

**Learners perceptions of ICT Use In Intercultural
Communicative competence Development**

A Study at ahmed zabana university, Relizane

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Dedications

I dedicate this humble work to my parents, who gave me the gift of life and surrounded me with love and care. I express to them my deepest respect and heartfelt gratitude. With deep love and appreciation, I dedicate this work especially to my father, who raised me with strength, wisdom, and endless care. His support and sacrifices have always been my foundation and inspiration.

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To all those who contributed, directly or indirectly, to my success, I dedicate the fruit of my efforts.

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of authentic ICT-based instruction on the development of intercultural communicative competence among second-year students at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane. Using a qualitative and qualitative case study approach, the research collected data through a questionnaire for students and a semi-structured interview with teachers to examine how ICT tools enhance communication skills, learner engagement, and intercultural awareness in English language learning. The findings revealed that authentic digital materials increased students' participation, interaction, and understanding of different cultures, while teachers emphasized both the advantages and challenges of integrating ICT tools in the classroom. Overall, the study confirms the effectiveness of ICT-supported instruction in developing intercultural communicative competence and offers recommendations for the effective integration of ICT and authentic materials in language teaching.

Key terms: *ICT-Based Instruction, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Authentic Materials, Second-Year Students, English Language Learning.*

Résumé

Cette étude explore l'impact de l'enseignement basé sur les TIC authentiques sur le développement de la compétence communicative interculturelle chez les étudiants de deuxième année à Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane. En adoptant une approche qualitative et quantitative de type étude de cas, la recherche a recueilli des données à travers un questionnaire destiné aux étudiants et un entretien semi-structuré avec les enseignants afin d'examiner comment les outils des TIC améliorent les compétences communicatives, l'engagement des apprenants et la sensibilisation interculturelle dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais. Les résultats ont montré que les supports numériques authentiques ont augmenté la participation, l'interaction et la compréhension des différentes cultures chez les étudiants, tandis que les enseignants ont souligné à la fois les avantages et les défis liés à l'intégration des outils TIC en classe. Dans l'ensemble, l'étude confirme l'efficacité de l'enseignement soutenu par les TIC dans le développement de la compétence communicative interculturelle et propose des recommandations pour une intégration efficace des TIC et des supports authentiques dans l'enseignement des langues.

Mots-clés : *Enseignement basé sur les TIC, Compétence communicative interculturelle, Supports authentiques, Étudiants de deuxième année, Apprentissage de l'anglais.*

الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة أثر التدريس القائم على تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال باستخدام المواد الأصلية في تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لدى طلبة السنة الثانية بجامعة أحمد زبانة بعليزان. واعتمدت الدراسة على منهج دراسة الحالة النوعية و الكمية، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان موجه للطلبة ومقابلة شبه مهيكلية مع الأساتذة، بهدف دراسة كيفية مساهمة أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال في تحسين مهارات التواصل، وزيادة اندماج المتعلمين، وتعزيز الوعي بين الثقافات في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. وأظهرت النتائج أن المواد الرقمية الأصلية ساهمت في رفع مستوى مشاركة الطلبة وتفاعلهم وفهمهم للثقافات المختلفة، كما أشار الأساتذة إلى الفوائد والتحديات المرتبطة بإدماج أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال داخل القسم. وبصفة عامة، تؤكد الدراسة فعالية التدريس المدعوم بالتكنولوجيا في تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، وتقدم مجموعة من التوصيات من أجل الاستخدام الفعال للتكنولوجيا والمواد الأصلية في تعليم اللغات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس القائم على تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال، الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، المواد الأصلية، طلبة السنة الثانية، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.

List of Abbreviations

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

COIL: Collaborative Online International Learning.

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

EAP: English for Academic Purposes.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ESP: English for Specific Purposes.

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence.

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning.

SUNY: The State University of New York.

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General Introduction

In the contemporary era of globalization, English is widely recognized as an essential medium for intercultural communication rather than merely a system of grammatical structures. EFL learners are therefore expected to develop the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. This ability, commonly referred to as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), includes intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural awareness.

However, in many Algerian university contexts, EFL teaching still prioritizes linguistic competence and examination performance, while intercultural aspects remain insufficiently addressed. Consequently, learners may encounter difficulties in interpreting cultural meanings, responding appropriately in intercultural situations, and engaging in authentic communication.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The rapid expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has created innovative opportunities for language learning. Authentic ICT-based resources such as videos, online interaction, multimedia content, and virtual exchanges expose learners to real-life language use and diverse cultural perspectives. Despite their availability, these tools are not always systematically integrated to support intercultural learning. This situation highlights the necessity of examining the effectiveness of authentic supportive ICT-based instruction in enhancing learners' intercultural communicative competence.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study aims to emphasize the importance of integrating authentic ICT-based instruction in EFL classrooms to promote intercultural communicative competence. It may

provide teachers with practical strategies to create more engaging and culturally rich learning environments.

Additionally, the research contributes to curriculum development by highlighting the need to incorporate intercultural objectives alongside linguistic goals. The findings may also support learners' motivation, cultural awareness, and communicative confidence, particularly within Algerian higher education contexts.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. Examine the current level of intercultural communicative competence among 2nd-year EFL learners.
2. Investigate the extent to which teachers use ICT-based instruction to promote intercultural competence in EFL classrooms.
3. Explore how authentic supportive ICT-based instruction enhances learners' intercultural communicative competence.
4. Identify students' perceptions of ICT-supported intercultural learning.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.4.1 Research Questions

1. What is the current level of intercultural communicative competence among second-year EFL learners?
2. To what extent do teachers use ICT-based instruction to promote intercultural competence?
3. How does authentic supportive ICT-based instruction enhance learners' intercultural

communicative competence?

4. What are students' perceptions of ICT-supported intercultural learning?

1.4.2 Hypotheses

1. Second-year EFL learners possess a limited level of intercultural communicative competence.
2. Authentic ICT-based instruction positively enhances learners' intercultural communicative competence.
3. Teachers and students demonstrate positive attitudes toward the integration of ICT in intercultural learning.

1.5 Research Tools and Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires will be administered to students to assess their intercultural competence and perceptions of ICT use. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with teachers to explore their practices and attitudes.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data will be examined through thematic analysis to provide deeper insights into intercultural learning processes.

1.6 Structure of the Study

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One presents the theoretical framework addressing intercultural communicative competence and ICT integration in EFL education.

Chapter Two describes the research methodology, participants, instruments, and procedures. Chapter Three presents data analysis, discussion of findings, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for improving intercultural competence through ICT-based instruction.

Introduction

This chapter studies the theoretical and empirical literature related to the enhancement of Intercultural Communicative Competence through authentic supportive ICT-based instruction in the EFL context. It gives comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of ICC, explores the strong relationship between language and culture, examines the pedagogical role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in language education, and discusses the integration of authentic digital materials in enhancing intercultural awareness. The chapter ends with a review of previous studies and the identification of research gaps that justify the current study.

1.1 Overview of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

1.1.1 Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural Communicative Competence is an important part of teaching process today. It provides a practical framework that encourages students in developing their intercultural awareness and improving their foreign language learning experiences.

According to Byram (1997), from his book “Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence” page 71, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is defined as “the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language.” This means that ICC is not just about knowing the language, but also about understanding the culture, values, and ways of communicating of other people. It helps learners to communicate in an appropriate and effective way, avoid misunderstandings, and build positive relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds.

For Milton J. Bennett (1993), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) refers to the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with others who are from various

cultures through the development of intercultural sensitivity. Although Bennett did not offer a single explicit definition of ICC, he created a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This model confirmed that there is a progression through which individuals move from a self-centered cultural view to a culturally open perspective, where people understand, accept, and change their behavior according to different cultures. So, for Bennett, ICC is not only about speaking a language well; it also means developing how we think, feel, and act so we can understand, respect, and adapt to different cultures.

1.1.2 Historical Background and Development of ICC

The idea of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) did not start suddenly. It started little by little when scholars understood that communication is not only about language, but also about culture. In the 1960s and 1970s, Hymes (1972) introduced the idea of communicative competence. He said that knowing a language is not only about grammar, but also about using it correctly in different social situations. This was an important change, because it moved attention from just grammar to also including the social and cultural sides of communication. Around the same time, Hall (1976) said that culture, values, and body language affect how people understand each other.

Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, people started to focus more on understanding and being sensitive to other cultures. Milton J. Bennett (1993) said that people slowly learn how to accept and understand cultural differences, step by step, in his model called Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. After that, M. Byram (1997) gave a simple and useful model of ICC, especially for learning languages. He said ICC has things like having open and respectful attitudes, knowing about other cultures, being able to understand and talk with people, and also thinking carefully about cultures.

Today, ICC is very important because the world is global now and people from different cultures talk to each other every day, in school, work, or online. It shows that good communication is not only about knowing the language, but also about understanding others, being open-minded, and trying to see things from other cultures.

1.1.3 Key components of Intercultural Communicative Competence

In the context of EFL learners at Ahmed Zabana University, developing intercultural communicative competence becomes particularly important. Students are not only learning English as a system of grammar and vocabulary, but they are also engaging with a language that carries diverse cultural meanings, values, and worldviews in different sources such as classroom materials, textbooks, audiovisual content, online platforms, and real-life communication with speakers from other cultures.(Byram, 1997)

When learners cultivate positive attitudes, deepen their cultural knowledge, practice intercultural skills, and develop critical awareness, they become more confident and flexible communicators. For second-year students especially, this stage of learning represents a shift from simply “learning about English” to “using English to connect with others.” This is because, at this level, students are usually exposed to more communicative tasks, interactive activities, and authentic materials, and they start to use English beyond basic structures, which pushes them to interact, interpret meaning, and respond to cultural differences more actively. (Byram,1997).

In this sense, ICC is not an abstract concept; it becomes a practical ability which shapes how learners participate in discussions, interpret texts, interact online, and respond to cultural differences both inside and outside the classroom.

1.1.3.1 Attitudes

According to Byram (1997), attitudes in ICC mean being curious, open-minded, and ready to not judge other cultures quickly.

In simple terms, attitudes are like the emotional base of intercultural competence. A student who is open and respectful will more easily accept differences instead of refusing them. In EFL class, students should learn about cultures without stereotypes or fixed ideas. For second-year students, especially when they use ICT like social media, videos, or online sites, good attitudes help them talk and understand different views in a respectful and confident way. If there is no openness, communication between cultures can become misunderstanding instead of real understanding.

1.1.3.2 Knowledge

Byram (1997) says in his book “Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence” that knowledge means knowing about social groups, traditions, values, and how people interact in your own culture and in other cultures.

But knowledge in ICC is not just learning facts about other countries by heart. It also means understanding how culture affects people’s behavior, how they talk, and what is socially expected. For EFL students, this helps them understand texts, movies, and online talks in a better way. When students use real materials on the internet or other ICT tools, this knowledge helps them see deeper meanings and not misunderstand things. So, knowledge improves both understanding and being more sensitive to other cultures.

1.1.3.3 Skills

Byram (1997) says intercultural skills are two types: skills of understanding and connecting ideas, and skills of finding new information and communicating with others.

These skills help students compare different cultures, understand strange or new behaviors, and change the way they communicate depending on the situation. In real classes, students can hear different accents, expressions, or opinions. With ICT tools like online chats or virtual exchanges, students can practice how to understand meaning and reply in the right way. Intercultural skills turn what students know into something they can actually use, so communication becomes more natural and effective, not just automatic.

1.1.3.4 Critical Cultural Awareness

Byram (1997) says critical cultural awareness is when a person can look at cultural habits and ideas and judge them in a careful and fair way.

This part is more than just understanding. It makes students think about their own ideas and question the idea that one culture is better than others. In university, this is important because students need to think in a more deep and analytical way. When they see different content online and global views using ICT tools, they can learn how to make fair opinions. So, critical cultural awareness helps students be fair, understand others, and act like responsible global citizens.

1.1.4 Models of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

Some researchers have made models to explain ICC. The most known are Byram's model (1997), Bennett's model (1993), and Deardorff (2006). These models talk about different parts like attitudes, knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness that help people communicate well with other cultures.

1.1.4.1 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

One of the most important models of ICC was made by M. Byram (1997). This model says that to communicate well with other cultures, it is not enough to just know the

language. You also need to understand culture and be open to other ways of life. Byram says ICC has different parts like attitudes, knowledge, skills for understanding and connecting, skills for discovering and interacting, and critical cultural awareness. These parts help students understand cultural differences and communicate in a good way with people from different cultures.

This model shows that we should learn culture and language together, not separately, so students can become better at communicating with people from other cultures (Byram, 1997).

1.1.4.2 Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Another important model is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Milton J. Bennett. This model explains how people slowly learn to understand cultural differences. Bennett says that people go through stages. At first, they are ethnocentric, meaning they think their own culture is the most important. Later, they become more open and see other cultures as different but equal. In the final stages, they respect and understand cultural diversity. Through these steps, people become better at understanding other cultures and changing the way they communicate in different situations (Bennett, 1993).

1.1.4.3 Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence

The Process Model of Intercultural Competence, ICC is not something fixed, but something that keeps developing. In this model, ICC starts with attitudes like respect, openness, and curiosity about other cultures. These attitudes help people learn cultural knowledge and communication skills, which help them understand and interact with others in different cultural situations. In the end, learners develop things like flexibility, adaptation, and empathy, and this helps them communicate better and in a suitable way with people from different cultures (Deardorff, 2006).

