	Count	0	0	9	3	12	
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	82.14%	16.6%	100.0%	
Respect and explain	Count	0	0	37	1	38	
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	96.13%	2.6%	100.0%	
Total	Count	6	1	48	6	61	
	% within A racist friend	9.8%	1.6%	82.9%	6.6%	100.0%	

values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures overlaps with the skills of interacting and discovery.

Similarly, the other two objectives: Objective (b) (make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refer socio-culturally to an explicit perspective and criteria) and Objective (c) (Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes) are respectively connected to the skills of interpreting and interacting which adds an evaluative dimension to the components of the ICC as seen through the eyes of Byram's (1997) model. Therefore the analysis of the components included in this section is done only to detect the ideological inclination of the respondents as well as their conscious engagement with others on the ground of the socio-cultural perspectives.

(A) Objective (a): identify and interpret explicit and implicit values in documents and events in one's own culture and in other cultures

The objective here is to show how the intercultural speaker can use a range of analytical approaches to place a document or event in context (of origin and sources, time, place, other documents or events) and to demonstrate the ideology involved.

Table 20 shows that 96.13% of the respondents demonstrate their interculturality by being ready to respect and tolerate others' racist behavior and are also

liable not to accept wrong statements about their religion and ready to explain any misconceptions that may crop up as a result of stereotypes or culturally perceived ideas about them and their culture. This could be seen as a sign of cultural openness that proves the extent to which the respondents can accept others even in situations where their world frames are condemned by other who are culturally different from them. The chi-square test illustrates that the relationship between the two variables is significant as it is shown through the significance value ($X^2 = 68.95$; $df = 29$; $p = 0.00$).

(B) Objective (b): Make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refer socio-culturally to an explicit perspective and criteria

The aim here is see whether the intercultural speaker is aware of his/her own ideological perspectives and values ('human rights', socialist, liberal Moslem, Christian, etc.) and evaluates documents or events with explicit reference to them.

As Table 21 indicates, 75.0% of the respondents who are likely to consider changing their behavior when criticized by a boss from another culture different from theirs are predisposed to respect and tolerate the other's racist behavior. The chi-square test shows clearly that the relationship between the two variables is significant on the light of the significance value ($X^2 = 39.12$; $df = 12$; $p = 0.00$). It could be concluded therefore that the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between the two variables is rejected and as a result there is dependence between the two variables.

Table 21. Crosstab of Q (26) Interfaith dialog and Q (28) A superior criticized you.

Variable	A superior criticised you				Total	
	NA	Neutral	Consider changing my behavior	React differently		
NA	Count	3	0	1	0	4
	% within A racist friend	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Neutral	Count	0	0	0	1	1
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
A racist Friend	Count	0	0	6	0	6
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Respect and Tolerate	Count	0	0	9	3	12
	% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Respect and Explain	Count	1	1	26	10	38
	% within A racist friend	2.6%	2.6%	68.4%	26.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	4	1	42	14	61
	% within A racist friend	6.6%	1.6%	68.9%	23.0%	100.0%

(C) Objective (c): Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one’s knowledge, skills and attitudes

The objective is to give an idea about whether the intercultural speaker is aware of potential conflict between his/her own and other ideologies and is able to establish common criteria of evaluation of documents or events. This is not possible because of incompatibilities in belief and value systems; the intercultural speaker is able to negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of differences.

Table 22 indicates that 83.3% of the respondents who are likely to consider changing their behavior if criticized by a foreign superior accept to recognize the difference in chronemics between cultures as an indicator of their awareness of the nonverbal aspects of intercultural communication patterns characterizing their own culture. This implies that these respondents can be viewed as intercultural speakers who hold back their cultural judgments and disbeliefs and show openness and flexibility in accepting cultural differences. The chi-square test reveals that the relationship between the two variables is significant. That is to say that the statistical hypothesis is rejected as there is dependence between the two variables ($X^2 = 38.00$; $df = 12$; $p = 0.00$).

As Table 23 indicates, 78.9% of the respondents who are predisposed to interculturally mediate in cross-cultural situations and clarify the source of the misunderstanding are also willing to respect and tolerate racism from foreigners. The chi-square test shows clearly

that the relationship between the two variables is significant on the light of the significance value ($X^2 = 25.44$; $df = 12$; $p = 0.01$). It could be concluded therefore that the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between the two variables is rejected and as a result there is dependence between the two variables.

