

Investigating Teachers' Beliefs and Practices of Integrating the Intercultural Approach in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

التحقيق في معتقدات الأساتذة وممارساتهم بشأن دمج النهج متعدد الثقافات في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية

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Abstract:

This papers aims at investigating the perceptions and practices of teachers at the department of English language at Setif 2 University regarding the intercultural approach to foreign language learning. 30 teachers participated through a questionnaire. The outcome reveals that however important integration of intercultural approach and intercultural communicative competence are to foreign language instruction, as well intercultural communicative competence is undeniably an important competence, teachers' practices in class do not display this. Teaching rarely targets source culture explicitly, with little reference to home culture, as well as a total absence of integration of culture into language skills teaching. Results also unveil small focus on learners' intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to give more emphasis to intercultural approach integration in their classrooms

Keywords: Intercultural approach, intercultural communicative competence, teachers, perceptions, practices.

المخلص :

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى دراسة تصورات وممارسات الاساتذة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة سطيف 2 فيما يتعلق بالنهج المتعدد الثقافات لتعلم اللغة الأجنبية. شارك 30 معلماً من خلال استبيان. أشارت النتائج إلى أنه على الرغم من معتقدات المعلمين بأن نهج المقاربة بين الثقافات مهم لتدريس اللغة الأجنبية، وأن الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات هي بلا شك كفاءة مهمة، فإن ممارساتهم فيما يتعلق بدمج المقاربة بين الثقافات لم تعكس المبدأ الأساسي للثقافات التعليم. نادراً ما يتم تدريس ثقافة الهدف بشكل صريح، وقليل من الإشارة إلى الثقافة الام، بالإضافة الى غياب دمج تدريس الثقافة في تدريس مهارات اللغة، والتركيز البسيط على الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات للطلبة. يتم تشجيع الاساتذة على التركيز بشكل أكبر على نهج المقاربة بين الثقافات في فصولهم الدراسية، حيث يُعتقد أنه يوفر بيئة أفضل لتعلم اللغة الأجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نهج المقاربة بين الثقافات، الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، الاساتذة، التصورات، الممارسات.

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Introduction:

During the past few years, teaching English as a foreign language (FL) has shifted interest from linguistic grammatical competences to communicative and intercultural skills. Unfortunately though, and despite the fact that in educational research, it has already been established that language and culture are inseparable; and that the teaching of language will inevitably lead to the teaching of culture as well, practices in teaching English as FL has somehow ignored this fact and still concentrate on a skill building, linguistic competence. Language is divorced from its cultural context and intercultural teaching occurs separately from language instruction; a situation that calls for a need to a reflection on how teachers at the department of English at Setif 2 university perceive the intercultural approach; the importance of its integration in the foreign language classroom; in addition to investigating what are their practices with regards to the integration of the intercultural approach in their teachings.

2. Literature review:

2.1. Language and Culture

It has long been recognized by linguists and anthropologists that the linguistic forms and uses of a given language mirror the social context where the language is spoken (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 1997). According to Kramersch (1993, p. 3), language is viewed as "a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value"

Kramersch defined culture from two different perspectives : the first definition comes from the humanities' perspective as " it focuses on the way a social group represents itself and others through its materials' productions , be they works of art , literature , social institutions or artefacts of everyday life; and the mechanism for their production and preservation through history" (ibid, p.3). Looked at from a social sciences perspective, culture is defined as "attitudes and beliefs, way of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of that community" (ibid, p.4). This latter is strongly related to the definition of Brislin who sees that culture " refers to widely shared ideas, values, assumptions about life , and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as "right" and "correct" by people (Brislin, 1990,p.11)

One of the main concerns of today's FL research revolves around the kind of relation that governs language and culture, and with what perceptions FL instructors hold concerning culture integration. The integration of the target culture (TC) in teaching English as FL has been a subject of investigation for many decades. Linguistics scholars have argued that cultural competence is as important as the linguistic competence especially for FL learners (Brown, 1987; Byram, 1991; Kramersch, 1993). Moreover, what seems to be trendy in the research area nowadays is whether they possess the appropriate techniques and strategies to a better TC integration. Kitao clarifies this idea by putting forward that "foreign language teachers recognize the necessity of teaching culture. However they were not adequately trained to do so."(ibid, 2000, p. 13) Hence, instructors are required to be aware of the importance of the culturally integrated classrooms and therefore employ appropriate, useful and beneficial techniques and strategies to present cultural content in their syllabi.