1.1.5 The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Language Learning

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is very important in learning languages today. Learning a foreign language is not only about grammar and words, but also about the culture of people who speak it. M. Byram (1997) says that good communication needs both language and cultural understanding. So, when students develop ICC, they can talk better with people from other cultures and avoid misunderstandings.

1.1.5.1 ICC as an Essential Component of Language Learning

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is very important in modern language learning. Learning a foreign language is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding the culture behind the language. Kramsch (1993), says that language and culture are linked together, and knowing the culture helps students understand meanings and how people really communicate. When students develop ICC, they can use the language in the right way in different situations. This means they don't just speak correctly, but they also know when and how to use words and behavior properly.

1.1.5.2 Promoting Cultural Awareness and Tolerance

Another important role of ICC in language learning is helping students become more aware of cultures and more tolerant. When students learn about different cultures, they also understand their own culture better. This helps them respect cultural differences and avoid stereotypes and misunderstandings. Byram (1997) says that developing ICC helps learners think about cultural differences in a careful way and communicate with people from different backgrounds with respect and open-mindedness. As a result, students become more flexible in their thinking and more ready to communicate in multicultural environments.

1.1.5.3 Improving Real-Life Communication

ICC also has an important role in preparing students for real-life communication with people from different cultures. In today's global world, people often talk with others from different languages and cultures. Darla K. Deardorff (2006) says that good intercultural communication needs positive attitudes like curiosity, openness, and respect. It also needs skills like understanding cultural behavior and changing the way we communicate when needed. These abilities help students communicate better in real-life situations like studying abroad, business, and international workplaces. So, developing ICC helps learners become more confident and better at communicating in multicultural environments.

1.1.6 Role of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the EFL Context

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has become very important in learning and teaching English as a foreign language. Today, learning English is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding culture and how people communicate. EFL students often communicate with people from different cultures, so intercultural competence becomes very important for good communication. So, adding ICC to language learning helps students improve their language and also develop attitudes, knowledge, and skills to communicate in a respectful and appropriate way with people from different cultures (M. Byram, 1997; C. Kramsch, 1993).

1.1.6.1 Enhancing Effective Communication

In EFL learning, English is not only about grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students also need to understand how people from different cultures speak and share their ideas. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) helps students use English in a more suitable and meaningful way when they communicate with people from other cultures.

Michael Byram (1997) says that language learners need intercultural abilities to communicate successfully with people from different cultures.

1.1.7 Reducing Misunderstandings in Communication

ICC is important in the EFL classroom because it helps students avoid cultural misunderstandings. Some expressions, gestures, or ways of speaking can have different meanings in different cultures. When students develop intercultural awareness, they can understand messages better and respond in the right way. Claire Kramsch (1993) explains that language and culture are closely connected, and understanding this connection is important for successful communication.

1.1.7.1 Promoting Openness and Respect for Cultural Diversity

ICC also helps students develop positive attitudes toward other cultures. When students learn about different cultures, they become more open-minded, curious, and respectful of cultural differences. This helps them avoid stereotypes and understand people from different societies better. In this way, intercultural competence helps build respect and tolerance between people from different cultural backgrounds.

1.1.7.2 Preparing Learners for Global Communication

In today's global world, English is used a lot for international communication. Because of this, EFL students often communicate with people from different cultures in study, work, or online. Developing ICC helps students communicate better in these situations. Milton J. Bennett (1993) says that when people understand cultural differences, they can communicate in a more appropriate and effective way in multicultural situations.

1.1.7.3 Developing Critical Cultural Awareness

ICC helps students think about their own culture and other cultures. It makes them able to compare values, ways of communication, and social rules. When students become more aware of these differences, they can develop a more balanced and critical way of thinking about cultures.

1.1.8 Challenges in Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Although intercultural communicative competence is important for EFL learners, developing it is not always easy because students may face different linguistic, cultural, and educational challenges.

1.1.8.1 Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is an important goal in learning English as a foreign language. It helps students communicate better with people from different cultures and understand cultural differences. But developing ICC is not always easy. Many students face different challenges that can make it difficult for them to build this competence. (M. Byram, 1997).

a. Limited Exposure to Other Cultures

One of the main difficulties students face is not having direct contact with other cultures. In many EFL situations, students learn English mostly from textbooks and classroom activities that focus more on grammar and vocabulary, not on cultural interaction. Because of this, students may know the language rules but still feel not ready to communicate with people from different cultures. Without real exposure to other cultures, it becomes hard

for students to understand cultural values, behaviors, and ways of communication better (M. Byram, 1997).

1.1.8.2 Stereotypes and Cultural Misconceptions

Another problem that can affect ICC is stereotypes or fixed ideas about other cultures. Sometimes students build opinions about other cultures from media or not enough information. These simple ideas can cause misunderstandings and make students judge how others speak or behave in a wrong way. To develop intercultural competence, learners need to be open-minded, respectful, and question what they think they know about other cultures (Byram, 1997).

1.1.8.3 Language Barriers

Language level can also be a problem in developing ICC. When students don't have enough vocabulary or their speaking skills are weak, they may find it hard to express themselves or understand cultural meanings in conversations. This can make them less confident and make intercultural communication more difficult. Improving language skills is still very important to help develop intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

1.1.8.4 Lack of Intercultural Integration in Language Teaching

In some educational settings, language teaching still focuses mostly on grammar and vocabulary, while the intercultural part is not given much attention. Teachers may not always have enough training, time, or materials to include intercultural activities in their lessons. Because of this, students may finish their studies knowing grammar well, but still have low intercultural awareness and weak communication skills (Fantini, 2009).

1.2 The Relationship Between Language and Culture in EFL Teaching

1.2.1 Understanding the concept of Language and Culture

Language and culture are strongly connected. Language is a way people use to communicate and share ideas, beliefs, and values. At the same time, culture affects how people use and understand language in different situations. So, understanding both language and culture is very important for good communication, especially when learning a foreign language.

1.2.1.1 Definition of Language

Language is a system people use to communicate and share meaning, ideas, and social interaction. It can be spoken, written, or signed, and it follows grammar rules that people in a community understand. Language is not only for communication, but it also shows culture, identity, and how people think. It is also used to pass knowledge and social rules from one generation to another (Crystal, 2003; Saussure, 1916/1983)

Scholars define language in different ways:

- Hockett (1960) says language is a system of symbols that are not naturally connected to their meaning, but people use them to communicate.
- Saussure (1916/1983) says language is a social system of signs that people in a community agree on.
- Crystal (2003) says language is always changing and it is very important for human communication and thinking.

1.2.1.2 Definition of Culture

Culture means the shared ideas, values, habits, and ways of behaving that a group of people has. It affects how people see the world, how they talk, and how they act with others. Culture is learned from others and passed from one generation to another. It also shapes identity and social behavior (Geertz, 1973; Hofstede, 2001).

Different scholars explain culture in different ways:

- Edward T. Hall (1976) says culture is “the way of life of a people,” including how they think, feel, and act.
- Geertz (1973) says culture is a system of shared meanings and symbols that people use to communicate and understand life.
- Hofstede (2001) says culture is like “programming of the mind” that makes one group of people different from another.

1.2.2 The Interconnection between Language and Culture

Language and culture are very connected, and each one affects the other. Language is not just for communication, it also carries culture, values, beliefs, and social rules. Through language, people show their identity, share culture, and understand the world. At the same time, culture changes how people use language, like the way they speak, the expressions they use, and how they understand meaning. So, language and culture cannot be separated (Crystal, 2003; Geertz, 1973; Hall, 1976).

1.2.2.1 Language as a Reflection of Culture

Language is not just words and grammar used to communicate, it also shows the culture of the people who speak it. Through language, people share their beliefs, values, traditions, and ways of thinking. So, culture affects how people speak, what expressions they

use, and the meaning of words. For example, greetings, politeness, and idioms can be different from one culture to another. That is why understanding a language also needs understanding its culture. This shows that language and culture are linked, and learning a foreign language also means learning its culture. (Kramch, 1998).

1.2.2.1.1 Language and Cultural Values

a. Vocabulary and Meaning

Words have cultural meaning and often show what a society values. For example, some languages have many different words for things like family, respect, or nature. This shows what is important in that culture (Crystal, 2003).

b. Idioms and Proverbs

Idioms and proverbs show cultural knowledge, history, and shared experiences. They give ideas about what people believe and value, and how they understand life and human behavior (Geertz, 1973).

1.2.2.1.2 Language and Social Norms

a. Politeness and Speech Styles

Cultural rules affect how people talk, like how formal they are, how polite they speak, and if they speak directly or indirectly. For example, honorifics in Japanese or polite forms in Arabic show respect and social levels in society (Hall, 1976).

b. Gender and Language Use

Culture also affects how men and women use language. It can change the words people choose, the way they speak, and how they take part in conversations. These

differences show what society expects from men and women and the roles they have (Hofstede, 2001).

1.2.2.1.3 Language and Worldview

a. Conceptualizing Reality

Language shows how a culture understands the world. For example, the way people talk about time, space, or feelings can show how they see reality in their culture (Whorf, 1956).

b. Metaphors and Symbolism

Figurative language also shows cultural values. Things like metaphors, symbols, and ways of telling stories can show how a group of people see the world and what they experience together (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

1.2.2.1.4 Language Change and Cultural Dynamics

a. Language Evolution

Language changes when culture changes too. New technology, social changes, and new generations affect words, grammar, and how people speak. This shows how cultural ideas and priorities are changing over time (Crystal, 2003).

b. Borrowing and Globalization

When cultures meet, new words, expressions, and language patterns appear. Language changes to fit this contact, and this shows how societies take ideas from other cultures and include them in their own way of speaking (Hofstede, 2001).

1.2.2.2 Culture as a Context for Meaning

Culture gives the frame that people use to understand meaning. Words, gestures, and symbols are not alone by themselves; their meaning depends on culture, values, and shared experiences. So, to understand language or behavior, we need to look at the cultural context where it happens (Geertz, 1973; Hall, 1976).

1.2.2.2.1 Cultural Frameworks and Interpretation

Meaning is often influenced by the way each culture thinks and sees the world. For example, some ideas or expressions in one culture may not have the same meaning or even exist in another culture. This shows that cultures have different values, beliefs, and ways of understanding life (Hofstede, 2001)

1.2.2.2.2 Contextual Meaning in Communication

Pragmatics is about how language is used in real situations. It shows that culture affects meaning a lot. Politeness, how people talk in conversation, and body language are different from one culture to another. So the same words or gestures can mean different things depending on the culture (Crystal, 2003; Hall, 1976).

1.2.2.2.2 Culture and Symbolic Meaning

Symbols, rituals, and metaphors come from culture. They carry meanings that people inside the same community understand, but outsiders may not understand them easily. To understand these things, you need to know the culture, its history, and shared experiences of the people (Geertz, 1973; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

1.2.2.2.3 Implications for Cross-Cultural Communication

Understanding culture as the background for meaning is very important for good communication between cultures. Misunderstandings often happen when people judge words or behavior without thinking about cultural rules, values, and expectations (Hofstede, 2001).

1.2.3 The Role of Culture in EFL Teaching

Culture is very important in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Learning a language is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding the social rules, values, and ways people communicate. When teachers include culture in lessons, students can understand meaning better, use English in the right way, and develop intercultural competence. This is important for good communication in different situations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

1.2.3.1 Cultural Awareness in Language Learning

Culture is very important in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Learning a language is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about understanding the social rules, values, and ways people communicate. When teachers include culture in lessons, students can understand meaning better, use English in the right way, and develop intercultural competence. This is important for good communication in different situations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

1.2.3.2 Strategies to Develop Cultural Awareness

Teachers can enhance cultural awareness through various strategies, such as:

a. Using authentic materials

Developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in higher education is not only about being exposed to the language. It needs well-planned teaching methods. A study by Wylie and Vodopija-Krstanović (2023) in European universities showed that teachers used discussions, cultural examples, and interactive activities to help students practice real communication. But they also said that just having different cultures in class is not enough; teachers must guide students and use clear strategies to develop ICC.

This idea is supported by Byram (1997), who says ICC is not only about language skills, but also about attitudes, knowledge, and communication skills. Kramsch (1993) also explains that using real cultural materials helps students understand meaning better and think about both their own culture and other cultures.

These ideas show that using real materials and well-organized intercultural activities is very important. It helps students go beyond simple language learning and develop deeper cultural understanding and better communication skills.

b. Activities comparing cultures

ICC activities help learners compare their own culture with other cultures and think about the differences. A recent study at the University of Putra Malaysia by Zhou, Samad, and Perinpasingam (2024) found that students improve their ICC when they do tasks that involve comparing cultures, reflecting, and analyzing real communication situations.

This idea matches Michael Byram's (1997) theory, which says learners should be able to interpret and connect cultural meanings from different contexts. Milton Bennett (1993) also explains that when students reflect on cultural differences, they can move from judging other cultures to understanding them better.

Cultural comparison activities are important. They help students build intercultural awareness and improve their communication skills.

c. Role-playing and simulation

Role-playing and simulation are useful ways to improve learners' communication and intercultural skills. A study by Leelasopawut (2025) at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna looked at Thai EFL students who took part in role-play activities like discussions, problem-solving, and dialogues based on real-life situations. The results showed

that students became better at speaking, taking turns, and sharing ideas in English. However, the study also found that role-play works best when students are well prepared and when it is not too scripted. Kolb (1984) says learning by experience helps students understand better, and Byram (1997) says role-playing helps students become more open-minded.

