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The Impact of Reading Comic Strips on Enhancing EFL

Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence

(ICC)

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the M.A. Degree in "Didactiques de L'Anglais"

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***“And what is the use of a book,” thought Alice,
“without pictures or conversations?”***

- Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the ones that we got, to the ones that we wish they were here, but they are not, to the ones that are here today, and to the ones that we lost on the way.

Nada Elyassmin & Ayoub



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We cannot deny all of the blessings that we were given by All-mighty Allah. We are sincerely grateful that he has given us the strength, and durability to get through the hard times; we are thankful that he protected us from harms that could happen to us especially in this sensitive period of our lives.

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List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as Second Language

CC: Communicative Competence

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

CC: Intercultural Communication

CS: Comic Strips

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Abstract

Cultivating students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is one of teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) instruction goals, yet this is not an easy task. Thus, this research investigates the effectiveness of using comics as a creative tool to enhancing the ICC level. Using the quasi-experimental research method with the one group pre-test/post-test design would either confirm the hypothesis or prove it wrong. A group of 35 first year EFL students of Chadli Bendjdid University participated in the quasi-experiment in the academic year 2019/2020. First, students self-reported themselves using five points ICC assessment scale. Then, they were treated via reading collection of comic strips (CS) followed by the same test as a post-test in order to investigate the effects of reading (CS) on their ICC level. Another tool was used to collect data which is a perspective students 'questionnaire. It aimed at finding out first year EFL students' opinion about comics. This Questionnaire was submitted to 50 EFL first year students in order to answer. The results of both instruments were collected and quantitatively analysed and compared. The research findings revealed that students' ICC was developed. In addition to that, they had a positive perspective towards comics and the idea of using them as a didactic support to ICC teaching in the EFL classroom. The study concludes with stating some implications and pedagogical strategies in order to promote comics use in different modules, and to make the University of Chadli Bendjdid a place where students would have the ability to get access to authentic literacy and engage more positively in cross-cultural interactions overcoming the barriers to Intercultural communication (IC).

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Comic Strips, reading, EFL students.

إن تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لدى الطلاب هي واحدة من أهداف تعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، و لكن هذه ليست مهمة سهلة و بالتالي يستقصي هذا البحث فعالية استخدام القصص المصورة كأداة إبداعية لتعزيز مستوى الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات. باستخدام طريقة البحث الشبه التجريبي بإتباع نموذج التصميم القبلي-البعدي لمجموعة واحدة نهدف إلى تأكيد الفرضية او إثبات بطلانها. شارك 35 طالبا من طلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية من جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد في شبه التجربة. أولا قام المشاركون باجتياز الاختبار القبلي و هو عبارة عن تقييم مستواهم باستخدام مقياس من خمس نقاط لتقييم مستوى كفاءتهم التواصلية بين الثقافات بعد ذلك، قام المشاركون بقراءة مجموعة من القصص المصورة متبوعة بنفس الاختبار الأول كاختبار لاحق من اجل التحقيق في آثار قراءة القصص الهزلية على مستوى كفاءتهم التواصلية. تم استخدام أداة أخرى لجمع المعلومات و هي استبيان للطلاب و يهدف إلى معرفة رأي طلاب السنة الأولى للغة الانجليزية بخصوص القصص المصورة. تم تقديم هذا الاستبيان إلى 50 طالبا من طلاب السنة الاولى من اجل الإجابة عنها. بعد جمع البيانات و تحليلها كيميا و مقارنتها كشفت النتائج عن وجود تطور في مستوى كفاءة الطلاب التواصلية وقد تبين أنهم يملكون وجهات نظر ايجابية تجاه قصص الرسوم الهزلية و فكرة دمجها كأداة دعم تعليمية للتدريس في الفصل الدراسي. تختم هذه الدراسة بذكر بعض الآثار و الاستراتيجيات التربوية التعليمية من اجل تعزيز استخدام القصص المصورة في تدريس وحدات مختلفة كذلك لزيادة الوعي بأهمية تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات. و لجعل جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد مكانا يسمح للطلاب بالاندماج و التفاعل بشكل أكثر ايجابية و التغلب على الحواجز التي تعترض التواصل بين الثقافات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، القصص المصورة، القراءة، طالب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Chapter one

General Introduction

Introduction

Educators started using the Communicative Language Approach in teaching the foreign language, focusing on teaching how to communicate using the target language successfully rather than on grammar rules and structures. This point led many scholars to carry out researches concerning the importance of learning culture and its impact on communication. Byram (1997) explains that having the ability to understand the culture of your own and others' helps enhancing the communicative competence. Thus, Byram restated the notion of communicative competence in English as a foreign language (EFL) as intercultural communicative competence (ICC) claiming that EFL students must develop their ability to manage dealing with the dimensions of different cultures in order not to be a fluent fool (Bennette, 1997, p. 16). Teaching about the ICC is considered to be fundamental in the EFL teaching .The Comic strips usually contain an authentic language and present different cultural information in an interesting way that it can be useful and helpful to enhance students' ICC more than the communicative text books which focus on the form and neglect the socio-linguistic aspect in its contexts.

This research investigates the possibilities to work with comics from a communicative perspective that allows students to be exposed to different cultural aspects. The focus would be on enhancing Chadli Bendjdid EFL student' ICC that can be developed using comics, and on students' perspective towards this creative material. The introductory section of this study deals with the statement of the problem, the aim, and the significance of the study. The research questions and hypotheses are also presented. Also, It provides the methodology

used including the research design along with the organization and the limitation of the study.

1. Statement of the problem

The intercultural communicative competence has been one of the most undervalued and ignored academic subjects in EFL curriculum due to the common idea that it does not have any academic outcome thus it is not given much weight. It is almost impossible to successfully communicate using the foreign language without having the ability to understand its culture and your own.

EFL students are expected to perform well using the target language taking into consideration its cultural background, yet what is observed is that the first year students of Chadli Bendjdid encounter some difficulties concerning communication. Hymes's (1972) notion of communicative competence has been given much importance in EFL instruction. EFL teachers are focusing only on teaching grammar rules and language structure, and ignoring the importance of the effect of cultural competence on language use. Byram (1997) improved the CC notion; he linked it to culture and brought up the new concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to the field.

ICC teaching and learning can be a complex task since it cannot be easily introduced within the courses; comics could be a creative tool to effectively enhance students' ICC because it is known that it contains an authentic language, and it is interesting and flexible in terms of its use to teach different subject matters. This leads us to the main issue of our study:

Does reading comic strips enhance the students' ICC and help them overcome the intercultural communicative barriers.

2. Aims of the study

In order to promote students' level of intercultural communicative competence, this study investigates the impact of reading comic strips (CS) on shaping the awareness of EFL

students about the main factors that greatly affect oral communication; to have a better knowledge about cultural differences and contextual appropriateness, it serves a great deal in helping students understanding cultural barriers and overcoming them. The findings of this study will open new dimensions in using creative tools such as CS as a didactic support to boost communication skills of EFL students in Chadli Ben Djdid University.

3. Significance of the study

Over the years, comic strips have been only seen as an amusing way for children to distract themselves and pass time; however, recent studies had been conducted on the importance of using comic strips as an effective material in EFL classrooms and gave it a better reputation.

Algerian universities are overlooking the importance of the ICC; thus, new innovative tools must be presented in order to develop EFL students' communicative capacities. This study aims at discovering the effects of using CS as a didactic support on nourishing students' abilities at spotting their own communicative flaws and to be motivated enough to work towards overcoming them. Comics are implicitly going to activate students' cognitive equilibrium about the wrong cultural assumptions, anxiety and ethnocentrism.

4. Research Questions

For discovering the most suitable way to implement culture into communicative lessons, the following questions will help conduct this research.

1. Does reading comic strips enhance EFL students' Intercultural Communicative Competence?
2. How do students perceive the idea of teaching using comics as a didactic support?

5. Research hypothesis

According to the questions mentioned above, we reach the following hypothesis:

1. Reading comics does enhance EFL students' ICC.
2. Students' perception towards the use of comic strips is positive.

6. Research Design

The purpose behind conducting this research is to assess the effectiveness of cultivating students' ICC through reading comics; therefore, a quasi-experimental method with a one group pre/ post test design was adopted by this study. A group of 35 first year students of English language at the University of Chadli Bendjdid were assigned to complete this experiment with us. First, a pre-test was submitted to those students to assess their Cultural Intelligence. The pre-test takes the format of self-reporting likert scale assessment which is composed of four components. Second, the treatment took the form of an online reading of collection of comics associated with a review of literature permitted to identify the cultural elements that are needed to foster students' ICC. The post-test was directly taken after finishing the reading and discussing of the comics. The post-test takes the same form and composed of the same questions of the pre test in order to do the comparison between their results. After this phase, a questionnaire was submitted to first year EFL students of Chadli Bendjdid University to find out their reaction and perspective towards reading comics and the idea of implementing them in EFL courses in the classroom. Thus, this research adopts the quantitative method combining both experiment's and survey's data to reach the goal of this study and answer the research questions.

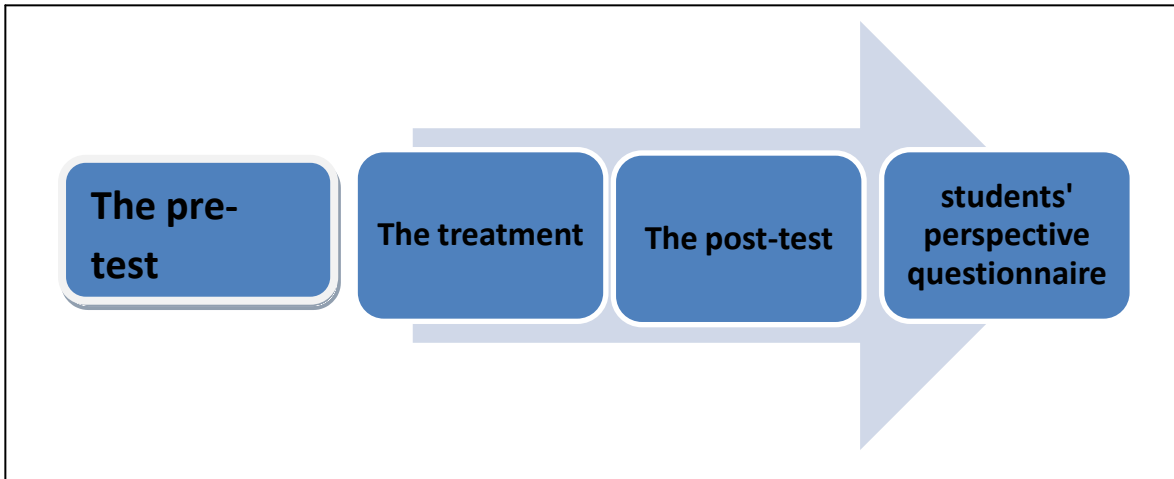


Figure 1.1: Research Design of the Study

7. Organization of the Study

This dissertation is composed of five parts. The first part is the introductory chapter which it introduces the topic of this research with its background. It states the problem of it along with the aim and the significance of this study; the research questions and hypothesis. It gives a glimpse about the research design, states the organization of the study, and its limitations.

The next part is the theoretical section that deals with the literature review which is composed of three parts. The first is about comics, its history, and its impact on EFL teaching; the second deals with culture and its relation to language teaching and its importance, the last part sheds light on the communicative competence, and how it developed to become intercultural communicative competence by putting an emphasis on the cultural aspect of EFL teaching. It states the different components of ICC, its importance, its communication barriers, and it indicates some used models to assess students' ICC and their intercultural intelligence (CQ). It is concluded by mentioning the impact of reading comics on cultivating students' ICC related to some research that are conducted in Algeria. This Chapter is followed by the third chapter concerning the practical part. It deals with the research methodology starting by citing some information about the location, the sample of the study, and

participants. In addition, it explains the methodology that is adopted by this study, the methods and the instruments that are used to collect data. The fourth part which is the fourth chapter it states the results' analysis. The last chapter that is labelled as Discussion, Implications and Recommendations. It includes interpretation of the study's results, discussion of hypothesis, and the implications of the research's findings, as it addresses a set of recommendations about the use of comics as didactic tool in EFL classrooms in Chadli Bendjdid University. Finally, this dissertation is ended by drawing a general conclusion to this study. Taking into consideration the results and their interpretation, the findings are summed up shedding light on some points and areas that could form a good base for further future researches.

8. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited because of the short duration that is devoted to start the practical part of the study. This was mainly because the spread of the global Covid-19, Corona Virus, and the mandatory quarantine for the entire world's population that lasted for more than nine months so far. This led to disrupting the work of all sectors including the educational sector. It was planned to make a reading workshop that would last for four sessions and take a place in the university, yet according to the current circumstances, it is been changed to an online reading of a collection of comics along with discussing some literature that is related to culture and ICC. Reaching the participants was not an easy task to complete the whole procedure of the research experience because of the continuous outages of electricity and the internet which were the only way to communicate with them. The researchers had opted to administer questionnaires to EFL teachers in order to get their perspective towards comics' reading and student's ICC cultivating, yet we were obliged to cancel it due to the difficulty in contacting them.

Chapter two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the relation between comics and fostering students' ICC. It starts with stating the literature on comic strips, its definition, characteristics, and gives a brief overview of its history, and critics. It presents some benefits of reading comics on learning language skills, aspects, and motivation. In addition to that, this chapter identifies culture, its relation to language, and what effect it may have on the mastering of foreign language skills. The last part deals with the communicative competence (CC) and its models. Then it sheds light on the shift from CC to Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), discussing its different dimensions, components, and models which would enable us to identify and justify the scales opted for in this research. Possible barriers that could face EFL students while communicating are addressed; as well as, ICC assessment. Finally, this chapter provides some points that make comics a good tool to teach ICC and overcome its barriers.

Comic Strips

1.1.1. Comics' Definition

When we track the word comics back in time, we find out that its origin comes from the Greek word 'κωμικός' which means funny, something makes you want to laugh (Tiemensma, 2009).

McCloud in his book, *Understanding Comic* (1993), tried to find a suitable definition of comics. He started by criticizing Eisner's definition, "Master comics artist Will Eisner uses the term Sequential Art when describing comics" (1993, p.5), claiming that this "definition is strictly neutral on matters of style, quality or subject matter" (1993, p.5). This means that we

should separate the message which is the content from the messenger or the medium which is comics when it comes to trying to define it.

To simplify things, McCloud (1993) compares the artistic form of comics to the vessel that contains all the images, speech, and texts which resemble the content or the message. McCloud (1993) was interested more in defining the message than the messenger; He started by replacing the word art from Eisner's "sequential art" with "static image". Since films are considered to be a "visual art too", he added "juxtaposed sequential" to the definition to make the difference clear between the two;" Animation, films, is sequential in time but not spatially juxtaposed as comic are" (McCloud, 1993, p.7). Words are "made of letters, letters are symbols that are devised out of (sequential) images" (Eisner, 1985, p.14), so he replaced it with: "pictorial and other images". At the end, the definition of comics became:" juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response" (1993, p.9).

Saraceni (2003) discussed the fact that the usage of the word comics can be a little bit confusing about the nature of many artistic publications that take the form of comics such as "Joe Sacco's Palestine, which is about the problems of the Palestinian people" (p.4). It is impossible that this can be comic, funny, since it discusses a serious matter. That is why McCloud stated:" comics is the word worth defining, as it refers to the medium itself, not a specific object as comic book or comic strip do" (1993, p.4). Pratt gives a more detailed definition of comics stating that it is "a predominantly narrative medium" (2009, p. 107).

Comics, as cited in Timensma (2009), is "a form of visual sequential art consisting of images which are commonly combined to text, often in form of speech balloons or image caption"(Comics,2007,p. 1). He also stated that comics are a narrative artistic form which consists of images organized in sequences (Varnum & Gibbons, 2001).

Meskin Stated kunzile's definition of comics as: "comic strip consists of a sequence of separate images" with a "preponderance of image over text" that appears in a "mass medium and tells a story which is both moral and topical" (2007, p. 369).

Roger Sabin (as cited by Meskin, 2007) considers comics to be "mass reproduced" and "containing a recurrent character" (p. 36).

"In Henry John Pratt's recent article "Narrative in Comics" (2009), he defines comics as narratives telling stories by a sequence of pictures with speech balloons" (Ripple & Etter, 2013, p.192)

In the light of the above definitions and statements, comics can be defined as an artistic form that is consisted of images sequentially organised in panels combined to short speech balloons or texts to tell a story of a serious matter or a funny one.

1.1.2. Comics' Component

Comics just like any type of art have some important characteristics. Saracani stated that: "The most important characteristics of comics are:

- *Employment of both words and pictures;

- * Texts organised into sequential units, graphically separated from each other (2003, p.5)

The way that both the image and the word are used and interact with each other is what made it one of its significant unique characters, "The format of the comic book presents a montage of both word and image" (Eisner, 1985, p.8). Unlike cartoons, comics are sequenced in space and arranged in several panels not only one.

The language of comics is like the language that we usually use (Saraceni, 2003). Since it is called language, the rules that govern how comics are made are called Comics'

Grammar (McCloud, 1993). Grammar is made of components such as the word, and Comics' components are: Panels, gutters, balloons, and captions (Saraceni, 2003).

1.1.2.1.The Word

Language speech is represented by words. Words consist of grouped letters and sounds following a certain convention in order to convey meaning. Bloomfield in 1928 stated that words are seen as the smallest meaningful unit of speech that can stand by themselves (Katamba, 2005).

Saraceni explained that our language is made of words. These words are divided into functional words such as articles, conjunctions, prepositions and content words. He said that the same is for the language of comics “where there are functional components and content components” (2003, p.5).

Saraceni stated that as functional words relate sentences and parts of sentences together, indicators of space and time which are called “functional elements” “connect different parts of the story together” (2003, p. 7). These indicators usually appear as captions in the panels. Other functional elements are the musical notes and symbols such as dots, sweat drops that represents anxiety, and nervousness (2003, p. 7). There are also “words whose sounds similar to the noise that the words refer to”; these are called “onomatopoeic words” such as flip, click, bang, and gulp (Saraceni, 2003, p.7). The content elements are just the same as words of content. They are found in the speech balloons and captions in the text of the story.

1.1.2.2. The Image

Pictures are defined as iconic entities, signs, which mean what they mean because of what they resemble (Saraceni, 2003, p. 22). In other words, the image is a representation of something. It can depict real objects, ideas and non-real thoughts or things.

The image is an important element in comics since the story is based on the sequenced pictorial events that are represented in panels. In some cases, the story can be conveyed by the image alone without being associated with word (Kelley, 2009). That is why Saraceni (2003) stated that images can be read just like words because the way we understand a picture depends on the conventional symbols that may contain which have precisely the same meaning cross different cultures.

1.1.2.3. The Relationship between the Word and the Image

Pratt in 2009 stated that "comics have both literary and pictorial narrative dimensions: it is a hybrid art form that employs narrative strategies closely connected to literature, on the one hand, and other pictorial media, on the other" (Rippl & Etter, 2013).

Eisner stated that "Comics deal with two major communicating devices, words and images" (1985, p. 13). These two devices are treated separately, yet they came from the same origin. The skilful employment of these two in order to convey a meaning is the notable aspect of comics (Eisner, 1985).

"Words tend to be symbolic, and pictures are iconic" (Saraceni, 2003, p. 15); both are types of the sign; however, the two can also hold each other's features. The word can be iconic if they get blended to or take the form of a picture; the picture can be symbolic too when it holds some shared conventional symbols. Saraceni stated that "pictures can be

characterized by a blend of symbolic and iconic features” (p.14) which is eminent in comics (2003).

Saraceni (2003) stated that basically there are two kinds of relationship that exist between the word and the image, a blend and collaboration.

It is called blending when the image and the word are both iconic /symbolic at the same time, “the visual and the verbal aspects support each other in conveying the meaning of the cartoon” (Saraceni, 2003, p. 5). The blending will form the comics’ vocabulary; however, the collaboration forms the comics’ grammar which happens when the word and the image are separated from each other still related to convey meaning (Saraceni, 2003, p. 27).

1.1.2.4. The Comics’ Layout

As it is stated before, one of the most important characteristics of comics is the text that is organized into sequential units and separated from each other (Saraceni, 2003). He stated that these sequenced units contain a set of components which are: the panel, gutter, balloons and the caption (Tiemensma, 2009). They are all simply illustrated in figure2.

1.1.2.4.1. The panel

The panel is the basic format of comics. It can take many shapes which hold significant meanings added to the story that is told by the comics.

The panel primary functions as a frame in which usually contains some pictorial events associated with speech balloons or texts to place actions and objects. (Eisner, 1985; Visual Rhetoric). “Panels shapes vary considerably though, and while differences of shape don’t affect the specific meaning of those panels vis-a-vis time; they can affect the reading experience” (McCloud, 1994, p. 99). It can also affect our perception, and serve as our guide

through space and time (McCloud, 1994). “The panel border itself can be used as part of the non-verbal language of sequential art” (Eisner, 1985, p. 44).

1.1.2.4.2. The Gutter

The gutter is a significant part of comics. Reader of comics must fill the blank spaces between comics using his imagination to relate the depicted events in order to understand the whole setting of the story.

McCloud (1994) stated that the gutter is that space between the panels. “It can imply action, movement, or transition between panels” (Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat, p. 145). Some comic artists tend to leave no space between panels ‘gutter less’ yet, this does not mean that it does not exist (Saraceni, 2003).

1.1.2.4.3. The Balloons

Saraceni(2003). explained precisely this important element. They usually take the form of oval shape with a small tail indicates the speaker, and it is called speech balloons. Another shape it can take which is a cloud-like shape with a tail that is formed of series of small balloons which means that it is a thought balloon. The tail has the same function as the clause `he thought` or `he said`. Comics are being known for containing the speech balloons as way to tell stories and depict conversations.

1.1.2.4.4. The Caption

It is a separated element in comics that it is not placed inside the panel but in the top/bottom of the panel or on the left side. Unlike the balloons the caption contains the linguistic form and element. The role of the caption in comics is like the role of the narrator in movies. It can add certain information, tell what happened between panels which are indicated by the gutter, or simply show information about time and space (Saraceni, 2003).

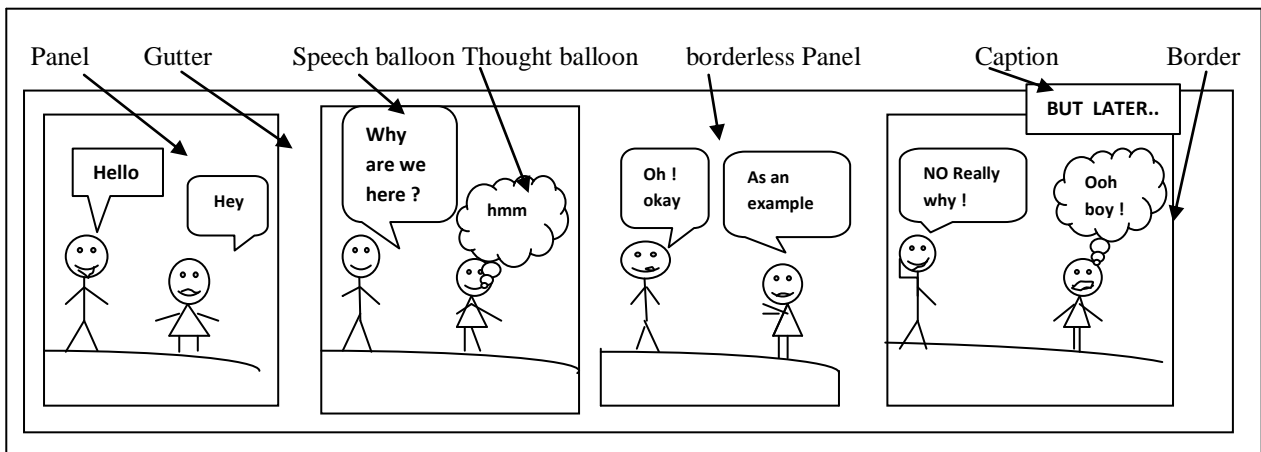


Figure 2.1: An example of comics' components.

1.1.3. Types of the Graphic Narratives

Chute & DeKoven (2006) (as cited in Ripple & Etter, 2013) were the firsts who introduced the term 'graphic narrative' to the English-speaking world of comics; Many other formats were known to have the same features of graphic narrative such as the Japanese 'Manga' and the French 'Bandes Dessinées'.

“Eisner (1996) (as cited in Kelley, MA.B, n.d), coined the term visual narratives to refer to texts that convey stories through images and words”, comics. Tiner (1997) (as cited in ((Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat, p.767), stated that it is called so because of the fact that “it uses drawings to give visual information, and like cinema in that it uses a combination of words and images to carry its message”.

The graphic narratives developed over time and took so many forms, yet they share the same characteristics and design. We can divide comics into four different types: the 'comic strips', the 'comic book', the 'graphic novel' and, the 'web comics'.

1.1.3.1. Comic Strips

The comic strips as we know today started to appear firstly in the British caricature magazines in the early 1900s (McCloud, 1994, p.18). Smith (2016) stated that comic strips are known to be usually utilized in newspapers and magazines where they can stand on their own in three to four squares. These strips are used to be called the funnies, comic, since they mainly hold a humorous concept (Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

1.1.3.2. Comic Books

Smith elucidated the difference between comic books and comic strips starting with clarifying that comic books are generally considered to be comic strips, yet they can run for several pages following a storyline (2016); Spurgeon (2011) (as cited in BorznruS, Srvtrz, and Low, 2017, p. 212), stated that Spiegelman, clarified that the comic book is long that it "needs a bookmark and has to be re-read".

Despite that the story of a single comic book develops between different issues, it can stand on its own. Because of that, it demands from the reader to be aware of the background knowledge of the earlier issues in order to understand the story. Another important point that makes the distinction between the two graphic narratives is the rich details of comic books' drawings and pictures that deeply present the storyline (Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

To simplify things, we can say that comic books are a collection of comic strips that tell the same story of the same characters and of the same plot.

1.1.3.3. Graphic Novels

The graphic novels are "bound books featuring sequential art" and much longer than the comic book (Kelly, n.d). Graphic novels share the same basic layout of comic books that is composed of both image and text, yet they differ in the nature of the storyline. It does not require a previous knowledge of any other books since it has a start and discusses just one

main complex issue until it gets to an end within the same book (Smith, 2016). Kelly illustrated that “Graphic novels may be single volume (like *American Born Chinese*) or multi-volume (like *Buddha*)” (p.1).

Graphic novels are old. Human beings before being able to write and read used to draw pictures on walls and stones to express their thoughts and tell the story of their daily activities.

1.1.3.4. WebComics

Smith (2016) in his *Teaching with Comics* was the first who defined the internet comics or as pop culture called them ‘Webcomics’. He stated that in the late 90’s, comic strips started to be published on web platforms. Usually, they are comic strips collected from newspapers and magazines to be available to everyone or self-published by the creator. Webcomics became much more known than comic strips and books. The 21st century generation got fascinated by this new art. The number of webcomics raised thanks to technology which led to the emergence of what we call the digital art.

1.1.4. The History of Comics

Over decades, Comics went through a lot of changes to be as the comics we know today. As cited in McCloud’s *Understanding Comics*, most of the books that tackled comics’ history discussed it shortly before the turn of the century where we can “venture a bit further than that, actually, a lot further” (1994, p.9). Before being introduced to literacy, people used to draw pictures on walls, stones, and tapestries to tell stories and record their history (Ásbjörnsson, 2018). McClouds illustrated the best examples of old comics starting with the ‘Egyptian Hieroglyphics’ (that) would seem to fit his definition of comics perfectly, and the old French 230-foot tapestry that “details the Norman conquest of England beginning in 1066” (1994, p.12).

As soon as the early twentieth century started to be drawn, comics began to appear taking the format we know today (McCloud, 1994). Thanks to the invention of the printing press, comic strips appeared. “The Yellow Kid”, an American newspaper comic strip by Richard Felton Outcault, was first appeared in the Hearst New York American on February 16, 1896 then was quickly joined by other comic strips (Cavette, 2020). To promote the sales of comic strips some decided to collect them into soft cover magazines; however, the first original comic book was released in the year of 1938 named ‘The Funnies’ published every Sunday just like newspaper then it was followed by ‘Detective Dane’ in the same year (Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

Carter (as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018), stated that the year (1938) was the beginning of a new age for comics that it was called the ‘Golden Age’ of American action comic books starting with superman. These comics were quite famous and popular among both adults and children.

In the mid of 50’s and after the introducing of television, Monin (2010) (as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018), stated that people were fascinated by its wonders, forgetting about comics which led to the loss of their popularity and the decrease of their sales. Meanwhile, Chilcoat & Ligon (as cited in Horrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat, 2002), stated that comics were attacked several times for “corrupting the innocent minds of the American youth”, and Carter (as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018), mentioned that they claimed that reading them would lead to the spread of reading problems among children. Chilcoat & Ligon (1994); Bunce (1996); and Yildirim (2013) discussed that under these circumstances a new movement of ideological publications appeared called ‘Comix’ started with publishing a new comic book under the title of *Zap Comix* in 1968 that contained inappropriate stories and pictures as a way of rebellion and fighting for survival against these waves of critics (as cited. in Horrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat, 2002; Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

Over time, the public opinion changed, and people became much more open towards comics. In (1987), Eisner's first graphic novel *Contract with God* was published (O' English? Mathews & Lindsay, 2006). As the 21st century started to be drawn, graphic novels gained a remarkable place within the American society thanks to the movies industry which turned a lot of them into films (Yildirim, 2013 cited.in Ásbjörnsson, 2018). Most of the writers who were interested in comics such as Eisner, McCloud, and Bunce believed that "the comic Scope continues to expand"(Bunce, 1996, p.12) and go much more further as to draw its way from being less regarded and valuable into a creative academic tool used in our classrooms.

1.1.5. Comics Criticism

Wright in 2001 said that "comic strips and comic book are popular form of the midum, though they are not typically held in high regard in terms of taste and worth" (Botzakis, Savitz, and Low, 2007, p. 311). "Comics were often viewed, at last, as popular entertainment and, at worst, as a dangerous influence on youth" (Jacob, 2007, p.19). At first, comics were seen as a funny tool made to pass time. Then, in the early 1950's things changed because of the anti-comics campaign in the United States where some people claimed that reading comics poisons children's mind Fredrikin (Ásbjörnsson, 2018). Wertham published a book titled *Seduction of the Innocents* in 1954 where he raised his voice against Comics claiming the most strenuous arguments, "comic books are death on reading" (Jacobs, 2007, p.19).He explained his point stating that:

"Reading troubles in children are on the increase. An important cause of this increase is the comic book. A very large proportion of children who cannot read well habitually read comic books. They are not really readers, but gaze mostly at the pictures, picking up a word here and there. Among the worst readers are a very high percentage of comic-book addicts who spend very much time 'reading' comic books. They are book-worms without books" (122)(Jacobs, 2007, p.19)

The problem according to Wertham is that the people who read comics are not actually reading, they are avoiding words, grammar, and the actual language focusing on pictures and images which would decrease their learning and acquisition abilities. He explained saying that “The visuals are more easily ingested and interpreted than the written” (Jacob, 2007, p. 19).

Another big criticism says that comic books and graphic novels cannot be forms of literature. In the 1970’s comics’ popularity decreased; a lot of books were burned in that period of time, and people started to hide their comic books under magazines covers to avoid harassments (Jacobs, 2007; Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

Comics characters were pejorative and slanderously accused of spreading ridiculous corrupted things such as wonder woman that was strong and independent which they considered it as a bad model for girls, and the same goes for superman who made children believe in the unnatural fictional things (Ásbjörnsson, 2018); Yildirim in 2013 stated that this unreasonable thinking did affect and still harming comics till now (Ásbjörnsson, 2018)

A lot of scholars and teachers still consider comic books and graphic novels substandard literature that must be held outside the classroom and should not be included in the curriculum since it is a waste of energy and time for both teachers and students (Gravette, 2013, as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

They also did criticize the comics’ content claiming that “the novels may be depictions of violence “(Rudiger & Schliesman, 2007), and contains unsuitable texts and pictures for people under the age of 18 taking the Comix publishing movement as an illustration (Bunce, 1996).

Despite all of these critics, a lot of voices voted for comics including them as a type of literature and as a beneficial tool can be used in classrooms because of its nature that combine the use of both the image and the word to convey meaning. This one aspect made comics

popular today in the field of education. Seeing comics as a bad influence on the younger generation is no longer accurate because there are set of criterium that are being in use to filter comics and choose what is suitable and appropriate for children or students' use.