Furthermore, the aim of language teaching is not only the acquisition of the linguistic competence but also the acquisition of the communicative competence (CC), which was first brought together by Hymes (1972). It refers to the ability to use the linguistic system in an effective and appropriate way respecting the socio-cultural aspects of the target language. He aimed at developing learner's capacity to use

language effectively in real life situations; this is why he considered the socio-cultural aspects as a component of CC.

Understanding the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning any language other than the mother tongue. Kramsch (1998, p.3), states the fact that “language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality”; this clearly shows that language and culture are “bound together”. Language is strongly related to culture, to the point that Kim (2003, p.1) stated that “without culture, language cannot exist”.

For Allwright and Bailey (1991), language teachers are culture teachers as leaning a new language entails the learning of its culture. It can be understood, that the instruction of a new language necessitates the learning of its culture too. Risager (2006) explores the correlation between culture and language from three different perspectives. First, the sociological perspective states that language and culture can be separated since “it is possible for a language to express or to create” (ibid, p 89). Second, the psychological perspective perceives culture and language as two aspects that cannot be separated from each other because “an individual carries all the linguistic and cultural experience within oneself, (ibid, 2006, p 90), and the third which is the linguistic perspective that views the strength of the relationship between culture and language while in the practice of linguistics, language is always analyzed outside of its cultural context”

Hence, culture is regarded as an important component of foreign language teaching. The objective of teaching culture in EFL classrooms should be cultivating intercultural skills of learners, rather than promoting the superiority of the target culture over the native one. The foreign culture should provide the mirror to the learners in which one’s own reflected culture can be seen. Culture learning should be a conscious, purposeful process in which the tacit is made explicit. Teaching culture is currently being understood as an “aspect of education values” (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p 4); through stimulating critical thinking and developing tolerance towards cultural differences, in accordance with the principles of the intercultural approach to foreign language teaching. According to Byram (1997), learning the target culture can be done through a comparative approach where learners are driven to be aware of their native culture; and of the contrasts it holds with the target one.

The fact that language and culture are inseparable emphasizes the importance of teaching the FL along within its culture. In this context, Brown (1994, p. 164) states that “... a language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language.”. Since language and culture cannot be taught separately, incorporating culture in the English FL classroom is crucial.

In the same vein, Thomas (1997) says that it is pretended that for a proper acquisition or study of English, learners must assimilate the English culture even if it is different or opposite to their culture. That is to say knowing about the foreign culture helps learners overcome the difficulties of language and cultural learning, thus learning the language properly. Moreover, Kramsch (1993) states that for comprehending the target or foreign culture, learners should have it along with their own one; in other words, learning their own culture along with the foreign one improves learners’ knowledge of the foreign culture, and allows them to figure out the similarities and differences they happen to display.

Likewise, according to Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981), culture and communication are closely related since culture not only orders who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, but it also aids to govern how people encrypt messages, the connotations they have for messages, and the conditions and

settings under which various messages may or may not be sent, observed, or inferred. Culture can be seen as the underpinning of communication.

This may appear to indicate that intercultural learning aids learners in mastering their intercultural communicative competence. Considering the previous reasons, Le Roux (2002, p.37) reports that teachers should not ignore the cultural component in the teaching-learning process for the fact that they may find "frustration, misapprehensions, intercultural conflict, and ultimately school failure".

2.2. Communicative Competence and Communicative Language Teaching

The concept of competence was originally derived from Chomsky's distinction (1965, p3) between "competence" and "performance". For him, competence refers to "the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous speech community"; while performance "is the actual use of language in concrete situations". In other words, competence refers to the knowledge that a person has on the target language; while performance is the ability to use this knowledge appropriately in true-life contexts.

Hymes (1972) has criticized the theory of Chomsky by referring to it as being "too narrow" to report the whole socio-cultural aspect; so he introduced the concept of "communicative competence". CC is referred to as "the level of language learning that enables language users to convey their messages to others and to understand others' messages within specific context" (Ibid. p 38). In other words, CC is not only about the grammatical knowledge but it implies an appropriate use of this knowledge in communicative situations.