1.2.3.3 Benefits for EFL Learners

Developing cultural awareness in EFL learners has multiple benefits:

a. Better communication skills

Developing communication skills in academic settings is an important goal in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs. A study by Hyland and Wong (2013) in British universities, including the University of Warwick, showed that students improve their academic communication through real activities like seminars and discussions. They also learn how to use polite language and understand meaning and tone better. The study explained that good communication is not only about correct grammar, but also about using language appropriately in context.

Canale and Swain's (1980) model supported this idea, it says that communication competence includes not just grammar, but also social and practical language use. It also supports Michael Byram's (1997) view that learners must use language in a way that fits different social and cultural situations. So, both research and theory show that communication skills develop best through real academic interaction, not only grammar practice.

b. Developing empathy and tolerance

Empathy and tolerance are very important results of intercultural learning in higher education, especially in classrooms with students from different cultures. Deardorff (2006) studied intercultural competence and found that when students interact meaningfully with

people from other cultures, they become more empathetic, respectful, and tolerant. However, she also explains that just having students from different backgrounds in the same class is not enough. They need structured activities and reflection to really understand each other.

This supports Milton Bennett's (1993) idea that intercultural sensitivity develops step by step through experience and reflection. It also matches Michael Byram's (1997) view that openness, curiosity, and respect are key attitudes in intercultural communication. So, both research and theory show that empathy and tolerance do not happen automatically, but grow through guided intercultural interaction.

c. More motivation to learn

Learners' motivation is very important for successful language learning, especially when lessons are connected to real life and academic situations. Dörnyei (2001) explains that students feel more motivated when they see English as useful, meaningful, and related to their future studies or jobs. He also says that using real materials and real-life tasks in class helps students become more interested and more active in learning.

Michael Byram (1997) says that using real cultural content makes students more interested in learning a language. Claire Kramsch (1993) also explains that learning becomes more meaningful when language is taught with real cultural and social context. Using authentic and cultural materials helps increase students' motivation to learn English.

1.2.3.4 Challenges in Teaching Cultural Awareness

Despite its importance, teaching cultural awareness can be challenging:

a. Limited exposure

Limited exposure to real cultural interaction is still a big problem in foreign language learning. Many students mainly use textbooks and classroom materials instead of real

communication with other people. To solve this, some universities use digital tools like video calls and email exchanges with international students to give learners more real experience with the language.

A study by Haukås and Nygaard (2021) in Norway found that students who do not have real contact with other cultures depend too much on course materials, which limits their intercultural understanding. However, when students take part in real communication activities with people from other cultures, their intercultural awareness improves. Claire Kramsch (1993) says that culture cannot be fully learned from books only, but needs real social interaction. Michael Byram (1997) also explains that intercultural communicative competence depends on both knowledge and real contact with other cultures. So, research and theory both show that limited exposure reduces intercultural learning, while real interaction improves it.

b. Risk of stereotypes

Intercultural classroom environments, such as those at the University of Melbourne, bring together students from different cultural backgrounds and create useful opportunities for intercultural learning. However, discussions about cultural differences can sometimes lead to stereotypes if they are not properly guided. For this reason, teachers encourage students to avoid generalizations and to understand that each culture includes individual differences.

It is widely recognized that intercultural discussions in higher education can sometimes reinforce stereotypes when students do not reflect critically. However, when teachers use structured activities and reflection tasks, students develop a better understanding and are less likely to stereotype others. This idea is strongly supported by Milton Bennett's (1993) developmental model, which explains that learners often start with simple or ethnocentric views and gradually move toward more open and flexible thinking about

cultures. It also matches Darla Deardorff's (2006) view that critical thinking is necessary to avoid stereotypes and build real intercultural competence. Therefore, both research and theory confirm that without guided reflection, intercultural learning can sometimes lead to stereotyping instead of understanding.

c. Curriculum limitations

Curriculum limitations are a big challenge when trying to include intercultural learning in English language education, especially in EAP and foundation courses. At places like University College London, there is often not enough time in class, so cultural content is usually included inside language activities instead of being taught separately. Because of this, teachers find it difficult to balance language goals with cultural learning goals.

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) explain that limited curriculum time makes it hard to properly include intercultural education, and culture often becomes less important than language. M. Byram (1997) also says that if intercultural learning is not clearly planned, it can easily be ignored because language learning takes priority. So, both research and theory show that curriculum limits can make it harder to fully develop intercultural communicative competence in language teaching.

1.2.3.5 Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is the ability to communicate well and appropriately with people from different cultures. It is not only about language, but also includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural awareness. These things help learners understand meaning better, change their behavior when needed, and communicate in a meaningful way with people from other cultures (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). In EFL teaching, developing ICC is important because students need to understand not only the language, but also cultural rules, values, and expectations in communication.

1.2.3.5.1 Components of ICC

Byram (1997) identifies five core components of ICC:

a. Attitudes

Students need to develop curiosity, openness, and be ready not to judge other cultures based only on their own culture. This part shows the importance of tolerance and accepting cultural differences. For example, when students communicate with native English speakers, they should respect things like greetings, politeness, or humor, even if they are different from their own culture.

b. Knowledge

It is important to students to learn about cultural practices, history, social systems, and how language is connected to culture. This also means understanding how cultural values affect communication, like some cultures speaking indirectly while others speak more directly.

c. Skills of interpreting and relating

Learners have to develop the ability to understand cultural materials such as texts, films, and traditions, and compare them with their own culture. For example, understanding an English idiom or proverb requires knowing its cultural meaning instead of translating it word for word.

d. Skills of discovery and interaction

Learners need to develop the ability to gain new cultural knowledge in real-life situations and adjust their language use accordingly. Activities such as role-plays, simulations, and online communication with native speakers help learners build these interactive skills.

e. Critical cultural awareness

Developing the ability to critically evaluate cultural practices, beliefs, and values, including their own, is a necessity to the students. This helps promote reflection, empathy, and respectful intercultural communication. For example, students can analyze cultural stereotypes in media and discuss their effects, which encourages a deeper understanding of different cultures.

1.2.3.5.2 Strategies to Foster ICC in EFL Classrooms

Effective strategies to develop ICC include:

a. Integrating Cultural Content (Deep Culture Approach)

Integrating cultural content in language teaching has changed from teaching simple cultural facts to exploring deeper meanings and values. At the University of Arizona, teachers now use a “deep culture approach,” where students study the historical, social, and ideological meaning behind cultural practices instead of only learning about holidays or celebrations. For example, when learning about “Thanks Giving”, students also study its history and its meaning in the American society.(Gomes, 2019).

Kramersch (1993) supports this idea and explains that culture is not just information to memorize. It is something created through language and meaning, and learners build a “third space” by connecting their own culture with the target culture. More recent research by Fantini and Tirmizi (2022) also shows that intercultural competence develops better when students reflect critically on cultural values instead of just memorizing facts. Their study found that deep cultural learning improves critical thinking and intercultural awareness in higher education.

Both theory and research show that effective cultural learning should go beyond surface facts and focus on deeper understanding and analysis of culture.

b. Using Authentic Materials (Real-World Learning)

The use of authentic materials in language learning is considered very effective for improving both communication skills and intercultural competence. At the University of Warwick, students use real-life materials like podcasts and social media instead of only textbook dialogues. At first, they may find it difficult to understand natural spoken English, but over time their listening and communication skills improve a lot.(Spencer-Oatey,2018).

Research by Reinders and Hubbard (2013) also supports this idea. They found that using authentic digital materials helps students improve listening skills and become more engaged with real language use. Byram (1997) also explains that authentic materials are important for developing intercultural communicative competence because they help learners go beyond copying native speakers and become real intercultural communicators.

Authentic materials are important because they connect language learning with real-life communication and cultural understanding.

c. Interactive and Collaborative Activities

Interactive and collaborative activities are very important for developing learners' communication and intercultural skills because they make students actively involved in real learning situations. At Stanford University, students take part in simulations like global climate summits, where they must discuss, negotiate, and work together while considering different cultural ways of communication. These activities help students experience real-life communication in a safe classroom setting.(LeBlanc,2020).

d. Reflective Practices

Reflective practices are an important way to develop intercultural communicative competence because they help learners think carefully about their intercultural experiences. At the University of Helsinki, students write reflective journals where they describe and analyze situations where they faced misunderstandings or communication problems with other cultures. This helps them think about their reactions and understand their own cultural assumptions, which improves self-awareness and intercultural understanding. (Nystrom, 2021).

Darla K. Deardorff (2006) supports this approach, explaining that reflection serves as a cornerstone for developing intercultural competence by bridging the gap between lived experience and deeper cognitive understanding. Consequently, reflective practices remain essential for fostering intercultural awareness and optimizing communicative proficiency.

e. Digital and Virtual Exchanges (Telecollaboration)

Digital and virtual exchanges, also called telecollaboration, are now an important way to develop intercultural communicative competence in higher education. Programs like SUNY COIL connect students from different countries so they can work together online on shared tasks. Through these activities, students notice different ways of communicating, such as being direct or indirect, polite or formal, and they learn how culture affects communication. (Rubin, 2017).

Robert O'Dowd (2018) argued that telecollaboration helps students actively deal with cultural differences through real online interaction. His research shows that these exchanges improve not only language skills but also intercultural awareness and communication across cultures.

Digital exchanges are a useful way to develop intercultural communicative competence in modern education.

1.2.3.5.3 Benefits of Developing ICC

Developing ICC offers multiple benefits for EFL learners:

a. *Effective cross-cultural communication*

Effective cross-cultural communication is one of the main results of intercultural communicative competence because it helps learners change the way they speak depending on the cultural situation. At Monash University, studies show that students with high ICC are not only better in English, but also able to adjust how they communicate based on who they are talking to. For example, they can use more direct or more indirect speech depending on the culture of the person they are interacting with. (Arasaratnam-Smith & Doerfel, 2005; Cross, 2012).

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) explain that ICC includes the ability to think about cultural practices and adapt communication to different contexts. Michael Byram (1997) also says that good intercultural communication requires learners to step outside their own cultural view and try to understand other cultures without judging them.

Effective cross-cultural communication depends on cultural awareness, flexibility, and reflection, not just language knowledge.

b. *Enhanced empathy and tolerance*

Enhanced empathy and tolerance are important outcomes of intercultural learning in higher education, especially when students take part in structured intercultural exchange programs. At the University of Iowa, students in the “Global Buddies” program were paired with peers from different cultures to communicate and share their perspectives. The results

showed that students gradually moved from judging cultural differences to understanding, accepting, and adapting to them. (Allred & Shrestha, 2018).

This is supported by Pedersen (2017), who found that structured intercultural programs help students develop empathy and tolerance by exposing them to different ways of thinking and living. Milton Bennett (1993) also explains that empathy is not something people are born with, but a skill that develops through experience and reflection in intercultural situations.

Empathy and tolerance develop through real intercultural interaction, not just by being aware of cultural differences.

c. Improved motivation and engagement

Improved motivation and engagement are important results of intercultural project-based learning in higher education. At Kyoto University, students worked on real collaborative projects with schools in the United Kingdom, where they used English for real communication and shared academic tasks. This led to higher motivation, better attendance, and more active participation. Students also felt that English was no longer just a school subject, but a useful tool for real-life communication.

Kotthoff and Watanabe (2019) support this idea, showing that international projects increase students' motivation and engagement because they connect learning to real-world communication. Zoltán Dörnyei (2005) also explains that students are more motivated when learning is linked to their personal goals, future plans, and sense of identity.

Intercultural collaboration helps increase students' motivation and engagement in language learning.

d. Preparation for global opportunities

Preparation for global opportunities is one of the main benefits of developing intercultural communicative competence in higher education. A European study on Erasmus students showed that those who developed strong ICC during their exchange programs had better job opportunities after graduation. Employers especially valued their ability to work in multicultural teams and adapt to different professional environments.

Deardorff (2006) also emphasizes that ICC is essential for modern careers because it improves communication, cooperation, and adaptability in international settings. Intercultural competence helps prepare students for global career opportunities.

1.2.3.5.4 Challenges in Developing ICC

Despite its significance, teaching ICC presents several challenges:

a. Limited authentic intercultural contact

A study at the University of Helsinki by Harjanne and Tella (2014) examined intercultural communication in EFL teacher education programs. It found that student teachers mainly relied on classroom simulations instead of real intercultural interaction, which limited the depth of their understanding regarding other cultures. This perspective is supported by Robert O'Dowd (2018), who explains that online intercultural exchange can only successfully develop ICC when activities are carefully designed to encourage critical reflection and deeper cognitive thinking, rather than just simple communication.

b. Complexity in assessment

At the University of South Australia, assessment practices in intercultural programs were significantly informed by D. K. Deardorff's (2006) framework, which promoted the integration of portfolio-based evaluation within EAP courses. Through this approach,

students compile comprehensive evidence of their learning progression over time, incorporating reflective journals, detailed descriptions of intercultural interactions, and rigorous self-assessments.

Deardorff (2006) argues that intercultural communicative competence (ICC) cannot be effectively measured through traditional examinations or isolated, one-time tests. Instead, it must be conceptualized as a continuous developmental process that encompasses evolving transformations in attitudes, knowledge, and behavioral skills. Consequently, assessment methodologies should prioritize documenting learners' long-term growth and development rather than evaluating a single, static performance.

c. Teacher's Readiness and Training

A study by Trudeau (2017) at the University of Toronto examined how prepared language teachers are to teach intercultural content. The results showed that many teachers felt they did not have enough training and were often hesitant to discuss cultural issues in depth because they feared showing bias or lacking sufficient cultural knowledge.