1.1.6. The influence of Reading Comics on EFL Learning

After being widely criticized, “comics have made their way into schools mainly as scaffold for learning [...] in terms of both the literate practices and content involved” (Jacobs, 2007, p.20). Many researches was carried out to prove the effectiveness of comics in the educational field, and a lot of peer reviewed articles were and still getting published to provide teachers with strategies and recommendations of how to effectively implement comics in classrooms' activities and courses (Lui, 2004). *Comics in Education* is an online version of Gene Yang's final project for his master's degree at California State University, Hayward. It is one of a variety of academic researches that tackled Comics and offers a great help for those who agree on using comics for educational purposes. Jacobs' article, “More Than Words: Comics as a Means of Teaching Multiple Literacies” stated Yang's claims towards comics and an explanation of his point of view, “the educational strength of comics is that they are motivating, visual, permanent, inter-mediary, and popular”(2007, p. 20). Yang's study shed light on the relationship between the word and the image; his findings contradict Wertham's ideas in (1954). Comics are seen now as “a steppingstone to the acquisition (and learning) of other higher skills” (Jacobs, 2007, p.20).

1.1.6.1. Comics' Impact on Reading and Writing Skill

Developing the reading skill of students rely on giving them the right type of reading tasks taking into consideration their age and interests which would help them to develop their creative writing skills. Comics nowadays form a good and creative tool to introduce young people to the world of reading because of its interesting nature and characteristics.

Jun Liu in (2004) said about comics, “the medium that once discarded and thought of as a childish with no literacy value has now become a respected genre” (Ásbjörnsson, 2018, p.10). As it is cited before numerous newspapers such as New York Times (Yang 2008), journals, and researches have introduced comics to education. Smith, cartoonist and a teacher, has written a book named *Teaching with Comics* in 2006 where he defined comics, its features, and its contribution to improving students’ reading skill level. He stated the advantages of comics saying that:

- > With the combination of text and illustration, comics are powerful aids for students who excel at visual learning or who have short attention spans.
- > Comics prompt the development of powerful imaginations. In studying education, many educational theorists’ site the theory of scaffolding – students receiving incrementally decreased aid at a skill until they are able to master it on their own. [...]. While the text is often the heart of the story, it is reinforced and furthered through the illustrations. This not only aids in development of reading skills for students in earlier grades but allows advanced students to visualize the story and the characters.
- > The illustrations in comics can also further a student’s analysis of the literature and reinforce the power of words. Illustrations act as clues to what is being conveyed in the text (p.6).

Another example of documents that discussed the effect of reading comic on students’ reading comprehension is Lui’s article, “Effects of Comic Strips on L2 Learners’ Reading Comprehension”, in 2004. He presented a lot of scholars’ theories and findings about comics .

Starting with Wright & Sherman (1994) who discussed the characteristics and features of comic strips that made them serve as an important English source and as a tool for reading for second or foreign languages. Gyselink & Tarteru (1999) explained that the effect of comic strips on reading comprehension depends widely on the fact that the information have been repeated, “presented in the text and illustrated in the images which would enhance (students’) performance”(Liu, 2004,p. 238).

One of the eminent features of comics is that it depends on visuals along with the language to convey the story. They have a positive effect on reading which are outlined by researchers such as: Lvis & Lentz, 1982; Levin, Anglin, & Carney, 1987; Gorman, 2002

- Representation: Visuals repeat the text's content or substantially overlap with the text.
- Organization: Visuals enhance the text's coherence.
- Interpretation: Visuals provide the reader with more concrete information.
- Transformation: Visuals target critical information in the text and recode it in a more memorable form.
- Decoration: Visuals are used for their aesthetic properties or to spark readers' interest in the text (Liu, 2004, p. 226).

Vygotskyin (1978), and in (1968) stated that “the understanding [...] of a language encounters with static media” (Kelly, n.d, 4), visuals. The relationship between the image and language is a complex matter; the picture supports language development, and it has a great influence on our cognition;” It forms our understanding of what and ideas mean as it builds a schema that is necessary for successful reading”(Kelly, n.d, p.4). It can be further explained as it holds the same concept of the relationship between De Saussure ‘signifier & signified’ for the signifier refers to the image, and the signified refers to the concept or the meaning (1916).

In (1996), Wright & Sherman developed their theories about including comics as being a type of literature in classrooms' courses to promote students' reading and writing skills. Their findings revealed that reading comics is effective for building a higher level of cognition and creative thinking because of the mental process that the students go through when trying to combine words and pictures (Liu, 2004), “The task is to stimulate student's thinking about explicit and implicit meaning conveyed by textual materials” (Wright & Sherman, as cited in Liu, 2004, p. 230). The fact that graphic novels as a type of comics are

rich with illustrations would help students to develop their cognitive strategies which in turn can improve their reading or writing skills, intellectual development, and language competence; the same can be applied on learning a second or a foreign language (Schwartz, 2002, as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018, p. 16).

William (1995) experienced how comics can be used as ‘instructional materials’ in the classroom for students that are low-intermediate level in ESL reading and writing skills. He found that comics “can raise awareness of pragmatics of the language” (Liu, 2004, p. 230), and develop the critical skills in learning language of today’s students” (Ásbjörnsson, 2018, p. 14). McTaggart talked about the effect of reading comics on all kinds of students stating that “the struggling reader becomes interested [...], the reluctant reader would become motivated [...] the learner who is in learning at a higher level would become challenged”(Ásbjörnsson, 2018, p. 15).

One of the hardest tasks for teachers is to select texts that are interesting, useful, and suits students’ level and potentials, to avoid making them frustrated and reluctant towards the text (Frey & Fashion, 2004 as cited in Ásbjörnsson, 2018); graphic novels can serve as a great deal for both teachers and students. It can introduce students to classic literature such as Shakespeare’s plays. Since they are considered to be hard to be comprehended and it contains a lot of difficult vocabularies, the illustrations could make it much easier for them to understand, learn new metaphors, personifications, and make use of imagination which would help them later in producing creative pieces of writings, and play a large role in their life long reading (Crowford, 2004; Bikers, 2007; Carter, 2007, cited. in Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

Ásbjörnsson (2018) in his thesis presented that comics could have an impact on developing the students’ level in writing skills. Teaching writing skill is being a challenging task since it is considered to be a complex mental activity that demands a rich schema and background

knowledge about the language competences. He stated some scholars' ideas that are: Graphic novels are finally seen as a valid authentic literature resource, and a good base for writing activities that help promoting students' level of creative writing (Buchar & Manning, 2004,), and they can also help developing their non-verbal skills and learning new vocabulary items (Frey & Fisher, 2004). Morrison et al in (2002) stated that comics are interesting tools to depend on to make interesting writings not just simple classic and traditional compositions since it make students engage in real life conversations and know how language is exactly being in use (Ásbjörnsson, 2018).

1.1.6.2. Comics' Impact on Readers' Motivation

Teachers in classrooms are facing a problem of non- motivated students that refuse to read what they are asked to read. Researches of the field of literacy instruction say that students tend to read any other form of literacy except what teachers want them to read; this depend mainly on the nature of the medium (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; Cavazos-Kottke, 2005; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007, as cited in Kelly, n.d). Because graphic novels and other types of comics reduce the cognitive load of some struggling readers who have difficulty in reading texts, or get frustrated of the amount of the complex vocabularies in texts, they represent a suitable way to make more motivated and willing to hold a book and start actually reading and “if they feel successful as readers, they are more likely to continue reading and read more other types of texts too” (Kelly, n.d, p.6).

Comics work well with any type of readers, they are made to suit both genders and both children and adults (New Jersey Reading Association, 2007). That is, they can also motivate advanced reader to “continue to develop their reading habits and skills” (Kelly, n.d, p.7).

In the late 1990's, libraries played an essential role in the reconsideration of comics as a type of a literacy that should be introduced into library collections; they considered it a good way to drive children and reluctant readers to go into libraries and start reading since it make it would make it seem cool and interesting and not boring as it is known to be (Jacobs, 2004). Jacobs stated that graphic novels are one” strategy in teaching and encountering literacy practices (and) a way station to more challenging higher forms to literary”(2007, p.20).He means that it is a tricky way to introduce students to simple forms of literature than it would motivate him move forward more complex books and texts.

1.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

1.2.1. Culture

1.2.1.2. Definition of Culture

The term culture is easy to be comprehended, yet difficult to be defined. This difficulty lays on the numerous definitions that culture has; despite that all of them use different terminologies to express it, they all lead to the same concept.

In his Dictionary of Sociology, Henry Pratt Fairchild defined ‘Culture’ from an Anthropologist view as

A collective name for all behaviour patterns socially acquired and transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool-making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artefacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices, art objects, etc. (80)(Berger, 2002, p. 1)

From the above definition, we can simply say that “Culture is the full range of learned human behaviour pattern” (Choudhury, 2014, p.2). *Primitive Culture* (1871) marked the first use of the term culture in this sense by Edward B. Taylor; he stated that culture is “that

complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Choudhury, 2014, p.2). Williams (1976) stated that "culture is the process of human development" (as cited in, Fukagawa, n. d).

Choudhury in his article 'The Role of Culture in Teaching English as a Foreign Language', stated that "Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Cultures are what make countries unique" (2014, p.3). It indicates how people of a given society think about the world and how they perceive and value things in their lives which differ from region to another (Kim, 2004).

Besides having a lot of characteristics, culture has also a set of elements that was cited in Itulua-Abumere (2013): Symbols, Language, Values, Beliefs, and Norms (Corchia, 2010 quoted in Wikipedia, 2013).

All in all, culture is a description map for a given society way of living. It depicts all what is related to human being inventions starting from abstract things such as beliefs and conventions to concrete things such as dress and food.

1.2.1.4. Culture in Learning Foreign Language

1.2.1.4.1. Culture and Language

The kind of connection that is between language and culture has always been a concern of scholars, and researchers. Some agreed on the idea that there is no connection between the two, yet researchers have proven the opposite. Before trying to identify their relation, the term language must be defined.

Language is considered to be means of communication and expression; one can express his feelings, thoughts, ideas, and needs. Language was defined by De Saussure (1974) as a language of signs; as cited before, the signifier that is the sound and the form of the word, and the signified which refers to the concept or the thought that we hold in our minds so the sound and the thought cannot be separated (as cited in Mahadi, and Jafari, 2012).

Crystal (1971, 1992) identified the language as “the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self expression” (as cited in Mahadi, and Jafari, 2012, p. 231). Pollock (1997) suggested that the language is a system of arbitrary signs which is shared and agreed upon by a given group or society (as cited in Mahadi, and Jafari, 2012) in other terms “language is essentially set of sound patterns to which the speakers have arbitrarily assigned meaning or reference on which they implicitly agree” which changes continuously through time and differs geographically from place to another (Amer, 2016, p. 216).

Language is a part of culture that cannot be separated from it (Sapir, 1970 as cited in Elmes, 2013, p. 12) “because it is deeply embedded in” (Amer, 2016, p. 213). Further, Salzmann (1998) saw that language is the key to old societies’ culture, and a guide to today’s since it represents it (Sapir, 1929 as cited in, Elmes, 2013, p. 12). Sapir and Whorf recognized that we cannot understand one from having knowledge about the other (Elmes, 2013, p. 12).

The structure of a language represent the way the speaker perceive the world which is called ‘The linguistic determinism’; “with ‘strong’ determinism stating that language actually determines thought, and ‘weak’ determinism implying that our thought is merely influenced by our language” (Campbell, 1997; Wardhaugh, 2002 as cited in Elmes, 2013, p. 13).

To simplify things we can say that “Culture is in language and language is loaded with culture.” (Ager, 1994 cited in Baltasi and Anıç, 2016, p. 261)

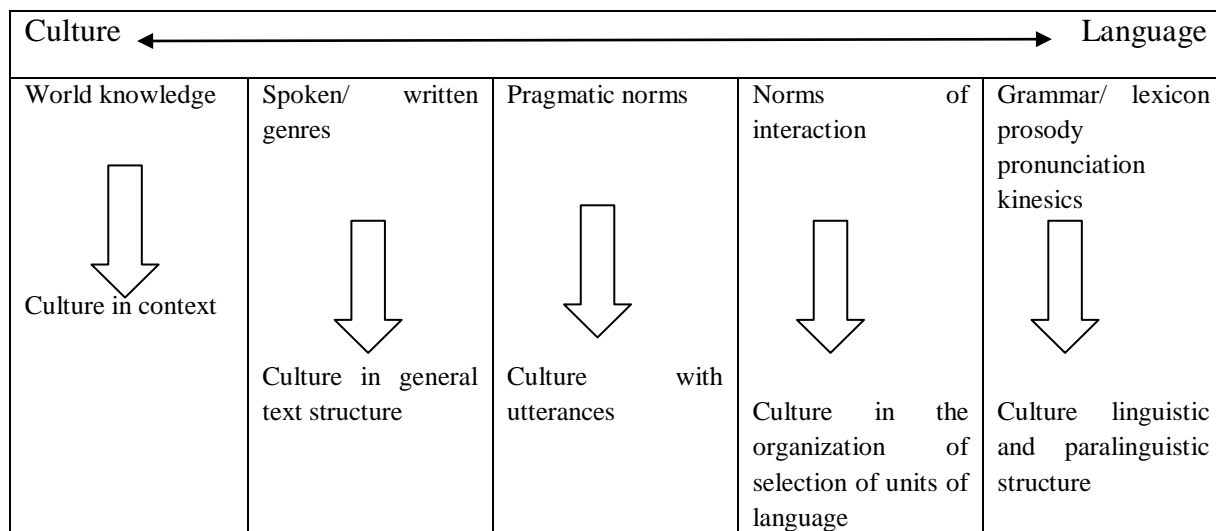
1.2.1.4.2. The Influence of Learning Culture on the Foreign Language Learning

Effective education of a foreign language demands from the teacher and students to pay attention to the cultural aspect of the target language. Bennet (1993) stated that anyone who masters all the language skills, yet have no idea about the cultural, sociocultural, competence is a fluent fool (as cited in Baltasi and Aniç, 2016, p. 261). Brown (2000) confirmed that “a language is part of a culture, and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven”, he also states that learning a foreign language is in another way learning of another culture (as cited in Freimuth, 2016, p.3), so it is obvious that culture would affect the teaching and learning of a foreign language.

Önalan (2005) argued that learning culture helps to foster students’ communicative competence and their attitude towards integration of culture in classroom (as cited in Baltaci and Taniç, 2018). McKay (2003) further discussed the influence of culture on EFL learning and divided it into two manners: linguistically in which it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language, and pedagogically it influences the choice of the language materials (cited in Genc and Ardogan, p. 75). Liddicoat et al. (2003) (as cited by Ibrir and Kharoubi, 2017) agree with him claiming that language reflect culture’s aspect in all levels. The table below was done by Liddicoat et al., (2003) to explain how aspects of language are reflected or presented by culture (as cited in Ibrir and Kharoubi, 2017, p. 15).

Table2.1

Points of Articulation between Culture and Language (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p 9)



1.2.2. Communicative Competence

The first half of the 1970s marked the emergence of the notion of “communicative competence” (CC) which has been and still a major component of language teaching and learning; Dell H. Hymes is the one who introduced it to this field (Coste, de Pitro, and Moore, 2012). Before moving to define this concept, we start by the concept ‘Competence’.

This concept was originally taken from Chomsky’s distinguishing between ‘Competence’ and ‘Performance’. According to Chomsky (1965, p3), competence is “The shared knowledge of the ideal speaker- listener set in a completely homogenous speech community”, and performance refers to “the actual use of language in a concrete situations”. To simplify things, competence is the knowledge about a language a person has in his mind and the performance is applying that knowledge in real life situations, language use.

Hymes (1972) criticized Chomsky’s theory claiming that “the Chomskyan exclusion of sociocultural dimensions and the link established between performance and imperfection have to do with ideology” (Coste, de Pitro, and Moore, 2012, p 3); he argued that “Social life has affected not merely outward performance but inner competence itself” (Coste, de Pitro, and Moore, 2012, p. 3), so teaching and learning a foreign language to be successfully used in

an accurate situations needs to take into consideration the social factors. Therefore, he brought up the concept of ‘Communicative Competence’ which it is defined as “the level of language learning that enables language users to convey their messages to others and to understand other’s messages within a specific context” (Ibid, p.38). CC then refers to the ability of the appropriate use of language knowledge in communicative situations.

Hymes (1972) set a model for CC as four important analytic questions:

- **Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible?** This refers to the correct use of grammar rules.
- **Whether (Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible?** It refers to the sociolinguistic system which refers to the ability of making your message understandable.
- **Whether (Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate?** This means whether the utterances used are acceptable by the norms of a given society.
- **Whether (Whether (and to what degree) something is done?** It refers to the ability to know whether something is actually done within that context in a given society or not.

Savignon (1972) defined CC as “the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (as cited in Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p.96).

Hymes’s model of CC was further explained, Canale and Swane (1980) “understood communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication” (as cited by Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p.96). .In other words CC means to have the knowledge about the language and how it is being in use. According to Canal and Swain (1980) (as cited by Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007)

There are three types of knowledge: knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use language in a social context in order to fulfill communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with respect to discourse principles. In addition, their concept of skill refers to how an individual can use the knowledge in actual communication (p. 96).

Canal and Swain (1980) have made a CC model composed of four components which is presented in figure 3;

-Grammatical Competence: “is concerned with mastery of the linguistic code (verbal or non-verbal) which includes vocabulary knowledge as well as knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic and orthographic rules” (Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p97)

-Sociolinguistic Competence: which “includes knowledge of rules and conventions which underlie the appropriate comprehension and language use in different sociolinguistic and sociocultural context” Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p97)

-Discourse Competence: It is defined by Canal (1983) “as mastery of rules that determine ways in which forms and meanings are combined to achieve a meaningful unity of spoken or written texts” (as cited in Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p97)

-Strategic Competence: which “is composed of knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that are recalled to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to insufficient competence in one or more components of communicative competence” (as cited in Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007, p97).

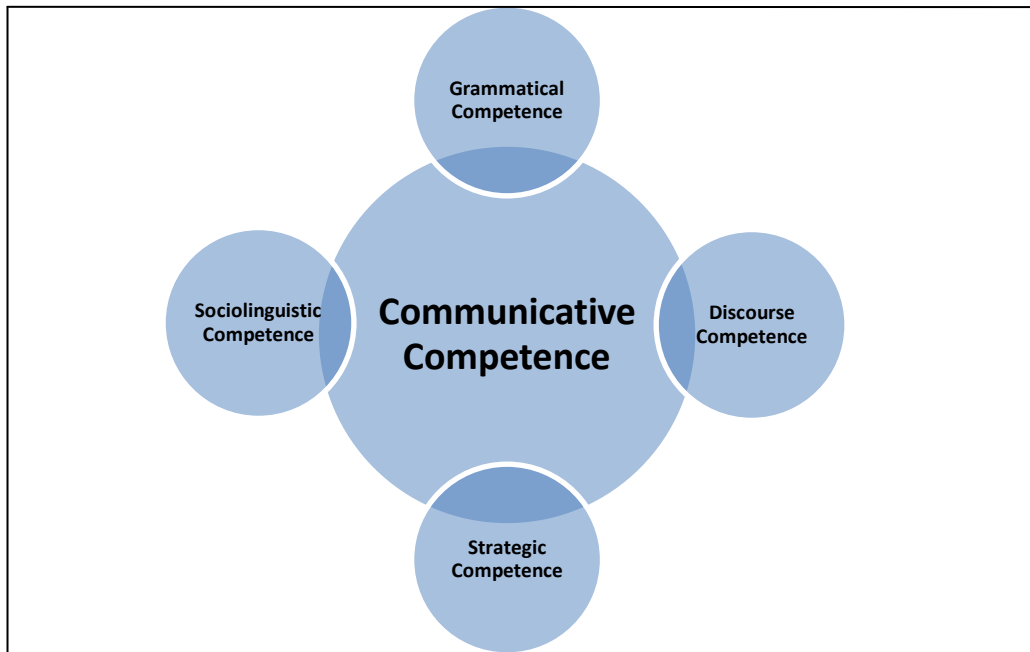


Figure 2. 2: Canale & Swane' (1980) Model of Communicative Competence.

1.2.3. Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Teaching and learning EFL has been the subject of research for many scholars and educators. One of the goals of English teaching, as it is stated by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, is to enable students to apply linguistic skills in various speech situations in foreign countries. Byram's (1997) (as cited by Brdarić, 2016) presented three goals of foreign language instruction:

- The development of CC for use in situations the learners might expect to encounter.
- The development of an awareness of the culture of target language.
- The development of insight into the foreign culture and positive attitudes toward foreign people, yet he noticed that EFL instruction that is being in use focused only on teaching the linguistic and discourse competences ignoring the cultural dimension knowledge claiming that it is naturally conveyed.

Byram et al. (2002) argued that “learners need not just knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways” (as cited in Bouslama and Benaissi, 2018, p. 123), so he wanted to restate the notion of Hymes’ (1972) Communicative Competence in the EFL field to Intercultural Communicative Competence to indicate the importance of culture and its effect on foreign language learning noting that students’ ability of dealing with their cultural meaning in parallel with the target culture must be developed (as cited in Gomez, 2012).

(Bachman, 1990; Savignon, 2001) stated that CC refers to the speaker’s ability to communicate and negotiate meaning with others from different speech community (as cite in Gomes, 2012) ; whereas ICC refers to “the speaker’s ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures that he/she recognizes as being different from his/ her own” (Gomez, 2012, p. 51); Lázár (2003) defines intercultural communicative competence as an extension of communicative competence (as cited in Gomes, 2012, p. 51).

“Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is defined as the competence to obtain effective outcomes in intercultural communication situations” (Gulbinskienė and Lasauskienė, 2014, p. 153) whereas Diller & Moule (2004) (as cited by Gulbinskienė and Lasauskienė, 2014) argue that “ICC is the ability to identify cultural diversity and develop empathy” (153).

There are a lot of terms that are used “interchangeably with the most frequent labels of intercultural competence”, the table 2 presents 19 terms that have been utilized as “alternatives for discussing intercultural competence “(Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007, p. 3). Hammer et al. (2003) have ‘intercultural sensitivity’, made the distinction between cultural sensitivity as being “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” and ‘intercultural competence’, being “the ability to think and act in intercultural appropriate ways” (as cited in Bouslama and Benaissi, 2018, p.125).

Table 2.2

Alternative Terms for Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Adapted from Fantini, 2006, Appendix D) transcultural communication international

transcultural communication	cross-cultural adaptation	intercultural cooperation	biculturalism
cross-cultural communication	international competence	cultural sensitivity	multiculturalism
cross-cultural awareness	international communication	cultural competence	plurilingualism
global competitive intelligence	intercultural interaction	communicative competence	Effective inter-group communication
global competence	intercultural sensitivity	ethnorelativity	

1.2.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence Components

Chan and Starosta (1996) proposed a model of ICC that is composed of three dimensions. These dimensions are considered to be skills that must exist within each foreign language speaker in order to affectively interact with others from different speech communities. Their model is composed of intercultural sensitivity (affective aspects), intercultural awareness (cognitive aspects, and intercultural adroitness (behaviour aspects).

-Intercultural awareness: it indicates the ability of understanding and explaining other's cultures. It is about the learning of the ways of people's thinking from other cultures as well as their values and beliefs (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

-Intercultural Sensitivity: Hammer, Bennit, and Wiseman (2003) defined it as "the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences" (as cited in kim, 2004, p. 26) and according to Chen and Starosta (1997), intercultural sensitivity is composed of four elements: self-concept, open-mindedness, nonjudgmental attitudes and social relaxation.

- **Intercultural Adroitness:** Chen and Starosta (1996) added this perspective to his model of ICC which refers to the ability to be a skilful in interacting with one's counterpart taking into consideration the appropriate use of the language in a given context; Adroitness enables the speaker to be successful and productive in the process of intercultural communication with people from different speech community.

Byram (1997) (as cited by Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018, p. 125) the one responsible for bringing the notion of ICC into the field of teaching foreign language made another modal which is the most known modal of IC. He stated that his model is consisted of five components or savoir which is, presented in figure 4, stated by him as follow:

1. **Attitudes (savoir être):** Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
2. **Knowledge (savoir): Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.**
3. **Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre):** Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
4. **(savoir apprendre/faire):** Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication.
5. **Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager):** Ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Intercultural competence is a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one to understand and (respect other's cultural diversity) [...], respond appropriately [...] when interacting, [...] and establish positive relationship with people" (Huber and Reynolds, 2014, p. 16).

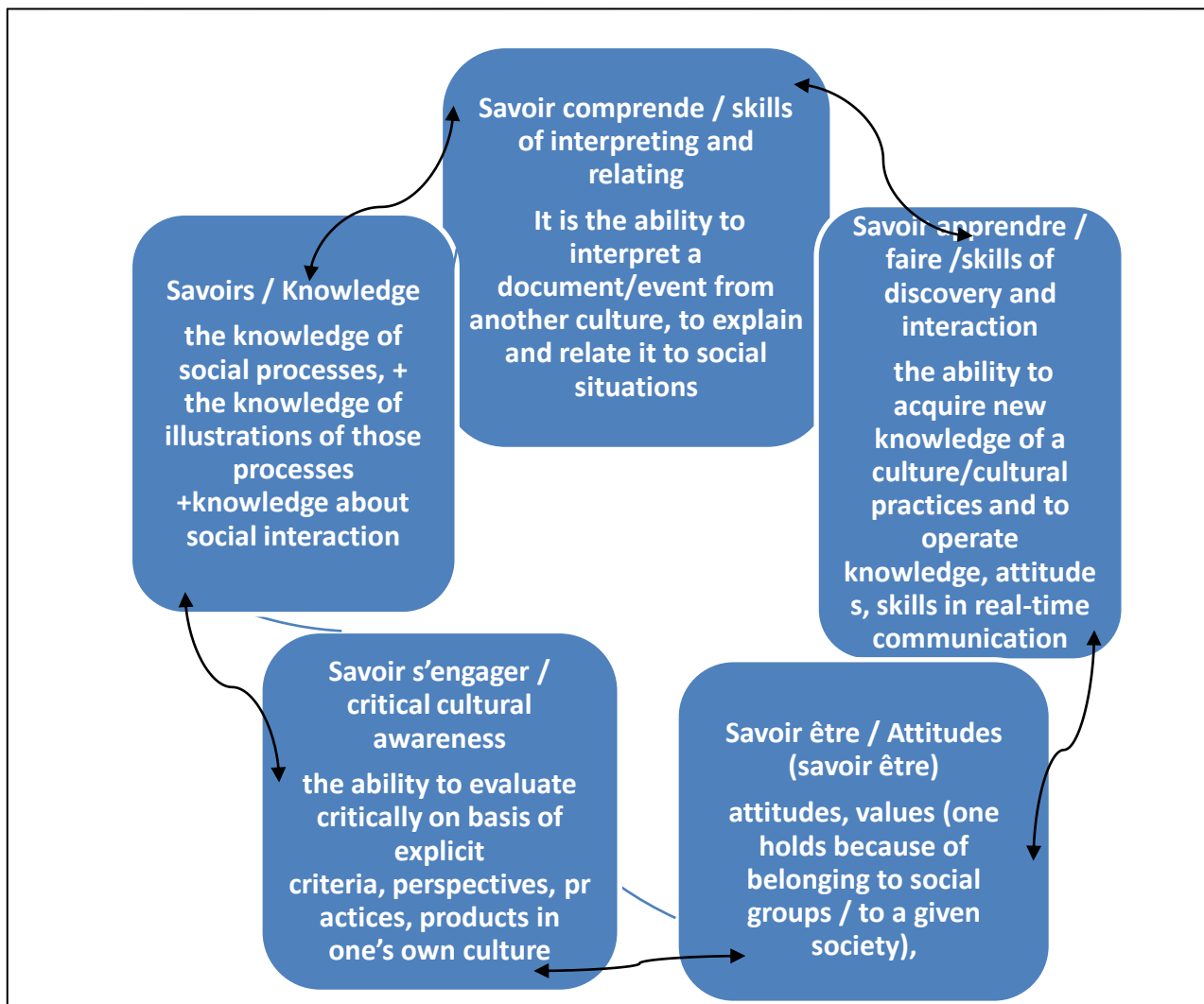


Figure2.3: Byram's (1997) Model of ICC (cited by Müller- Hartmann, Andreas/ Schocker-von Ditfurth; Marita (2007).

1.2.6. The Importance of Intercultural Communication Competence in EFL classroom

As cited before, one of Byram's (1997) three goals of teaching a foreign language is to develop the cc of students. Camilleri defined communication as a process in which individuals share knowledge; therefore, she claims that communication is "facilitated by the extent to which we have similar meanings for the terms we use and the behavioural norms we share. "This in turn, depends on both knowledge of language and knowledge of culture, or better still cultural awareness" (as cited in Bradric, 2016, p. 5).

Ismail Çakir, a Turkish professor, (as cited by Bradric, 2016) explains why it is significant to introduce students to the target culture:

The use of language in general is related to social and cultural values, language is considered to be a social and cultural phenomenon. Since every culture has its own cultural norms for conversation and these norms differ from one culture to another, some of the norms can be completely different and conflict with other cultures' norms. Consequently, communication problems may arise among speakers who do not know or share the norms of other cultures (5).

Being aware of the existence of cultural otherness is the gate to master a foreign language. The goal of it is the enter-group communication, ICC, which would probably fail without cultural awareness. Arabski and Wojtaszek argue that “language learning is in fact a social psychological process, in which the role of a wider sociocultural context should not be marginalised” (as cited in Bradric, 2016, p. 10).

“It was underlined by the majority of studies that being competent in speaking, listening, reading or writing is not adequate to communicate since without knowing the culture of the language, it would be almost impossible to have a true understanding of the language” (Önalın, 2005; Razi&Böcü, 2016 as cited in Baltacı and Tanis, 2018, p. 261). Moreover, Farnia & Abdul Sattar, 2015 indicate that having a lack intercultural competence “lead to many communication breakdowns, misunderstandings or deviated norms in an interaction no matter it is spoken or written” (as cited in Baltacı and Tanis, 2018, p. 261).

Allo (2018) stated that “Through intercultural communication, we can learn more about other people and their unique cultures and about ourselves culture as well as our background” (p. 162). “The appearance of disharmony, misunderstandings and even conflicts in communication is largely due to a lack of ICC. “The ability to communicate successfully with native speakers depends not only on language skills but also on the comprehension of cultural habits and expectations” (Gulbinskienė & Lasauskienė, 2014, p. 150).

Lum (2004) stated that “communication in real situations is never out of context, and because culture is part of most contexts, communication is rarely culture-free” (Gulbinskienė and Lasauskienė, 2014, p. 152). Berardo, Deardorff et al (2012) (as cited by Gulbinskienė and Lasauskienė, 2014, p. 153) argued that “a lack of ICC may cause culture shock. Culture shock is caused by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs (words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, and norms) and symbols or social contacts”; therefore, the goal of teaching EFL should be turned towards the cultivation of ICC of students in order to avoid all of these problems.

1.2.7. Barriers to Intercultural Communicative Competences

LaRay M. Barna (1997) in his ‘Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication’ made a list of barriers that may cause a failure in cross-cultural communication. He brought up this important approach to examine all types of attitude, lacks, and behavioural that may face a target language speaker in a different speech community since, as it is said, spotting the problem is considered to be half of the solution. This list is composed of: assumption of similarities, language differences, nonverbal misinterpretation, prejudice and stereotyping, high anxiety, and ethnocentrism.

1.2.7.1. Assumption of Similarities

One reason why misunderstandings happen in inter-group communication is that people assume that there are no differences between the world’s inhabitants. Simply because we are all human beings from the same nature and in need to the same conditions to survive does not mean that we share the same ideologies, beliefs, behaviours, and attitude towards the world.

Barna (1997) states that the assumption of similarity and refusing to believe in cultural diversity includes every aspect of life and extends to the expectation of having a common

non-verbal language which would lead to a false decoding of gestures, and facial expressions which would automatically cause misunderstandings of messages

1.2.7.2. Language differences

. Barna (1997) discussed that having no competence about the target language would obviously cause a problem while interacting with foreigners, yet the real problem is being knowledgeable about the language with no regards to the contextual meanings of idioms, vocabularies or expressions. Jandt (2001) states that” Ways in language can be barrier to intercultural communication are problems of vocabulary equivalence, idiomatic equivalence, experiential equivalence and conceptual equivalence” (as cited in Keles, 2013, p 1517). Some concepts that exist in one culture cannot have equivalents in many other cultures or may have different interpretations (Keles, 2013

1.2.7.3. Non- Verbal Misinterpretation

“The lack of comprehension of nonverbal signs and symbols that are easy to observe- such as gestures, posters, and other body movements- is a definite communication barrier” (Barna, 2013) since some messages and emotions can be conveyed without the use of words.