It is evident from Table 24 that 90.9% of the respondents claim that when in intercultural situations, one should be equipped with all the necessary tools like intercultural knowledge, positive attitudes, different relating, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness for better intercultural mediation. They have shown their tolerance when they have opted for the clarification of the intercultural misunderstanding rather than taking sides. The relationship between the two variables is significant based on the chi-square test value ($X^2 = 34.14$; $df = 18$; $p = 0.12$). It could be concluded therefore there is dependence between the two variables as the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between the two variables is rejected.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

Here, discussion and interpretations of this study’s results are given. This task shall be undertaken in the light of the research questions and the review of the literature. The four research questions that this study seeks to find an answer to are:

- (1) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough knowledge/savoir of EFL culture that enables them to behave adequately and in a flexible way when

Table 22. Crosstab of Q (28) A superior criticized you and Q (30) Explain chronemics.

Variable			Explain chronemics					Total
			NA	Neutral	Part of our culture	Do not care	Not part of our culture	
A superior criticised you	NA	Count	4	0	0	0	0	4
		% within A superior criticised you	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	0	0	1	0	0	1
		% within A superior criticised you	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Consider changing my behavior	Count	3	1	35	2	1	42
		% within A superior criticised you	7.1%	2.4%	83.3%	4.8%	2.4%	100.0%
	React differently	Count	0	0	11	3	0	14
		% within A superior criticised you	0.0%	0.0%	78.6%	21.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	7	1	47	5	1	61	

Table 23. Crosstab of Q (26) A racist friend and Q (30) Mediation in cross-cultural encounters.

Variable			Mediation				Total
			NA	Better not to interfere	Clarify the misunderstanding	Back up the Indian	
A racist friend	NA	Count	4	0	0	0	4
		% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Neutral	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		% within A racist friend	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Be a racist	Count	1	1	4	0	6
		% within A racist friend	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	Respect and tolerate	Count	1	1	9	1	12
		% within A racist friend	8.3%	8.3%	75.0%	8.3%	100.0%
	Respect and explain	Count	5	1	30	2	38
		% within A racist friend	13.2%	2.6%	78.9%	5.3%	100.0%
	Total	Count	12	3	43	3	61
		% within A racist friend	19.7%	4.9%	70.5%	4.9%	100.0%

confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations representative of the foreign culture?

(2) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough know-how/savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire of EFL culture that enables them to use efficiently their intercultural communicative competence as intercultural speakers?

(3) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough intercultural being/savoir-être of EFL culture that enables them to be culturally aware of the target culture minute differences and stabilize their self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation?

(4) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have

enough critical cultural awareness/savoir s'engager to critically evaluate, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products, of their own and of other cultures?

(1) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough knowledge/savoir of EFL culture that enables them to behave adequately and in a flexible way when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations representative of the foreign culture?

The results from questions (1 through question 16) show that the Moroccan EFL university students' level at ICC is

Table 24. Crosstab of Q (30) Mediation in cross-cultural and Q (34) Diplomatic mediation.

Variable	Mediation				Total	
	NA	Better not to interfere	Clarify The misunderstanding	Back up the Indian		
NA	Count	7	1	6	0	14
	% within Diplomatic group	50.0%	7.1%	42.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Knowledge	Count	2	1	10	1	14
	% within Diplomatic group	14.3%	7.1%	71.4%	7.1%	100.0%
Skills	Count	0	1	1	0	2
	% within Diplomatic group	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Diplomatic Mediation Attitudes	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	% within Diplomatic group	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Knowledge and skill	Count	2	0	11	0	13
	% within Diplomatic group	15.4%	0.0%	84.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Knowledge and attitude	Count	0	0	4	2	6
	% within Diplomatic group	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
All	Count	1	0	10	0	11
	% within Diplomatic group	9.1%	0.0%	90.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	12	3	43	3	61
	% within Diplomatic group	19.7%	4.9%	70.5%	4.9%	100.0%

average with a tight spread around the mean (M=9.11) which is shown through the computed low standard deviation (SD=2.58). That is to say, the respondents have shown that they do possess the average of the intercultural knowledge that an intercultural speaker has to have if they are to act appropriately and effectively in cross-cultural communication encounters. However, it should be stressed here that the Moroccan EFL students tend to have more or less good scores when it comes to the home memory and culture for instance in items (7, 8, 13 and 14) dealing with Volubilis, Alqarawiyyin University, Aid Ikbir and the Islamic baptizing process. The respondents scored high with clear percentages of 77.1%, 85.2%, 95.1% and 85.2% respectively.