This finding is consistent with Michael Byram (1997), who argues that teachers should not act as "cultural experts," but rather as facilitators of intercultural learning. In this role, teachers guide students to explore, question, and critically reflect on cultural differences instead of simply providing fixed cultural information.

d. Cultural overgeneralization and stereotyping

A study conducted at Peking University by Wei (2016) analyzed EFL textbooks and found that cultural content was often simplified and stereotyped, which led students to form generalized and sometimes inaccurate views about foreign cultures.

This finding supports Claire Kramsch (1993), who argues that culture is dynamic and depends on context. She also warns that when culture is presented as fixed information, it can encourage stereotyping and misunderstanding instead of real intercultural understanding.

1.2.4 Implications for EFL Classrooms

Including culture in EFL teaching is very important for classroom practice. When teachers understand culture and ICC, they can make lessons that are not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about real communication and understanding other cultures. By using cultural topics, real materials, interactive activities, and reflection, teachers can help students be more ready to communicate in real intercultural situations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

1.2.4.1 Integrating Culture in EFL Teaching

Integrating culture in EFL teaching means adding values, beliefs, social rules, and daily practices of the target language into lessons. This shows that language learning cannot be separated from culture. Students need not only to learn grammar and vocabulary, but also to understand the culture so they can use the language correctly in real-life situations (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1997).

1.2.4.1.1 Strategies for Integration

a. Authentic materials (media approach)

At the University of Lancaster, applied linguist Freda Mishan developed influential work on authenticity in language teaching. In her book *Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials* (2005), she argues that authenticity is not defined only by the origin of the material, but by learners' interaction with it.

She explains that materials such as advertisements and media texts become pedagogically valuable when learners actively interpret meaning rather than passively consume language. This supports the use of media-based authentic input in EFL classrooms.

b. Cultural themes (beyond simple topics)

At University College London, intercultural communication research is strongly influenced by the work of anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1976), who introduced the concept of high-context and low-context cultures.

Hall explains that communication is shaped by cultural systems of meaning, not just vocabulary or grammar. For example, workplace interaction and job interviews differ depending on cultural expectations of directness, hierarchy, and politeness.

c. Comparing cultures (reflection)

At Georgetown University, intercultural communication training has been influenced by Michael Byram (1997), who emphasizes that learners develop intercultural competence through comparison, reflection, and critical awareness.

Byram argues that learners must decenter from their own cultural perspective to understand other cultures without judgment, which is essential in comparative cultural analysis tasks such as apologies or politeness strategies.

d. Project-based learning

At University of California, Berkeley, learning theory research is strongly influenced by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in their seminal work *Situated Learning* (1991).

They argue that learning occurs through participation in communities of practice, meaning students learn language and culture effectively when they are actively engaged in real social or collaborative tasks, not through memorization alone.

e. Multimedia and virtual exchange

At the State University of New York (SUNY), the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) initiative, developed by Jon Rubin, promotes structured online collaboration between students from different countries.

Research on COIL shows that students develop intercultural awareness more effectively when activities are carefully designed with clear tasks and reflection, rather than simple informal online conversation.

This is in line with Robert O'Dowd (2018), who stresses that virtual exchange must be guided and task-based in order to effectively develop intercultural communicative competence.

1.2.4.1.2 Benefits for Learners

Including culture in EFL teaching gives students many benefits. It helps them understand the language better, become more aware of other cultures, and feel more motivated to learn. When students learn language with its cultural context, they can use it in the right way, understand meanings more clearly, and develop skills to communicate well in different situations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

a. Enhanced linguistic competence

Research in pragmatics shows that knowing grammar alone is not enough for effective communication. At the University of Melbourne, EAP studies found that students who are exposed to authentic pragmatic input tend to make fewer sociocultural communication errors, even if their grammar is not perfect.

This is supported by Jenny Thomas (1983), who introduced the concept of pragmatic failure. She explains that communication problems often happen not because of grammar

mistakes, but because learners do not understand what is socially appropriate. For example, English speakers often prefer indirect forms like “Would you mind...?” to sound polite.

b. Improved intercultural sensitivity

At the University of Oslo, intercultural education research focuses on helping students understand different cultural perspectives through reflection and discussion activities.

This aligns with Milton Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which explains that learners move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. In other words, they gradually learn to see other cultures as different but equally valid, instead of judging them as better or worse.

c. Increased motivation

At Eötvös Loránd University, research shows that project-based cultural learning (such as exploring music, social life, and intercultural topics) increases students’ motivation and engagement in learning English.

This is supported by Zoltán Dörnyei (2005), who explains in his L2 Motivational Self System that learners are more motivated when they can imagine themselves using English in real future situations. This “future self” idea strengthens interest, effort, and persistence in learning.

1.2.4.1.3 Challenges in Integration

Including culture in EFL teaching can be difficult. Sometimes there are not enough real materials, or the curriculum does not give enough time for cultural activities. There is also a risk of creating stereotypes if culture is taught in a simple or general way. Also, students may not have real contact with the target culture, which makes it hard to use what they learn in real communication (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

a. Limited resources or exposure

In many EFL settings, students do not have enough contact with real English-speaking environments. Studies in countries such as Africa and Central Asia show that learners often depend on old or simplified textbooks that do not reflect real cultural communication (Coleman, 2011; Trudell, 2016). To improve this, teachers sometimes ask students to study English in their daily environment, such as signs, advertisements, and social media.

Bonny Norton (2013) explains that the problem is not only lack of materials, but also learners' identity. Students need to feel that they are real users of English, even if they do not travel to English-speaking countries.

b. Risk of stereotyping

Research in intercultural education shows that students can develop stereotypes when culture is taught only through films or general descriptions. For example, in multicultural university settings, students may wrongly believe that all people from one country behave in the same way.

Adrian Holliday (2011) explains that this happens when we treat culture as one fixed idea for an entire country. He suggests focusing on "small cultures," meaning real differences between individuals and groups.

Michael Byram (1997) also says that students should learn to think critically about cultural information, not just accept it as true.

c. Curriculum limitations

In exam-focused educational systems, such as in South Korea, educators face significant time constraints that impede the integration of intercultural content, primarily

because high-stakes examinations predominantly test grammatical precision and vocabulary retention (Choi, 2018). Elana Shohamy (2006) explains this systemic challenge through the concept of “washback,” which asserts that large-scale tests inevitably control and dictate classroom instructional practices. If intercultural communicative skills are excluded from formal assessments, teachers are highly unlikely to prioritize them, regardless of their recognized pedagogical importance.

1.2.4.2 Promoting Intercultural Understanding

Promoting intercultural understanding in EFL classes means helping students respect, understand, and think about different cultures. It is not only about learning language, but also about developing attitudes, knowledge, and skills to communicate with people from different cultures. This helps students build ICC, so they can deal with cultural differences and communicate in the right way in different situations (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

1.2.4.2.1 Strategies to Promote Intercultural Understanding

To develop intercultural understanding in EFL classes, teachers can use different methods that involve students in learning about culture and real communication. These methods help students connect language with culture, practice how to communicate in the right way, and become more aware of cultural differences (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

a. Cultural comparison and reflection

At prominent institutions such as Stanford University, simulation-based learning is widely integrated into language curricula, where students engage in professional role-plays, including mock international meetings, cross-cultural correspondence, and organizational problem-solving tasks. This immersive approach aligns with Leo van Lier’s (2004) framework in *The Ecology and Semiotics of Language Learning*, which argues that language acquisition is a dynamic, ecological process that occurs through active social interaction,

contextual participation, and meaningful communication, rather than through the isolated memorization of rules.

b. Multimedia and Virtual Exchange

The SUNY COIL program (State University of New York), pioneered by Jon Rubin in 2003, connects students from diverse countries through structured online collaboration. This pedagogical model is strongly supported by Robert O'Dowd (2018) in *From Telecollaboration to Virtual Exchange in Higher Education*, who explains that virtual exchanges successfully cultivate intercultural communicative competence (ICC) when tasks are systematically structured and incorporate critical reflection. O'Dowd (2018) also notes that communicative friction or misunderstandings—such as periods of silence or delayed digital responses—serve as pivotal, authentic learning moments for students.

c. Interactive activities

At Stanford University, students do simulations like working in an international organization. They write emails, have meetings, and solve problems together. They learn how to use small words to be polite and soft in communication. Leo van Lier says students learn better when they practice and interact, not just study.

d. Critical discussion and analysis

At the University of Toronto (Canada), intercultural education practices often include analyzing films and media to identify stereotypes and cultural bias.

Michael Byram (1997), argues that learners should critically evaluate cultural representations through “critical cultural awareness” (*savoir s'engager*). It is also supported by Claire Kramsch (1993), who emphasizes that culture is not fixed but socially constructed through language and representation.

1.2.4.2.2 Benefits for Learners

Promoting intercultural understanding in EFL classes gives students many benefits, not just language skills. It helps them communicate better in different situations, understand and respect other cultures, and become more confident and flexible when they interact with people from other cultures in real life (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2009).

a. Better communication skills

Research in pragmatics shows that communicative success depends more on appropriateness than grammar accuracy.

At the University of Cambridge, pragmatic competence is widely discussed in applied linguistics research and EAP teaching practice, where learners are trained to use polite strategies such as mitigation (“I might be wrong, but...”).

This is supported by Jenny Thomas (1983), who introduced the concept of pragmatic failure, explaining that inappropriate language use (even with correct grammar) can sound rude or inappropriate in real communication.

b. More intercultural sensitivity

A foundational model of intercultural development was created at the University of Minnesota by Milton Bennett (1993). His Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) explains that learners develop from ethnocentric stages to ethno-relative stages, where they begin to understand cultural differences such as silence being interpreted as respect in some cultures and awkwardness in others.

c. Better adaptability in global situations

Research on intercultural competence in global employability shows that ICC is strongly linked to workplace success.

A widely cited framework by Darla K. Deardorff (2006), developed through international higher education research (including US universities), identifies adaptability as a core outcome of ICC, enabling learners to function effectively in unfamiliar cultural environments.

d. Critical thinking and reflection

At the University of Toronto, students analyzed how media shows ideas like “The American Dream.” They learned to question these images and understand that culture is not fixed. Michael Byram says students should become intercultural citizens who can think critically about their own and other cultures.

e. Higher motivation and engagement

At Eötvös Loránd University, students became more motivated when English lessons were linked to real-world topics like gaming or social issues. They saw English as useful for their future. Zoltán Dörnyei says motivation is stronger when students can imagine their future self-using the language in real life.

1.2.4.2.3 Challenges

Even though promoting intercultural understanding in EFL classes has many advantages, it also comes with some problems. For example, students often do not have enough real contact with other cultures. It is also difficult to measure things like attitudes and intercultural skills in tests. In addition, teachers may need more training and better materials to teach culture effectively (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2009).

a. Limited exposure to the target culture

In many EFL classrooms, students do not have much contact with native speakers or real cultural situations. However, cultural learning can still happen in other ways, such as through media, the internet, and daily life.

Bonny Norton (2013), in *Identity and Language Learning*, explains that learning a language is not only about being in a foreign country. It is also about identity and how learners use language in their everyday life. She says students build cultural understanding through social interaction, media, and communication, even without direct contact with native speakers.

b. Teacher preparedness and training

A major challenge in developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is teachers' confidence in teaching culture. Sercu et al. (2005), in a large European study on language teachers, found that many teachers feel unsure when teaching cultural content. They often worry that they might give incorrect or outdated information about other cultures. So instead of acting like experts, teachers are now seen as guides who help students explore and learn. Michael Byram says teachers don't need to know everything; their job is to help students think and discover by themselves.

c. Assessment difficulties

At the University of South Australia, teachers changed exams to portfolios where students write about cultural experiences and confusion moments. This helps teachers see how students think and reflect. Darla Deardorff says intercultural competence cannot be tested with simple right or wrong answers because it develops over time.

d. Risk of stereotyping and oversimplification

A big problem in intercultural teaching is that cultures can be shown in a simple or general way, which leads to stereotypes.

Adrian Holliday (2011) explains that we should not see culture as one fixed identity for a whole country. Instead, he talks about “small cultures,” such as groups in classrooms, workplaces, or communities. This helps students see that culture is diverse and not the same for everyone.

e. Curriculum and time constraints

In response to the grammar-focused nature of exams at Seoul National University, teachers often include cultural content inside language lessons so that students can still develop intercultural skills even when time is limited.

Shin (2007) explains that in exam-driven contexts like South Korea, teachers usually cannot teach culture as a separate subject. Instead, they integrate it into grammar and vocabulary lessons so that students still gain some intercultural understanding while preparing for exams. Claire Kramsch says culture should not be separated from language because it is what gives language meaning.

Understanding these challenges helps teachers design better intercultural activities. It also helps them choose suitable materials and give students chances to reflect and interact in real situations. In this way, learners can develop stronger intercultural competence.

1.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Language Education

1.3.1 Definition of ICT in Language Education

According to UNESCO (2002), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) includes different technological tools used to communicate, create, share, store, and manage information. In language learning, ICT helps students improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It also gives access to many tools and resources that make learning easier and more interesting.

Using ICT in language teaching allows teachers to use different digital materials such as videos, online exercises, educational platforms, and communication tools. These technologies make lessons more engaging and give learners chances to practice the language in real-life situations. As argued by Warschauer (2000), technology is important because it supports communication and helps students learn languages through authentic materials and real communication experiences. ICT has become a key part of modern language education as it helps improve both teaching practices and learners' language skills. ICT has become a key part of modern language education as it helps improve both teaching practices and learners' language skills.