1.2.7.4. Stereotyping and Preconceptions

Samovar and Porter (1991) stated that “Prejudice, like stereotypes, can be either positive or negative although it is generally referred to as the unfair, biased or intolerant attitudes or opinions towards another person or group simply because they belong to a specific religion, race, nationality or another group (as cited in Keles, 2013, p. 1517). Preconceptions or as it is labelled ‘prejudice’ is seen as a “discrimination (that) impedes intercultural communication as it involves the unfavourable treatment and/or denial of equal

treatment of individuals or groups because of race, gender, religion, ethnicity or disability (Brisling, 1988 as cited in Keles, 2013, p. 1517).

1.2.7.5. High Anxiety

Anxiety or stress is so common within a cross-cultural communication because of the various differences between cultures. Gibb (1961) (as cited by Barna, 2013) discussed that under the pressure of interacting with an individual from a different speech community, a person who is not used to the amount of differences of language, attitude, and nonverbal language would try to protect himself through isolating his innersole away from what is surrounding him which would lead to an internal noise that most likely would drive him to commit a lot of mistakes during the communication process since he was not concentrating upon the message.

A speaker must overcome the stress and have control upon his verbal and nonverbal flow of language during the interaction to reach a successful level of cross-cultural communication. If he couldn't he would be affected by the 'cultural fatigue' which is a psychological condition known as 'cultural shock'. Cultural shock is a psychological disorder of the person after being introduced to a whole new culture without knowing anything about it. It produces stress and panic attacks.

1.2.7.6. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism or cultural relativism means to judge negatively other's beliefs, and norms making one own culture as a standard model.

Being ethnocentric means that you are close minded and don't accept any change in your way of thinking. This would lead a person to have a tendency to evaluate other's

statements and actions rather than trying to understand how others view the world; this is a major reason of the failure of a cross- cultural interaction (Bram, 1997).

1.2.8. The Assessment of the Intercultural Communicative Competences

Griffith et al stated that "The modern wave of globalization, having long overtaken the business sector, economics, technology, and transportation, has come to higher education" (2016, p. 1) therefore universities and instructors have to prepare students to be able to face different situations and problem in the occupational world. The most important thing that EFL students must be competent at is the intercultural communication using the lingua franca which is English Language. Many researchers and scholars constructed different definitions of ICC and made different models for its components and dimensions. The most known modals are: Chan and Starosta's (1996) and Byram' (1997) modals in addition to Earley & Ang's (2003) modal of cultural intelligence that divided its competencies into meta cognitive, cognitive, behavioral, and motivational domains (as cited in Griffith et al. 2016, p. 7). Recent studies and researches of cross- cultural communication acknowledged some important approaches to assessing ICC that have utilized in many sections and fields. There are two assessment formats that are widely used which are survey and portfolios formats; the survey assessment usually came as a self- reporting that can consist of nine items likert- scaling to over 160 items, and the portfolio assessment which is "a collection of materials produced either by an individual over time or scores from various assessments or both" (as cited in Griffith et al. 2016, p. 7); for now no standard portfolio assessment exist so they are used only by some institutions in various ways.

The Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Competence (BASIC) (Koester & Olebe, 1988; Ruben & Kealey, 1979) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ISCI) (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992) are two widely used ICC assessment models. The ISCI depends on

self-reporting assessment and the BASIC assesses an individual's ICC based on their actions in a cross-cultural communication (as cited in Sinicrope, Norrise, & Watanabe, 2007, p. 12). Another modal made ICC assessing is called "Culture Intelligence 20 item scale which is divided into four sections each section is made to assess one of the cultural intelligence domains, meta cognitive, cognitive, behaviour, and motivation, of an individual (as cited in Griffith et al. 2016, p.8). There are many forms and modals for assessing ICC and each one focuses on a set of components or domains which some of them are presented in table 3 below (as cited in Griffith et al. 2016, p.8):

Table 2.3

Some Existing Assessments of Cross-Cultural Competence

Test	Developed(year)	Format	Delivery	Forms and items	Themes/topics
Assessment of Intercultural Competence(AIC)	Fantini and Tirmizi (2006)	Self-report; 6-point Likert scale (not at all competent to extremely high competence)	Online survey	54items(4subscales; 11–19items per scale)	Includes four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical awareness.
Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)	Ang et al.(2007)	Self-report;7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree)	Online survey	20 items	Measures cultural intelligence through four subscales: cognitive (knowledge of other cultures), metacognitive (awareness of how one thinks about other cultures), behavioural (behaving appropriately in cross-cultural interactions), and motivational (desire to interact with and learn more about other cultures).
Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)	Hammer(2011)and Hammer et al.(2003)	Self-report (with10 additional demographic items); 5-point Likert scale (disagree to agree)	Online and paper and pencil	50 items	Measures orientations to cultural differences through five dimensions: denial/ defence, reversal, minimization, acceptance/adaptation, and encapsulated marginality.
Intercultural Sensitivity Scale	Chen and Starosta (2000)	elf-report; 5-point Likert scale (strongly	Online survey	24 items	Measures intercultural sensitivity through five

(ISS)			disagree to strongly agree)			factors: interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.
Scale of Ethno cultural Empathy (SEE)	Wang et al.(2003)		Self- report; 6-point Likert scale (strongly disagree that it describes me to strongly agree that it describes me	Online survey	31 items	Measures empathy toward people of racial and ethnic backgrounds different from one's own. Contains four subscales: empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, acceptance of cultural differences, and empathic awareness.
Tests for Hidden Bias	Project Implicit https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html	Implicit	Performance measure (implicit association tests)	Online survey	14 different tests	Implicit association tests that measure unconscious biases such as negative prejudices toward various ethnic groups

There are some advantages and disadvantages of each and every format of ICC assessments, performance, portfolio, interviews, since it studies Humanities and social sciences which are known to be far from being exact sciences. Table4 presents some of these advantages and disadvantages of direct approaches to ICC assessment:

Table 2.4:

Overview of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Formats of ICC Assessment (as cited in Sinicrope, Norrise, &Watanabe, 2007, p. 33).

Assessment type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Performance	-authentic, real-world situations -avoids issue of self reporting	-difficult to elicit/create authentic scenarios -requires expert raters and/or clear assessment guidelines
Portfolio	-shows development over time -active role for participant	-not an objective presentation of self
Interview	-in-depth data	-time-consuming collection, transcription, and analysis

1.2.9. Comics as a Way to Foster ICC and Overcome its Barriers

Wordworth (as cited by Racine, 2013) stated that “Our real education begins outside the classroom with the joy of discovery”; he further discussed that when a person want to learn about a foreign language and its culture comics is a short cut to achieve that purpose because of their cross-cultural, worldwide popularity which make them useful inside and outside the classroom (p. 1). Being culturally competent and aware is one condition of having a successful cross-cultural communication; that is why EFL students seek to find interesting tools and effective ways to enjoy and to learn in the same time. Wordworth suggests the use

of comics so does Racine (2013) in his research *Comics aren't just for fun anymore* where he presented set of comics that were translated cross- culturally such as “The French comic book Series Asterix (that) has been translated into 107 languages (“Translations”). Tintin, a popular Belgian comic book series, is also available in more than 100 languages (“Fun Facts”)” (p. 1) that proved their efficiency in teaching readers about the language and its culture. He also stated that “Comics’ ability to traverse linguistic, social, and political barriers is useful to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) professionals and also has not been lost on nations and governments wishing to export their language and culture to others”. TESOL refers to the expression: ‘Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages’. He insisted that comics have an ability to depict how peoples of a given nation think, behave, and feel towards the world which is significant for non-native speakers who wishes to master the English language. Racine (2013) gave an accurate example of using comics when he stated that “British used English language comics to promote their culture in India, Hong Kong, and Japan”. Whiting, J. Teacher of English in the Plymouth University, New Hampshire wrote a book about the usage of comics in English language classroom. He further mentioned the advantages of using them in fostering the target culture competence stating that: “Comics offer ways to bring in target-language culture, comics are often culturally contextualized, Opportunities for collaboration with other content area teachers, Editorial cartoons for higher -level students” (n.d, p. 27).

Gómez (2013) in his article “Reading, Speaking and Writing through Creative Resources: Comics in Second Language Teaching” tackled the methodological use of comics in classroom to foster the students ICC. He stated that “

Comics are normally associated with fantastic stories that belong to fiction. However, there are lots of them with political or historical contents. White (1992) makes reference to the possibility of accessing historical or cultural facts in a particular country by using different

materials. Moreover, comics are also very powerful to foster communicative competence in our students. The main relationship between communicative competence acquisition and comics comes from comics' characteristics. Particularly, this relationship has to do with the association between image/drawings and text that establishes a connection between the meanings behind both. Comics are generally easy to read stories and their language is part of familiar or diary conversations. Besides, comics have an attractive context and offer the possibility to work with their different language extracts from a communicative approach. The written text is normally supported and implemented by the image, so that combination between text and image promotes further understanding. Furthermore, Starr points out that "comics provide authentic language learning opportunities [...]. The dramatically reduced text of comics makes them manageable and language profitable" (Starr, 2004: 2) (p. 444)

Comics can be used in teaching EFL students from a communicative aspect which would allow teachers to combine between language aspects with cultural knowledge to foster the students' inter-group communication (Gomés, 2013). Van Leeuwen states that there are other aspects of comics which would make them an effective didactic tool which he considered comics as "a single, multi-layered, multimodal communicative act, whose illocutionary force comes about through the fusion of all the component, semiotic modalities: dress, grooming, facial expression, gaze or gesture" (as cited in Goméz, 2013, p. 448); moreover, "comics can show daily habits, customs, ornaments and responses associated with an individual cultural reality. Hence, by an appropriate selection of comics that show cultural aspects, teachers can create their own materials to develop intercultural communicative aspects (Goméz, 2013, p. 448).

"In the Algerian educational system, IC teaching has gained attention from Algerian educators" (Bousslama & Benaissi, 2018, p. 125) Teachers of high school are asked to use some available tools such visual texts and technological aids to prompt pupils' ICC, yet Messerehi (2014) stated that instructions that are used to teach EFL in Algeria are still concerned only with teaching and focusing on the linguistic and grammar competence

ignoring that cultural aspects and sociocultural competence are part of ICC which without them cross- cultural communication would probably fail (as cited in Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018, p. 125). Many researches submitted for the requirements of the Degree of Doctorate concerning ICC and how to foster it are being conducted especially the last two years because of the arise of the globalization stream such as Haddaoui (2019) and Bennacer (2019), yet no research was conducted on the use of comics to cultivate EFL learners cultural awareness.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a review on the literature of Comics and how they made their way to classrooms as an effective tool in teaching and learning EFL. After that we discussed the significance of culture in learning a foreign language moving to the part where the concept of ICC was brought up as an extension to the CC with an additional focus on the intercultural competence which would build EFL learners' ability to cross- culturally interact with people from different speech communities sharing the English language as a lingua franca. In addition to presenting Some ICC assessment models, the last part was concerned of the relationship that relates comics to culture that would make it an effective way to foster EFL students' ICC.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The first chapter dealt with the literature review that is related to comics, culture in EFL teaching, and ICC. It also explored the relationship between them in order to enhance students' ICC. By tracking this information, we paved the way to conduct this study and answer the research questions, and verify the validity or nullity of the hypotheses. The second chapter is devoted to shed light on the methodology that is used in order to carry on this research. It discusses where this research would take a place and the choice of the sample and participants. Then, it explains the research design that is opted for to proceed this study, the stages, and procedures along with the research instruments, and the tools of data collection.

2.1. The Research Location

This research is conducted in Chadli Bendjdid University- El-Taref, in Eastern Algeria; however, it did not take place at the university. The experiment was done online, the treatment and both tests. Because of the mandatory quarantine, we used the social media, facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp as tools of communication to facilitate the process of the experiment. It was used to share the tests links, and the document that was used in the treatment phase, *Collection of Comic Strips*, as an individual reading task for participants. The same went for students' questionnaire. It was addressed to participants via the same media that are mentioned above. It was a good chance to make use of technology and internet as tools of conducting researches and prove their effectiveness and importance in such circumstances.

2.2. The Participants

The population that is targeted in this study are first year EFL students of Chadli Bendjdid University during the academic year 2019/ 2020. The target population refers to the group of people that are interested in by researches and want to generalize conclusions to them (Sim and Wright, 2000). Conducting a research and making experiments on the whole population is considered to be nearly impossible; thus, taking some individuals of it to do the study and then generalize the findings on the whole is a much easier way; this process is called the sampling. The sample of this study was selected randomly to participate in the experiment. We had a group of thirty ($N= 35$) first year EFL students. Their ages range from 18 years old to 38 years old maximum ($M=19, 65$). This was related to the first part of the research procedure; whereas, the second part which is related to the questionnaire we chose a sample of fifty nine ($N= 59$) first year EFL students from the same population to answer them. Their ages also range from 18 years old to 38 years old maximum.

The choice of this population was not randomly. As it is known, students at their first year in the university encounter a difficulty in using the target language to communicate because at their first years of learning EFL in the middle and the secondary schools, the emphasis was put only on learning reading and writing skills and pretty much ignoring the cultural aspect of target language use in the society. Therefore, a separate module was designed, called the 'Oral Expression', for enhancing their speaking skill; still, the neglecting of the cultural competence and ICC in the instruction used to teach EFL in our university and other Algerian universities had increased the size of this problem. Since they always refer to their mother tongue language and relate to, it made them incapable to intercultural communicate and use the target language in its right sociocultural context (Messerhi, 2014). Thus, first year EFL students are the most suitable target population for this study because cultivating Students' ICC at their early stages of specializing in studying the English

Language and finding the most suitable and creative ways to do it is the major aim of our research.

2.3. The Research Instruments

The quantitative method was selected as a research approach to conduct this study. Two data collection instruments were used and combined to solve this research problem. The used instruments are the pre-test/ post-test and the treatment material used in the quasi-experiment opted for answering the main research question about the effectiveness of using comics to cultivate students' ICC. A questionnaire was addressed to first year EFL students to detect their perspective towards using comics in classroom as a didactic tool to deliver courses and answer the second research question. These instruments were carefully chosen to meet the conditions of conducting an accurate, reliable, and a valid research.

2.3.1. Pre-test/ Post-test

The fact that we chose to make this study an experimental research calls for using the quasi-experiment as a research method working with one group using pre and post test to assess students' ICC prior and after the treatment. This assessment in turn would evaluate the effectiveness of using the independent variable. The Cultural Intelligence scale (CQS) that was developed by Ang et al. (2007) as mentioned before is adopted by this research as a model for designing the pre-test and the post-test. The choice of using this scale as an assessment tool is vindicated by the fact that this scale “Measures cultural intelligence through four subscales: cognitive (knowledge of other cultures), metacognitive (awareness of how one thinks about other cultures), behavioural (behaving appropriately in cross-cultural interactions), and motivational (desire to interact with and learn more about other cultures)” (Griffith et al. 2016, p.8). This scale is composed of four components that serve and match Byram's (1997) definition of ICC; in which he divided the ICC into four components that

stands for the competences that EFL speaker should encounter; The Knowledge which refers to the knowledge of social processes, illustrations of those processes, and about social interaction, the attitude that stands for being knowledgeable about the attitudes and values that one holds because of belonging to social groups or to a given society, the skill that means having the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture or cultural practices and to operate knowledge, attitudes, skills in real-time communication , and the awareness which is the ability to evaluate critically on basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, products in one's own culture (Müller- Hartmann, Andreas / Schocker-von Ditfurth; Marita, 2007) . Byram's (1997) modal of ICC was adopted by this research as the items that should assessed in order to track students' level of ICC; therefore, the pre-test/post-test take the form of self-reporting assessment likert scale with a five points rating. It is composed of four components/ 20items questions. Students were asked to answer both tests online.

2.3.1.1. The Validity and Reliability of the Pre-test/Post-test

The researcher is most concerned with having a valid and reliable data in order to draw logical conclusions and be able to generalize them to the target population. Making sure that the used instruments are valid and reliable will insure the validity of the research findings. Instruments' validity refers to the construct validity which is defined by Lodico et al. (2006) as to what extent "an instrument is accurately measuring an abstract trait or ability" (as cited in Haddaoui, 2019, p 96). The pre-test/Post-test used in this research depends on Byram's (1997) definition and model of ICC. This definition was proved to be the highest rated valid definition (M= 3.5 in a 4 point scale ranging from 4= highly applicable to 1= not applicable) among other researchers 'definitions (Griffith et.al. 2016). Cohen et al. (2000) and Lodico et al. (2006) discussed the importance of the internal validity explaining that it refers to the dissimilarity that may occurs between the pre-test and post-test in terms of difficulty or ease (as cited in Haddaoui, 2019) That is why we used the same pre-test as post-test too to avoid

doubting that point. The reliability of the instruments refers to the ability to give us approximately the same scores if individuals took the test twice. The self-reporting Likert scale assessment was proved to be reliable by Haddaoui (2019) when ten students sat for the same test twice; one month was the duration between the two tests. The test produced almost the same scores in the second test as the first one.

2.3.2. The Collection of Comic Strips

The comic strips were designed to serve as a research instrument used in the treatment phase to prove the effectiveness of reading them on enhancing students' ICC. The collection of comics is consisted of seven comic strips. Each one is made up to deliver one of the important cultural information composed by Ellis and Brewster (2003) (as cited by Choudhury, 2014) into categories such as:

- Linguistic and illustrations: conventions and non-verbal language.
- Geographical: how it affects the target culture and the use of the language.
- Historical: information about historical events and festivals.
- Related Cultural Behaviours such as stereotyping and generalizations.

This information was put in a fun context as the subject of conversations that run between two high school students. One of them is Native American, and the other is an Algerian Immigrant. The comic strips are titled *Jake & Adam*.

2.3.3. The Handouts

A set of handouts were delivered to students online along with the comic strips to help them understand the literature that is related to culture and cultural information. These handouts are composed of three parts. The first part is a list of key concepts that contains a

simple definition of terms such as culture, norms, values, ethnicity...etc. The second part is made for explaining some behaviours that are committed by individuals that belong to an ethnic group towards others from different cultures or ethnicities. Most of these behaviours are considered to hold negative intensions such as discrimination, stereotyping, ethnocentrism...etc. The last handout is concerned with defining and making a distinction between multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural communities and interactions. This handout is addressed to students in order to help them differentiate between the above mentioned concepts, and to spot the points of strengths and weaknesses of each type of communication (see appendix C).

2.3.4. Students' Questionnaire

Another instrument is used in this quantitative research is the questionnaire. It is the most known tool for gathering a quantitative data. It is defined by Brown (2001) (as cited by Irbir & Kharoubi, 2017) as “any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their awareness or selecting from among existing answers” (p. 40). The questionnaire used in this study aims for collecting students' opinion and perspective towards reading comics; therefore, it was addressed to first year EFL students online to answer. It is consisted of (21) questions of different types in order to attract the respondent's interest and not to look so boring and long so he would answer all of the questions.

2.3.4.1. Description of the questionnaire

There are set of types of questions that are used in this questionnaire which are:

- **Closed Questions:** They are questions that don't need more than one word to answer such as yes or no questions by ticking in the right box. These questions are

likely to be objective and easy to be coded and interpreted. (Q: 3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20)

- **Open-ended Questions:** The answer of this type of questions demands more than just one word, and it is not limited by choices. The respondent has to answer with his/her own words. (Q: 21)
- **Multiple Choice Questions:** They are like the close-ended questions; the only difference is that the respondent can choose one answer or more by ticking the box/boxes of the given choices. Some questions include another choice resembled by the word 'other' which would allow the respondent to add another answer of his own. (Q: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13)
- **Likert scale questions:** They are a good survey questions used to know the respondent's opinion about something and to what extent they agree or disagree to certain things. They come in 5, 7, or 9 points scales or it may use words as a scaling method such as: I don't agree, I agree somehow, I fully agree. (Q: 4, 9, 15, 18).

2.4. The Research Design and Procedures

2.4.1. Quazi Experiment

The first part of this study adopts the quazi experiment as a quantitative research method to collect the necessary data. This experiment followed the one group pre-test/post-test design. It started by a pre-test followed by a treatment then a post-test.

This research has been done at Chadli Bendjid University. The students that participated in this experiment are 35 first year EFL students during the academic year 2019/2020. Our experiment run for a pre-test to assess students' ICC, then they went for a treatment that is an online individual reading task of collection of comic strips. Finally, they

sat for the same test as a post-test to track their ICC level; whether the treatment helps in the improvement their ICC abilities or not.

2.4.1.1. The Pre-test

Since our experiment was done online, the first thing we have done is publishing an announcement on the facebook platform regarding our experiment. It was published on May 2nd, 2020 in the facebook group of first year EFL students of Chadli Bendjdid University (see appendix A). We explained the subject of the study, and asked some volunteers to help us do the experiment. We received some responses from students. We decided the day of 11th May, 2020 to be the date of taking the first test by sending the participants the link of the pre-test using Facebook and Instagram. 35 students completed the test and sent it to us on the same day. The pre-test took the format of a self-reporting, five points likert scale assessment. It is composed of five parts. The first part consisted of three questions aimed to collect information about the participant and his/her opinion about comic. The second part is the first component of ICC that consisted of six statements about the student's knowledge about the cultural competence. The second component is 'attitude'; this part consisted of five statements describing the student's attitude when he/she cross-culturally communicate. The third component is 'skill' which is consisted of four statements, and the last component is 'awareness' that is consisted of five statements. The participant is asked to check the number (from 1 stands for not at all to 5 that stands for extremely well) that best describes his/her situation concerning all the statements (see appendix D)

2.4.1.2. The Treatment

After taking the pre-test, the treatment started. As it is mentioned before, the treatment took the format of an individual reading task of a collection of comic strips. The collections of comic strips were combined to a set of handouts concerning the related literature to culture.

They were sent to participants directly after taking the pre-test via facebook and Instagram. These comic strips were designed by us with the help of other EFL students. The comics were made up to meet the students' needs and interests in order to be both fun and educational (see appendix B). The comics are collection of seven comic strips having the same plot of the story, yet each one talks about a different subject that can be considered as a course about one of the cultural information that student should be knowledgeable about in order to improve his/her ICC level in a sarcastic and funny way.

The first comic strip is titled 'What is Culture'. It introduces culture, its simple definition, and its importance in language learning. It also mentions the term 'fluent fool' and how a foreign language speaker can be a fluent fool.

The second comics tackle the non-verbal communication language. It explains how it differs from one culture to another by mentioning some examples. It also shows how the misinterpretation of a body language can be a barrier to intercultural communication and causes a misunderstanding.

The third comics explain how geography can affect culture that produces different varieties of language use among countries or societies. A significant example of this is about translation and idioms. They cannot be translated into other languages since some words or contexts cannot be relevant for some cultures or cannot find equivalent terms for it.

The fourth comics discuss some legends and myths. It gives information about the importance and the differences between both terms.

The fifth comic strips can be considered as a lesson in history and culture in the same time since it mentions some historical events of the target culture that can be related to the festivals and vacations that the American society celebrate.

The sixth comic strips talks about how difficult can be to marry a person from a different culture. The wedding party can go messy just because one person does not know about the other's cultural norms such as customs, food, traditions. Imagine that this would be for a life long term; it would really be a problem. That is why it is important to know about the target culture in order to have healthy intercultural conversation and life style.

The seventh and the last comics discuss one of the important issues that an individual can face when interacting with others from different cultural groups. It is the stereotyping, preconceptions, and ethnocentrism. As EFL learners, students must be aware of these concepts and behaviours that are considered one of the barriers to intercultural communication. They need to acknowledge the cultural diversities and respect it in order to avoid this primitive mindset and achieve the goal of ICC.

A set of handouts were combined to these comic strips in order to help the participants understand the new terms and concepts that are related to culture. Having knowledge about the cultural competence with the illustrations that exist in these comics of attitude and skills of intercultural communication would help building good capacities for EFL students. Participants were given five days to complete the reading task.

2.4.1.3. The Post-test

After finishing the treatment, the reading task, the post-test was administered to the participants in order to assess their level of ICC and measure how much did reading the comics affected their level. To avoid any type of bias in the type of data we used the same test as a post-test with a slight difference concerning the first three questions. They were changed in order to get students' opinion about the treatment, if they enjoyed reading the comics or it was hard for them to complete this task.

In an attempt to make sure that the assessment procedures, the results of the pre-test and post-test were carefully analysed twice. Then the scores were compared to each other in order to track any sort of difference that occurred on students' ICC level.

2.4.2. Students' Questionnaire

The second part of the present study sheds light on students' perspective towards reading comics. Their opinion about the idea of including the comics in the classroom courses as a tool for teaching culture and cultivate their ICC would be taking into consideration Since the significance of using this creative tool lays on their willingness to learn using it. Using this tool will not be effective if it does not interest and motivate them to learn. This point is justified by Edward Thorndike when he included 'the low of readiness, which it refers to the willingness and mindedness to learn, as one of the important lows for an effective EFL learning. Thus, a perspective questionnaire was submitted to EFL first year students of Chadli Bendjdid University to answer. The sample of this study consisted of 50 students of intermediate level. The questionnaire link was addressed to them online via facebook groups or individually via Instagram in order to be filled. Unexpectedly, 59 students filled and returned them in a short period of time. That was one of the advantages of using an online questionnaire; they don't take much time to be answered or returned. The results of this questionnaire were analysed in a quantitative way in which they indicated the participants' reading habits, their attitude towards reading comics, the comics' impact on their culture and EFL learning. Also, to what extent they agree or disagree to including comics into their EFL courses.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter a clear and detailed description of the methodology that is used to conduct this research. We started by stating the sample of this research and its

location. Then, we explained the procedure of the quasi- experiment, the pre/post test, the treatment tools, and finished with describing the second data collection tool which is the questionnaire that is addressed to students in order to fill.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Introduction

The fourth chapter is concerned with the analysis of the data that is collected from students ‘scoring in both pre-test and post test. The results of the pre-test were analysed in a quantitative method, and the results of the post-test were analysed in account to the pre-test in order to compare between the two. Also, it addresses the analysis of the data collected from the students’ questionnaire following the same method.

2.5.1. Pre-test Analysis

Students’ ICC was assessed by the pre-test. The pre-test composed of five sections: general information, knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness. We started by analysing the first part.

Section one: Background information

Item1: Age distribution: It was collected in order to have a clear description about the participants in terms of age and their opinion about comics.

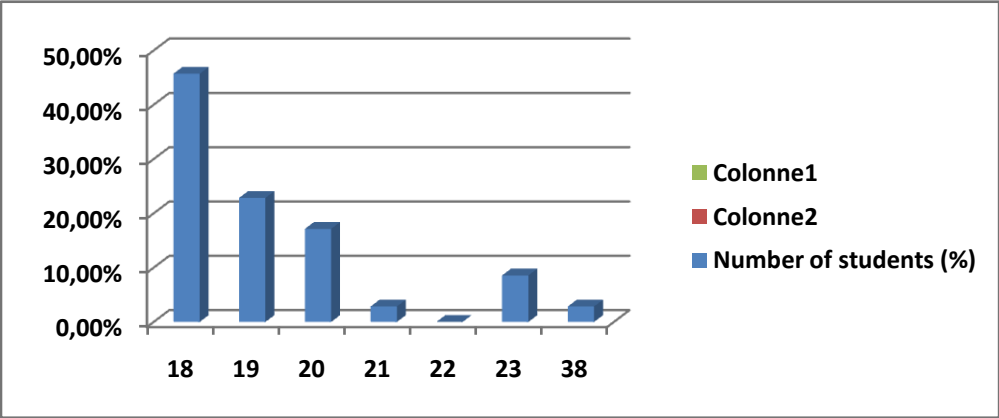


Figure 4.1 . Participants’ Age

According to findings, the majority of the participants are of 18 years old (45, 71 %). This means that they succeeded in all of their school years. Then we have a 22, 85% of

participants of age of 19 years old and a 17, 14% of age of 20 years old. This can be explained by either these students faced a failure in their baccalaureate exam, or repeated the academic year. 11, 42 % of participants are of age of 21 years old and 23 years old. This can be explained by either these students faced a failure in their baccalaureate exam, repeated more than one academic year, or there is another probability that these students are actually studying to get a second diploma in addition. There is one student who is of a 38 years old (2, 85%). The fact that this person is a first year LMD student is because that he/she is studying to have a second diploma, recently attended the baccalaureate exam, or returned from a long academic vacation.

Item 02: Do you read comics?

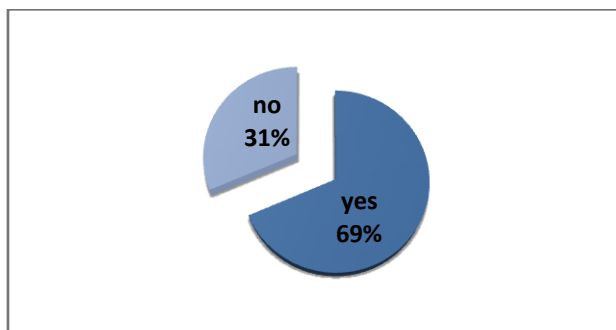


Figure 4.2. How many student read comics.

Findings revealed that 31% of the participants do not read comics; whereas, 68% which resembles the majority, read comics since comics are made especially for teens and young people.

Item three: If yes, why?

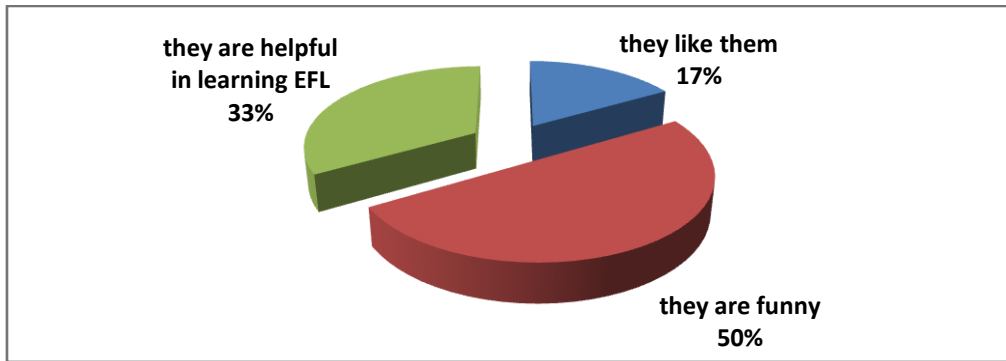


Figure 4.3. Participants’ opinion about comics

Most of the participants who answered ‘yes I read comics’ explained that by the fact that comics are funny and good for time passing (50%). 17% of the participants justified their answer stating that they just like reading them since childhood. Since they are studying English, they liked reading comics in English too. The rest of them stated that they read comics because they find them a creative way to learn more about the target culture, and learning new vocabulary to enhance their reading skill (33%).

Section Two: Knowledge

Item one: I could cite the definition of culture and describe its components.

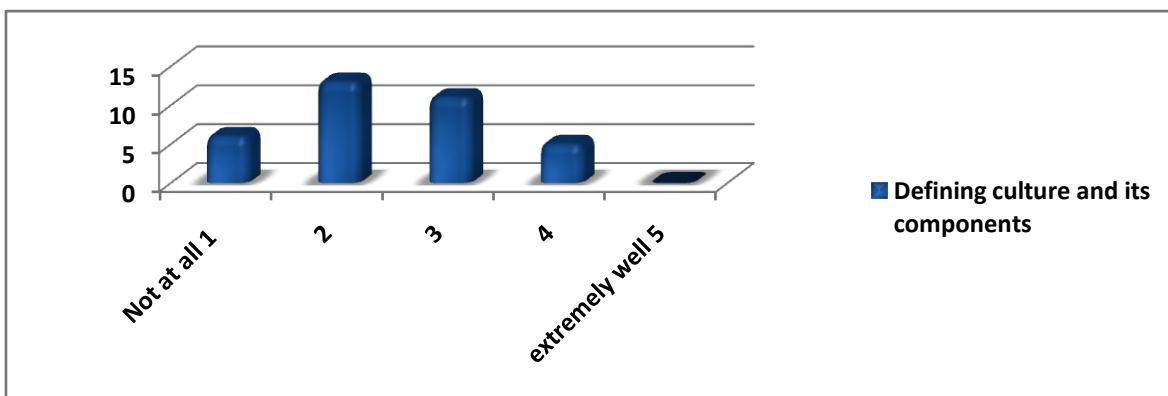


Figure 4.4. Students’ ability to define culture and its components.