Hymes views CC as having the following four competencies; which were explained by Canale and Swain (1980):

✓ **What is formally possible?** Refers to the interaction of the grammatical system of competence. In other words it is about the correct use of grammar rules.

✓ **What is feasible?**

It refers to the psycholinguistic system of competence, which is the ability to make others understand the message.

✓ **What is the social meaning or value of a given utterance?**

It refers to the socio-cultural system of competence, which is related to the ability to use the utterances in line with the social norms.

✓ **What actually occurs?**

It refers to the probabilistic rule of occurrence related to the ability to know whether something is in fact done or not.

Canale and Swain define CC in the context of second language teaching as "a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p 11). In other words, they perceive CC "as being knowledgeable about the grammatical rules of a language and having the ability to use them for communication."

To explain better their perceptions, Canale and Swain have developed a model consisting of four main domains (ibid, 1980)

1. **Grammatical Competence:** it refers to the accurate knowledge of sentence formation and the appropriate use of vocabulary.

2. **Sociolinguistic Competence:** it refers to the ability of using a language in a social context in order to fulfill communicative purposes.
3. **Strategic Competence:** it refers to the ability of using verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to overcome problems of communication breakdowns.
4. **Discourse competence:** it refers to the ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances to achieve the desired communicative purposes.

Widdowson's concept of communicative language teaching agrees with the model of CC proposed by Hymes. He points out that "we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence; but also how to use sentences appropriately to achieve communicative purposes" (1978, p33). In other words, both Widdowson and Hymes agree that communication requires both grammar and the skill of using it appropriately.

The main goal of the Communicative Language Teaching approach is to focus on the communicative aspects of language rather than the linguistic ones. As Widdowson (1978, p.1) assumes that in the approach of communicative language teaching "language is automatically taught as communication by the simple expedient of concentrating on notions or functions rather than on sentences". For Widdowson (1978, p.3), "the knowledge of grammar rules does not help learners to develop their communicative abilities". However, Berns (1984, p.3) "supposes that the focus should be on both the form and the meaning in social context".

Nunan (1991, p 7) claims that the "Communicative language teaching is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices". In other words, the communicative language teaching is a flexible method of teaching where the learners are actively engaged in the process of learning without any stress or restraints.

2.3. From Communicative to Intercultural

In a globalized world people from different cultural and linguistic background are brought closer together, and the contact between people from different cultural backgrounds has increased dramatically; a notion that CC seems to ignore. CC is considered to be utopian (Agilar,2007); the notion of native speakership is a linguistics myth as it portrays a monolithic perception of the native speaker's language and culture; by referring mainly to conventional ways of thinking and behaving. CC fails to reflect the lingua franca status of English.

Communicative Competence is according to Fantini (2005) rather constraining, as it challenges teachers and learners' autonomy by associating the notion of authenticity with the native speaker's social background. In fact, the intricate skills needed to perform successfully and properly when interacting with speakers linguistically and culturally different from oneself, have to be sorted out. Consequently, the traditional native speaker-based models of competence fail to address the dynamic aspects of intercultural communication. Therefore, it is high time for FL teachers to reconsider the notion of CC.

The shift from communicative to intercultural may help upholding the multicultural value of FL while facilitating successful communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. An intercultural approach to FL learning and teaching based on the comparison between target and source culture; while prioritizing both of them may provide a solid framework based on which TC could be integrated to foster intercultural communicative competence of FL learners. Byram (1997) asserts that intercultural education should move from 'Native Speakership', and revalue the

importance of source culture too. Even the role of the teachers is re-evaluated under the intercultural approach; he is not only a language teacher, but an educator with a sense of anthropology and social sciences.

2.4. Intercultural Language Teaching

The Intercultural Approach is also called the Comparative Approach. According to Byram (2000) instead of a mono-cultural approach to FL education, a comparative approach to English has to be encouraged. The basic principle of this approach is to reflect on both the native and foreign cultures. It draws first on the learners' own culture which forms a basis for successful communication with members of the foreign cultures. The essence of the comparative approach is advocated to provide learners with double cultural perspectives for the sake of knowing that there are many ways of doing things and their way is not the only possible one. The Comparative Approach to FL teaching and learning provides learners with an opportunity of comparison. Learners comprehend similarities and differences between their own culture and other ones through comparison.