1.3.2 The Importance of ICT in Language Education

1.3.2.1 Increasing Learners' Motivation and Engagement

Mark Warschauer's (2000) study from UC Irvine shows that using digital tools such as computers and videos in the classroom can greatly improve language learning. Instead of only listening to the teacher, students become more active and involved in the lesson. Technology makes the learning environment more interactive and interesting, which

increases motivation. It also gives students more chances to practice and communicate with others, making language lessons more effective and lively.

1.3.2.2 Providing Access to Authentic Materials

Using digital tools is very helpful for language students because they give access to real-world content. Instead of using only textbooks, learners can use the internet to find articles, videos, and podcasts made by native speakers. This helps them understand how the language is really used in daily life and learn more about the culture.

This idea is supported by Jack C. Richards (2015), who says that technology is important because it gives access to authentic materials and cultural context. In the same way, David Nunan's (2001) research at the University of Hong Kong shows that online resources such as news and real communication help students learn how people speak and interact in everyday life.

1.3.2.3 Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

Technology makes it much easier for students and teachers to connect and work together. By using tools like email, forums, and video calls, learners can share ideas and talk to others in real time. Michael Byram (1997) points out that these interactions give students valuable chances to practice their language skills in situations that actually matter.

This is further supported by Julie A. Belz and Steven L. Thorne (2006), who studied tele-collaboration. They found that digital tools allow students from different countries to collaborate instantly. Their research shows that these online conversations just improve how well students speak; they also provide a genuine way to practice a language as it is used in the real world.

1.3.2.4 Promoting Learner Autonomy

Furthermore, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) helps students become more independent. It gives learners access to online resources, educational websites, and language learning apps, so they can continue learning outside the classroom. Since students can practice, review lessons, and learn at their own speed, they take more responsibility for their own learning (Little, 1991). This idea is also supported by Benson (2001), who argues that ICT increases learner autonomy. His research explains that digital tools and online learning environments help students manage their own learning, choose their own materials, and practice language skills independently outside.

1.3.3 Types of ICT Tools Used in Language Education

ICT provides a wealth of resources to help teachers and students learn languages. These resources improve the effectiveness, flexibility, and interactivity of the learning process.

The primary categories of ICT tools consist of :

1.3.3.1 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer-Assisted Language Learning programs are commonly called CALL. These programs include different tools such as language games, vocabulary activities, and grammar exercises. CALL allows students to learn at their own pace and receive immediate feedback, which helps them progress more independently (Richards, 2015). This idea is also supported by Davies (2003), who explains that CALL programs give learners organized practice and instant corrections. This quick feedback helps students notice and correct their mistakes by themselves. His research shows that these computer-based programs support self-paced learning and help students improve their language skills outside the traditional classroom.

1.3.3.2 Online Learning Platforms and Websites

Online platforms and educational websites give easy access to lessons, exercises, and multimedia resources such as video tutorials, discussion boards, and quizzes. These tools make learning more flexible because students can study whenever and wherever they want (Mark Warschauer, 2000).

This idea is also supported by Diana Laurillard (2002), who explains that online environments provide organized materials and interactive activities that support student-centered learning. Her research shows that digital platforms improve flexibility by allowing learners to review lessons when needed, complete tasks at their own pace, and study outside the traditional classroom.

1.3.3.3 Multimedia Tools

Multimedia resources such as videos, audio, and storytelling applications help students improve their speaking and listening skills. These tools also give useful examples of how language is used in real-life situations and in different cultures (Richard E. Mayer, 2001).

This idea comes from Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which says that people learn better from words and pictures together than from words alone. His research shows that when students learn through both visual and audio materials at the same time, they remember information more easily. The combination of images, sound, and text improves understanding and helps students develop communication skills in meaningful and practical contexts.

1.3.3.4 Communication Tools

Digital tools such as video conferencing, messaging apps, forums, and email allow students to communicate with their teachers, classmates, and native speakers. These

platforms encourage collaboration and give learners opportunities for real-world communication (Carol A. Chapelle, 2003).

This idea is supported by Chapelle's research on Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). She explains that technology-based communication gives students useful chances to practice language in meaningful ways outside the classroom. Her findings show that interacting through digital platforms helps learners develop communicative competence by taking part in authentic language exchanges with teachers, classmates, and native speakers.

1.3.3.5 Mobile Learning Applications

Mobile apps for language learning help students practice using smartphones or tablets at any time. These apps usually include interactive features such as games, exercises, and flashcards to improve vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. By using these digital tools, students can continue practicing their target language outside the traditional classroom (Agnes Kukulska-Hulme & Leslie Shield, 2008).

This idea is supported by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield's research on Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Their study shows that mobile technology gives learners flexible and continuous access to learning materials. It also encourages regular practice and supports self-directed learning. These mobile resources help students improve their language skills anytime and anywhere, connecting classroom learning with daily life.

1.3.4 Benefits of ICT for Language Learners

Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into language learning has many benefits. It helps students improve their performance and makes the learning experience more effective and enjoyable.

1.3.4.1 Immediate Feedback and Error Correction

One major benefit of ICT is immediate feedback. Digital tools such as language learning software, online quizzes, and CALL programs can automatically correct students' mistakes and suggest improvements. This helps learners quickly notice their errors and adjust their learning, leading to better accuracy and faster progress (H. Douglas Brown, 2007; Jack C. Richards, 2015).

This is supported by research from Carol A. Chapelle (2001), who found that students using CALL programs with instant feedback did better in grammar and vocabulary tasks than those who received delayed correction in traditional classes. Her study shows that immediate feedback helps learners identify and correct mistakes more effectively, which speeds up language learning.

1.3.4.2 Personalization of Learning

ICT also supports personalized learning by adapting content to each student's needs. Many online platforms use adaptive systems that adjust the difficulty level depending on how well a learner is doing. This helps students work on their weak points and learn at their own pace, which improves both learning results and motivation (Zoltán Dörnyei, 2001).

This idea is supported by Kurt VanLehn (2011), who found that students using adaptive tutoring systems performed better than those in traditional classrooms. His study shows that personalized feedback and adjusted difficulty levels make learning more effective because they match instruction to each student's needs.

1.3.4.3 Development of Digital Literacy Skills

Integrating ICT into language learning helps students develop digital literacy. It teaches them how to search for information, evaluate online sources, and use digital tools effectively. These skills are important for school success and for participating in today's

digital world. Research by Mark Warschauer (2000) and David Little (1991) shows that ICT improves both language skills and digital skills at the same time.

This is also supported by Yong Zhao (2003), who found that students using technology in class became better at finding, analyzing, and using digital information while also improving their language abilities. Overall, ICT helps learners become more independent and more confident in using digital tools.

1.3.4.4 Exposure to Different Language Varieties

ICT gives learners access to authentic materials from around the world, exposing them to different accents, dialects, and ways of speaking. According to Claire Kramsch (1998) and Michael Byram (1997), this exposure is important for understanding language diversity and improving listening skills in real-life situations.

This is also supported by Robert J. Blake (2008), who found that students who communicated online with native speakers and used real digital content improved their listening skills and intercultural understanding. His research shows that ICT helps learners become familiar with different communication styles, making them more confident in real-world interactions.

1.3.4.5 Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Availability

Another significant benefit of ICT in language education is its ability to reduce language anxiety. Traditional classrooms often create a stressful environment where students fear making mistakes in front of their peers. In contrast, digital platforms, simulation software, and online communication tools provide a low-stakes, non-threatening environment. As demonstrated by Melchor-Couto (2017), engaging in digital and virtual interactions significantly lowers students' foreign language anxiety. This reduction in stress allows learners to practice more freely, experiment with the language, and gradually build the confidence needed for real-world communication.

1.3.5 The Role of Teachers in ICT-Based Language Learning

Teachers are still very important in language learning even with ICT. They guide and support students in using technology effectively, not just teach them content (Warschauer, 2003).

1.3.5.1 Facilitators of Learning

In ICT-based language learning, the teacher's role changes from being the main source of information to a guide or facilitator. Teachers help students use digital tools properly and show them how to choose useful resources like websites, apps, and videos based on their learning goals. According to Mark Warschauer (2003), teachers are still very important because they make sure technology is used in a meaningful way and supports active learning instead of passive learning. Rod Ellis (2003) explains that language learning works best when teachers guide students to interact with language and use it for real purposes. In online learning environments, this support is important because it helps students turn what they see and hear online into real learning and practice.

1.3.5.2 Designers of Learning Activities

Teachers also act as designers of learning activities. They use technology to create interactive tasks, digital projects, and online discussions. These activities give students chances to practice the language in real situations, which improves fluency and communication skills. Mark Warschauer (2000) explains that ICT works best when teachers design tasks that encourage real communication instead of simple repetitive exercises.

This idea is supported by Diana Laurillard (2002), who says that teachers should organize technology-based activities in a way that promotes interaction, feedback, and active participation. She also explains that well-designed digital tasks help students learn through collaboration, making ICT a strong tool for language learning.

1.3.5.3 Monitors and Assessors

In ICT-based language learning, teachers also act as monitors and assessors. They follow students' participation in online discussions, check digital assignments, and see how well learners are using technology. Through regular feedback and guidance, teachers help students stay focused and reach learning goals. Mark Warschauer (2003) explains that ICT is most effective when teachers provide this kind of support to ensure meaningful language use and steady progress.

This role is also supported by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998), who emphasize the importance of continuous assessment. Their research shows that ongoing feedback helps students improve by letting them understand their strengths and weaknesses and adjust their learning strategies as they go.

1.3.6 Challenges of Integrating ICT in Language Education

While ICT has many benefits for language learning, it also comes with some challenges. According to UNESCO (2011), several issues can reduce its effectiveness and create difficulties for both teachers and students.

1.3.6.1 Lack of Technical Skills

One major challenge in using ICT is that many teachers do not have enough technical skills. Without proper training, it becomes difficult for them to use digital tools effectively in their teaching. As a result, technology is often used in simple ways or not fully used, which reduces its impact on student learning.

According to UNESCO (2011), the lack of training is a key obstacle. Teachers need both technical skills and teaching support in order to successfully use technology and improve the learning process.

1.3.6.2 Limited Access to Technology

Limited access to technology is a major problem in ICT-based language learning. Many schools do not have enough devices like computers or tablets, and some also have slow or unreliable internet. These problems make it hard to use digital tools regularly, which affects activities such as online exercises, virtual communication, and multimedia projects.

According to UNESCO (2011), this lack of infrastructure creates a “digital divide” between schools that have good access to technology and those that do not. This gap reduces equal learning opportunities for students and weakens the effectiveness of ICT in education.

1.3.6.3 Time Constraints

Time constraints are a major challenge in ICT-based language learning. Using technology effectively often takes extra time for teachers to prepare digital materials, create interactive activities, and fix technical problems before lessons. It can also be difficult to fit these activities into a fixed timetable, especially when teachers still need to cover the required curriculum and give students enough time to learn how to use the tools. Because of this, lessons can feel rushed, or technology may not be used fully.

Neil Selwyn (2012) points out that this is a key problem, explaining that the time needed to plan and manage technology-based lessons often stops ICT from being used regularly in everyday teaching.

1.3.6.4 Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a common problem in ICT-based education. It happens when teachers or students feel unsure about using new technology or prefer traditional teaching methods. This often leads to limited or irregular use of digital tools, which stops the classroom from fully benefiting from ICT’s advantages like interaction, flexibility, and engagement.

According to UNESCO (2011), this resistance is an important barrier because the success of technology in education depends a lot on people. In other words, ICT only works well when teachers and students are willing to accept and adapt to new ways of learning and teaching.

1.3.6.5 *Maintaining Focus and Discipline*

Maintaining focus and discipline is a major challenge in ICT-based language learning. While technology offers many useful learning opportunities, it can also distract students if it is not properly managed. Without supervision, learners may end up using social media, playing games, or visiting unrelated websites instead of focusing on their tasks.

Because of this, teachers need to closely monitor how students use digital devices and guide them toward responsible use of technology. Neil Selwyn (2012) points out that managing distractions and preventing off-task behavior is one of the biggest challenges in ICT use, since technology should support learning rather than take attention away from it.

1.3.6.6 *Technical Problems and Maintenance*

Technical problems are a common issue in ICT-based language learning. Problems like system crashes, software errors, or unstable internet can suddenly interrupt a lesson. This wastes time and makes teaching less effective. It can also be frustrating for both students and teachers.

Even though technical support is important, it is not always available when problems happen. According to Wim J. Pelgrum (2001), these technical difficulties are a major barrier to using ICT successfully. They not only interrupt lessons but also reduce teachers' confidence in using digital tools in the future.

1.4 Authentic ICT-Supported Materials and Intercultural Competence

1.4.1 Authentic Materials in Language Learning

1.4.1.1 Definition of Authentic Materials

Teachers are not limited to using textbooks; they can also use authentic materials such as news articles, podcasts, or social media. Since these resources are created for real communication rather than for teaching, they give students a more natural and realistic view of the language.

As Gilmore (2007) explains, using authentic materials helps learners understand how people actually speak and write in everyday life.

1.4.1.2 Characteristics of Authentic Materials

Unlike standard textbooks, real-world resources such as YouTube videos and blog posts expose students to natural slang and idioms that are often missing from academic materials. By using these authentic resources in class, Richards (2001) explains that learners can better understand how people really communicate and express themselves in everyday situations.

1.4.1.3 Importance of Authentic Materials in Language Learning

Using real-world resources in lessons helps connect classroom learning with real-life use of language. These materials do more than teach grammar; they also expose students to cultural details and different social situations, making learning more interesting and meaningful.