Over 17, 6 % of participants reported that they cannot define culture and its components, and 37, 1 % of them, which form the majority, reported that they are not good enough at defining it. 31, 4 % reported that they consider themselves as they are of an intermediate level in completing this task. Only 14, 3 % believe that they are good enough, yet no one said that he/she is extremely well at citing culture's definition.

Item two: I know the essential norms of the target culture (i.e, greeting, dress, conventions...).

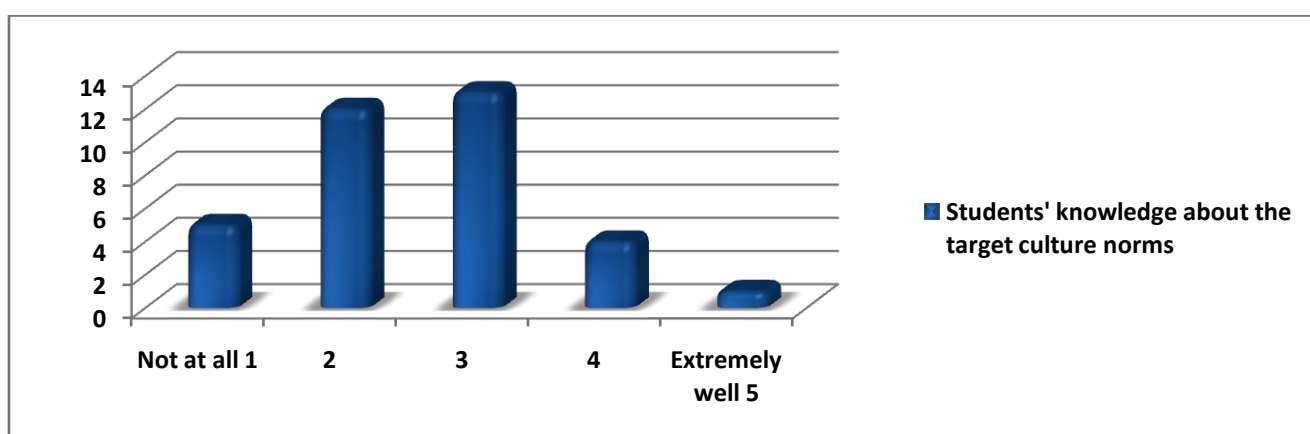


Figure 4.5. Students' knowledge about the target culture's norms

Students' answers concerning the second scale vary since 14, 3 % reported that they do not know anything about the target culture's norms, 34, 3 % answered as they do know a little about it, other rated themselves as they have an average knowledge about the norms of the American society (37, 1 %), few reported that they do know about the target culture's norms (11, 4 %), and just one person said that he knows very well most of the norms (2, 9 %).

Item three: I know some historical events and festivals that shaped the culture of the target language.

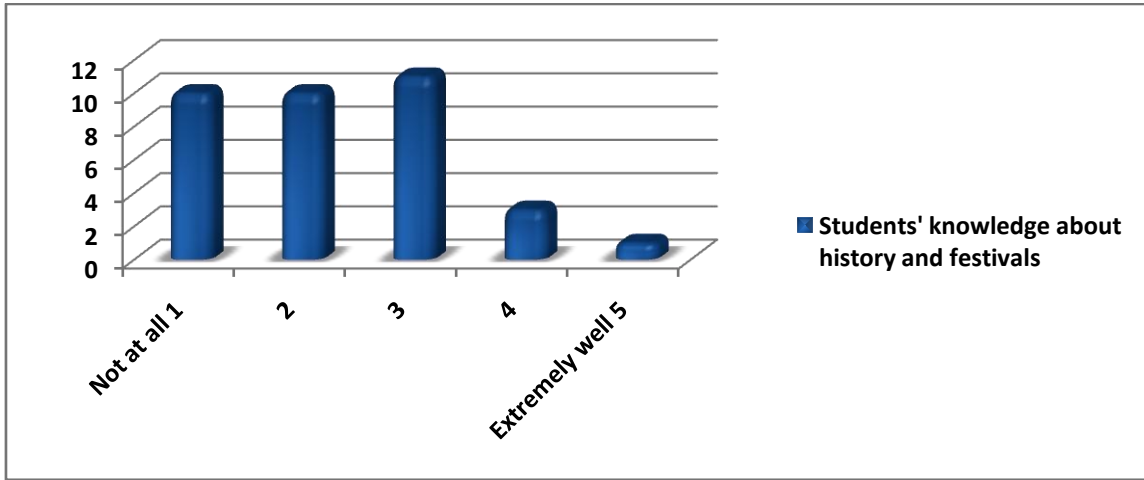


Figure 4.6. Students’ knowledge about history and festivals of the target culture

This five points scale show how much students know about history and festivals about the target culture. 28, 6 % reported they do not have any idea about this, and the same number of students said they do know some information about history. 31, 4 % rated their knowledge as it is of an average level concerning the target history. Few students consider themselves good in history of the target culture (8, 6 %), and only one student (2, 9 %) know so much about the festivals and historical events about the target culture.

Item four: I know the rules of expressing the non- verbal behaviours in target culture.

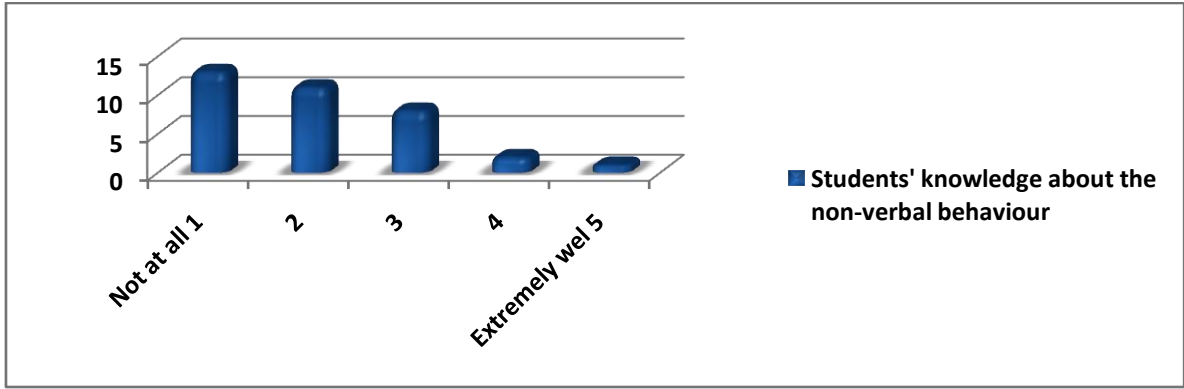


Figure 4.7. Students’ knowledge about the rules of expressing the non-verbal behaviours in the target culture

This findings of this scale shows that most of the students don't know how to express themselves via the non-verbal language (37, 1%) or they do know a little about it (31, 4%). 22, 9% of the participants have an average knowledge about that rules; however, only one know very well them (2, 9 %).

Item five: I know the target culture's values and beliefs

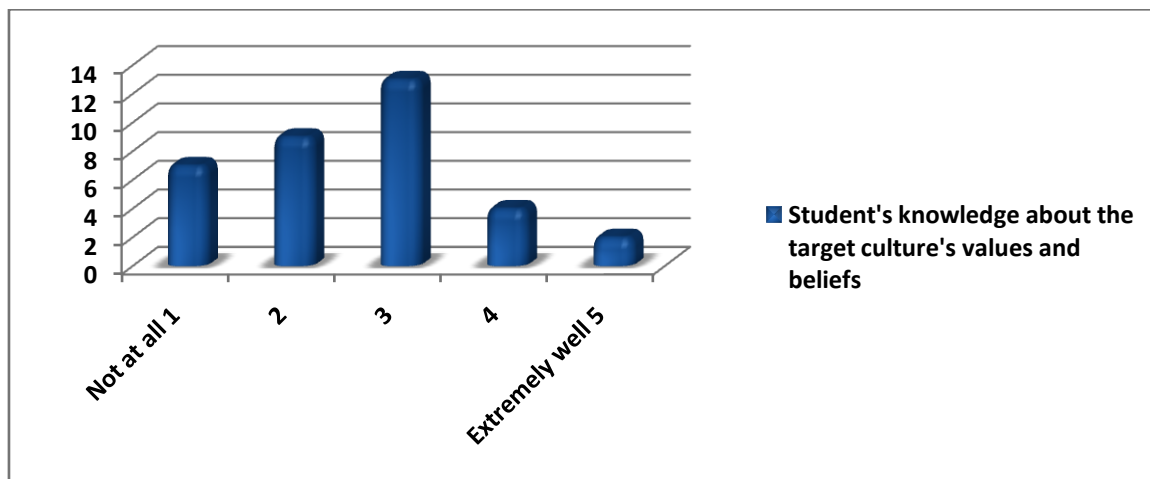


Figure 4.8. Students' knowledge about the target culture's values and beliefs

20% of students reported that they don't have any single clue about the target culture's beliefs and values. Others said that said they know some information about this (25, 7%). The majority reported that their knowledge about the values and beliefs is almost of an average level (37, 1%); whereas, the rest either said that they know a lot about that (11, 4%) or they know very well about all of the American society beliefs and values (5, 7%).

Item six: I know the rules that govern how language is actually used (grammatical competence, sociocultural competence).

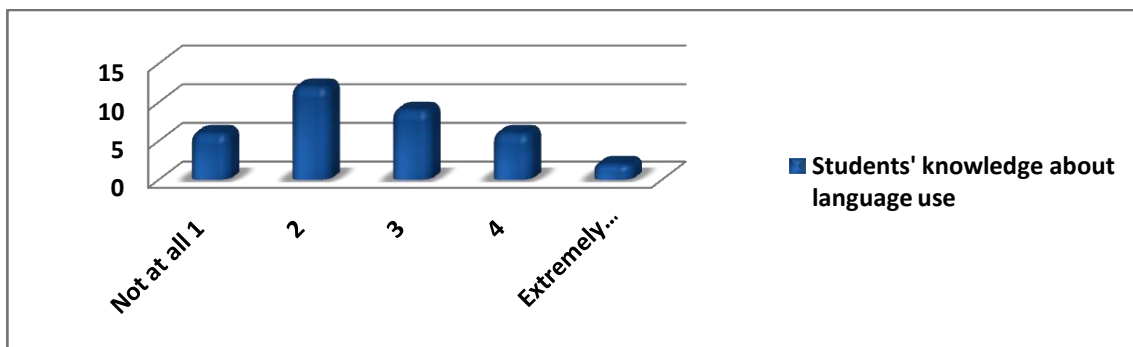


Figure 4.9. Students' knowledge about the rules of the target language use

According to findings, we notice that only 17, 1 % of students do not know about the rules that govern how the target language, EFL, is actually being used in the target society. The majority (34, 3 %) of them know a little bit about these rules. Some students reported that their knowledge about language use is average (25, 7 %). Other said that they know enough about these rules (17, 1 %), and the rest answered as if they know extremely well about language competences (5, 7 %).

Section three: Attitude

Item seven: I change my verbal behaviour (accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

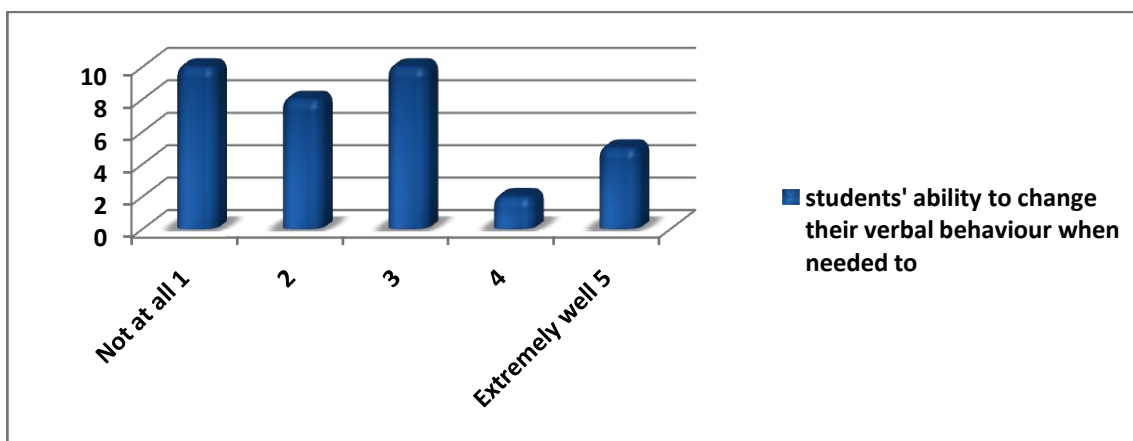


Figure 4.10. Students' ability to change their verbal behaviour when they cross-culturally interact with others.

Findings of this item revealed that 28, 6 % of the students do not change their verbal behaviour when cross-culture interaction happens. 22, 9% of them answered as if they do change a little bit of their tone and accent when using the target language. Ten students said that their ability at changing their verbal behaviour is of an average level (28, 6 %). 5, 7% of them stated that they are good at changing their behaviour whenever the situation requires to, and only 14, 3% rated themselves as they are extremely well at that.

Item eight: I use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross- cultural situations.

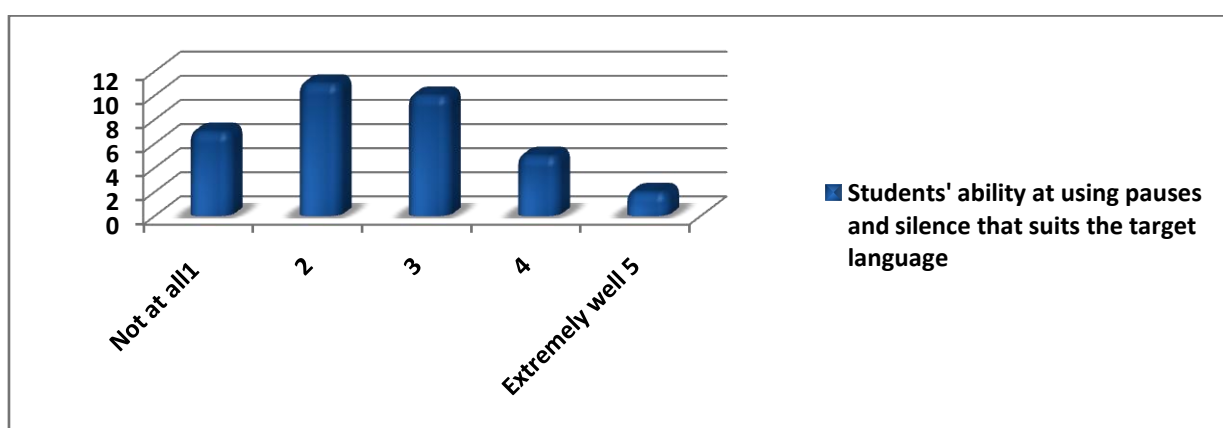


Figure 4.11. Students’ ability at using pauses and silence that suits using the target language

Findings of this scale show that 20 % of the students are not able to use pauses and silence differently to suite different situations of cross- culture interaction. 31, 4% of the participants reported that their ability to use the verbal punctuation is not good enough; whereas, 28, 6% stated that ability is of an average level. Some students answered as if they are good enough at that (14, 3%), yet only two students said that they are extremely well at controlling their verbal communication using pauses and silence according the target language use (5, 7%).

Item nine: I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross- cultural situation requires it.

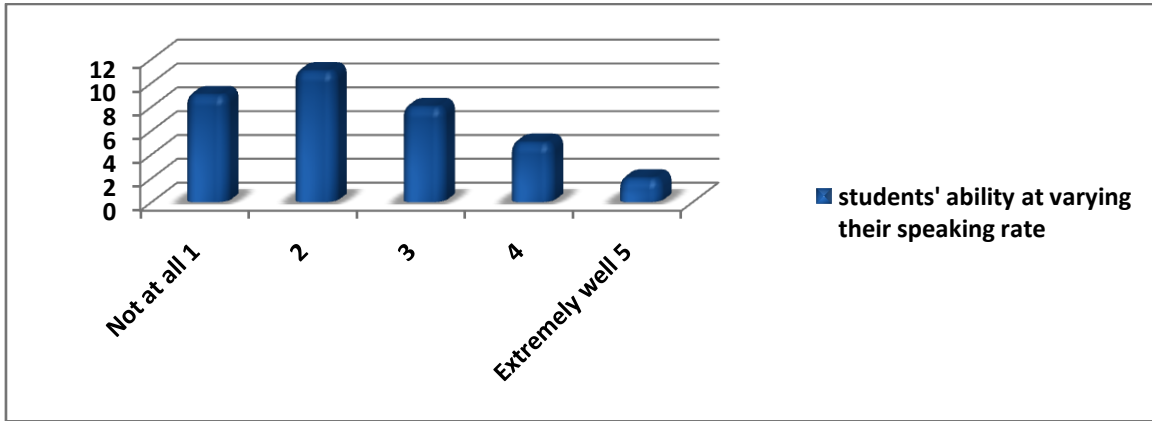


Figure 4.12. Students’ ability at varying their speaking rate.

This five points scale item revealed that most of the students do not vary their speaking rate at all when cross-cultural situations require (25, 7 %), or they do change it a little (31, 4%); however, 22, 9 % of them consider their ability at changing and controlling their speaking rate is of an average level. The rest stated that they are good at it (14, 3%), and only two students reported that they are extremely well at this (5, 7%).

Item ten: I change my non- verbal behaviour when a cross- culture situation requires it.

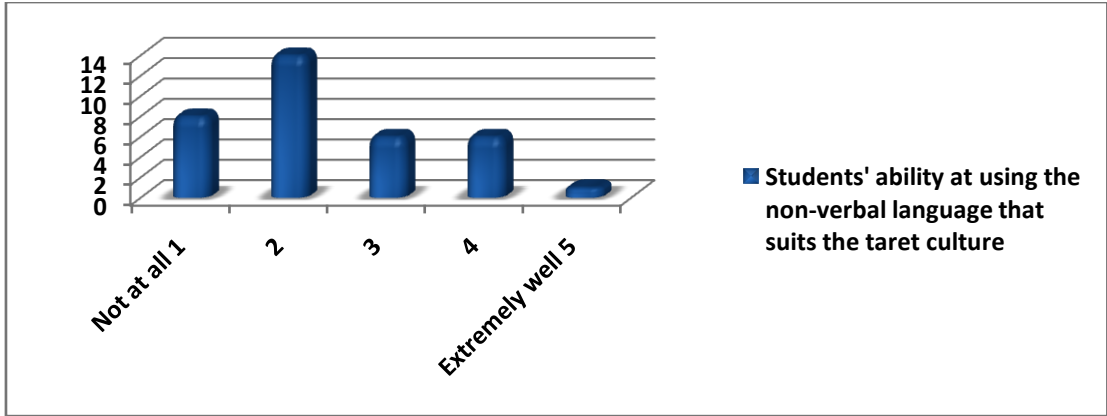


Figure 4.13. Students’ ability at changing their non-verbal language when they cross-culturally interact with others.

22, 9% of the students reported that they do not know about the non-verbal language use and how to change their behaviour when cross-culture situation requires it. Most

of students' answers revealed that they do not vary their non-verbal behaviour that much when needed to (40%); moreover, 17, 1% of them claimed that their ability of controlling their non-verbal behaviour is of an average level, and the same percentage claimed that they are good enough at it. As usual, we got only one student that consider himself extremely well at this task (2, 9%).

Item eleven: I suspend judgments, appreciate, and respect, other's diverse culture when cross- culturally interaction occurs.

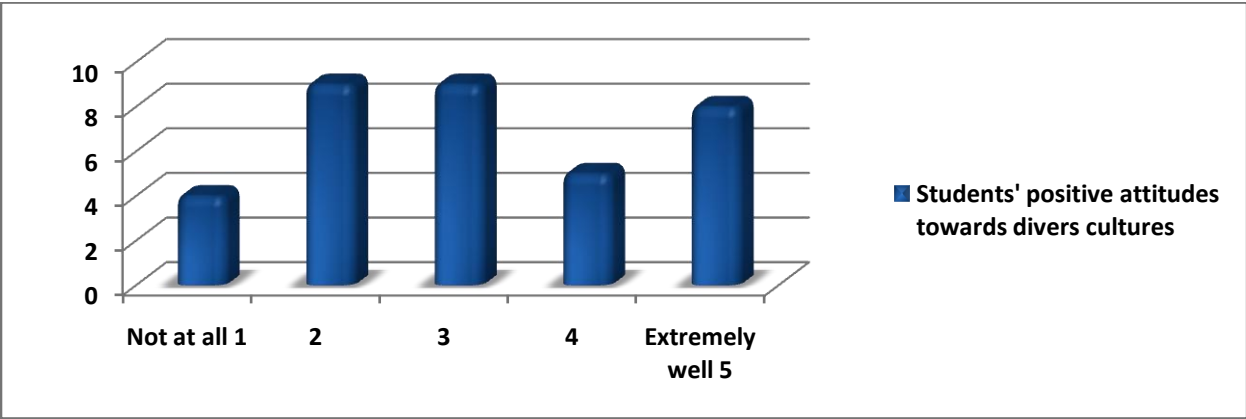


Figure 4.14. Students' positive attitude towards other's diverse cultures

11, 4% of students believe that they cannot suspend judgments or appreciate the cultural diversity when cross-culturally interact with others. 25, 7% of them stated that they don't suspend judgments and have positive attitudes towards people from different culture that much. Only 22, 9% of them stated that they are extremely well at showing positive attitudes when cross-culturally interact.

Section four: Skill

Item twelve: I adjust my behaviour when interacting with others to avoid offending them.

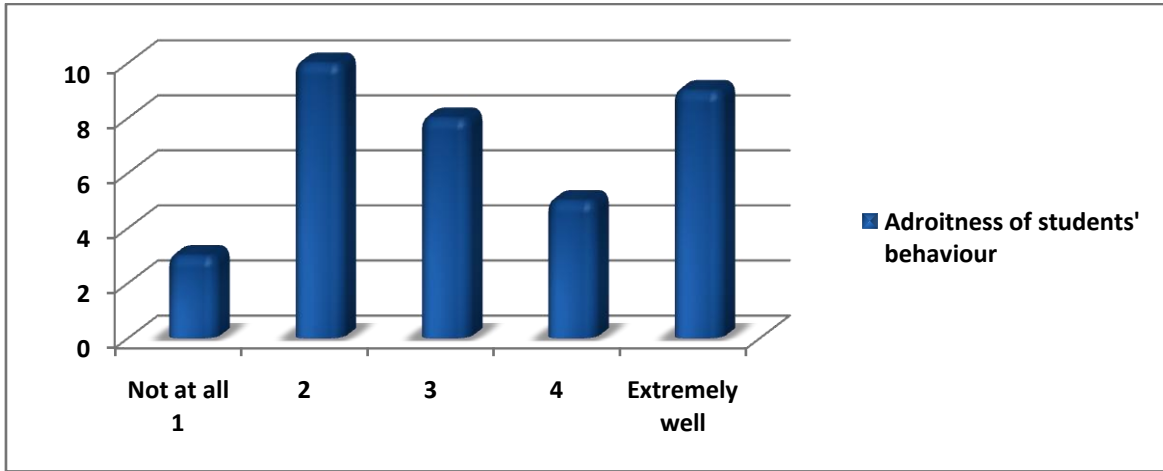


Figure 4.15. Adroitness of students’ behaviour when interacting with others from diverse culture.

8, 6% of students reported that they don’t pay attention to their behaviours, yet most of students claimed that they do pay some attention to their behaviour and try to adjust it (28, 6%). 22, 9% of them said that their ability of adjusting their behaviour is of an average level, but 14, 3% of them said that they are good at adjusting their behaviour. Nine students said that they are extremely well at adjusting their behaviours in order not to offend others (25, 7%).

Item thirteen: I am aware of the culture knowledge I use when cross- culturally interact with others.

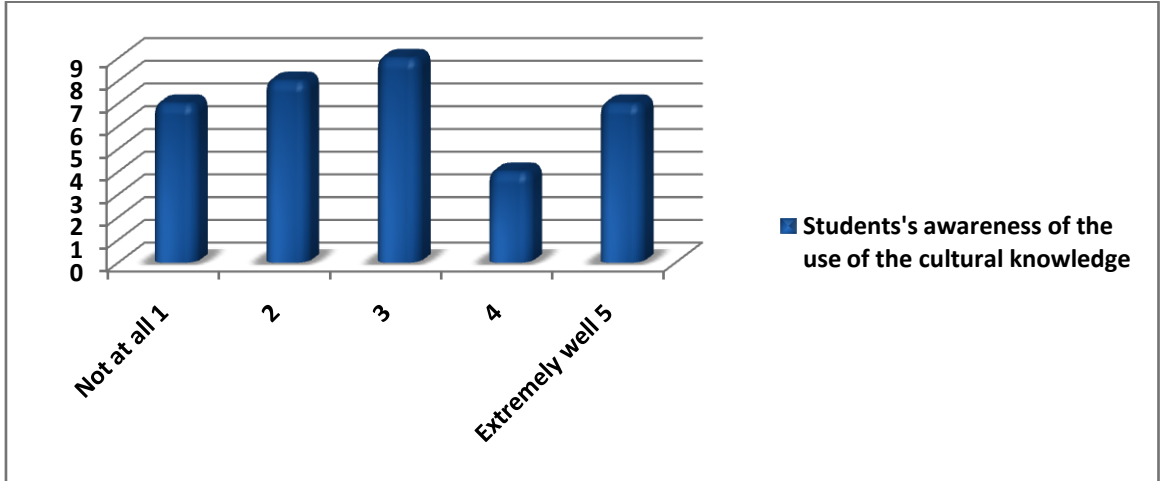


Figure 4.16. Students’ awareness of their use of the cultural knowledge.

Many students reported that they are not aware of the cultural knowledge that they use when cross-culturally interact with others (20%), or they do know a little about it (22, 9%). Most of them said they are of an average level when it comes to their awareness (25, 7%). Only few students consider themselves good at this (11, 4%), and the other 20% see that they do have extremely well awareness about the cultural knowledge and when to use it.

Item fourteen: I can avoid ethnocentrism while having a cross- cultural conversation.

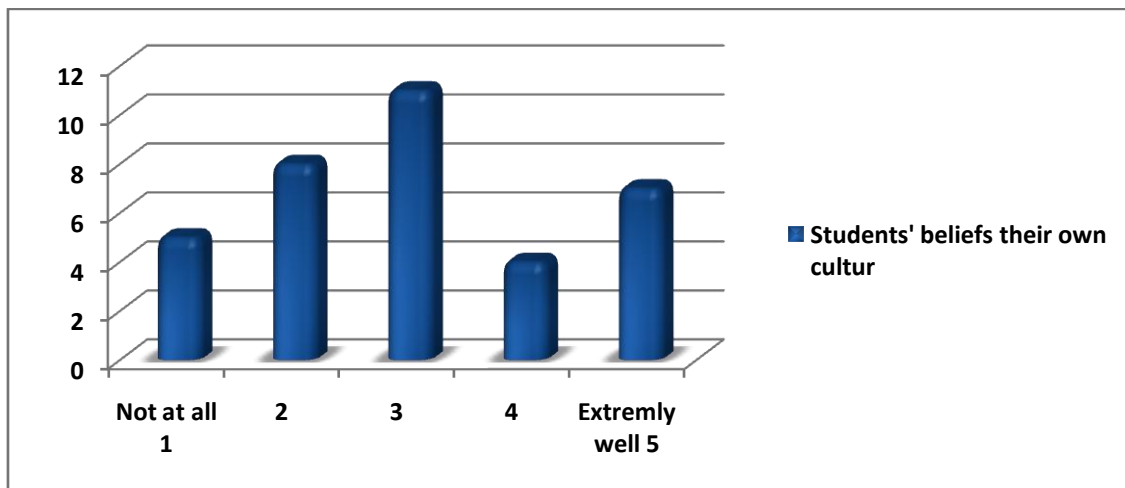


Figure 4.17. Students’ beliefs about their own culture.

Most of the participants of this experiment reported that they can avoid ethnocentrism in an average way so they cannot fully avoid or ignore this believe (31, 4%). Only five students reported that they cannot avoid (14, 3%), and 22, 9% answered as if they can avoid it just a little bit. The other participants reported that they are good at it (11, 4%); the rest believe that they are extremely well at dealing with this belief and avoid it (20%).

Item fifteen: I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

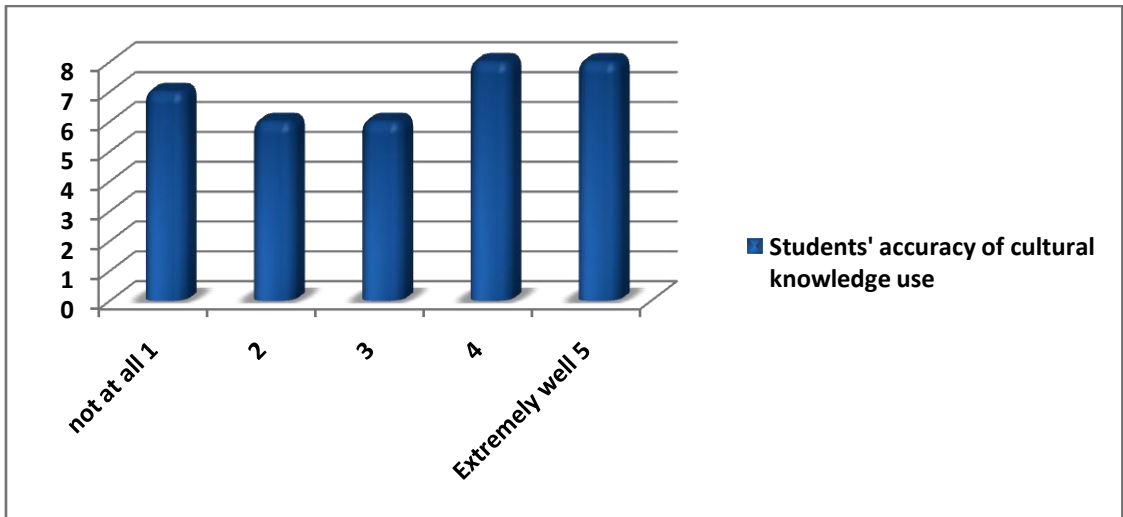


Figure 4.18. Students’ accuracy of cultural knowledge use.

The findings revealed that 20% of the participants do not check the accuracy of their cultural knowledge use, and 17, 1% of them do check their accuracy but not that much. The same percentage of students reported that their use of cultural knowledge is being checked by them often. The rest of them their answers vary between 4 (21, 9 %) and 5(21, 9 %) when 4 refers to ‘good’ and 5 refers to ‘extremely well’.

Section five: Awareness

Item sixteen: I realize the importance of differences and similarities across mine and the other culture.

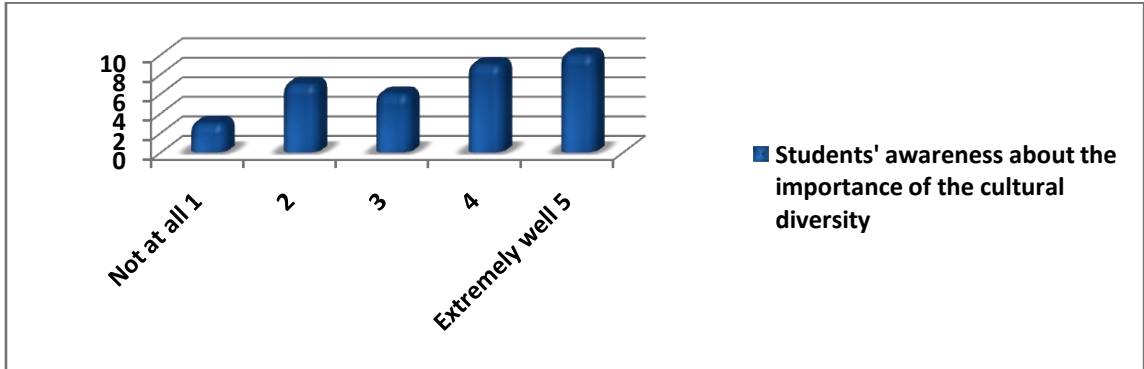


Figure 4.19 Students’ awareness about the importance of cultural diversity.