The different answers included here have had the objectives of assessing the deep learning of the respondents rather than the shallow learning which the respondents have shown through different reasons after each of the questions administered. They have shown an ability to compare, regroup, infer, appreciate, synthesize and judge information found in texts as opposed to only memorize cultural facts about the target and home cultures.

In a nutshell then, it could be concluded that the first hypothesis that states that the Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough knowledge/savoir of EFL

culture that enables them to handle effectively problems that happen in cross-cultural situations is disconfirmed in the light of the first section of the findings as the respondents turned out to be more or less intercultural competent in terms of factual knowledge about their home memory and culture, and the other's culture and history, minimal as it appears though.

(2) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough know-how/savoir comprendre (the skill of interpreting and relating), savoir apprendre/faire (discovery and interacting skill) of EFL culture that enables them to use efficiently their intercultural communicative competence as intercultural speakers?

It seems clear through Tables (9 through 20) and the corresponding questions (25 through 35) that the respondents have shown clear signs of intercultural skills. They have been able to show that they could respect and tolerate racist acts while in intercultural encounters as well as provide sound explanations for their flexible reaction in an attempt to prove the interlocutor wrong, and put them in a position to reconsider their intolerant attitude.

Nevertheless, the respondents have shown skills that

could be qualified as negative in the sense that they have reacted unfavorably towards the foreigners who qualified Muslims as intolerant people with an abrupt answer that he/she is absolutely wrong without taking the trouble to explain to him/her.

The respondents have also shown that they are ready to consider changing their behavior whenever conflicts crop up; a sign of their ethnorelativism and competence to understand the other's world frame. Additionally, the respondents have been able to show that they have the skill to illustrate, admit and explain plainly to others from different cultures the problem of chronemics in our culture (77.0%) in an attempt to avoid misunderstanding and cultural conflict. This has been apparent also in their skill to clarify the cross-cultural misunderstanding that happened between the Christian teacher and the Muslim Indian (70.5%) and not take the side of the latter though he is a Muslim.

The competence to discover and interact interculturally has been shown in the answers to questions (31 through 35) through the diverse ways of asking others from different cultures about the home culture (respondents' home culture) as well as through proving a plethora of ways to evaluate their country's relation and other foreign countries (USA as an instance) revealing the respondents' desire to discover other cultures directly from the source (the natives). This has been again backed up by the various ways of asking others about their identity (52.5%).

Further, the respondents have opted for an option that is open to ideological interpretations (answers to question 34). They have chosen to stop their foreign guest in the middle of the meal and ask them to wash their hands as it is a Moroccan table manner (to eat with clean hands). However, it could be seen as an act of disrespect for the guest to be stopped, go and wash his/her hands.

Besides, they think that they needed only knowledge (23.0%) to be purposefully and interculturally efficient while in cross-cultural communication encounters; a context in which the respondents have illustrated that they have not been tolerant and flexible enough (31.1%) to treat the foreigner who happened to start eating one of their historical and cultural dishes (couscous) as they have opted to stop him and ask him to go and wash his/her hands while in the middle of enjoying his/her meal.

Generally speaking, the respondents have shown that the intercultural speakers do possess the necessary skills and competencies that enable them to detect conflicting and ethnocentric tendencies and try to appropriately and effectively use them to mediate between the two cultures/world frames. To conclude then, the hypothesis that says that The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough know-how/savoir-faire of EFL culture that enables them to be aware of the differences between their 'home' culture and the target culture is disconfirmed on the basis of the already given findings.

(3) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough intercultural being/savoir-être (attitudes) of EFL culture that enables them to be culturally aware of the target culture minute differences and stabilize their self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation?

The results from Tables (2 through 9) covering question 17 through question 24 deal with the intercultural attitudes (curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own) the respondents have to possess if they want to be successful intercultural speakers; that is to find a *modus vivendi* satisfactory to themselves and their interlocutors. They view all cultures as equal with a clear suspension of disbelief about the other cultures and beliefs about their own showing thus a willingness to take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality and mutual respect.