As Nunan (1999) explains, working with authentic everyday language is one of the best ways for learners to improve their communication skills and gain confidence in real-life situations.

1.4.2 ICT-Supported Authentic Materials

1.4.2.1 Definition of ICT-Supported Materials

ICT-supported materials are educational resources that use technology such as the internet, mobile apps, videos, and online platforms. These tools give students access to real content like articles and websites instead of only textbooks. As Chapelle (2003) explains, using these digital resources helps learners encounter authentic language more often, which improves their understanding of how people really communicate in everyday life.

1.4.2.2 ICT-Supported Materials Used in the Classroom

a. Interactive Whiteboards

Interactive whiteboards and PowerPoint presentations are useful ICT tools that bring real-world content into the classroom. For example, smartboards can be used to show videos and images that make lessons more interesting and easier to understand, while PowerPoint slides with real articles, pictures, and dialogues help students see how language is used in real life.

According to Warschauer and Kern (2000), this type of technology helps students understand language and culture in a more natural way. Gilmore (2007) also supports this idea, stating that real-life materials are important for helping learners deal with everyday communication.

b. Computer-Based Exercises

Digital exercises on computers allow students to practice language skills and receive instant feedback on their performance. This quick response helps learners correct their mistakes immediately and improve faster. According to Chapelle (2003), this kind of structured, interactive practice is an effective way to develop language skills.

This idea is also supported by Stockwell (2010), who found that computer-based activities increase student engagement and improve grammar accuracy through regular practice and real-time feedback.

c. Language Learning Apps

Language learning apps like Kahoot and Quizlet give students a way to practice real vocabulary and phrases through interactive activities. Dudeney and Hockly (2007) explain that these tools make students more engaged and help them understand language and culture better than traditional methods.

This idea is also supported by Reinders and Wattana (2015), who found that using digital games and apps increases student motivation and helps them remember new words more easily through regular and enjoyable practice.

d. Digital Storybooks / e-Books

Digital storybooks and e-books let students read and listen to stories that show how people communicate in real-life situations. They also help learners discover different cultures and ways of life. As Byram (1997) explains, this kind of exposure helps students better understand different ways of communicating and the cultural traditions behind them.

This idea is also supported by Robin (2008), who found that digital storytelling improves both language skills and cultural understanding by making learning more meaningful and engaging.

1.4.2.3 The Role of ICT in Providing Authentic Language Input

The internet gives students easy access to real examples of language, going beyond what textbooks offer. By using content like videos, blogs, and social media posts, learners

can see how people actually speak and write in everyday situations. This helps them become familiar with natural communication styles and different accents.

As Warschauer and Kern (2000) explain, technology gives students better opportunities to engage with both the language and the culture behind it.

1.4.3 The Relationship Between Authentic ICT Materials and ICC

1.4.3.1 Authentic Materials as a Tool for Cultural Exposure

Authentic materials give students a real look at the daily lives of native speakers, offering more than what traditional textbooks can provide. By watching films, videos, and online conversations, learners can see real cultural habits, values, and ways of communicating. This helps them go beyond grammar and vocabulary to better understand how people think and behave, which bridges cultural differences.

This idea is supported by Herron and Seay (1991), whose study in American university French classes found that students who used authentic video materials improved their listening skills and developed stronger cultural awareness than those who only used textbooks.

1.4.3.2 ICT as a Medium for Intercultural Learning

ICT makes it much easier for students to connect with people around the world and learn about different cultures directly. Through online platforms, learners can share ideas and traditions, which helps them develop stronger cultural awareness. O'Dowd (2007) explains that these digital tools allow real intercultural communication that textbooks cannot fully provide, making learning more realistic and meaningful.

This idea is also supported by research on telecollaboration. O'Dowd and Ritter (2006) found that students involved in online international exchanges improved their communication skills and became more culturally aware through direct interaction with

peers. In the same way, Belz (2003) showed that discussing with native speakers online helped students understand cultural meanings beyond literal translation.

1.4.3.3 Developing ICC through Authentic ICT-Supported Materials

To develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), students need to go beyond textbooks and engage with real-world materials. With ICT, learners can access authentic resources such as videos, social media, and online articles, which expose them to different perspectives and ways of communicating. This also helps them reflect on their own culture in comparison with others. As Bennett (2003) explains, direct exposure to cultural diversity is an important step in developing real cultural understanding.

This idea is supported by research on telecollaboration. O'Dowd (2011) found that students who take part in online intercultural exchanges with peers from other countries become more aware of cultural differences and improve their ability to understand deeper meanings in cross-cultural communication.

1.4.4 Previous Studies on ICT, Authentic Materials, and ICC

1.4.4.1 Studies on ICT in Language Learning

Studies show that using ICT in language classrooms makes learning more effective and engaging. Instead of relying only on textbooks, students can use real materials like videos, online articles, and interactive exercises that show how language is used in real life. These tools also give learners more chances to participate, practice, and communicate in meaningful ways.

As Warschauer (2004) explains, technology is important for improving communication skills and increasing motivation because it makes language learning more active, interesting, and connected to everyday situations.

1.4.4.2 Studies on Authentic Materials in Language Education

Research shows that using authentic materials is very important in language learning. When students use resources like news articles, YouTube videos, podcasts, and social media, they see how the language is really used in everyday life, which helps improve their reading and listening skills. Unlike textbooks, these materials show natural expressions and real communication styles.

As Peacock (1997) explains, using real-life materials not only improves language skills but also makes lessons more interesting, which increases students' motivation and participation.

1.5 Previous Studies on ICT and Intercultural Communicative

Competence

Many researchers agree that technology helps language learners better understand different cultures. Studies show that using the internet and digital apps makes it easier for students to communicate with people around the world while also improving their cultural awareness.

According to Michael Byram (1997), language and culture cannot be separated. He explains that to communicate well with people from other countries, learners need more than grammar; they also need an understanding of cultural differences and an open attitude toward them. His work is an important foundation for modern approaches to teaching global communication skills.

In a 2018 study, Nguyen Thi Thanh Tran and Nguyen Thi Thu Duong looked at how teaching culture affects English learners in Vietnam. They used digital tools and classroom group discussions about different cultures. Their results showed that students not only learned

more about the world, but also became more confident when communicating with people from different backgrounds.

In another study, Shih-Chang Liu and his team (2021) examined Chinese students learning English. They included more digital tools and cultural topics in their lessons. The findings showed that students improved their understanding of other cultures and became more open and willing to communicate with people from different countries.

Overall, research suggests that digital tools such as online platforms and videos are very helpful for learning about different cultures. They provide real examples of how people live and communicate, and also give students chances to practice communication in ways that textbooks alone cannot offer.

Conclusion

The link between technology and authentic resources is exactly what enables students to bridge the gap between language and culture. True fluency involves more than just memorizing vocabulary; it requires a deep understanding of the social context behind the words. By prioritizing these cultural competencies, educators can help students transform into confident, effective communicators capable of navigating any global environment.

Numerous studies highlight that technology serves as a powerful tool for developing both linguistic proficiency and cultural insight. It provides direct access to real-world resources and offers a platform for students to engage with diverse cultures. By integrating ICT into language instruction, learners receive a dual advantage: they refine their vocabulary while simultaneously learning how to function in a globalized society.

Reviewing the research makes it clear that combining technology with real-world materials results in a significantly more meaningful learning experience. This approach shifts the focus away from simply passing exams and toward equipping students with the actual

knowledge, skills, and open-mindedness required to connect and communicate successfully with people around the world.

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted to carry out this research. It explains the research design, the participants involved, the data collection tools, and the procedures followed to answer the research questions.

2.1 Research Methodology

2.1.1 Research Design

To carry out this investigation, a mixed-methods approach was adopted for data collection and analysis appropriate to the research objectives, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to explore EFL students' perceptions of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in language learning. A questionnaire was administered to collect numerical data and identify general trends regarding students' attitudes toward ICT.

In addition, qualitative data were gathered to provide deeper insights into students' opinions, experiences, and perspectives. The collected data were analyzed using suitable quantitative and qualitative techniques. This mixed-methods approach was chosen for its effectiveness in providing a more complete and detailed understanding of the research problem.

2.1.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted at the Department of English at Ahmed Zabana University in Relizane. The research focuses on EFL students and teachers involved in language learning and teaching where ICT tools are increasingly integrated into the educational process through the use of computers, smartphones, internet resources, language learning platforms, multimedia materials, and online communication applications. This setting was selected for its relevance to the objectives of the study and its suitability for investigating the role of

Information and Communication Technologies in enhancing intercultural communicative competence.

2.1.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of EFL students and teachers at the Department of English. From this population, a sample of seventy (70) second-year students was selected randomly to fill in the questionnaire. However, only seven (7) teachers participated in the interview. The students were selected because they are directly exposed to Information and Communication Technologies tools in their learning process through the use of computers, smartphones, online platforms, digital resources, and classroom technologies for learning activities and assignments, while the teachers were chosen because of their experiences in integrating ICT into language teaching. The selected participants provided relevant information related to the objectives of the study.

2.1.4 Research Instruments

In order to collect the necessary data, two research instruments were employed: a questionnaire for the second year students and an interview for the teachers.

2.1.4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data from second year students. It includes a number of 20 questions divided into 6 sections aiming to explore students' attitudes toward the use of ICT in language learning and its potential role in developing their intercultural communicative competence. The questionnaire includes different types of questions, such as closed-ended questions and multiple-choice items.

2.1.4.2 Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview included 20 questions divided into 6 sections preceded with 3 introductory questions was conducted with teachers

to collect qualitative data. The interview aimed to explore teachers' opinions and experiences concerning the integration of ICT in language teaching and its effectiveness in promoting intercultural communicative competence among students. The semi-structured format allowed the use of prepared questions while providing flexibility for further clarification and discussion.

2.2 Data Analysis

2.2.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The Aim of the questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to investigate students' perceptions of the role of authentic ICT-based instruction in enhancing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language learning.

Section 1: Personal Information

Question 1: Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

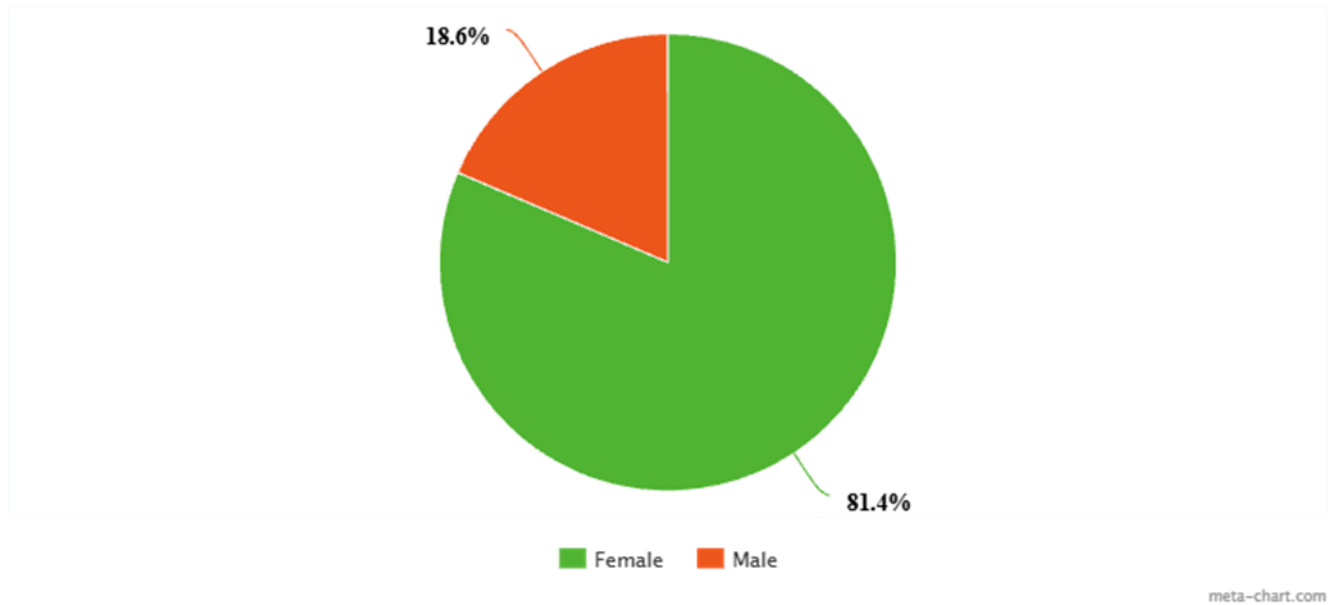


Figure 1: Students' Genders

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were female students, representing 81.4% of the sample, whereas male students represented 18.6%.