It is found that 8, 6% of students do not realize the importance of the similarities and differences cross their own culture and other's. 20% of them do realize its importance yet not that much. Few students rated their awareness concerning this point as it is of average level (7, 1%). 25, 7% of them reported that their awareness is of a good level; whereas, 28, 6% stated that they are extremely well at realizing the importance of the cultural diversity.

Item seventeen: I realize that my choices would affect others' opinion about me which make me less or more skilful when interacting with others.

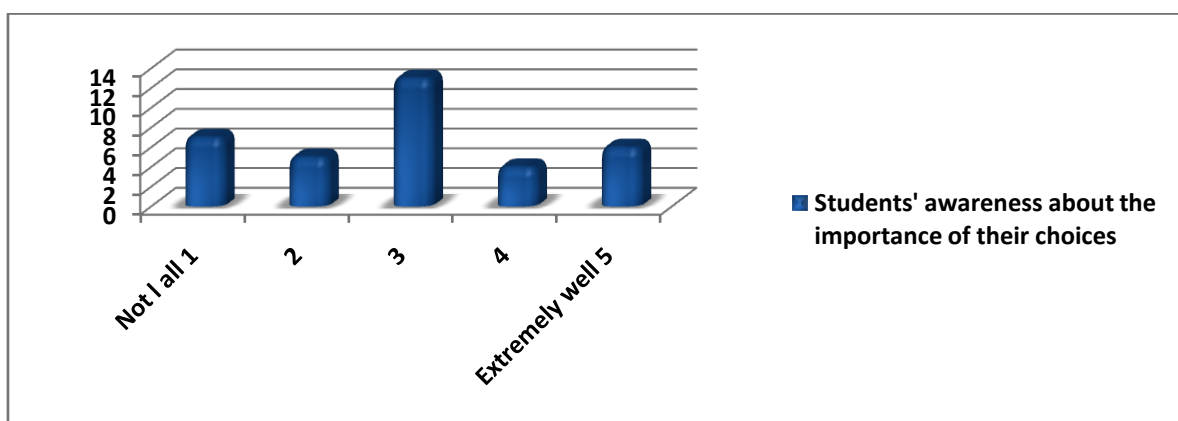


Figure 4.20. Students' awareness about the importance of their choices.

20% of students reported that they are not aware of the importance of their choices and decisions while interacting with others from different culture would affect their opining about their culture which would make them less skilful in cross-cultural interactions. 14, 3% said that they little bit recognize the importance of their choices; whereas, the majority (37, 1%) answered as if their awareness is of an intermediate level concerning this point. The rest stated that they are good at recognizing the significance of their choices (11, 4%), and 17, 1% are extremely good at it.

Item eighteen: I realize the dangers of generalizing individuals' behaviours as representatives of the whole culture (i.e., prejudice, stereotyping...).

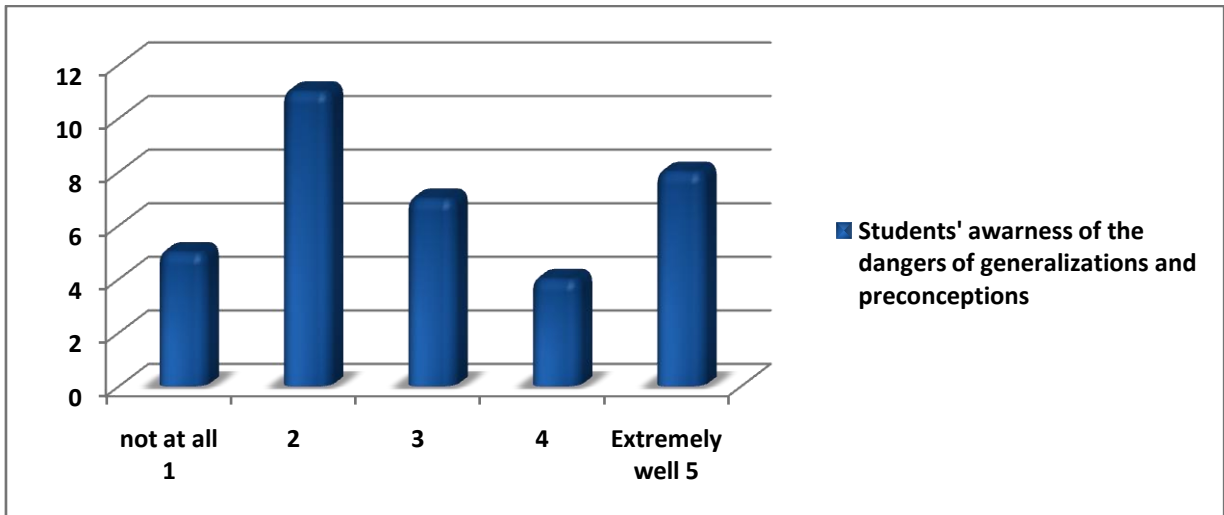


Figure 4.21. Students’ awareness of the dangers of generalization and preconception.

After getting through the results that are presented in the table and the chart above, it is been revealed that 14, 3% of participants reported that they have no clue about how danger it is to generalize individuals’ behaviours and consider them representatives of a given culture. Others answered that they a little bit aware of its dangers on the cross-cultural interaction (31, 4%). The findings show that 20% of students’ awareness is of an average level, 11, 4% are of a good level when it comes to spotting the dangers of stereotyping, and 22, 9% are extremely well at it.

Item nineteen: I realize that my culture is neither inferior nor superior to others’ cultures.

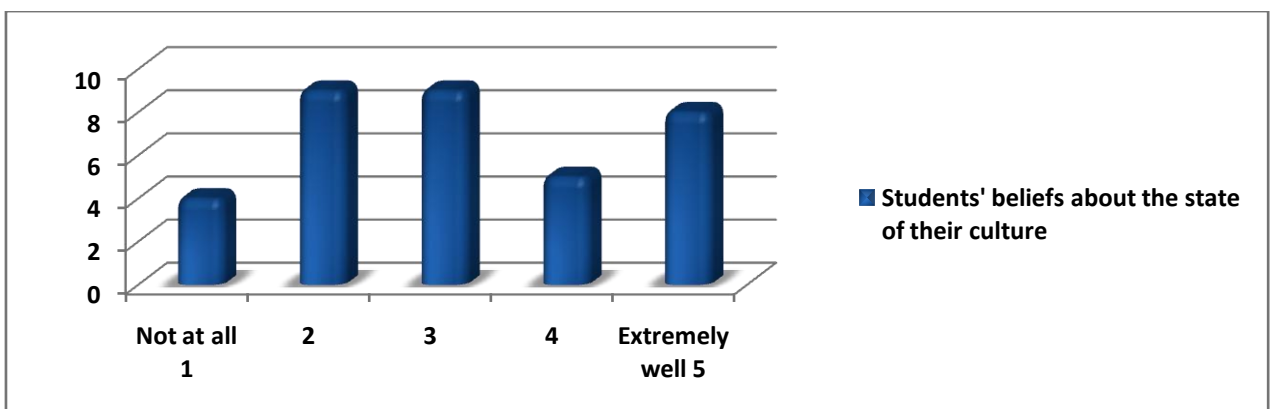


Figure 4.22. Students’ beliefs about the state of their culture.

According to the tabulated results above, we noticed that 11, 4% of students do not realise that their own culture equals other cultures. They either think they are culturally superior to them or inferior which is totally wrong belief. 25, 7% of them reported that their awareness concerning this point is not good enough as if they doubt it. 25, 7% believe that they are at the middle; whereas, 14, 3% of the participants suppose that their awareness is of a good level. The rest reported that they are extremely well at this point (22, 9%).

Item twenty: I realize how my values and ethics would be reflected by my language use in specific situations.

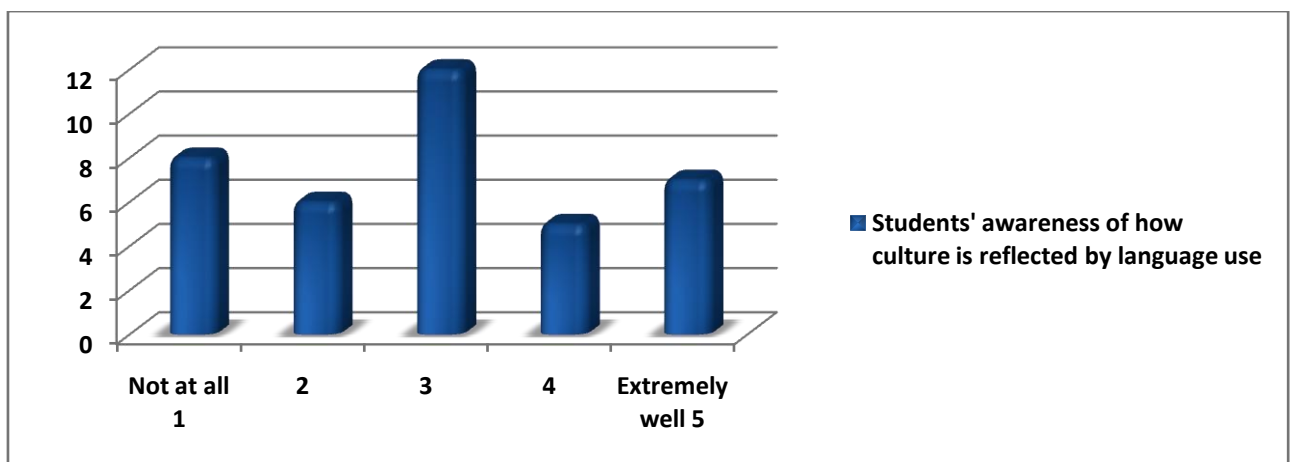


Figure 4.23. Students' awareness of how culture is reflected by language use.

The last scale's findings revealed that: 14, 3% of students do not know how culture's aspects are being influenced and reflected by language use, 17, 1% do know a little about this fact, 34, 3% of them have average knowledge concerning this point, 14, 3% are aware of the importance of language use as a reflection their values, and the majority realize extremely well this fact.

2.5.2. General Explanation of the Pre-test's Obtained Data

According to students' answers to the pre-test, we can notice that most of EFL first year students have a lack of cognitive competence in terms of the four component of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). That can be explained by the fact that the subjects and modules taught to them in their first year are focused only on grammar and learning language structures, yet lacked the cognitive materials related to the cultural and communicative aspects. The students do not have any significant knowledge concerning the latter, plus they encounter a difficulty in identifying and distinguishing simple needed notions in the field of learning a foreign language. They cannot enhance their competences nor get acquainted with all the necessary information on their own without the guidance of teachers.

2.5.3. Post-test Analysis in Account to the Pre-test

After finishing the treatment, the individual reading task of the collection of comic strips, Students' ICC was assessed again by the post-test. The post-test used is the same that was used in the pre-test the only difference is concerning the first section which aims at collecting data about students' experience of reading the special designed comics. The analysis of the other four sections of the post –test would be in account to the pre-test results in order to track any sort of improvement concerning students' ICC after reading the comics.

First section: About the treatment

Item one: Did you find trouble in completing the reading task of the collection of comic strips?

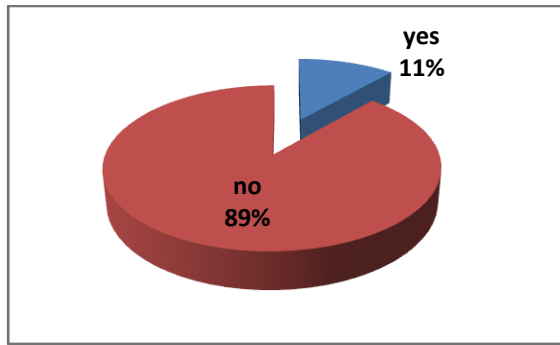


Figure 4.24. Students encountering troubles reading the comics

This item aims at finding out whether the participant faced any sort of difficulties or problem while reading comics. 89 % of students answered no, and 11 % answered yes we did face a problem.

Item two: If yes, can you say what was the problem that you faced?

The four students who said they faced problem while reading the comics, answered the second question saying that the problem is about understanding some new concepts that they found their meaning later when they completed reading the attached handouts.

Item three: Did you enjoy reading these comics?

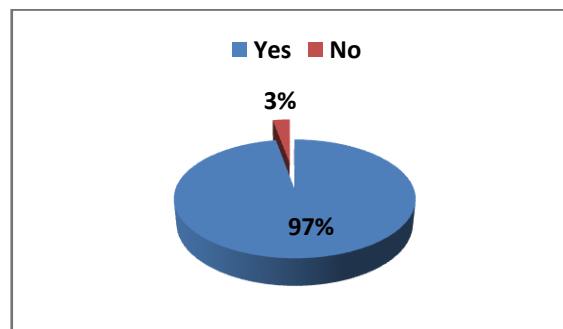


Figure 4.25. Students' positive perspective towards reading comics

The above representation of the findings show that all of the participants enjoyed reading the collection of comic strips (97%) except for one student (3 %).

Section two: Knowledge

Item one: I could cite the definition of culture and describe its components

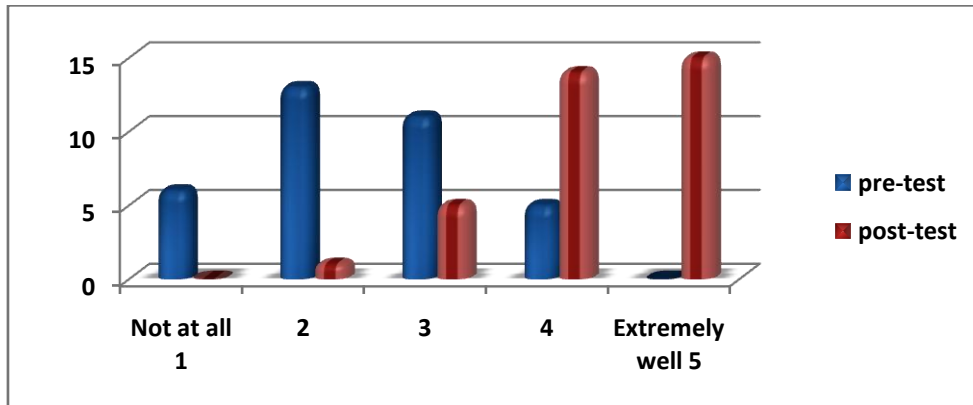


Figure 4.26. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about culture's definition

According to chart above, we notice that there is a marked variation between the result of the pre-test and the post –test concerning the first item which was about the ability of define culture, unlike the pre-test, 42, 9 % of the participants in the post-test reported that they are extremely well at defining culture and its components. 40 % of them that are good at this, and 14, 3 % choose the point number three which stands for their average level at completing this task. Only one student stated that he is not sure of his ability of defining culture.

Item two: I know the essential norms of the target culture (i. e, greeting, dress, conventions...).

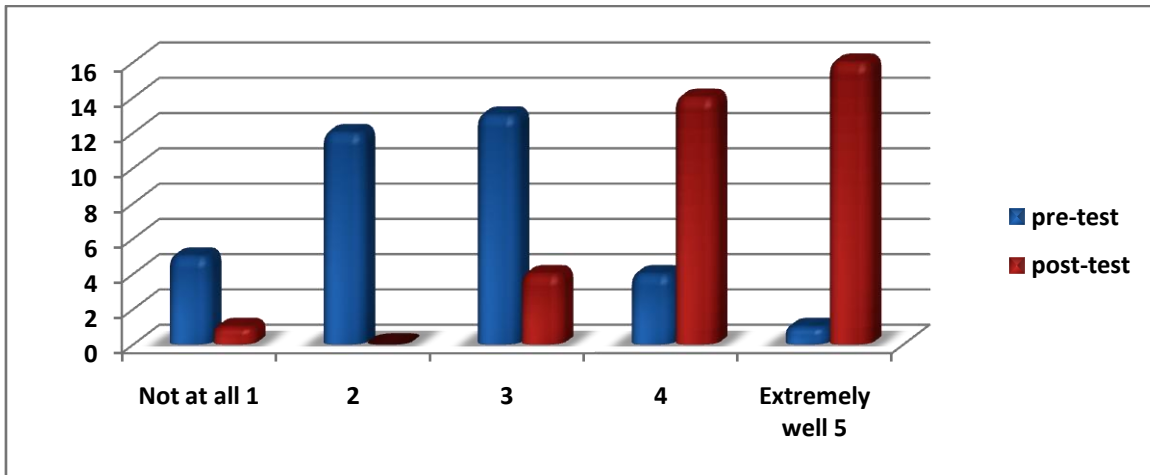


Figure 4.27. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about the norms of the target culture.

Taking a closer look at the results and the chart above, we clearly notice that the number of students who reported that they do not know anything about the cultural norms or they are not good enough in the pre-test changed in the post-test. The majority of participants stated that their knowledge is extremely well (45, 7 %), and good enough (40 %) in stating the target culture norms. 11, 4% among them have an average knowledge concerning this point, and only one person stated that he still don't know about them (2, 9 %).

Item three: I know some historical events and festivals that shaped the culture of the target language.

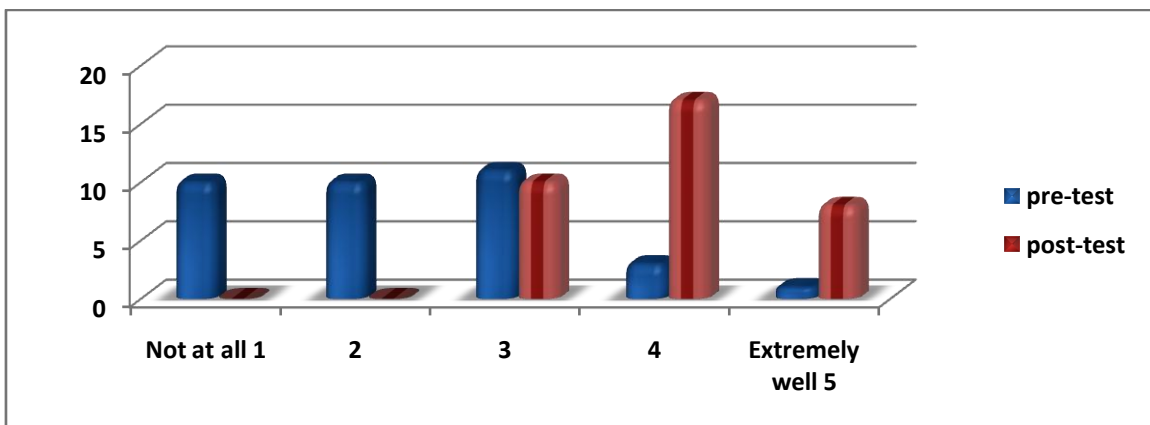


Figure 4.28. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about the target culture history and festivals.

While comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test, we perceived that students' level developed. Unlike the pre-test, no student chose the first and the second points of the scale in the post-test. 28, 6% of the participants reported they are of an average level which is a less percentage than the first test. 48, 6 % of students answered as they are good at reciting some festivals and historical events, and 22, 9 % were sure that they are extremely well at it.

Item four: I know the rules of expressing the non- verbal behaviours in the target culture.

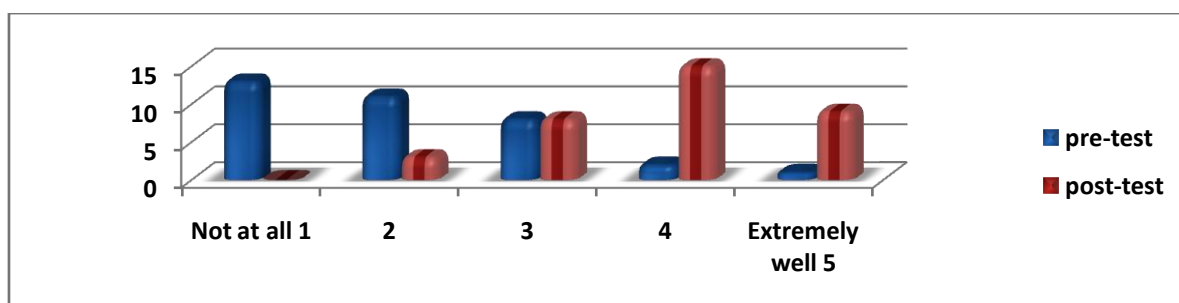


Figure 4.29. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about expressing the non-verbal behaviours in the target culture.

Most of the students in the pre-test reported that they either do not know anything about expressing the non-verbal behaviour and its rules; however, after taking the pre-test they seem that they gained more knowledge about this since 25, 7 % of them were sure that they are extremely good at knowing those rules, and 42, 9 % reported that they are of a good level. The same number of students reported that they are of an average level both in pre and post test (22, 9%). Only three students choose not to be sure about their ability and answered that their knowledge is not good enough.

Item five: I know the target culture's values and beliefs.

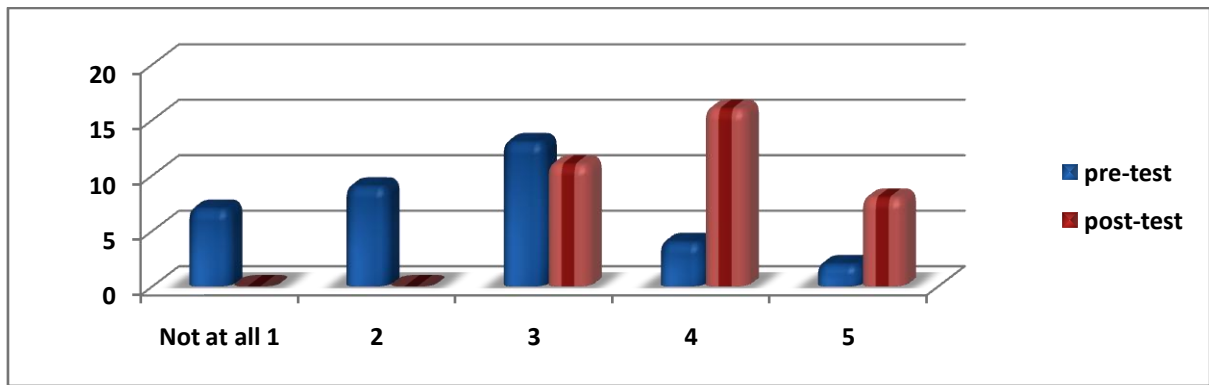


Figure 4.30. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about the target culture's beliefs and values.

Findings of the post-test and the comparison between both tests show that in one hand, the percentage of students that did not know about the target culture beliefs and values and those who reported their knowledge is not good enough was decreased to be 0 %; In the other hand, the percentage of participants who are sure about their knowledge and reported they know extremely well some historical events was raised to 22, 9 %. The same goes for the two other scale points (3 and 4 that stand for average and good), their percentage turned to 31, 4% and 45, 7% which indicates the fact that students are improving.

Item six: I know the rules that govern how language is actually used (grammatical competence, sociocultural competence).

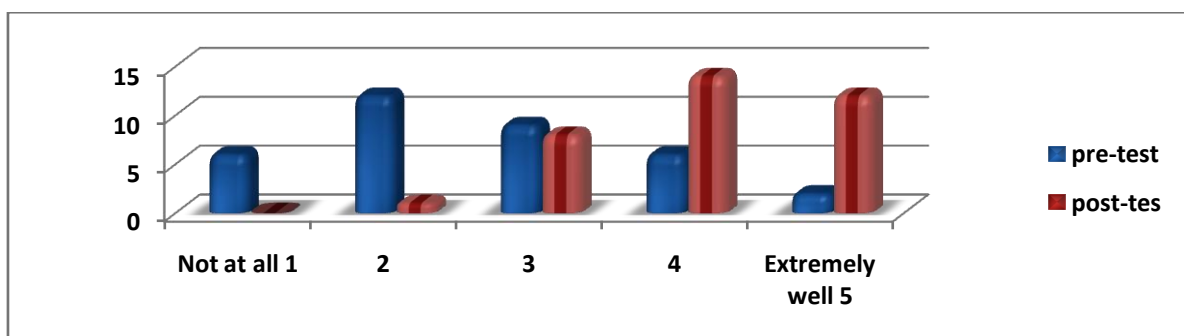


Figure 4.31. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' knowledge about the target language use.

Findings of the post-test revealed that 34, 3 % of the participant know extremely well about the rules that governs how the EFL is actually used, 40 % of them are good at knowing these rules, and 22, 9 % are of an average level. Only one student reported that his knowledge is not good enough about the target language use (2, 9 %), and no one reported that he/she has no idea about this. These results are so different when comparing the the pre-test results since the majority of participants did not know anything about language competences or they knew a little of it, yet in the post test, most of them have good knowledge about that.

Section Three: Attitude

Item seven: I change my verbal behaviour (accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

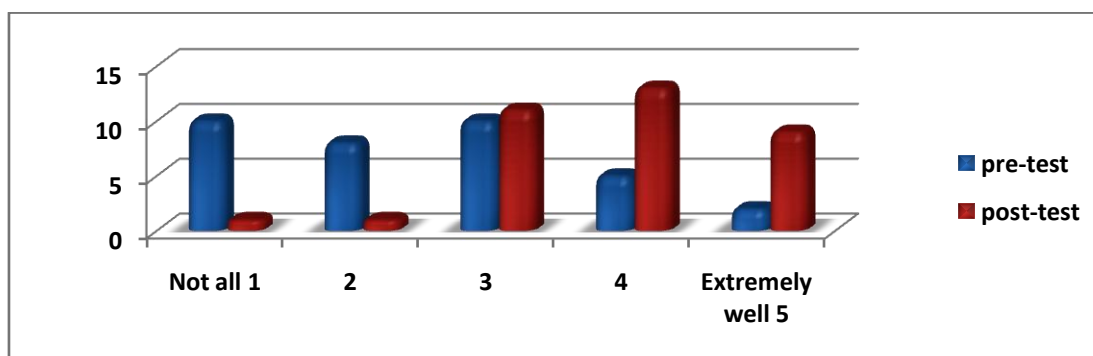


Figure 4.32. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' ability of controlling their verbal behaviour.

After getting through both of the pre-test and post-test results, we noticed that number of students who reported that they do not have the ability to control their tone and accent decreased, the number of students who were sure that they are good at it remarkably increased. 25, 7 % of the participants in the post-test answered that they are extremely well at

controlling their verbal behaviour; 37, 1 % of them reported that they are good at changing their tone and accent whenever the situation requires, and 31, 4 % said they are of an average level concerning this attitude. The two students left one of them answered as he/she has no idea about how to it (2, 9 %), and the other said he is not good enough or sure of his ability to control his way of speaking (2, 9 %).

Item eight: I use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross- cultural situations.

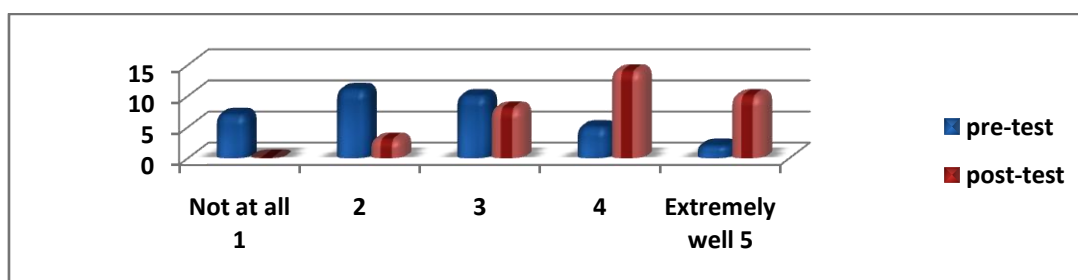


Figure 4.33. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' ability of using pauses and silence in a suitable way.

The tabulated results of the pre-test and the post-test show that students believe that they improved in terms of using pauses and silence while cross-culturally interact with others. 28, 6% believe that they are extremely well at controlling the flow their speaking, and 40 % of them believe they are good at it. 22, 9 % of the participants think that they are of an average level. Only three students reported that they are not good enough using pauses and silence when needed to (8, 6%). In the pre-test seven students reported they have no idea about this, but in the post-test no one said so (0 %).

Item nine: I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross- cultural situation requires it.

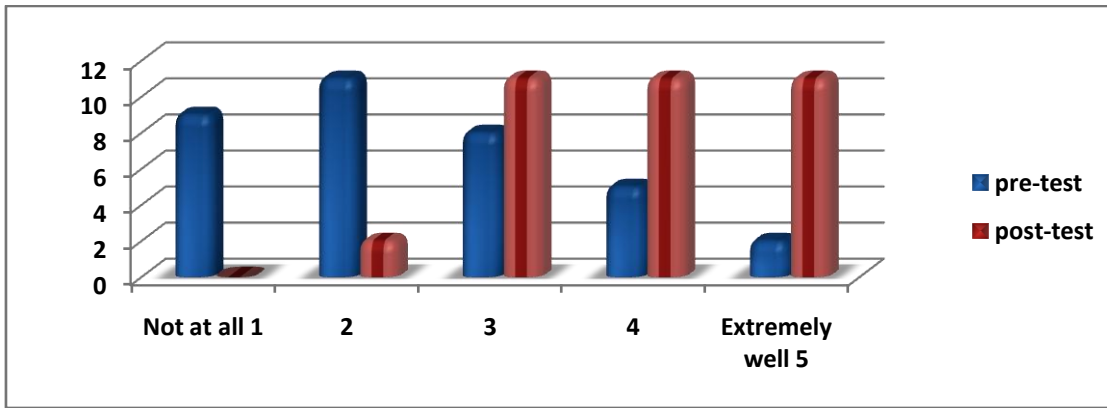


Figure 4.34. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' ability of varying the rate of their speaking.

The figure above shows that there is an equal percentage for participants who believe that they are extremely well, good and of an average level in varying the rate of their speaking (31, 4%). And only two participants reported that they are not sure of their ability concerning this point (8, 6%); whereas, no one stated that they do not know about it at all. When comparing the results of both tests we can clearly notice the difference and the positive changes that occurred among participants' level.

Item ten: I change my non- verbal behaviour when a cross- culture situation requires it

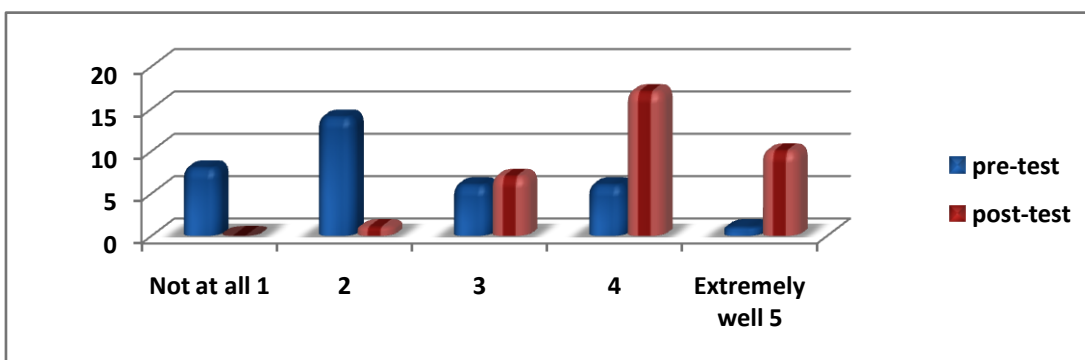


Figure 4.35. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' ability of changing their non-verbal behaviour when needed to.

This question revealed that the majority of students in the post-test reported that they are good at changing their non-verbal behaviour (48, 6 %), and 28, 6% of them are extremely good at it. 20 % of the participants reported that their ability of controlling their non-verbal behaviour is of an average level, and only one students said that he/she is not sure about his ability of doing that (2, 9%). Unlike the pre-test, no one in the post-test reported that he don't know anything about the non-verbal language.

Item eleven: I suspend judgments, appreciate, and respect, other's diverse culture when cross- culturally interaction occurs.

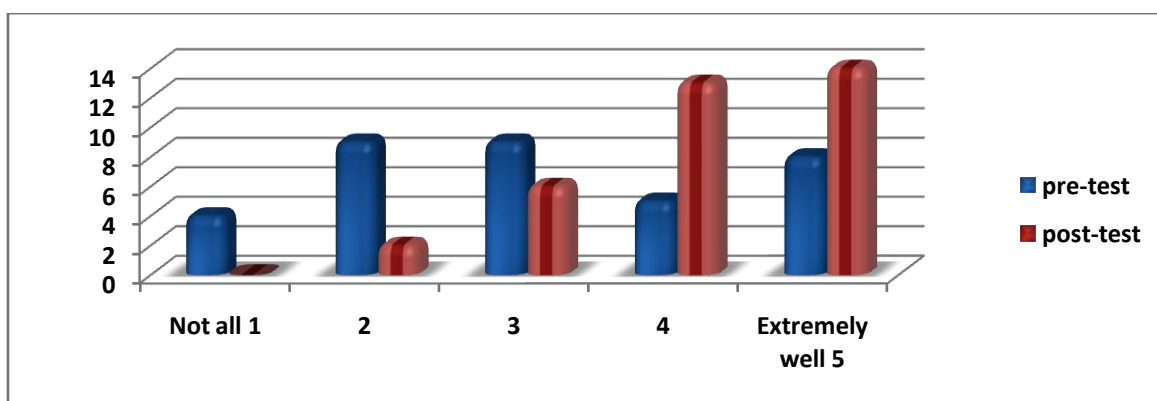


Figure 4.36. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' positive attitude toward diverse cultures.