The respondents have also shown interest in discovering other perspectives or interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in their own cultural practices. The discovery of others' opinions about their culture is made clear through their judgment that the others see their culture as no more than different (21.3%) and that they respect Ramadan as a religious practice peculiar to Muslims as well as through their act of smiling and shaking the hands of a Jewish friend (96.7%). This clearly shows an eagerness not to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in the others' environment with a view to suspend disbelief about one's own culture and that of others.

Nevertheless, the respondents seem to entertain a schizophrenic attitude when it comes to their view towards Americans as urbane and sophisticated whom they do not see as cultured and refined (45.9%), but they deep down want to sound like them (55.7%) with even an unusual readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of non-verbal communication and interaction shown through their willingness to wear a Scottish kilt (55.7%).

Briefly then, the respondents generally have shown that they possess positive attitudes that enable them to be culturally aware of the target culture minute differences and stabilize their self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation disconfirming thus the third hypothesis which stipulates that The Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough intercultural being/savoir-être (attitudes) of EFL culture that enables them to stabilize their self identities when in cross-cultural situations.

(4) Do the Moroccan EFL university students have enough critical cultural awareness/savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness) to critically evaluate, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products of other cultures?

It is worth pointing out here that the objectives of this

dimension overlap with the objectives of the third dimension that concerns itself with the intercultural skills of interpreting, relating, interaction and discovery. Therefore, the respondents have shown an ability to evaluate, interpret and criticize the other perceived perspective and even take action. It has been clear through the perception of cultural differences and awareness that 96.13% are able to evaluate others' racist behavior and are ready to respect and tolerate the act. Furthermore, they have demonstrated that they can criticize that very act by not accepting wrong statements about their religion and by being ready to explain any mistaken beliefs that may be outcomes of stereotypes or culturally perceived ideas about them and their culture. This could be seen as a sign of cultural openness that proves the extent to which the respondents can accept others even in situations where their world frames are condemned by others who are culturally different from them.

It was observed that 83.3% of the respondents have shown a flexibility to accept criticism from foreign superiors and acceptance to admit that they belong to a culture that is poles apart from the British or the American cultures in so far as chromemics are concerned. It is concluded here then that the respondents seem to be capable of detecting the intercultural differences between their own and the target cultures as far as the nonverbal intercultural communication aspects are concerned. It is evident also in the high percentages (78.9% and 90.9%) of the respondents who think that if they are to be predisposed to interculturally mediate in cross-cultural situations and elucidate the source of the intercultural misunderstanding rather than taking sides, they need to be equipped with all the necessary tools like intercultural knowledge, positive attitudes, different relating, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness for better intercultural mediation.

The evaluative dimension added to the other parts of the ICC model is revealed through the respondents' answers perspectives in the case of treating the behavior of the foreign guest (31.1%) they have shown their ideological inclination as well as their conscious engagement with others when volunteering to culturally mediate between the Christian teacher and the Muslim Indian and not for instance back up the Indian on blind religious grounds (70.5%). Thus, the hypothesis that stipulates that the Moroccan EFL university students do not have enough critical cultural awareness/savoir s'engager to evaluate, to interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in their own culture and in other cultures is disconfirmed on the basis of the already mentioned results.

In brief then, the respondents have demonstrated the ability to interact and mediate purposefully in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where and when necessary with a degree of acceptance

of others by drawing upon their knowledge, skills and attitudes and critical cultural awareness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, it has been suggested that the incorporation of an intercultural communicative course has been obviously proven to be necessary. An intercultural education that is liable to expose students to the target culture and de-centre them with a view to make them mindful intercultural speakers who are able to interact successfully with the target culture is a prerequisite.

The university course has to aim at developing a greater awareness and a broader knowledge about the target culture; acquiring a command of the etiquette of the target culture, understanding differences between the target culture and the student's culture; and understanding the values of the target culture.

Avoiding nurturing stereotypes and prejudices is another particularly relevant aim of foreign language learning that should particularly be stressed upon. Learners are supposed to be culturally ready to put aside their own cultural assumptions and beliefs and be prepared to negotiate and respect other ways of behaving and thinking without narrow-mindedness or bigotry. It is strongly believed that foreign language teaching can perpetuate students' prejudices or neglect of foreign culture and it is the language teachers' responsibility to promote positive rather than negative attitudes towards all other cultures and their people.