Question 2: Age

☐ 18–20 ☐ 21–23 ☐ 24 or above

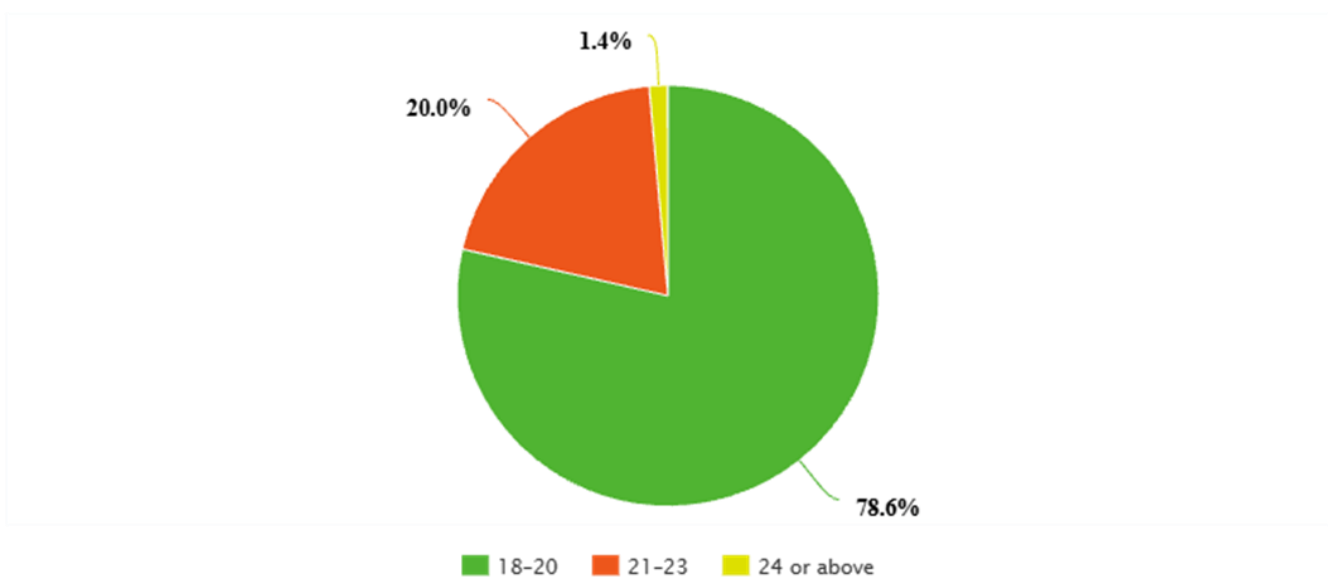


Figure 2: Students' Periods of Age

According to figure 2; 78.6% of the students are between 18 and 20 years old, 20% are between 21 and 23 years old and the rest 1.4% are 24 years old or above.

Question 3: How long have you been learning English?

☐ Less than 5 ☐ 5–8 ☐ More than 8

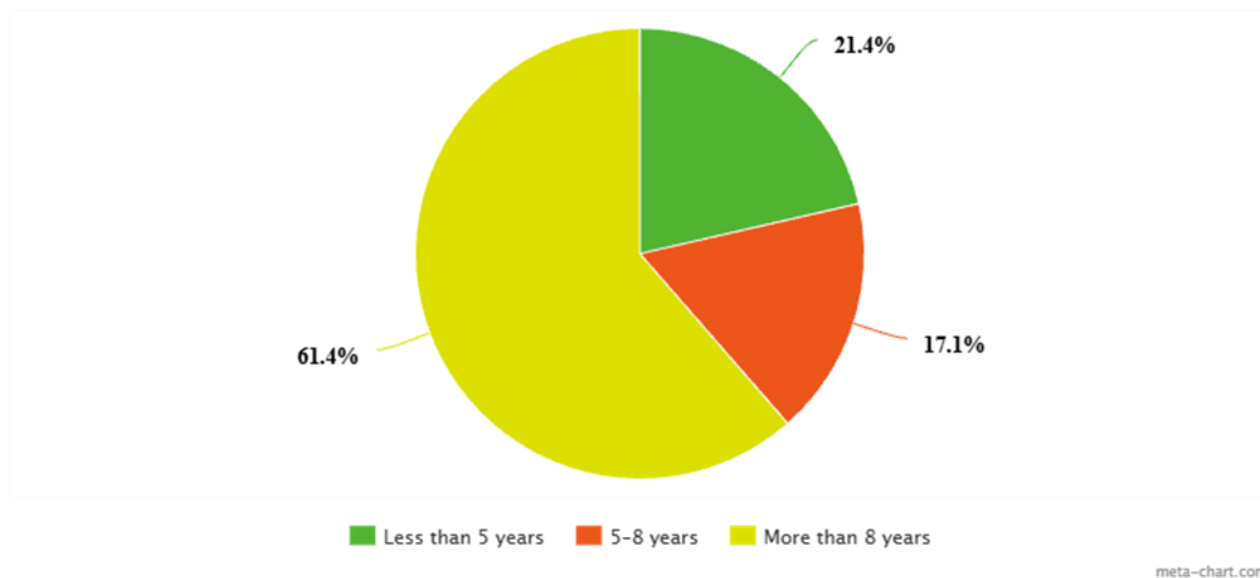


Figure 3: Students' English Learning Years

Figure 3 shows that 21.4% of the students have been studying English for less than 5 years, 17.1% for 5 to 8 years and 61.4% for more than 8 years.

Section 2: ICT Use in English language Learning

Question 1: ICT tools are used in my English classes

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

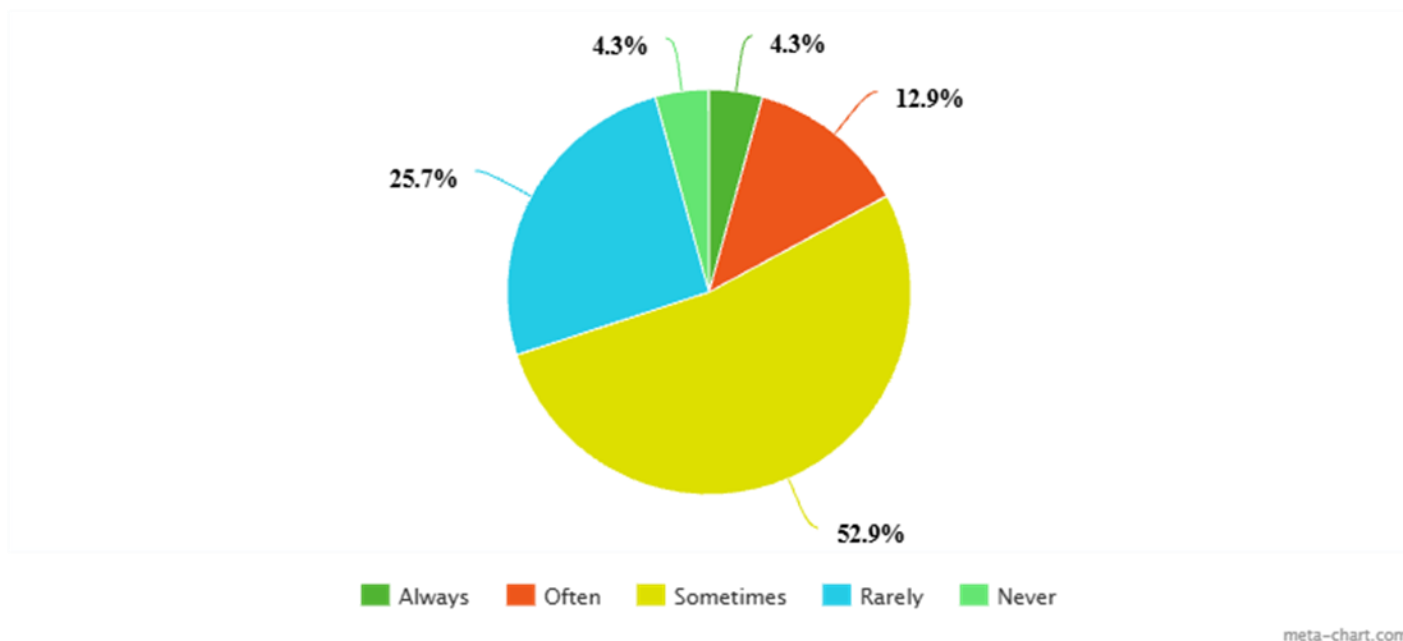


Figure 4: The Use of ICT Tools in Students' English Sessions

The results show 52.9% of the students reported that Information and Communication Technologies tools are sometimes used in their English classrooms, while 25.7% indicated that they are rarely used. Additionally, 12.9% stated that they are often used, and only 4.3% reported that they are never used. Another 4.3% indicated that ICT tools are always used.

Question 2: My teacher uses digital resources (videos, websites, presentations) to support learning.

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

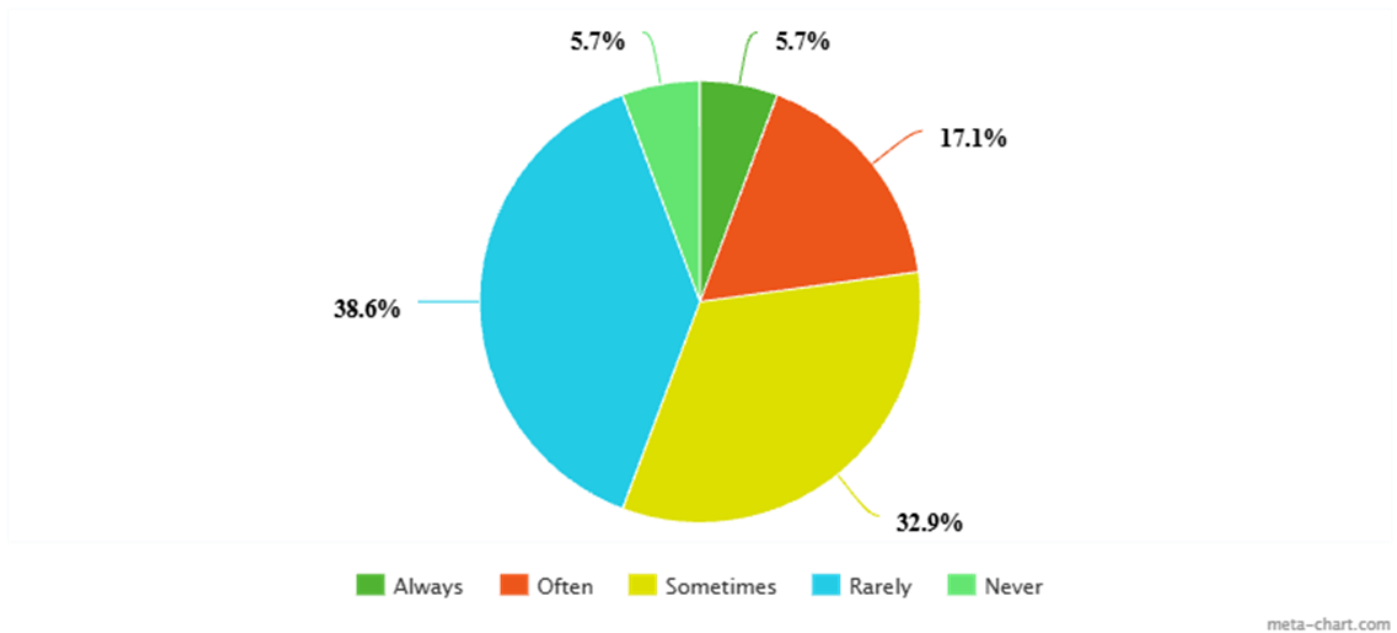


Figure 5: The Use of Digital Resources by the Teacher

The results indicate that 38.6% of students reported that their teachers rarely use digital resources. Meanwhile, 32.9% stated that these resources are sometimes used, and 17.1% indicated that they are often used. Only 5.7% reported that digital resources are always used, while another 5.7% stated that they are never used.

Question 3: ICT helps me understand English lessons more effectively.

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

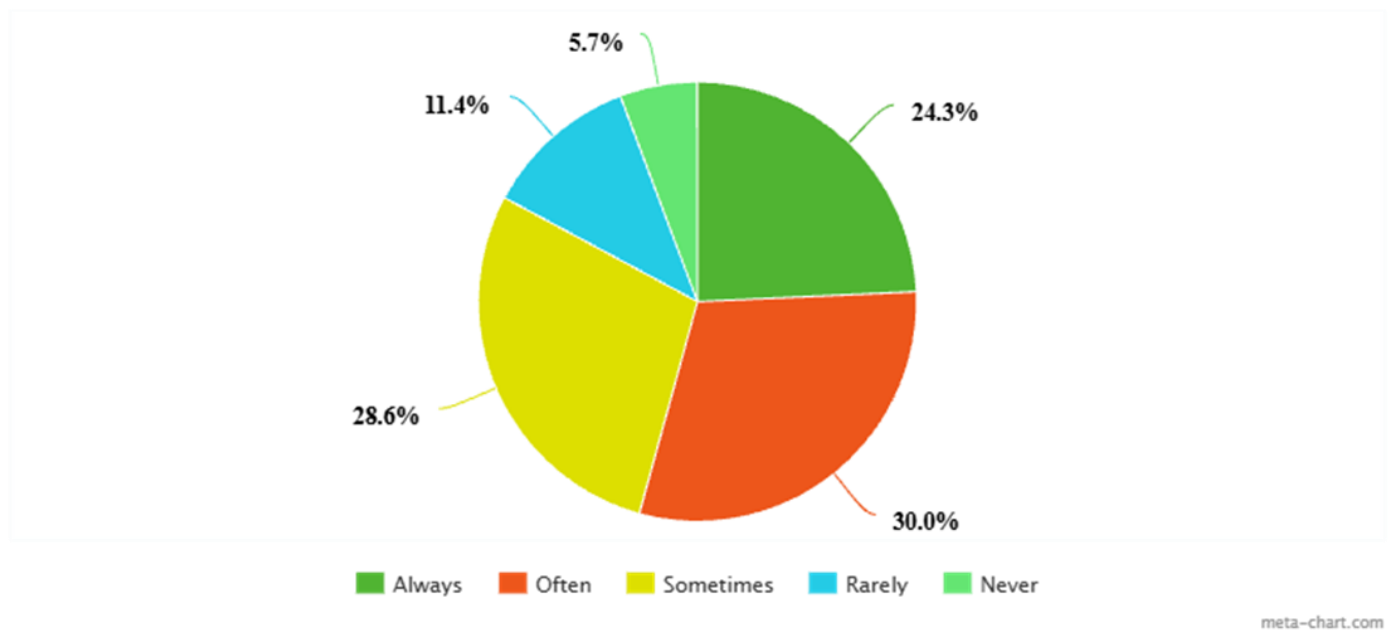


Figure 6: Students' Conceptions about ICTs Role in Understanding English Lessons

In this study, 30% of students reported that Information and Communication Technologies often helps them understand English lessons more effectively, while 28.6% stated that it sometimes helps. Additionally, 24.3% of respondents indicated that ICT always enhances their understanding. In contrast, 11.4% reported that it rarely helps, and only 5.7% stated that it never helps.