The table above clearly show the positive difference that occurred between the pre-test results and the post-test result. According to the above tabulated findings, we noticed that the majority of students in the post-test reported that they are extremely well at putting all the negative judgments apart and respect other's diverse cultures when interacting with them (40%). Also a group of students answered that they are good at having this kind of positive attitude when cross-culturally interact with others (37, 1 %). 17, 1% of the students reported they still think they are of an average level concerning this point. Only two students answered

that they are not good enough at showing a positive attitude towards others from diverse culture (5, 7%), and no one denied knowing about this significant point.

Section Four: Skill

Item twelve: I adjust my behaviour when interacting with others to avoid offending them.

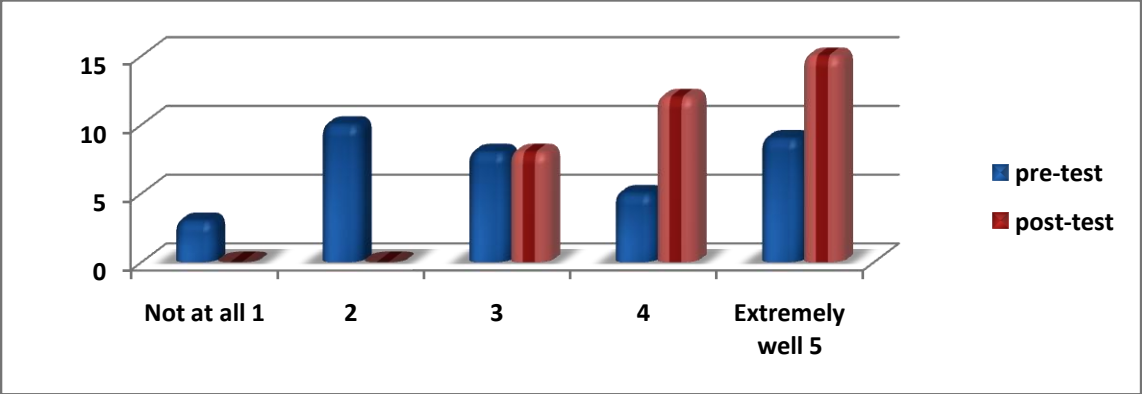


Figure 4.37 Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students’ ability to adjust their behaviours to suit the target culture.

According to the chart above, findings revealed that unlike the pre-test the majority of participants in the post-test reported that they are extremely well (42, 9%), and good (34, 3 %) at adjusting their behaviour when cross-culturally interact with others to suit their culture. Only 22, 8% of them answered that they think they are of an average level concerning this point. Remarkably, no one reported that they are not good enough or they don’t know how to do it.

Item thirteen: I am aware of the culture knowledge I use when cross- culturally interact with others

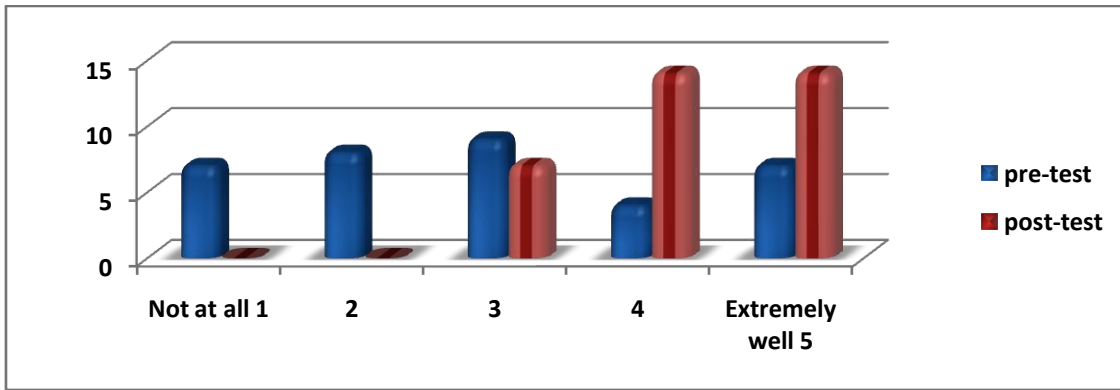


Figure 4.38. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness of the cultural knowledge when they use it.

The answers of this question indicates that the majority of participants consider themselves extremely aware (40%), and good (40%) at realizing the cultural knowledge they use when cross-culturally interact with others. 20% of them reported that they are of an average level in terms of awareness. No one reported that he/she is not good enough or know nothing at all about this point. These results are clearly different from the pre-test's results in a positive way.

Item fourteen: I can avoid ethnocentrism while having a cross- cultural conversation.

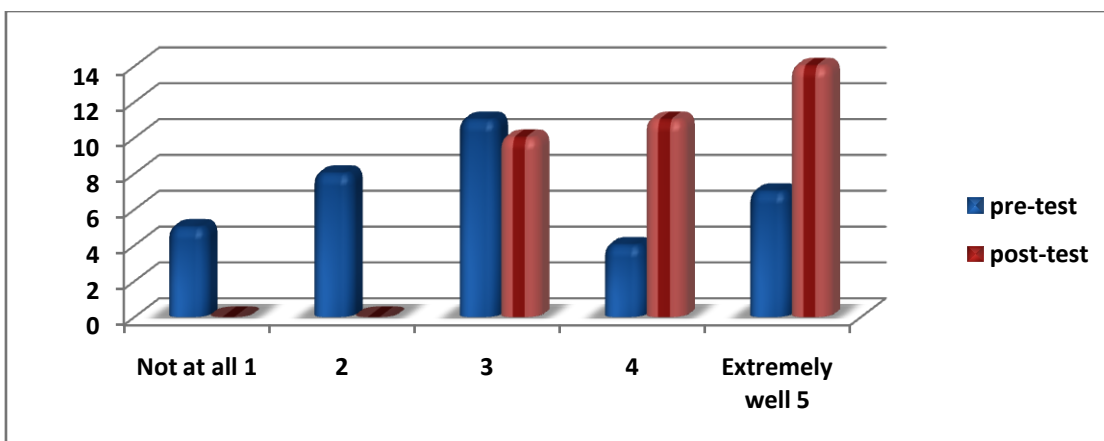


Figure 4.39. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' ability to avoid ethnocentrism while cross-culturally interact with others.

As the above table mention, 40% of participants answered that they are extremely good at avoiding ethnocentrism, 31, 4 % reported that they are good at it, and 28, 6% stated that they believe that they are of an average level. According to the chart above and when comparing both results we find out that students believe that they improved concerning this point.

Item fifteen: I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

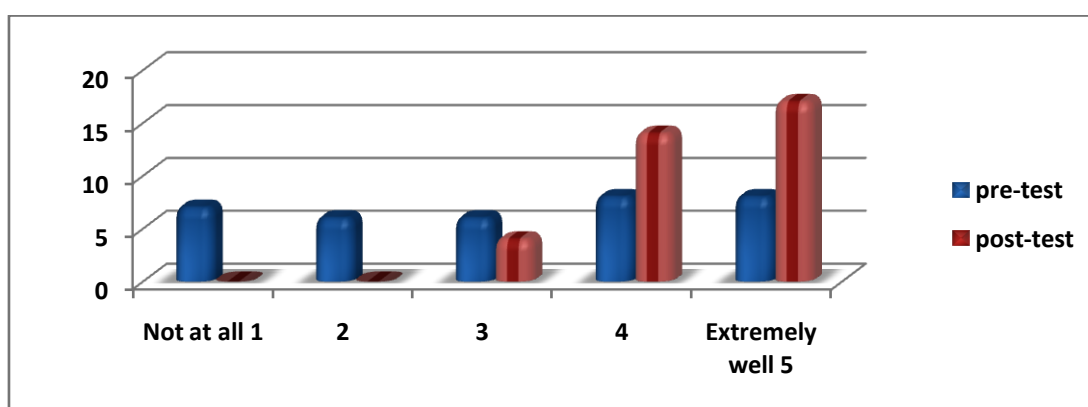


Figure 4.40. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' accuracy.

The above table indicates that the majority of students are extremely well at checking the accuracy of their cultural knowledge (48, 6%), and 40 % are good in it. The rest believe that they are of an average level in terms of their cultural knowledge accuracy (11, 4%). When comparing the results, it is pretty obvious that there are certain changes occurred among the participants after completing the treatment.

Section Five: Awareness

Item sixteen: I realize the importance of differences and similarities across mine and the other culture.

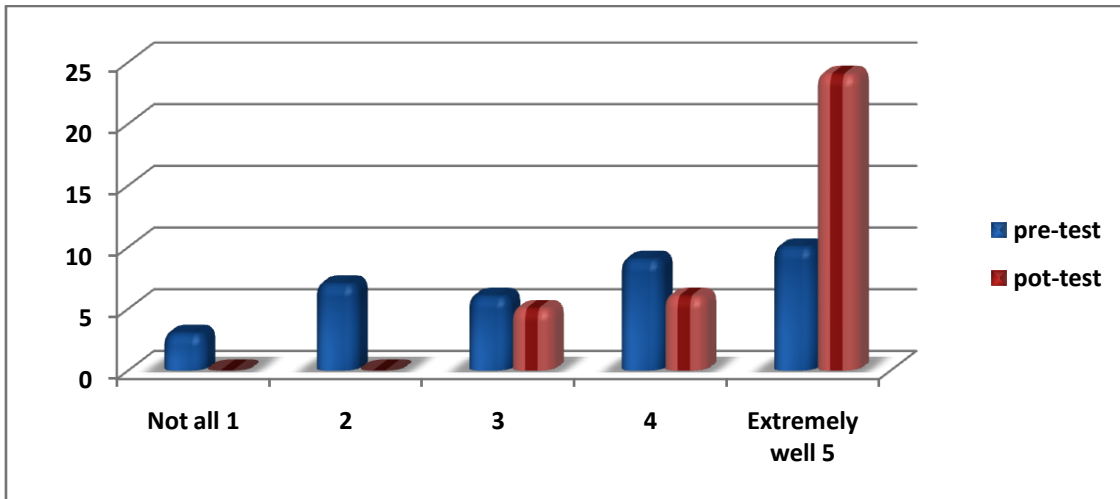


Figure 4.41. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness about the importance of cultural diversity.

After taking a closer look to the above chart, we can clearly notice that in the pre-test the number of participants was disturbed differently among the five points of the scale; however, the majority of students in the post test chose the final number of the scale which indicates that they are extremely well at realizing the importance of cultural diversity (68, 6%). Some students chose the fourth (17, 1 %) and the third (14, 3%) scale number to indicate that they are either good or of an average level concerning this point.

Item seventeen: I realize that my choices would affect others' opinion about me which make me less or more skilful when interacting with others.

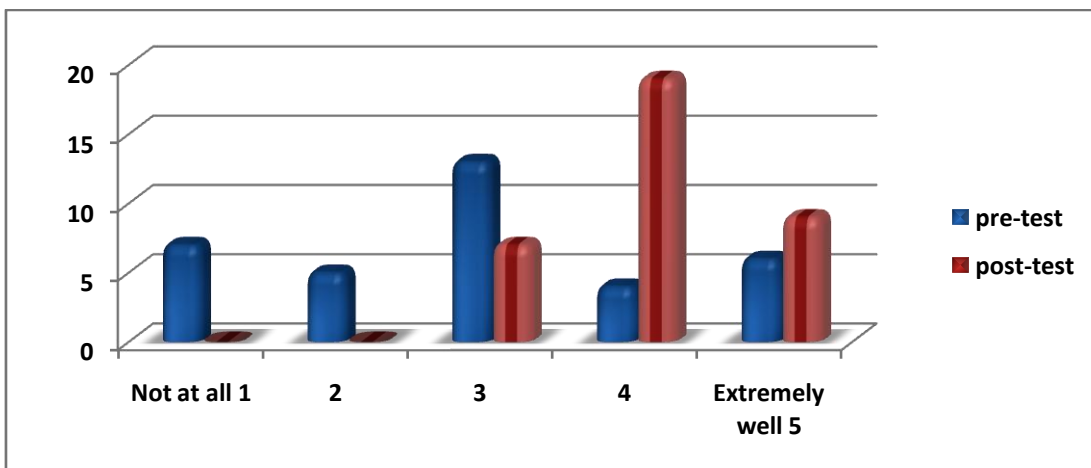


Figure 4.42. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness about the importance of their choices when cross-culturally interact with others.

This question aims at finding out whether students pay attention to their choices when cross-culturally interacts or not. The results of the post-test show that 25, 7% are extremely aware of their choices and its importance, 54, 3 % believe that they are good at realizing this, and 20% are of an average level. These results contradict the pre-test's results.

Item eighteen: I realize the dangers of generalizing individuals' behaviours as representatives of the whole culture (i.e , prejudice, stereotyping...).

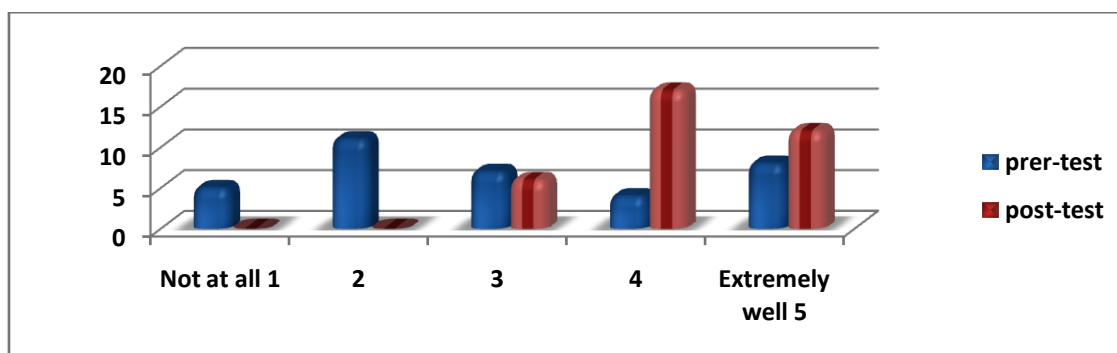


Figure 4.43. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness of the dangers of prejudice and stereotyping.

According to findings, the participants reported that they are extremely aware of the dangers of generalizations and prejudice since they are considered to be barriers to intercultural communication (34, 3%), and the majority reported that they are good at realizing those dangers (48, 6 %). The rest reported that they are of an average level when it comes to realizing what kind of dangers could be caused by the negative attitudes (17, 1%). These results are considered to be way better than the results of the pr-test.

Item nineteen: I realize that my culture is neither inferior nor superior to others' cultures.

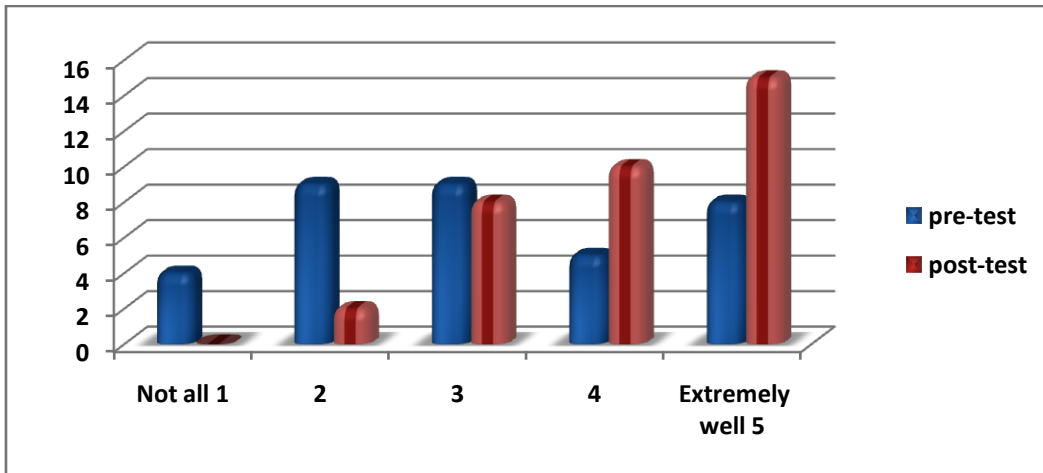


Figure 4.44. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness of the state of their own culture.

After getting through the results of the pre-test results and the post-test, we noticed that the number of students who reported that they are not good enough at realizing that state of their own culture compared to other's culture remarkably decreased in the post-test. 24, 9% reported that they are extremely good concerning this point, and 28, 9 % are just good. 22, 9% answered as if they are of an average level in realizing that cultures cannot be compared to each other, and only 5, 7% reported that they are not sure of what to think about their culture.

Item twenty: I realize how my values and ethics would be reflected by my language use in specific situations.

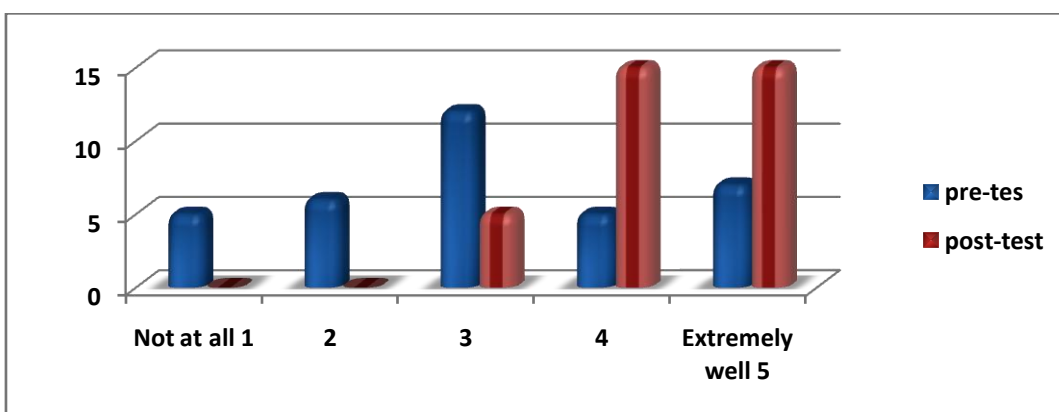


Figure 4.45. Comparison between pre-test and post-test results concerning students' awareness of how culture is reflected by language use.

The last item of the scale investigates students' awareness concerning the fact that language use is a mirror that reflects culture's values and ethics. Comparing the results of both tests, we notice that students awareness increased since the percentage of the number of students who reported that they are extremely well and good at realizing this point now is the same (42, 9%), and the percentage those who believes that they are of an average level is 14, 3% less than the result of the pre-test. This indicates that students improved after the treatment.

2.5.4. General Explanation of the Post-test's Obtained Data

After analysing the post-test's results in account to pre-test's answers, we noticed that most of the students changed their answerers concerning the four ICC components from "I do not know much about them" to "I am good at defining those notions" or " I am fully aware about that information". Thanks to the treatment phase, students were able to discover and explore new angles about language learning which is considered to be the most important element in mastering a foreign language. Comics served as a good way to present different cognitive cultural materials that are needed in order to communicate properly. Equipped with a set of handouts, learning such notions and information was easier for students of an intermediate level.

2.5.5. The Questionnaire Analysis

Section One: General Information

Q1: Gender

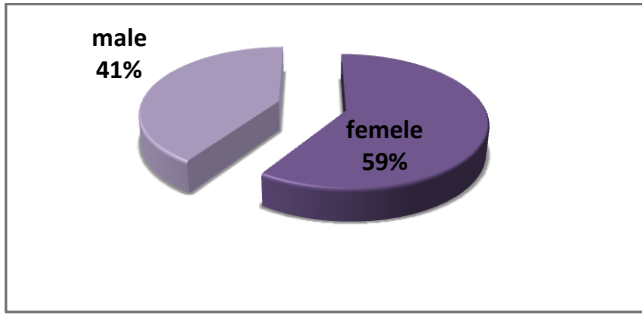


Figure 4.46. Gender of students.

According to students' responses to this question, we found out that 41% of them are males, and the rest are females 59%. This is not a surprising result since most of Algeria's youth are females.

Q2: Age.

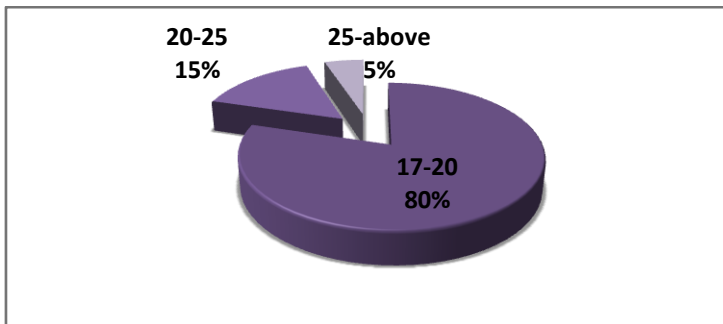


Figure 4.47. students' age.

As it is tabulated above, we can notice that the majority of first year EFL students are of ages between 17 years old and 20 years old (80 %). 15% of them are of age of 20 years old to 25 years old. The rest are of ages from 25 years old and more (5%). We can justify the variety of students' age by mentioning that maybe some of them did not pass the baccalaureate exam from the first try, some of them maybe repeated some academic years, or they are studying to obtain a second diploma.

Section Two: Students' Reading Habits

Q3: Do you read in English language?

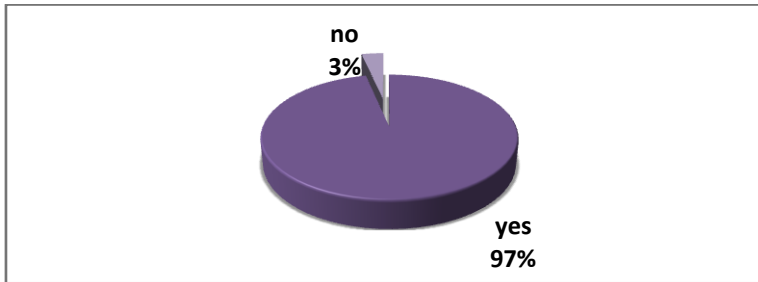


Figure 4.48. Students who read in English language.

It is clearly that the majority of EFL students read in English language (97 %); whereas, only a few denied that (3 %). Encountering a difficulty in understanding the language or not being motivated to read maybe the reason why those two students do not read.

Q4: If yes, how much do you read?

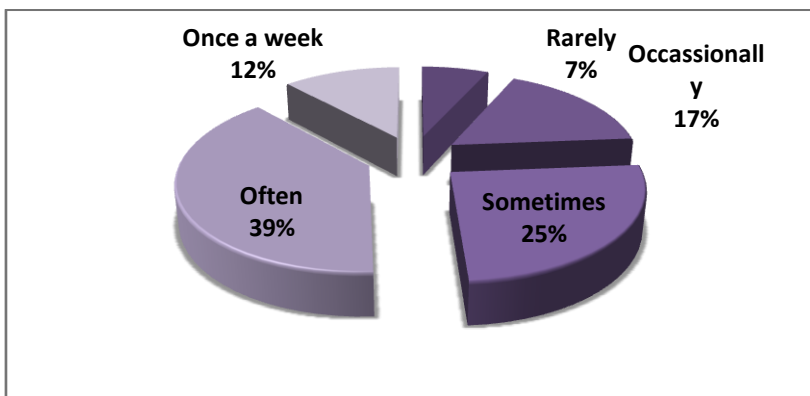


Figure 49. The Students' Frequency of reading.

Students who answered that they read in English language responded to this question as follow: 7 % of them said they rarely read, 17 % read occasionally, supposing that they read only when teachers ask them to do, 25 % answered that they sometimes do read, 39 % often read in English language, and 12 % only 12 % read once a week. The variety of

these answers is probably because of the variation in students' level, and their ability of understanding English well. Motivation can play a major role in this too.

Q5: Do you read for.

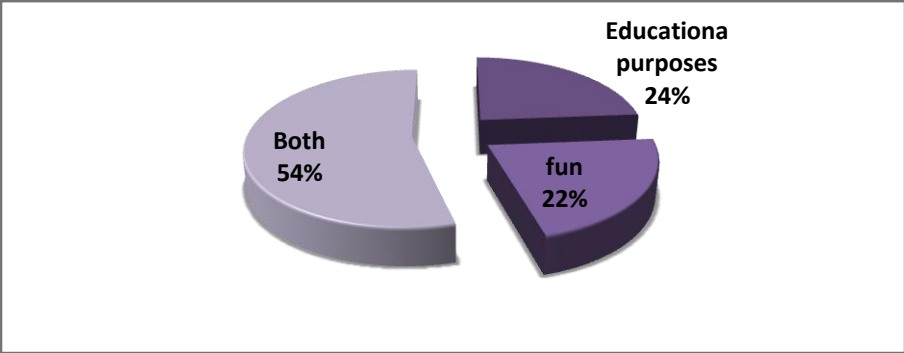


Figure 4.50. Students' purpose of reading.

According to the pie chart, the majority of the students read for both purposes, have fun and for educational purposes (54 %). 22 % of them read for fun purposes, but only 24 % reads for educational purposes only.

Q6: Have you read comics before?

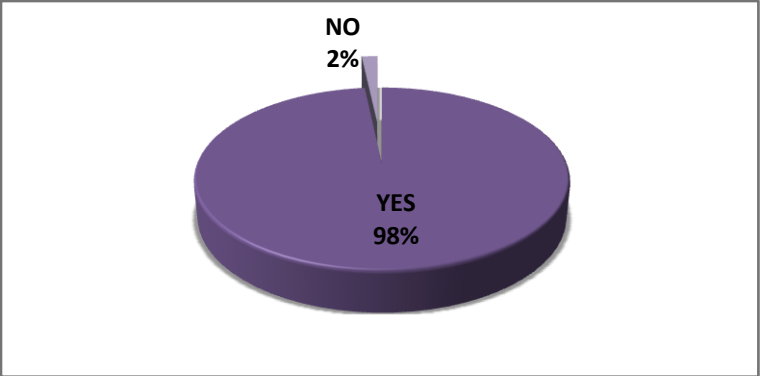


Figure 4.51. Students who read comics.

The pie chart above shows that 98 % of students read comics, yet only one person denied reading this kind of literacy (2 %). This result can be explained that the 2 % of the sample is either of an old age or believe that comics are just for children.

Q7: If yes, in what language.

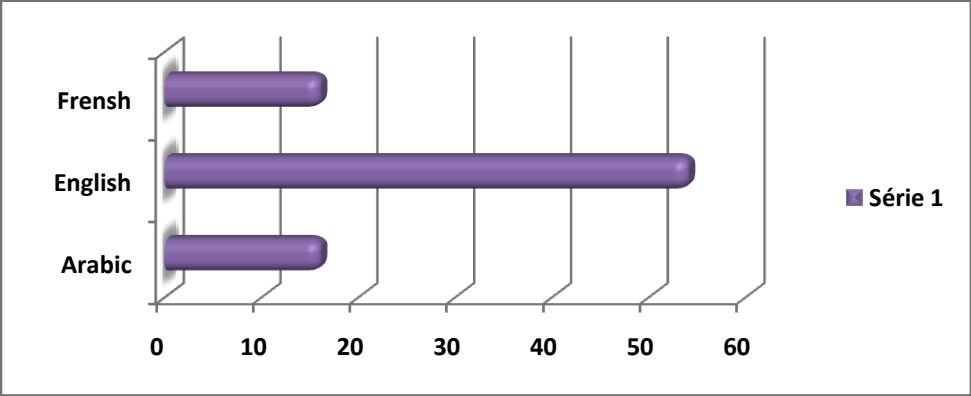


Figure 4.52. The Language of comics that students read.

After getting through the findings we found out that 91, 5 % of students read comics in English language since they are an EFL students. Students also read comics in Arabic (27, 1 %) and French languages (27, 1 %).

Q 8: What type of comics do you read?

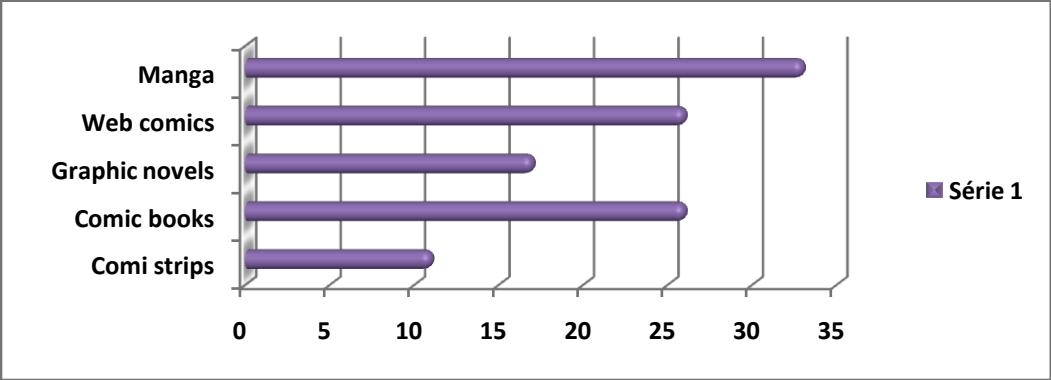


Figure 4.53. Types of comics that students read.

This question aims at finding which type of graphic narrative is more popular and most known among EFL students. Findings revealed that 55, 9 % of students read manga, Japanese comics that are translated into English language. This percentage resembles the majority of students. In the second place the comic books and web comics take place with a 44, 1 % of students that read them. 28, 8 % of them reported that they read graphic novels, and 18, 6 % read comic strips.

Section three: Students' opinion about comics and the importance of culture.

Q9: How do you describe your experience in reading comics? Rate it.

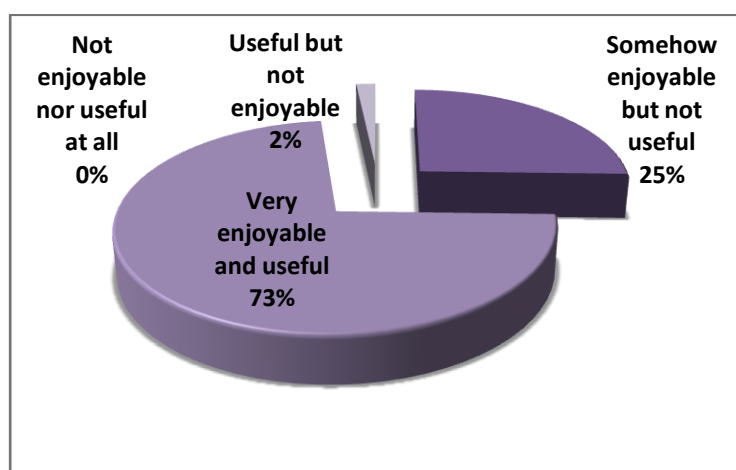


Figure 4.54. Students' perspective towards comics.

Students have different viewpoints concerning comics. This question aims at finding out these varied perceptions. Findings showed that the majority of students see that comics are so enjoyable and useful in learning (73 %). 25 % of students reported that comics are somehow enjoyable and useful in the field of education, only one student reported that they are not enjoyable but useful, and no one reported that comics are not enjoyable nor useful (0 %). Students have a very positive view towards comics.

Q10: Do you think that reading comics can help you develop your academic skills?

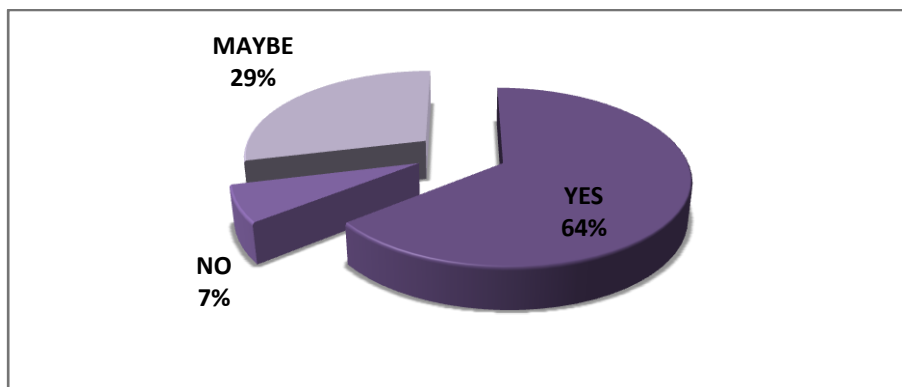


Figure 4.55. Students' opinion whether comics help developing their academic skills or not.