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APPENDIX A: THE INTERCULTURAL TEST

This test is designed for research purposes. So your cooperation will be of great help. Please answer all the questions contained in the test. Thank you for your cooperation.

Section (I)

1. (a) The Moroccan-British relations lived a period of tensions during the English occupation of Tangiers Bay. For how many years has Tangiers been occupied?

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.....

2. (a) What do you know about the historical Moroccan-British relations?

.....
.....

..... (c) When young American or British People introduce their friends to their parents, the friends say: (Please choose one and justify it?)

- Say hello and bow
- Kiss the hand and head of one of the parents
- Say nice to meet you and shake hands

.....
.....

3. (c) You are invited by a British friend who is married and has two children. What behavior would you consider culturally appropriate? And why? (Please choose one and justify it?)

- Go alone
- Bring your wife and children with you
- Bring a guest who has just come to visit you

..... (d & e) What do you know about Stonehenge in Britain?

.....

..... (d & e) What do you know about the Mayflower Ship now in Boston, USA?

.....
.....

4. (d & e) What do you know about Volubilis?

.....
.....

5. (d & e) What do you know about Aid Kebir and when is it celebrated?

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.....

6. (f & g) If you happen to ask an American or a British about the Moroccan Sahara? What would be his/her answer?

.....
.....

7. (f & g) Great Britain is composed of how many countries?

Appendix A. Cont'd

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8. (h) What do you know about Harvard University?
.....

..... (h) What do you know about the
baptizing process in the Christian world?
.....

.....
9. (h) What do you know about Alqarawyin University?
.....

.....
(h) How is a newly born baby given a name in Morocco (Please describe briefly the process)?
.....

..... (i) Cite two famous American
dishes?
.....

10. (i) What is the name given to the skirt worn by the Scots?
.....

Section (II)

11. (a) "Our culture is better than both the American and British cultures". Comment briefly on the following statement.
.....
.....

12. (a) "Black American culture is inferior to the White American culture". Comment briefly on the following statement.
.....
.....

13. (b) How do both Americans and British people view the Moroccan culture?
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.....

14. (b) How do both Americans and British people view Ramadan as a religious practice?
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15. (c) Do you consider both the Americans and British people urbane and sophisticated when you compare them to your own people? Why?
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Appendix A. Cont'd

16. (c) Do you wish you would talk the way Americans do? Why?

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17. (e) Would you wear a Scottish kilt (skirt) if you happen to visit Scotland because you were asked to participate in a national cultural festival there?

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18. (e) You were invited by an American friend, but when you got there he introduced you to his Jewish friend. How would you react? And why? Please choose only one answer?

- Smile and shake hands
- Smile and not shake hands
- Not smile and not shake hands

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Section (III)

Part I:

19. (a) In a conference about interfaith dialog (dialog between religions) a guest said "Muslims are actually not tolerant" Comment on this statement.

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20. (a) You made a friend through the internet, and you happen to invite him/her to your house, but to your surprise he/she turns out to be racist towards your culture. How would you treat him/her?

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21. (b) A foreign colleague behaved inappropriately towards you. How would you react back? And Why? Please choose only one answer?

- Tolerate his/her act
- Ask why and complain
- Insult him/her

.....
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.....

Appendix A. Cont'd

22. (b) You work for an international company and a superior from another culture criticized your work? Do you consider changing your behavior or react differently? Please explain?

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23. (c) You happen to have an American as a teacher, but the latter had a hard time grasping the recurrent behavior of your classmates coming always late. How would you explain to him/her?

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24. (c) You are studying in a culturally mixed class, and one day a Muslim Indian had a religious misunderstanding with his Christian English teacher. How do you mediate? Explain?

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.....

Part II

25. (a) If ever you want to know about how the others think about your culture, how would you proceed in your quest?

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26. (b) How would you ask an American about how and to what extent they feel their identity is related to their place of origin?

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27. (c) You invited a British friend for lunch on a couscous dish. The man started to eat with hands like any Moroccan, but you discovered that he had not washed his hands. How would you tell him?

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28. (d) You were in charge of a diplomatic group to represent Morocco in USA. What knowledge, skills, and attitudes you and your group are supposed to have? (Please, in Brief?)

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