The comparative approach can be considered as the main source of the intercultural approach. The idea of comparison helps learners to understand both cultures and enables them to function as intermediaries between the two cultures. The intercultural approach has become increasingly recognized alongside the communicative approach to FL teaching and learning. According to Byram (1997), the aims of interaction in FL learning is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence instead of developing communicative competence only; intercultural approach helps students develop their intercultural communicative competence, whereby becoming cultural mediators. (Ibid). Intercultural education leads, to a certain extent, to the acceptance of values, beliefs, and behaviours that may conflict with one's own. Gee (1988) highlight the fact that in using the intercultural approach, the FL teacher will guide the students to new perspectives and discover new identities; it is then to be implemented in a tactful, skilful, and conscious manner, to reach intercultural communicative competence. As Liddicoat (2004) stated; an intercultural approach to language teaching and learning comprises four main activities relating to culture:

3. • Acquisition about cultures
4. • Comparing cultures
5. • Exploring cultures
6. • Finding one's own 'third place' between cultures.

2.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence

The trend of globalization continues to dominate the twenty-first century, as English grows to be a world lingua franca, interaction between people from different culture became inevitable, hence the focus on intercultural communicative competence became a major concern.

Chen (1996, p 15) defines intercultural communicative competence as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment". In other words, it is the ability to achieve successful communication in an intercultural context. Chen and Starosta (2000) and Chen (1998) state that intercultural communicative competence can be examined from three perspectives:

- ✓ The affective aspect named intercultural sensitivity,
- ✓ The cognitive aspect labeled intercultural awareness,

- ✓ The behavioral aspect of intercultural competence entitled intercultural adroitness.

Byram and Zarate (1994) developed the concept of intercultural communicative competence for the Council of Europe's project to develop a 'Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching. Moreover, Byram (1997) deepens the concept of intercultural communicative competence in his book "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence.", where he claims that "successful communication can not only be achieved through an understanding of how different cultural contexts affect the interpretation and perception of what one says or writes; the ideal 'intercultural speaker' is also concerned with establishing and maintaining relationships across cultural boundaries" (Ibid, p3)

Bennett (1993) suggested a model for cultural learning and intercultural training that provides an idea about how to acquire or improve intercultural awareness. This model consists of five stages from denial to adaptation. These stages are devised into two categories: ethnocentric (one's culture regarded as the best one) and ethno relative (one's culture is equal to other's culture). This model was developed to assess people's attitudes and behaviors towards people having distinct culture. (Hoven, 2003)

Furthermore, it was asserted by Spitzberg(2000) that intercultural competence is acting properly and efficiently in a certain context; that is to say, intercultural competence can be described as being able to successfully interact with culturally different people.(Haddaoui, 2019).

Wiseman (2002, p. 209) says, an "appropriate communication entails the use of messages that are expected in a given context and actions that meet the expectations and demands of the situation". From the above definitions, it can be concluded that intercultural communicative competence is the capacity to engage effectively in an intercultural interaction.

As a matter of fact, the aim behind introducing interculturality in the FL classroom resides in assisting learners realize the process of interaction; and the role of social selves. Moreover, interculturality discusses the ability of learners to take part in these interactions regardless of "cultural differences, perspectives, and social values" (Byram, Gribokova & Starkey, 2002, P14). Promoting the intercultural dimension in the FL classroom may contribute in making students more open minded toward otherness, and toward cultural differences. Teachers, as Byram (2002) stated, should help students acquire interest in and curiosity about 'otherness', and an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people's perspectives; they should be able to see their own cultural from a critical point of view, while being open and tolerant toward other cultures.

3. Research Methodology

Following an appropriate research methodology is what enables the researcher to achieve accurate results and comprehensive conclusions. In pursuit of answering adequately the research question, the choice of an appropriate research design represents a fundamental step (Kothari, 2004). This research study aims at answering the following research questions:

- What are teachers' perceptions of intercultural approach integration in the FL classroom?
- What are their practices regarding intercultural approach integration in their classrooms?