We wanted to know in the previous question whether students enjoy reading comics and learn from them or not; whereas, in this question we aimed to figure out whether they think that reading comics help develop their academic skills or not. Results of this question are like follow: 64 % of students answered yes, 7 % answered no, and 29 % said maybe since they are not sure about this matter.

Q11: If yes, what skill?

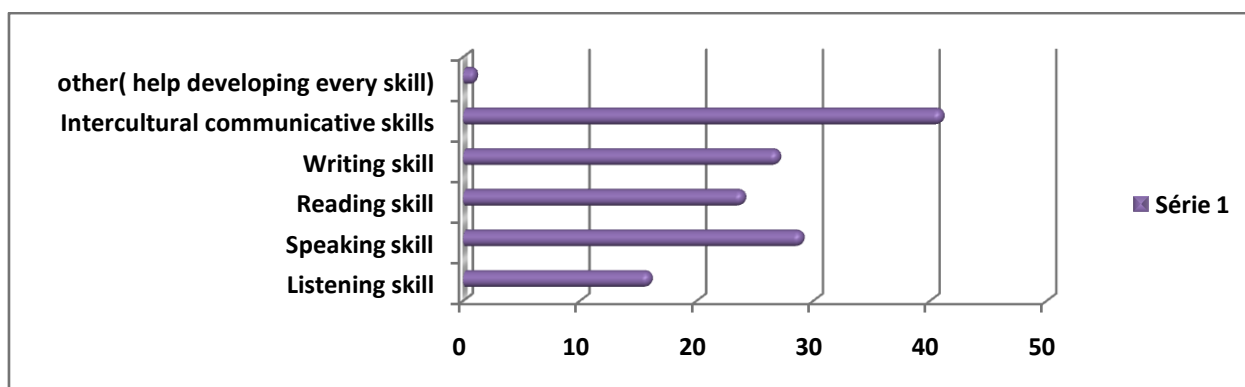


Figure 4.56. Skills that can be developed by reading comics.

Students who answered yes were asked to choose from the choices which skill is most affected by reading comics. The majority agreed on the intercultural communicative skills (69, 5 %). 49, 2 % answered that it help developing the speaking skill, 45, 8 % answered the writing skill, 40, 7 % chose the reading skill, and 27, 1 % said the listening skill. There

was another option where students were allowed to state any other skill that could be affected positively by reading comics. One student wrote that reading comics helps developing all of the EFL needed skills (1, 7 %).

Q12: After reading comics do you feel like you earned some knowledge about the target culture?

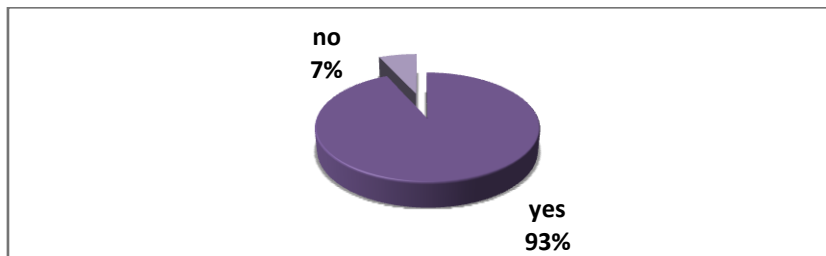


Figure 4.57. Students who agree that reading comics help enriching the knowledge about the target culture.

The results show that 93 % of students reported that after reading comics their knowledge about the target culture has been enriched; whereas, 7 % of them said no they did not learn anything new about culture.

Q13: If yes, what type of cultural information did you learn?

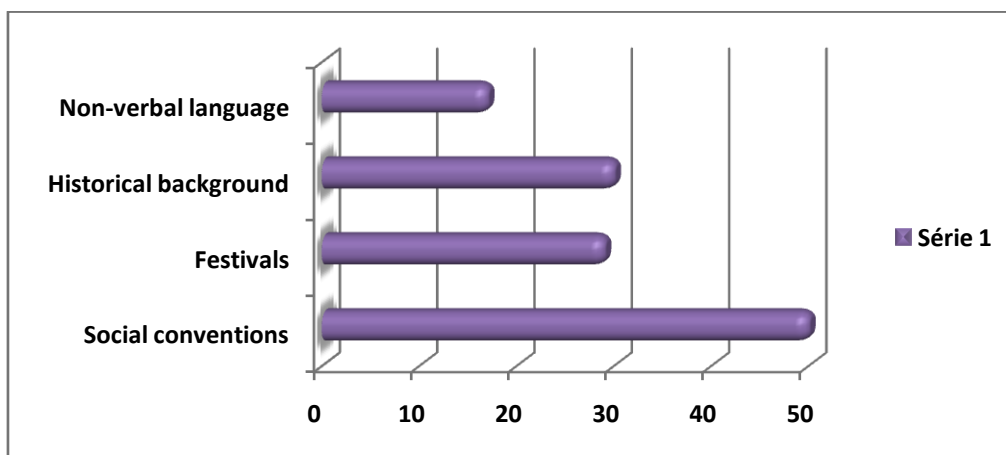


Figure 4.58. types of cultural information students learned from reading comics.

Findings show that 84, 7 % of students answered that they learnt information about the social conventions of the target culture such as food, customs, traditions...etc. 49, 2 % reported that they learned about festivals, 50, 8 % answered that they learned some historical events about the target culture, and 28, 8 %, which is the lowest percentage, reported that they learned some new non-verbal behaviour.

Q14: Do you think that knowing about the target culture can help you improve your Intercultural communication (ICC)?

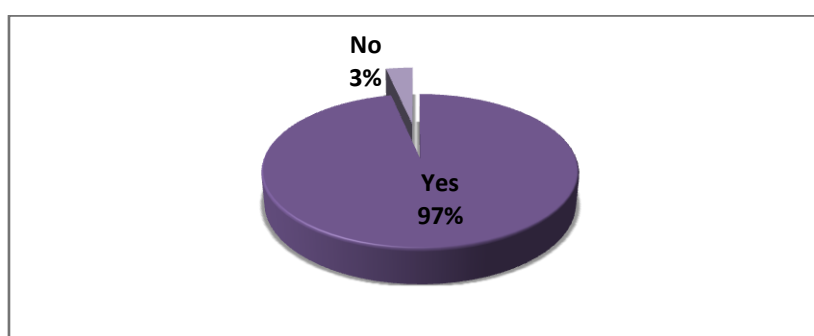


Figure 4.59. Students' opinion about whether knowing the target culture would help improve their ICC or not.

It is observed that the majority of students believe that knowing about the target culture would help them to improve their ICC level; whereas, 7 % answered that it does not help which is totally wrong belief.

Q15: If yes, how much it is important according to you?

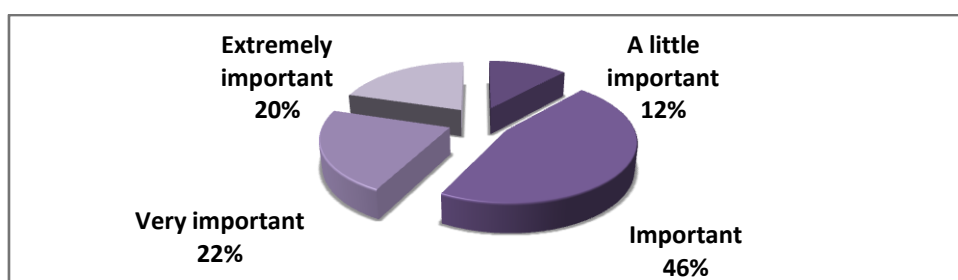


Figure 4.60. how much important culture is for students?

After getting through the results that are tabulated above, we noticed that most of the students see that culture is important for improving their ICC (46 %). 22 % of them said it is very important, and 20 % answered that that it is extremely important. Only 12 % said that have a little importance in terms of improving the ICC. The varied answers of students prove that not all of them are aware of the true value of culture when it comes to teaching EFL and ICC.

Q 16: Did reading comics help correcting some wrong beliefs about other ethnic groups?

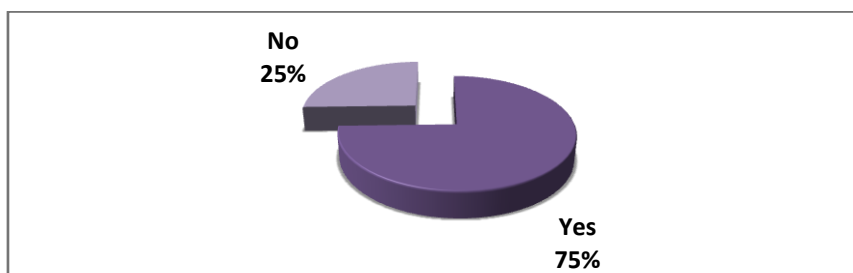


Figure 4.61. Students' opinion about the ability of comics to correct wrong beliefs.

The majority of students answered that yes reading comics helped them to correct some wrong beliefs about the target culture (75 %), and some students said no it does not (25 %).

Q17: Do you think that you are culturally superior to others from different cultures?

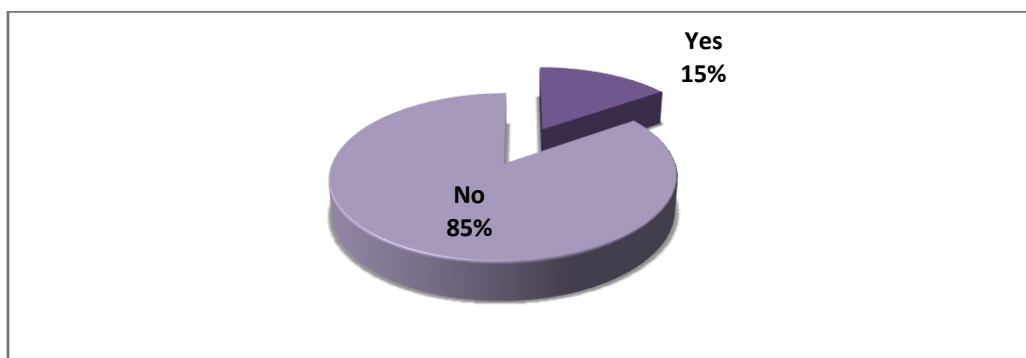


Figure 4.62. Does students believe that they are superior to diverse people?

15% of students answered yes, and 85 % answered no. The right answer is that no one or no culture is superior to other diverse people or cultures. In order to avoid ethnocentrism students have to correct their wrong beliefs.

Section four: Students’ opinion about implementing comics in classroom courses.

Q18: Do you agree that comics can be used for both fun and educational purposes? Choose what best suits you.

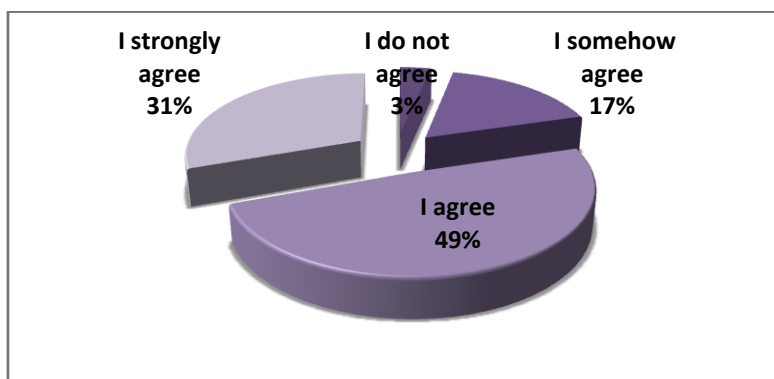


Figure 4.63. Students’ opinion about whether comics can be used for fun and educational purposes or not.

Findings revealed that the majority of students agree on the point that comics can be used for fun and for teaching (49 %). 31 % said that they strongly agree on the latter, and 7 % were not sure about this so they answered that they somehow agree. Only 3 % denied this point and said that they do not agree at all.

Q19: Do you find that implementing comics in classroom courses as didactic support is a good idea to develop the teaching/learning process?

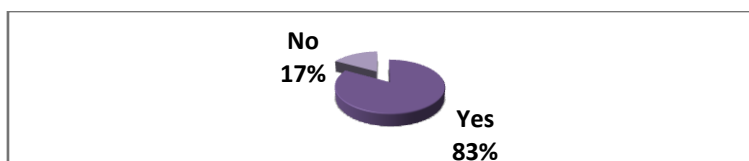


Figure 4.64. Do students find it a good idea to implement comics in the classroom courses?

The pie chart above shows that 83 % of students agree on the idea of implementing comics in the classroom as a didactic support; whereas, 17 % said no it is not a good idea.

Q20: Do you think that using comics in the classroom would increase your motivation and willingness to learn more about cultures?

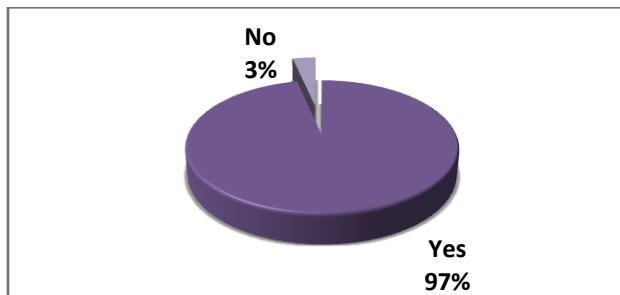


Figure 4.65. Does using comics in the classroom increase students' motivation to learn?

97 % of students answered yes. Using comics in the classroom would increase their motivation and willingness to learn more about cultures, but 3 % denied this point and answered no.

Q21: If you have any idea about how comics can be used in the classroom please write them down.

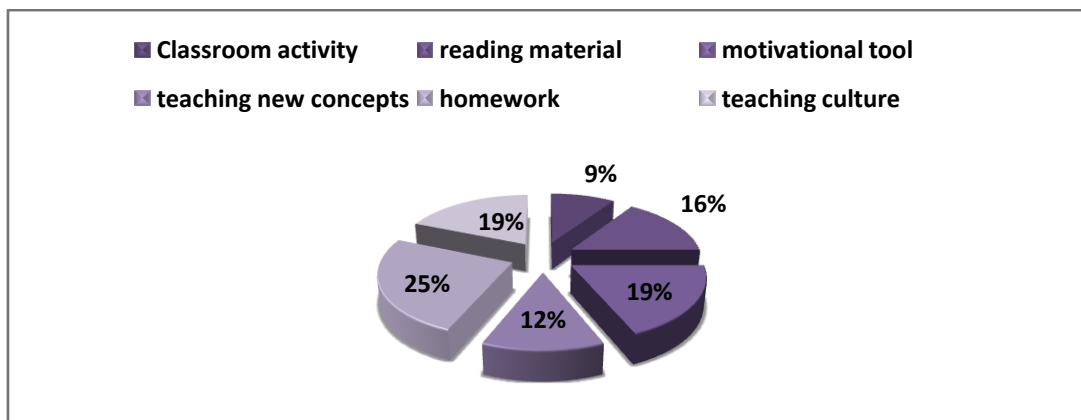


Figure 4.66. students' ideas about using comics in the classroom

This question aims at finding out how students think about implementing comics in the classroom and what can it be used for. 9 % of students talked about using comics as an activity form, 23 % said that teachers can ask them to generate their own comics concerning a history course or to develop their creative writing level, 15 % said that instead of reading long boring texts we can use comic novels followed with questions concerning their comprehension and the language used, 17 % said that comics can be a good motivational and interesting tool for them as a first year EFL students, 12 % reported that they can be used to teach them new concepts and to facilitate the process of their understanding of the new vocabulary, and 18 % stated that they can be a good tool to teach culture and the sociocultural aspects of the target culture use. First year EFL students have really good ideas about comics and how they can be used in order to improve their academic skills not only their intercultural communicative competence, and wish from teachers to take their wants and needs into consideration while delivering the courses.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that was collected, pre/post test's data and the questionnaire's data. First, the data gathered from the pre-test were tabulated, presented using charts and analysed. Second, the data gathered from the post-test were tabulate, presented in charts, and analysed in account to the pre-test data in order to compare between them. Finally, the data collected from students' questionnaire were also tabulated, presented in charts, and analysed. The analysis was done in a quantitative way since this study follows the quantitative research method.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Implication, and Recommendations

Introduction

The final chapter of this study deals with the interpretation of the results that were obtained from the analysed data. It discusses the hypothesises in account to the findings, and answers the research questions. The second part of this chapter is concerned with introducing the pedagogical implications that were drawn from the research's findings, and it states a set of recommendations concerning the implementation of comics in the English as a foreign language teaching courses in the University of Chadli Bendjdid.

2.6. Discussion

2.6.1. Discussion of Hypothesises

After getting through the findings of this study, reading comics proved to be an effective tool to cultivate the level of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of first year English as foreign language (EFL) students of Chadli Bendjdid University. The improvement that the students accomplished appeared clearly in the post-test results. Students' knowledge about the target culture, their attitude towards people from diverse cultures, their ability, their skills to know how to manage appropriately the use of their knowledge, and their awareness concerning the intercultural communicative aspects were notably enhanced. Students showed a positive attitude towards the comic strips that were used in the treatment. Also, most of the students agreed on the point that culture is an important part of EFL teaching/learning, and comics would play an essential role in enhancing their ICC. Students were excited about the idea of implementing comics in their EFL classroom courses. They reported that comics can be used for two purposes, fun and education, since it helped them to

learn a lot about the target culture and the language outside of the classroom. Further, they stated a set of suggestions about how comics can be used in the educational field which is considered to be both interesting and somehow effective.

The comic strips used in the treatment focused on delivering a set of cultural information that would develop the four components that made up the ICC, knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness. Due to the fact that first year EFL students are of an intermediate level and of a young age, they showed a big interest towards comics. Thanks to its creative and interesting characteristics that can deliver the needed knowledge in a joyful and funny way, it made students pay much attention to the importance of each aspect and raised their awareness towards the significance of ICC and the teaching of the target culture.

The handouts that were attached to the collection of comic strips helped the students a lot since they relied on it to clarify some concepts and notions that are needed to be acquired. It helped them to develop their schemata concerning culture and intercultural communication.

The researchers adopted the quantitative method combining between two data collection tools to carry out this study. Using the one group quasi- experiment along with a survey was the most appropriate choice for this study. It allowed tracking the students' improvement and perception towards both comics and intercultural communicative competence.

When combining all of the above mentioned elements and aspects, we were able to build up a creative and interesting tool that helped developing students' ICC that it depends on the enhancing of its four components; therefore, the first question of this research has been answered by validating the first hypothesis: "Reading comics does enhance EFL students' ICC". The findings of the second part of the research validate the second hypothesis:

“Students’ perception towards the use of comic strips is positive” which forms a satisfying answer to the second research question.

3. Implication and Recommendations

3.1. Implication

Some pedagogical implications are going to be stated in this part after taking into consideration the findings of the research. We started with mentioning a set of implications for students and teachers concerning methodology and the use of comics in teaching, then for syllabus designers, and for policy makers.

3.1.1. Implications for Students

Students of English as a foreign language are required to master the skill of intercultural communicative competence since we are living in the globalized world where English is considered to be the lingua franca. Thus, students are invited to be aware of the importance of learning culture in terms of intercultural communication. They should be more open towards reading about and learning different cultures especially the target and the source culture. They should know how to use their knowledge and refer it to the target culture in appropriate way to reach the level where they can make a successful cross-cultural communication. It is crucial for them to know that both the target and the source culture are of the same significance in EFL learning. Another important point that EFL students must take into consideration is that they should adjust their behaviour when intercultural communicating, and suspend all the negative attitudes and way of thinking such as ethnocentrism and stereotyping. Reading graphic novels can be helpful to learn about the history of the target culture; reading comics can be a simulation of real intercultural communication.

3.1.2. Implications for Teacher

Teachers of English as a foreign language should start to change the approach that is used in teaching from being information-based to communication-based. The goal of learning EFL is to learn the right way of communication using the target language; therefore, a balance must be made between the teaching of the linguistic competence and the cultural competence. The importance of teaching the target culture cannot be denied in the field of foreign languages education. Students must be prepared for the occupational world and the intercultural interactions that they are going to face; thus, students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) must be enhanced using creative interesting tools such as comics that their effective impact on students' level were proved.

Comics can be integrated in the classroom courses not only as reading materials to learn a new vocabulary and concepts from, but also as a motivational tool to push students towards the desire to learn more about culture. They can make the educational subjects fun and amusing, so it can be used in many courses as geography, religion of the foreign language's culture; a lot of historical events were turned to graphic novels and comic books. Teachers can make use of them in order to facilitate the process of teaching civilization and history to help them grasp variety of complex forms of historical and cultural knowledge as much as induce an increase of interest in the subject of their learning.

Comics can serve as a good tool to be used following the situational-based teaching approach; it can help teaching the suitable language and behaviour that must be used in different situations due to their remarkable characteristics of using both the word and the image to convey the message. They also can be used as a classroom collaborative activity where students can be grouped and asked to generate their own simple comics starting with writing the plot of the story, the dialogue, and finishing by coordinating the texts to simple

drawings. This kind of activity has been proved to be interesting and effective. It helps students to learn how to work in groups, and how to exchange ideas. This would increase the interaction between students using the target language; it would help them to develop their level of creative writing, and mostly would increase their intercultural communication abilities by dealing closely with the target culture aspects in account to their own culture. This approach is likely ignored while teaching because teachers are assuming that this type of information is learnt automatically. Using comics would allow students to go beyond classroom's walls by using their imagination to simulate the real intercultural interactions.

In addition, teacher should make more efforts to raise students' awareness about the importance of intercultural communicative competence. Many graduated students encounter a problem when trying to identify this notion. Opening comics' workshops where post graduate students can take part of it, and volunteer to help intermediate students and guide them could be both enjoyable and useful to build their trust and communication skills. They can be used to reveal the artistic and innovative tendencies of students.

3.1.3. Implications for Syllabus Designer

The people who work in the educational sector and responsible for designing the English as a foreign language teaching/learning syllabus are invited in the future to make the suitable changes to keep up with modernity and to the new priorities that were set in terms of EFL teaching. Intercultural communicative competence is the goal for EFL teaching nowadays, but not the linguistic competence. Generating a special independent module that allows students to acquire the cultural knowledge, and master the intercultural skills using creative tools and supports such as graphic narratives is a must in order to prepare them for the real world intercultural interactions.

3.1.4. Implications for Policy Makers

Policy makers are requested to review the educational system and try to make up for the deficiency that affects negatively the process of teaching and learning. One of the most important points is that those responsible for the university library should do more effort to enrich it. Books cannot be dispensed with, and their importance cannot be denied in the educational field. Bringing some graphic novels and comic books could be an effective way to push students towards reading. As it is mentioned before, not all comics are made for fun; some of them discuss some serious issues and have a considerable cultural and literary value.

Another point is that our policy makers are invited to make some effort and try to be part of the global students exchange system. It would be a great deal that would allow our students to study, to live abroad, and to enjoy a real intercultural interaction experience. They can bring back their experiences and share it with others. It would also benefit our universities when they would open their doors to the cultural diversity by inviting students from diverse countries. This step would help our students who cannot travel to engage in a real cross-cultural interaction in their own country which would foster intercultural communicative competence.

3.2. Recommendations

This research was interested in discussing an important issue in the EFL Algerian classrooms which is about fostering students' ICC using graphic narratives, comics. This study would raise interests in some areas, and themes that would be the subject for future researches; further theoretical and practical researches are still needed in order to develop more strategies and techniques that aim to raise awareness of both students and teachers about the importance of teaching culture and enhancing the students' level of ICC.

First, this research aimed at answering the question whether reading comics would help students to enhance their level of ICC or not. The findings of this study were based on students' self reporting. Their actual oral performance was not assessed. The students' ICC improvements would be better tracked if their oral performance were assessed. This point could be an aim for future researches since it was not investigated in this study.

Second, this study depended on Byram's (1997) modal of ICC that was composed of four components: knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness. There are other modals of ICC that can be used as the theme of the study. Chan's and Starosta's (1996) modal is known one that is composed of three dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Experiencing the effect of reading comics on students' adroitness, intercultural awareness, and sensitivity would provide more credence to the effectiveness of comics in this field.

Third, there are a lot of ICC assessment modals that have been proved more valid and reliable than the self-reporting scales such as face to face interviews and portfolios. The researchers can make use of them in future researches.

Fourth, the use of comic strips in this study took the form of a reading task as a treatment. Future researchers can take a different way and integrate more techniques to the use of comics such as organizing comics' workshops or designing some courses to be presented using graphic novels as a treatment. Then, assess the effectiveness of using graphic narratives inside the classroom on both students' behaviours and performances and on teachers. This would be a complement to this research using these findings to complete the missing piece of the picture that tell the importance and effectiveness of using the graphic narratives in the educational sector.

Fifth, making this study on a larger representative sample can be a choice for future researchers in order to get more valid and reliable defects-free data. Another point is to

relate this research to EFL teachers where the researcher would seek to find out teachers' opinion about using this tool as a didactic support and to identify the obstacles that may face them while delivering the courses using comics in order to find suitable solutions for them.

Taking into consideration the findings of this study, there are some points and concerns that must be tackled in details to make sure that all of the lacks are covered. To develop suitable methods and techniques that aim to cultivate students' ICC and integrate the teaching of culture in EFL classrooms a major attention must be paid to the following:

- ◆ A study to identify students' lacks and weaknesses concerning their ICC.
- ◆ A study to identify the current state of the intercultural communication teaching in EFL classrooms.
- ◆ A study to investigate teachers' perception towards the importance of ICC, and using new tools to teaching it.
- ◆ A study to investigate the impact of integrating graphic narratives to teach different subjects such as civilization, literature, and oral expression in the EFL classroom and the suitable techniques and methods that would benefit both teacher and students.
- ◆ An experimental study to find out the impact of teaching ICC using comics on students' oral performance.
- ◆ An experimental study to investigate the effect of reading comics on students' reading skill and verbal repertoire.

The previous mentioned points are set in order to make sure that EFL students and teachers would have the opportunity to explore new techniques and methods to develop and facilitate the teaching and learning process in terms of intercultural teaching. This would open a gate to the new age of intercultural communication teaching not only within the classroom's walls but also out in the new globalized world.

Conclusion

The final chapter was concerned with drawing a conclusion for this study by discussing the findings to answer the research questions and validating the hypothesis. This was followed by a set of implementation to the students, teachers, syllabus designers, and policy makers. They were asked to pay more attention and give importance to the teaching of intercultural communicative competence and integrating comics as a supporting tool. The findings of this research have raised some other points of concerns that would form a good base for further researches that aim at developing the EFL teaching and learning process, and to prepare EFL students for future professional intercultural communication situations.

General Conclusion

The current study is interested in the issue of teaching the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), and integrating the teaching of culture in the University of Chadli Bendjdid, EFL classrooms using comic strips as a type of graphic narratives. As a matter of fact, many researches already exist concerning the importance of teaching culture and implementing it in the EFL courses in order to build students' Intercultural Communication (IC) skills. Neither teachers nor students can deny the significant relationship that relates language to culture and communication; however, they seem to be ignoring this fact by focusing on teaching the language as an end forgetting to focus on its actual goal which is IC. Thus, a quasi-experiment was conducted with 35 first year EFL students of Chadli Benjdid University. They had a pre-test, treatment using comics, then a post test. Other data collection tool as used which is the questionnaire. It was addressed to 59 first year EFL students. These tools were advocated to collect the needed data in order to answer the research questions” does reading comics help enhancing students'ICC? “, and “what is students' perception towards using comics as a didactic tool?”

The data of the pre/post test were quantitatively analysed, and the findings showed that the students' level of ICC was enhanced after being exposed to comics. The students' knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness were remarkably improved. The data of the questionnaire was also analysed in a quantitative way; the findings revealed that students show a positive perception towards comics, and most of them believe that they can be a good didactic support to teach ICC. Consequently, these findings answered the research questions by validating the hypothesis. Comics can be used as effective tool to teach culture to EFL students since they showed a big interest in using this creative artistic literacy.

The last part of the research mentioned a set of implementations to students, teachers, syllabus designers, and policy makers in order to make the needed changes in order to facilitate the process of learning and mastering the intercultural communicative competence

skills for EFL students in Chadli Bendjdid University. Standing on the findings of this study, some researchable points were mentioned as recommendations for further researches to pave the way towards making the University a place where students are allowed to enjoy learning the needed knowledge of intercultural communication.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The facebook post



Ayoub Bouzergui



New Member • May 2 at 12:02 AM •

Hello ❤️ we are conducting a research concerning comics. We will be studying the effects of reading comics on your communication abilities so we would like to have some volunteers at least 20 to answer the questionnaire. I promise it's not going to be boring and your names won't be mentioned. Whoever wants to help us contact me on my fb . We only need 10 mins thats all 😊 comment down below if ur in ❤️
And saha ftourkom 💙



3

2 Comments • Seen by +62

Collection of Comic Strips



This collection of comics is used in the quzai-experiment research submitted to the department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in Didactic of English at El-Taref Chadli Bendjdid University, Algeria 2019/2020.