3.1. Design and Method

A clear specification of the research design to be followed is indispensable for effectively conducting any research study as claimed by (Kothari, 2004, p. 31) "the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data". This research uses an exploratory descriptive method, with a focus on single case study design.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises 60 teachers of English at the department of English language and literature at Setif 2 University. The sample comprises 30 teachers. Although the primary aim was to include all teachers as participants in this study, due to absences, busy schedules, and refusal to participate, the number of participants constitutes fifty percent of the whole population.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Investigating teachers' perceptions of the importance of intercultural approach integration and how it is used by teachers; calls for the use of a descriptive method. In order to achieve this aim, a questionnaire was used. The use of the questionnaire permits the researcher to collect standardized answers since all the participants respond to the same questions and may save time and effort either in data collection or handling (Dornyei, 2003).

The questionnaire contains three sections. The first section concerns teachers' demographic information such as age, gender, teaching experience, degrees, etc. The second section aims at identifying their perceptions of the intercultural approach, and the last one investigates their actual intercultural teaching practices. Since piloting is an important phase that does not only help the researcher identify irrelevant questions or any problems with the questionnaire that might cause biased answers but also tests the validity and reliability of the items (Hazzi and Maldaon, 2015). Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted with five teachers from the English department of Setif 2 University. Taking into account their feedback, some words were replaced and others deleted. Questionnaires were distributed in the teachers' room of the English department at Setif 2 University.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This sections deals with the results of data analysis of the questionnaire. The finding revealed from questionnaire are reported and discussed. Background information of the participants is summarized as well.

4.1. Participants' Background Information

The aim behind collecting this background information is to give a clear description of the sample, in terms of its gender, age, teaching experience, academic degree, as well as studying abroad experience. These data are reported in the following table:

Table (1): Teachers' Background Information

Gender	Male	Female			
N	5	25			
%	25	75			

Age	Less than 25	25-30	30-40	More than 40	
N	2	4	20	4	
%	6.66	13.33	66.66	13.33	
Teaching Experience	0-5	5-10	10-15	More than 15	
N	18	10	1	1	
%	60	33.33	3.33	3.33	
Qualification	Master	Magistère	PhD	Professor	
N	2	23	4	1	
%	6.66	76.66	13.33	3.33	
Studying abroad experience	Yes	No			
N	02	28			
%	6.66	93.33			

Note: N=number of participants, % percentage of teachers

As indicated the table 1 among 30 participants, 5 are male, and 25 are female teachers. Regarding their age, more than 66.66% are aged between 30-40, whereas those aged from 25-30 and more than 40 constitute equally 13.33%, and only 6.66 of them are less than 25 years old. As can be seen also from table 1, the majority of teachers (76.66) hold a magistère degree, and more than 60% have less than 5 years teaching experience. Furthermore, as indicated above, only 2 of them had an overseas teaching experience. Teachers' background information is to help describe the case and the context of the study. It is not aimed at suggesting that these information may affects the teachers' perceptions or practices of intercultural approach in their classrooms; as this is outside the scope of this research study.

4.2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Intercultural approach

Table (2): Teachers' Evaluation of Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence

Answers	Excellent	Good	Average	Low
N	0	3	7	20
%	00	10	23.33	66.66

Table 2 shows that the highest percentage is that of the teachers who evaluated the majority of their EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence level as low. The "average" level got the second rank followed by the "good" one. No teacher thought that the majority of his/her learners have an excellent intercultural communicative competence level. This discloses the urgent need for instructing learners at the English department of Setif 2 University using the intercultural approach.

Table (3): Teachers' Perception of the Importance of Intercultural Approach

Answers	Yes	No	
N	27	3	
%	90	10	

Table 3 indicates that 90% of teachers believe that the intercultural approach to foreign language teaching is very important; whereas only 3 of them don't perceive this approach as important to their instruction. Teachers' admission of the importance of intercultural approach in teaching English as a foreign language is in line with Byram (1997) who maintained that learners will not be able to learn the target language efficiently unless they are taught using an intercultural approach to develop their intercultural communicative competence, so as to become intermediaries between their own culture, and other ones.