Comics are made by:

Characters and settings design: Frahta Chaima & Karboua Zine Eddine

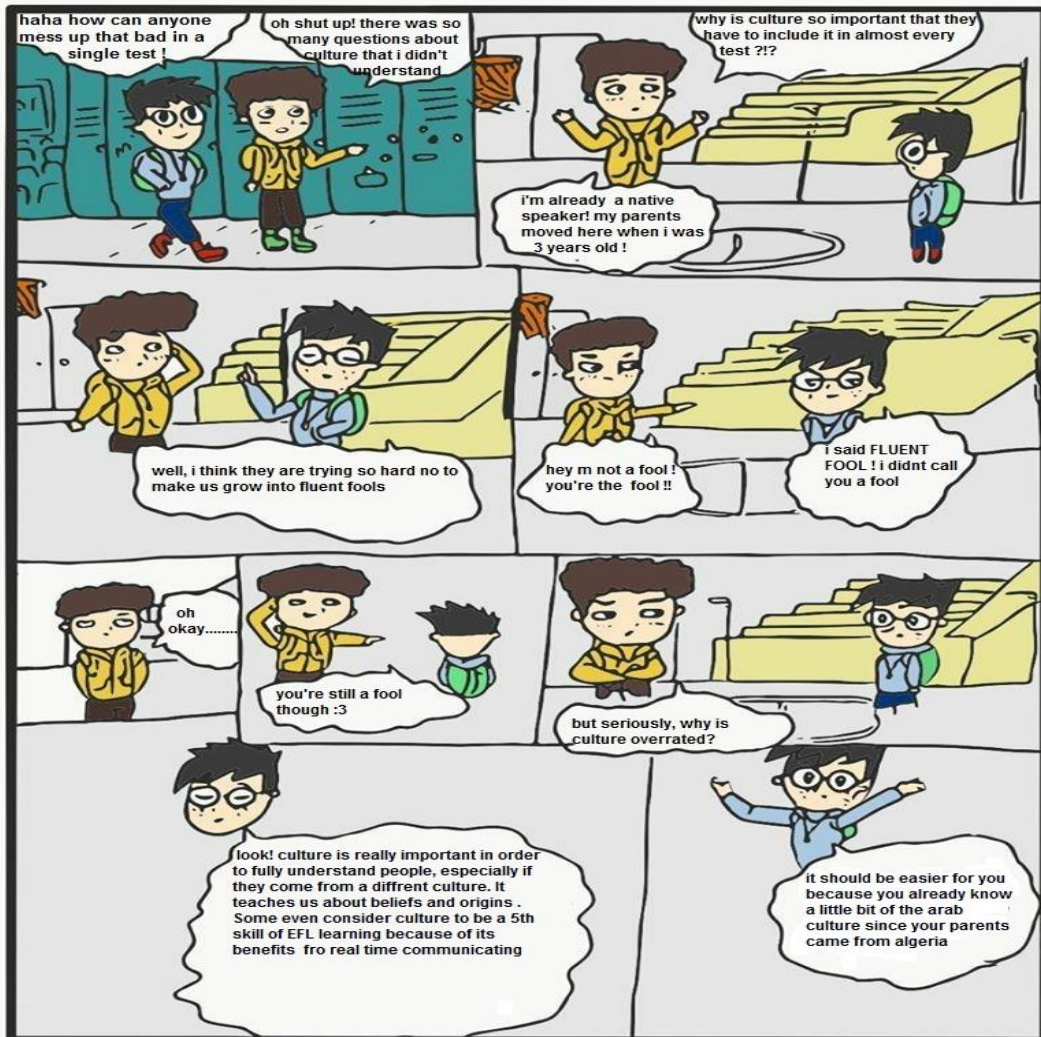
Text Description: Bouzergui Ayoub

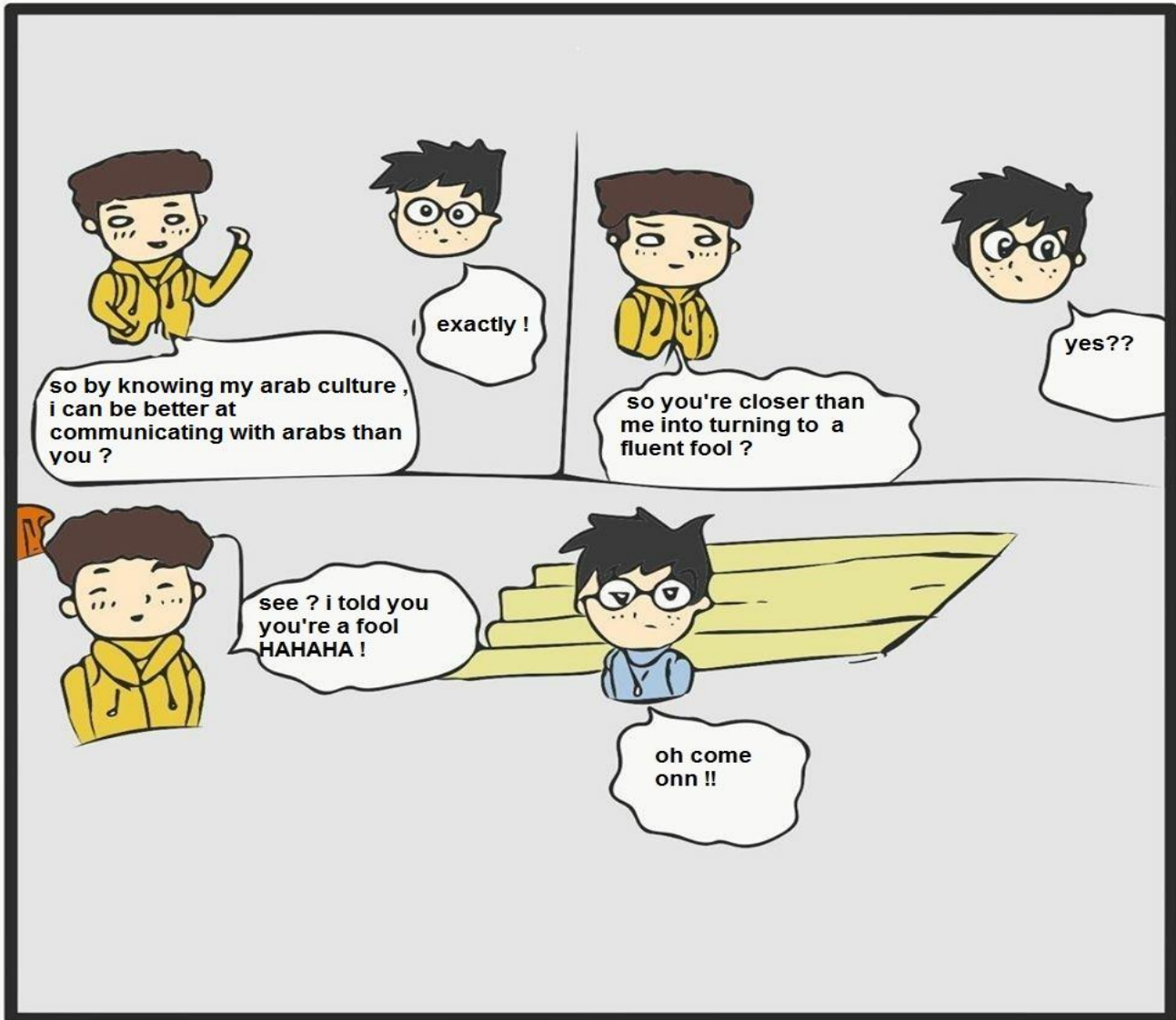
List of Key Concepts Handouts: Hammaizi Nada Elyassmin

The Dissertation is submitted by

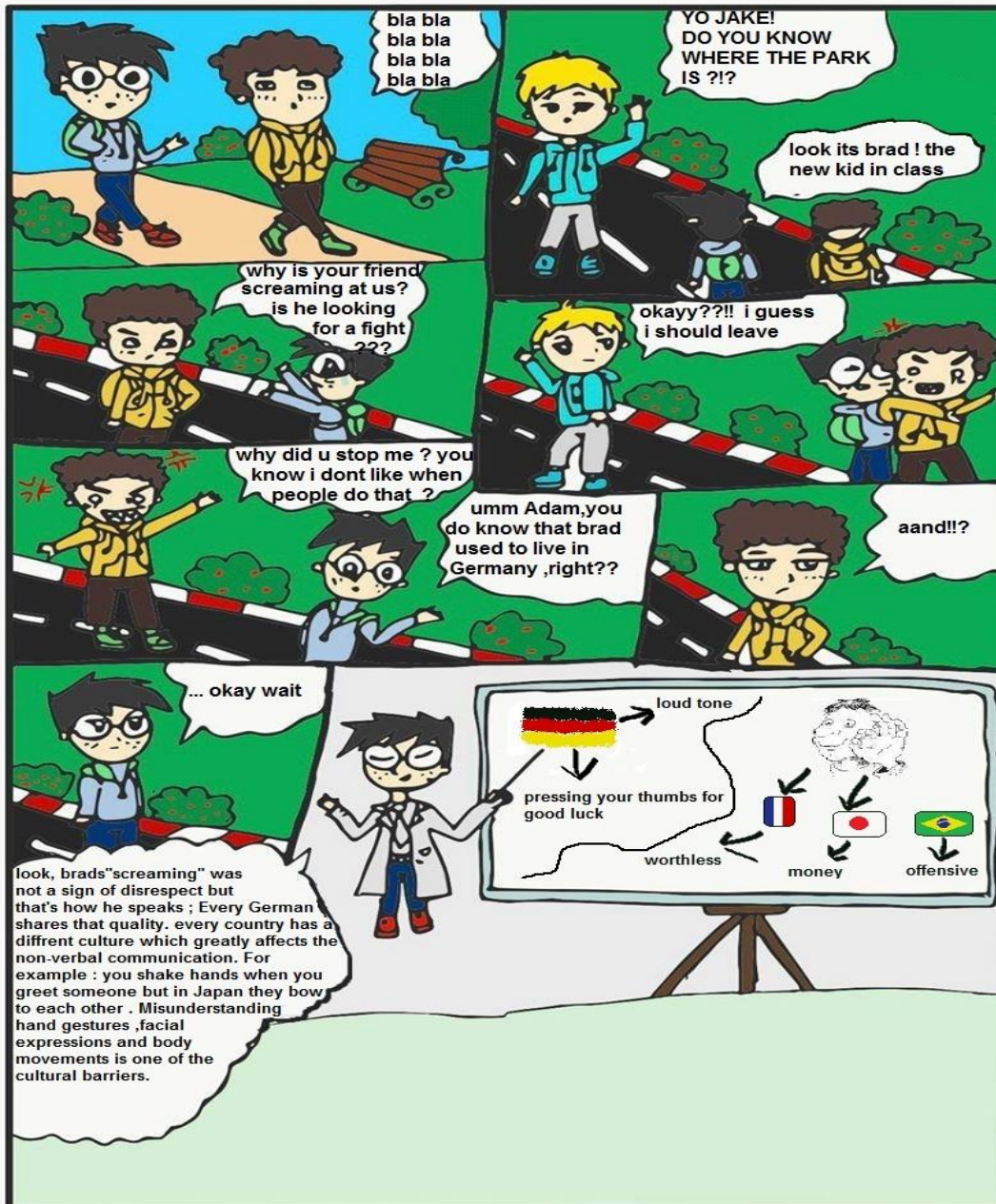
Bouzergui Ayoub & Hamaizi Nada Elyassmin

WHAT IS CULTURE?



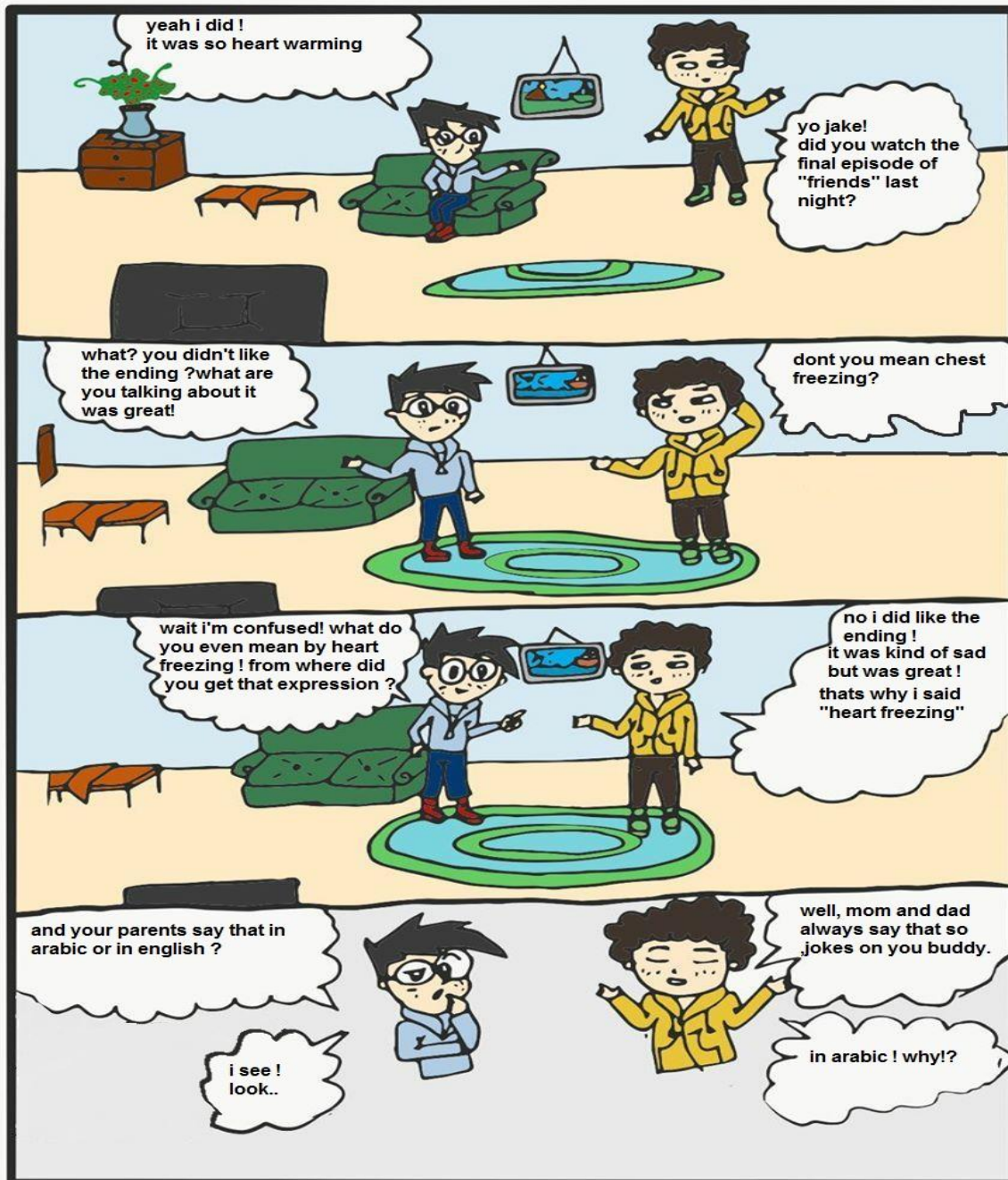


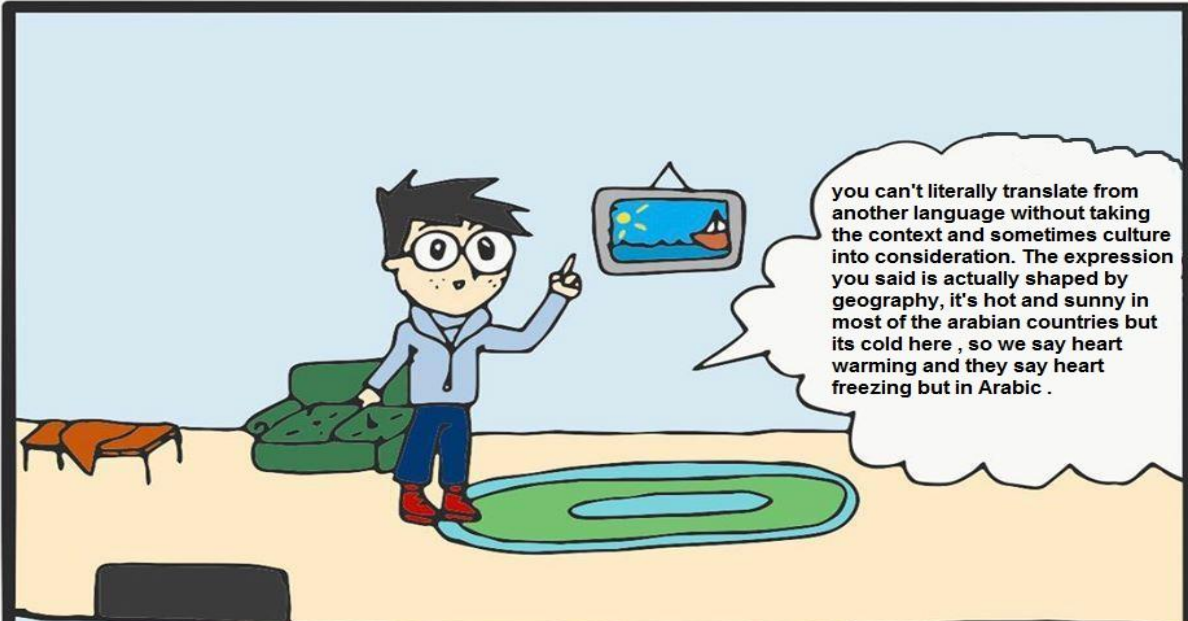
THE NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE





GEOGRAPHY AND ITS IMPACT ON CULTURE AND THE USE OF LANGUAGE





you can't literally translate from another language without taking the context and sometimes culture into consideration. The expression you said is actually shaped by geography, it's hot and sunny in most of the arabian countries but its cold here , so we say heart warming and they say heart freezing but in Arabic .



well ill start just to tease you ! geography also shapes our economy .In sunny places people turn sunshine into energy and in windy places they make energy from the wind.

not again with the culture thing !! and please dont start talking about geography!

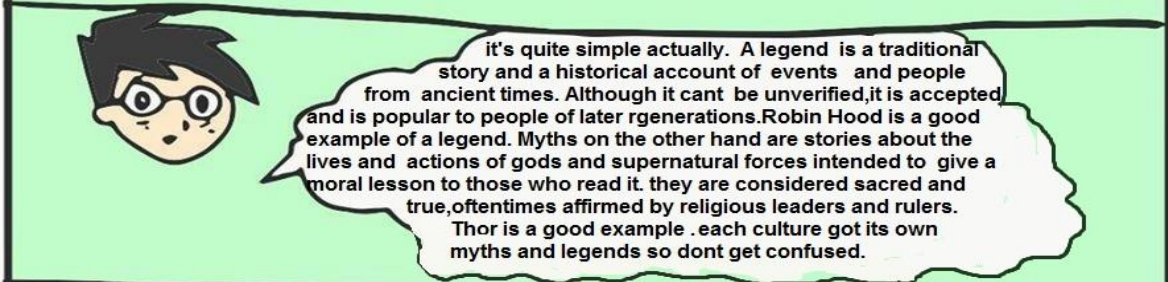


haha fine i'll stop

HEART WARMING ! just stop talking pleasee! heart warming it is !!

MYTHS AND LEGONDS





HISTORICAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS



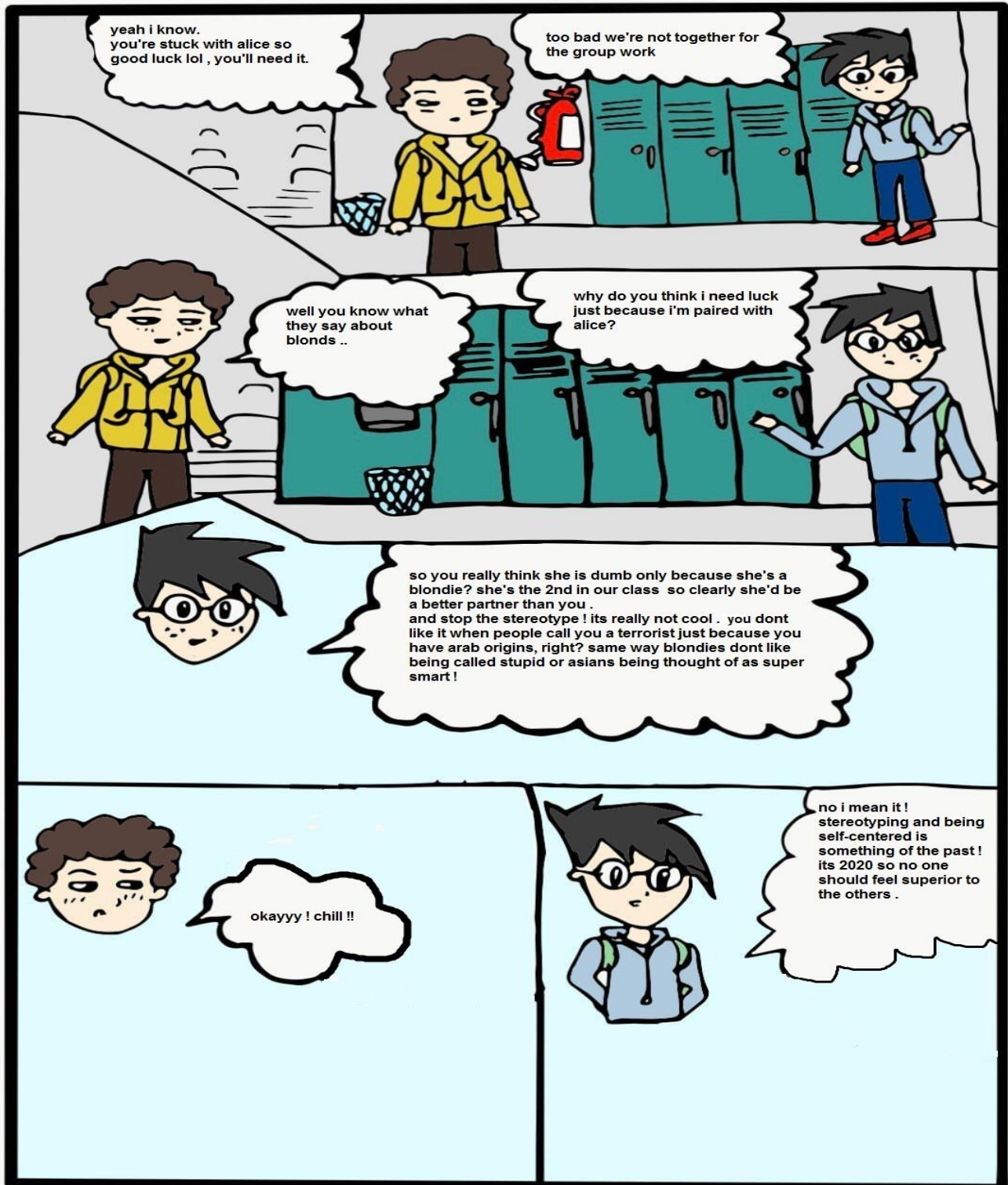


TRADITONS AND MARRIAGE





STERIOTYPING AND PRECONCEPTIONS





Appendix C

Handouts

List of Key Concepts

LANGUAGE: is a system of verbal symbols through which humans communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences. Through language these can be accumulated and transmitted across generations. Language is not only a tool, or a means of expression, but it also structures and shapes our experiences of the world and what we see around us.

CULTURE: is a set of traditions, rules, symbols that shape and are enacted as feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of groups of people. Referring primarily to learned behavior as distinct from that which is given by nature, or biology, culture has been used to designate everything that is humanly produced (habits, beliefs, arts, and artifacts) and passed from one generation to another. In this formulation, culture is distinguished from nature, and distinguishes one society from another.

VALUES: they are preferences and ideas people share about what is good, bad, desirable, undesirable. These are usually very general, abstract, cut across variations in situations.

NORMS: They are concepts and behaviors that constitute the normal, Behavioral rules or standards for social interaction. These often derive from values but also contradict values; sometimes derives from statistical norms but often not. Serve as both guides and criticisms for individual behavior. Norms establish expectations that shape interaction.

ETHNICITY: It is the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others. Members of ethnic groups see themselves as culturally distinct from other groups in a society, and are seen by those others to be so in return. Many different characteristics may distinguish ethnic groups from one another but the most usual are language, history or ancestry - real or imagined, religion, and styles of dress or adornment. Ethnic differences are wholly learned.

Acculturation: Cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact. It should be noted that individuals from culturally diverse groups may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.

Assimilation: To assume the cultural traditions of a given people or group; the cultural absorption of a minority group into the main cultural body.

Culturally Appropriate: Exhibiting sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities, and demonstrating effectiveness in translating that sensitivity to action through organizational mission statements, communication strategies, and services to diverse cultures.

Cultural Awareness: Recognition of the nuances of one's own and other cultures.

Cultural Competence: The ability of individuals to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups.

Cultural competency: It implies a state of mastery that can be achieved when it comes to understanding culture. Encompasses individuals' desire, willingness, and ability to improve systems by drawing on diverse values, traditions, and customs, and working closely with knowledgeable persons from the community to develop interventions and services that affirm and reflect the value of different cultures.

Cultural Diversity: Differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, physical ability, language, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, or customs among various groups within a community, organization, or nation.

Cultural humility: is a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique. Cultural humility does not require mastery of lists of “different” or peculiar beliefs and behaviors supposedly pertaining to different cultures, rather it encourages to develop a respectful attitude toward diverse points of view.

Cultural sensitivity: Understanding the needs and emotions of your own culture and the culture of others.

Ethnic: It is to relate to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.

Ethnicity: It is how one sees oneself and how one is “seen by others as part of a group on the basis of presumed ancestry and sharing a common destiny ...” Common threads that may tie one to an ethnic group include skin color, religion, language, customs, ancestry, and occupational or regional features. In addition, persons belonging to the same ethnic group

share a unique history different from that of other ethnic groups. Usually a combination of these features identifies an ethnic group. For example, physical appearance alone does not consistently identify one as belonging to a particular ethnic group.

The following related terms are defined by Webster's New World Dictionary of American English, Third Edition (1991), as follows:

- **Bias:** implies a mental leaning in favor of or against someone or something.
- **Bigotry:** the behavior, attitude, or beliefs of a person who holds blindly and intolerantly to a particular creed, opinion, etc.; intolerance; prejudice.
- **Discrimination:** the act of discriminating or distinguishing differences; the ability to make or perceive distinctions, perception, and discernment; a showing of partiality or prejudice in treatment; specific action or policies directed against the welfare of minority groups.
- **Diversity:** a quality, state, fact, or instance of being different or dissimilar; difference; variety.
- **Ethnocentrism:** the emotional attitude that one's own ethnic group, nation, or culture is superior; an excessive or inappropriate concern for racial matters.
- **Homophobia:** irrational hatred or fear of homosexuals or homosexuality.
- **Power:** the ability to control others; authority, sway, influence; a person or thing having great influence, force, or authority.
- **Prejudice:** implies a preconceived and unreasonable judgment, or opinion, usually an unfavourable one marked by suspicion, fear, or hatred.
- **Racism:** a doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that claims to find racial differences in character, intelligence, etc.; that asserts the superiority of one race over another or others, and that seeks to maintain the supposed purity of a race or the races; any program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, etc. based on such beliefs.
- **Segregation:** the policy or practice of compelling racial groups to live apart from each other, go to separate schools, use separate social facilities, etc.
- **Sexism:** discrimination against people on the basis of sex; specifically discrimination against, and prejudicial stereotyping of, women.

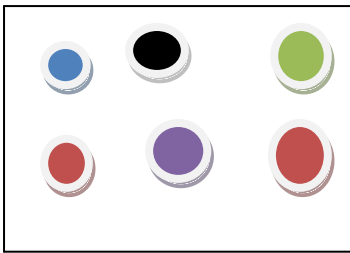
- **Supremacist:** a person who believes in or promotes the supremacy of a particular group, race, etc

Compiled by the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) from different source

Defining Multicultural, Cross-cultural, and Intercultural

Multicultural:

In multicultural communities, we live alongside one another.



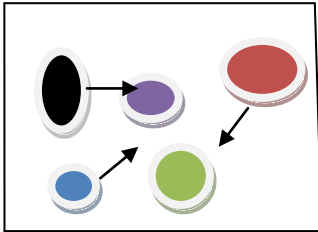
We value tolerance, and celebrate one another's culturally distinctive cuisine, dress, music, dance, and related outward expressions of culture. It usually requires only superficial and polite social interaction.

A multicultural community can also mean that:

- Society allows and includes very distinct cultural groups, with equal status
- People from different cultural groups are understood as standing side-by-side, at times in isolation from one another
- Often there is a superficial celebration of food, folk, and festivals without deep learning
- Power differentials are not addressed; it does not allow for exchange between these cultural groups, and tends to only focus on representation

Cross-cultural:

In cross-cultural communities, there is some reaching across boundaries.



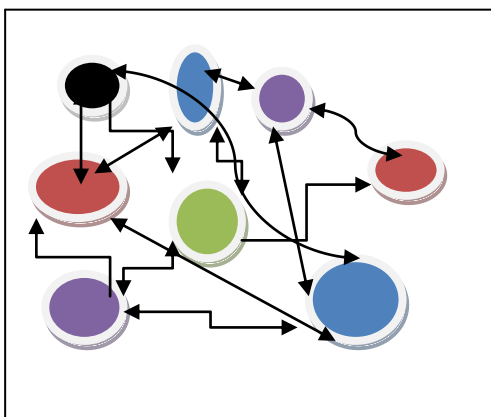
We try to build bridges of relationship between our cultural communities by sharing, listening, learning, and being open to changing. It usually requires intentionality, and programs of education and community-building.

It also means that

- Two or more cultures are considered or related to
- Often cultures are compared or contrasted with one another, and one culture is deemed superior or inferior to another
- Power differentials are still not addressed; it only allows for limited learning or exchange between cultural groups
- Cultural differences may be understood or acknowledged, but are also managed in a way that does not allow for individual or collective transformation

Intercultural:

In intercultural communities, there is comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity, and equality.



Our social structures and everyday interactions are defined by justice, mutuality, respect, equality, understanding, acceptance, freedom, diversity, peace-making, and celebration.

Intercultural community hopes to take us deeper than multicultural or cross-cultural models of community.

It also means that

- there are mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures
- people from different cultural groups interact with one another, learn and grow together; build relationships and become transformed, shaped, and moulded from each other's experiences
- “intercultural” is not a substitute for “ethnic”!
- the focus is on relationship building (not survival), deep connections, interactions, mutual gifting, respect, and learning from one another
- no one is left unchanged in the intercultural process: some examine their own culture more deeply, some are changed through their interaction with others, many learn more about what it means to be in community together
- racial and cultural power imbalances are addressed; people are enabled to learn from each other and lead toward the transformation of all peoples.

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Appendix D

The Original Survey

Cultural Intelligence Scale Online Survey (CQS) Ang et al. (2007)

		Strongly DISAGREE						Strongly AGREE
CQ-Strategy:								
MC1	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MC2	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MC3	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MC4	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CQ-Knowledge:								
COG1	I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COG2	I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COG3	I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COG4	I know the marriage systems of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COG5	I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COG6	I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CQ-Motivation:								
MOT1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MOT2	I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MOT3	I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MOT4	I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MOT5	I am confident that I can get used to the shopping conditions in a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CQ-Behavior:								
BEH1	I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BEH2	I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BEH3	I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BEH4	I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BEH5	I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix E

Intercultural Communicative Competence Pre-Test: The Four Components/ 20 Item

Scale Test (<https://forms.gle/XKC3NHa16wrzBsY97>)

*How old are you ?

*Do you read comics? Yes No

*: if yes, why?

Check the number below (from 1 = Not at all to 5 = Extremely well) that best describes your situation:

THE FIRST COMPONENT: Knowledge

1. I could cite the definition of culture and describe its components:

1 2 3 4 5

2. I know the essential norms of the target culture (i.e, greeting, dress, conventions...).

1 2 3 4 5

3. I know some historical events and festivals that shaped the culture of the target language.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I know the rules of expressing the non- verbal behaviours in target culture.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I know the target culture's values and beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I know the rules that govern how language is actually used (grammatical competence, sociocultural competence).

1 2 3 4 5

The SECOND COMPONENT: Attitude

7. I change my verbal behavior (accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I use pauses and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I change my non-verbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I suspend judgments, appreciate, and respect, other's diverse culture when cross-culturally interaction occurs.

1 2 3 4 5

THE THIRD COMPONENT: skill

12. I adjust my behaviour when interacting with others to avoid offending them.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I am aware of the culture knowledge I use when cross-culturally interact with others.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I can avoid ethnocentrism while having a cross- cultural conversation.

1 2 3 4 5

15. I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

1 2 3 4 5

THE FORTH COMPONENT: Awareness

16. I realize the importance of differences and similarities across mine and the other culture.

1 2 3 4 5

17. I realize that my choices would affect others' opinion about me which make me less or more skilful when interacting with others.

1 2 3 4 5

18. I realize the dangers of generalizing individuals' behaviours as representatives of the whole culture (i.e, prejudice, stereotyping...).

1 2 3 4 5

19. I realize that my culture is neither inferior nor superior to others' cultures.

1 2 3 4 5

20. I realize how my values and ethics. would be reflected by my language use in specific situations.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix F

Intercultural Communicative Competence Post-Test: The Four Components/ 20 Item

Scale Test (<https://forms.gle/P9NBfVirSHkVmaZr6>)

The survey that was used as the pre-test was used as the post-test too in addition to these introductory questions

*Did you find trouble in completing the reading task of the collection of comic strips?

Yes No

*if yes, can you say what was the problem that you faced?

.....

*Did you enjoy reading these comics? Yes No

c. Sometimes

d. Often

e. Once a week

Q5. Do you read for

a. Educational purposes

b. Fun

c. Both

Q6. Have you read comics before? **Yes** **No**

Q7. If yes, in what language?

a. Arabic

b. French

c. English

Q8. What type of comics do you read?

a. Comic strips

b. Comic books

c. Graphic novels

d. Web comics

e. Manga

Section three: Students' opinion about comics and the importance of culture.

Q9. How do you describe your experience in reading comics? Rate it

- a. Not enjoyable nor useful at all
- b. Somehow enjoyable but not useful
- c. Both enjoyable and useful
- d. Other

Q10. Do you think that reading comics can help you develop your academic skills?

Yes **No** **Maybe**

Q11. If yes, what skill?

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing
- e. Intercultural Communication Skill
- f. Others

Q12. After reading comics do you feel like you earned some knowledge about the target culture? **Yes** **No**

Q13. If yes, what type of cultural information did you learn?

- a. Social conventions (customs, food, traditions...)

- b. Festivals
- c. Historical background
- d. Non_verbal language
- e. Other

Q14. Do you think that knowing about the target culture can help you improve your Intercultural communication? **Yes** **No**

Q15. If yes, how much it is important according to you?

- a. A little important
- b. Important
- c. Very Important
- d. Extremely Important

Q16. Did reading comics help correcting some wrong beliefs about other ethnic groups?

Yes **No**

Q17. Do you think that you are culturally superior to others from different cultures?

Yes **No**

Section four: Students' opinion about implementing comics in classroom courses.

Q18. Do you agree that comics can be used for both fun and educational purposes? Choose what best suits you?

- a. I don't agree

b. I somehow agree

c. I agree

d. I strongly agree

Q19. Do you find that implementing comics in classroom courses as didactic support is a good idea to develop the teaching/learning process?

Yes

No

Q20. Do you think that using comics in the classroom would increase your motivation and willingness to learn more about cultures?

Yes

No

Q21. If you have any idea about how comics can be used in the classroom please write them down?

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!