4.3. Teachers' Practices with regards to the integration of the Intercultural approach

4.3.1. Explicit teaching of culture

All teachers indicated that they do not explicitly teach culture, especially target culture. They rather teach information related to history, civilization, cultural events, politics, but not issues related to values, social norms, and beliefs of the target culture. In addition to this, they do not refer to the source culture at all. The ultimate goal of language teaching and learning is to be able to communicate in another language. Crozet (1996) asserted that communication goes beyond grammar and vocabulary; it is also a matter of understanding culture. According to Liddicoat (2004, p17), "Cultural knowledge is not something that learners can just pick up" (p.1). If learners are to be taught target cultural knowledge, how should they understand how their native culture differs from the target one, and this should be done at an early stage of cultural teaching so as not to create problems. (Liddicoat, 2004). In fact, this is where the role of language teachers becomes clear; they should explicitly teach the target culture and explicitly explain how cultural differences vary (ibid).

4.3.2. Integration of culture into other skills

As a matter of fact, culture is taught separately as a module related to civilization and history. Teachers admitted to rarely discuss issues related to culture, whether target or source culture in other modules.

According to Liddicoat (2004), and based on Kramsch's work (1993), what explains better the relation between language and culture is that performing a speech is an accomplishment of a cultural act in itself. After establishing the four fundamental skills of language teaching (speaking, listening, reading, and writing); culture is introduced and can be considered some kind of a 'fifth macro-skill' (Liddicoat, 2004). Based on the inextricable relationship between language and culture, language skills cannot be taught without taking into account their cultural contexts (Ibid).

4.3.3. The bilingual Learner is the Norm

Teachers indicated they often referred to the native speaker being the norm that students should follow in learning a foreign language. According to Liddicoat (2004); this contraries one of the key pillars of intercultural language teaching: as it is inappropriate for it does not reflect the social and cultural reality of using a second language. He reports that "when someone speaks in their second language, they do not abandon their own thoughts, feelings and values and assimilate themselves to the thoughts, feelings and values of their interlocutors, instead they reach an accommodation between their own culture and personality and the new culture". (Liddicoat, 2004, p19). If teachers are willing to develop an intercultural approach of foreign language instruction they should consider introducing an international perspective to their teaching that doesn't see the native speaker as the norm which the

students should imitate; but to reach a compromise where FL learners realize the importance of both their native culture and the target one in learning a foreign language; and establish a bilingual view on English as a lingua franca of a culturally and linguistically diversified world.

4.3.4. Intercultural Competence

Most teachers shared the view that they do not aim at raising students' intercultural competence as part of their teaching objectives. Not only because, according to them, it is difficult to measure the change in intercultural competence, but also because it is challenging to acquaint learners to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers should encourage the development of intercultural competence in their foreign language classroom because this will help learners be successful interlocutors (Liddicoat, 2004). To be effective, intercultural language users, learners should "know some of the common cultural conventions in the language they are learning, they have strategies for learning more about culture as they interact, in addition to this ; they have the capacity to reflect on their own linguistic behavior and that of their interlocutors." (ibid, p20). English language learners should be aware of the small c Culture of the target language, be interculturally sensitive of social norms, values, and beliefs of the target culture.

5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Teachers should reconsider the issue of balance between linguistic competence and culture's competence with emphasis on learners' intercultural communicative competence, thence; teachers are encouraged to allocate more importance to the integration of culture in their teachings. Not only because of the inextricable relationship between the two, but also because this integration shall contribute to raising students' intercultural awareness and sensitivity; thus preparing them for the challenges of intercultural world interaction. The integration of culture shall not stay sporadic and information-based one; but rather in a systematic methodological approach following techniques and strategies adapted for this purpose. Besides, the intercultural foreign language teaching approach may be really helpful in integration activities that provoke and develop students' intercultural communicative competence, an approach that awards importance to both target and source culture, which is often neglected in foreign language teaching. Consequently, teachers would not teach EFL as an end in itself but as a means for communicative purposes, and henceforth, they create positive opportunities for the learners to go beyond their classroom environment and encourage them to engage in meaningful intercultural communication situations. English language syllabi designers and curriculum developers should be made aware of the changing priorities in nowadays foreign language learning. Focus should be more oriented to developing content and activities that draw on intercultural communication competence developing, and preparing learners for a professionally intercultural world. Foreign language learners should shift focus from a grammatical linguistic view of language learning into an intercultural one. Syllabus designers are invited to reflect on a module for undergraduate students dedicated only for intercultural communication development, where students learn to acquire intercultural communicative competence while studying foreign languages.

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