Section 3: Authentic Materials

Question 1: Authentic digital materials expose me to real English language use.

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

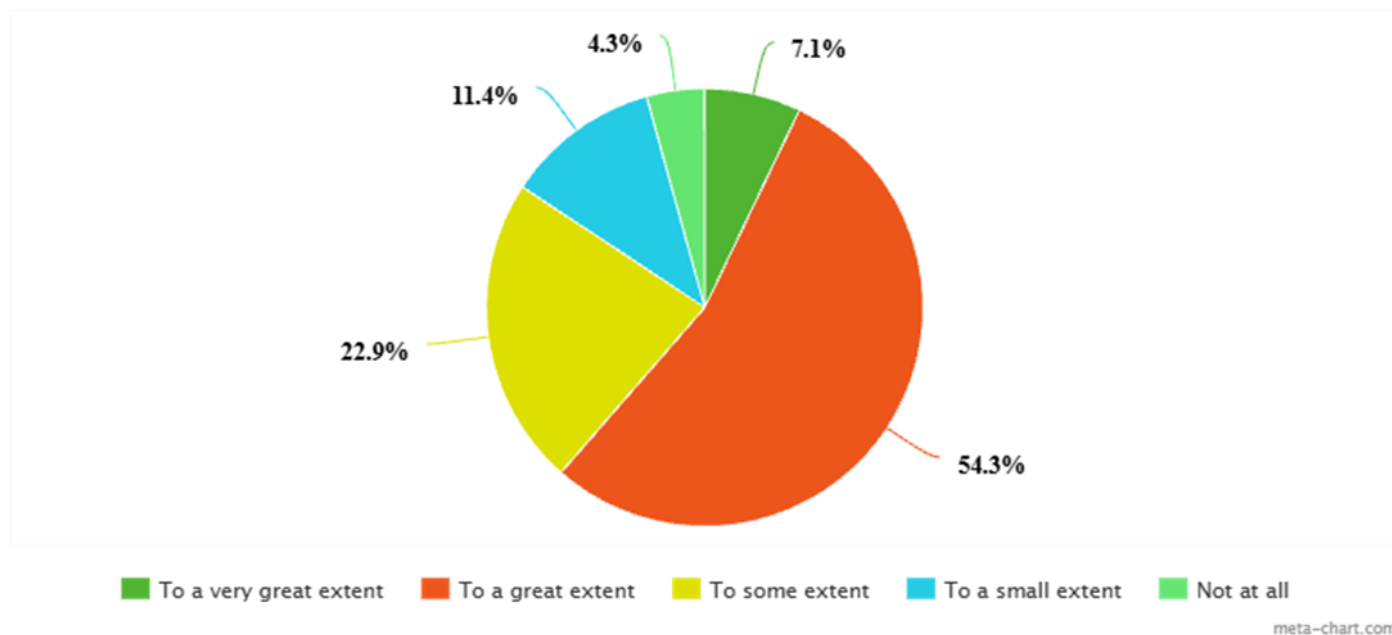


Figure 7: Students' Opinions on The Exposure To English Language Use Via Authentic Digital Materials

Most students feel that authentic digital materials expose them to real English language use. 54.3% said this happens to a great extent, 22.9% to some extent, and 7.1% to a very great extent. On the other hand, 11.4% reported only a small extent, and 4.3% said not at all.

Question 2: ICTs enhance English language learning through real-life situations.

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

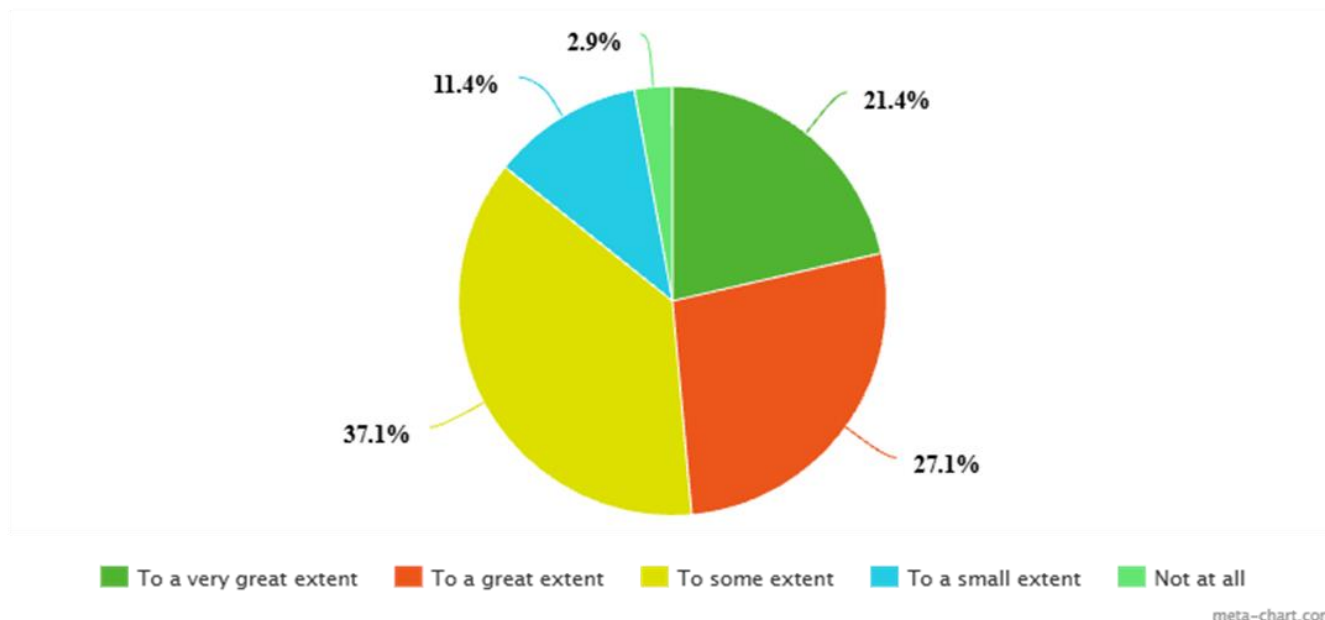


Figure 8: Students' Perceptions of ICT in Learning English Through Real- Life Situations

Regarding the use of Information and Communication Technologies to learn English through real-life situations, 27.1% of students reported that it helps to a great extent, 37.1% to some extent, and 21.4% to a very great extent. Meanwhile, 11.4% indicated that it helps to a small extent, and only 2.9% reported that it does not help at all.

Question 3: Online materials help me understand cultural aspects of English-speaking communities.

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

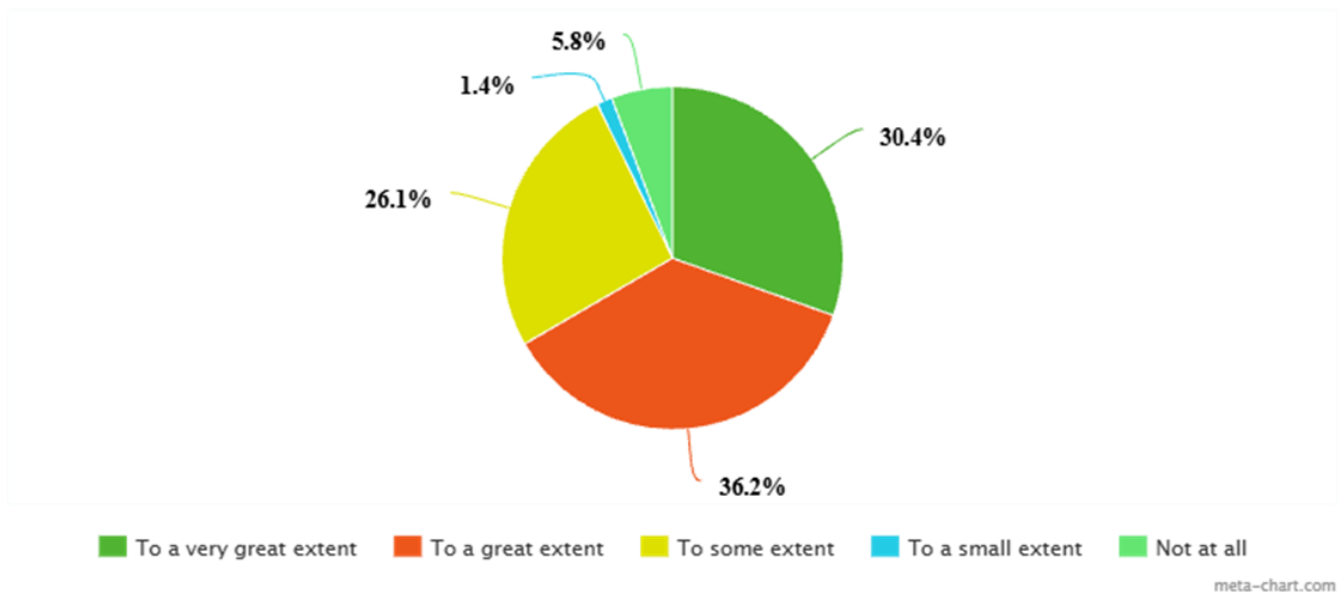


Figure 9: Students' Perceptions on the Role of Online Materials in Understanding Cultural Aspects of English-Speaking Communities

For the role of online materials in understanding cultural aspects of English-speaking communities, 36.2% of students reported that they help to a great extent, 30.4% to a very great extent, and 26.1% to some extent. In contrast, 1.4% indicated a small extent, and 5.8% reported that online materials do not help at all.

Section 4: Intercultural Communicative Competence

Question 1: ICT-based learning improves my ability to communicate with people from *different cultures*.

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

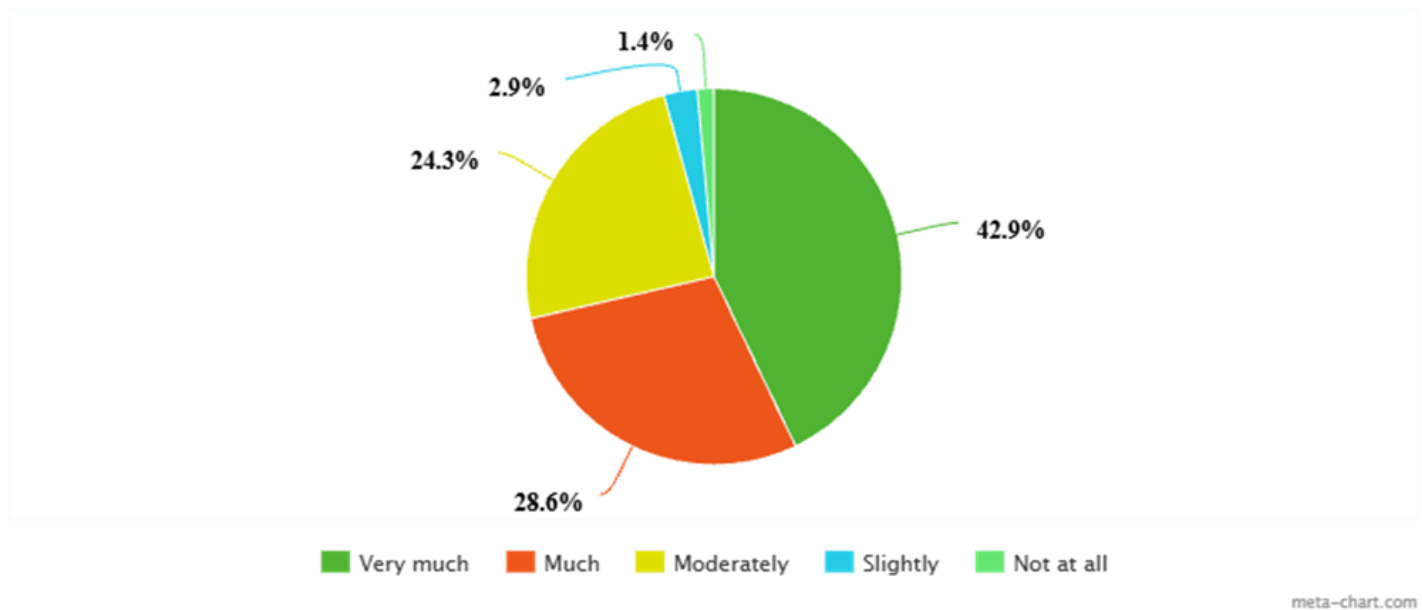


Figure 10: Students' Opinions about The Effectiveness of ICT-based Learning on Their Ability to Communicate with People from Different Cultures

According to figure 10, most students believe that ICT-based learning enhances their ability to communicate with people from different cultures. A majority of 42.9% reported it helps very much, 28.6% much, and 24.3% moderately help, while only 2.9% said slightly and 1.4% not at all.

Question 2: ICTs show frequent up-to-date cultural differences when using the English language.

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

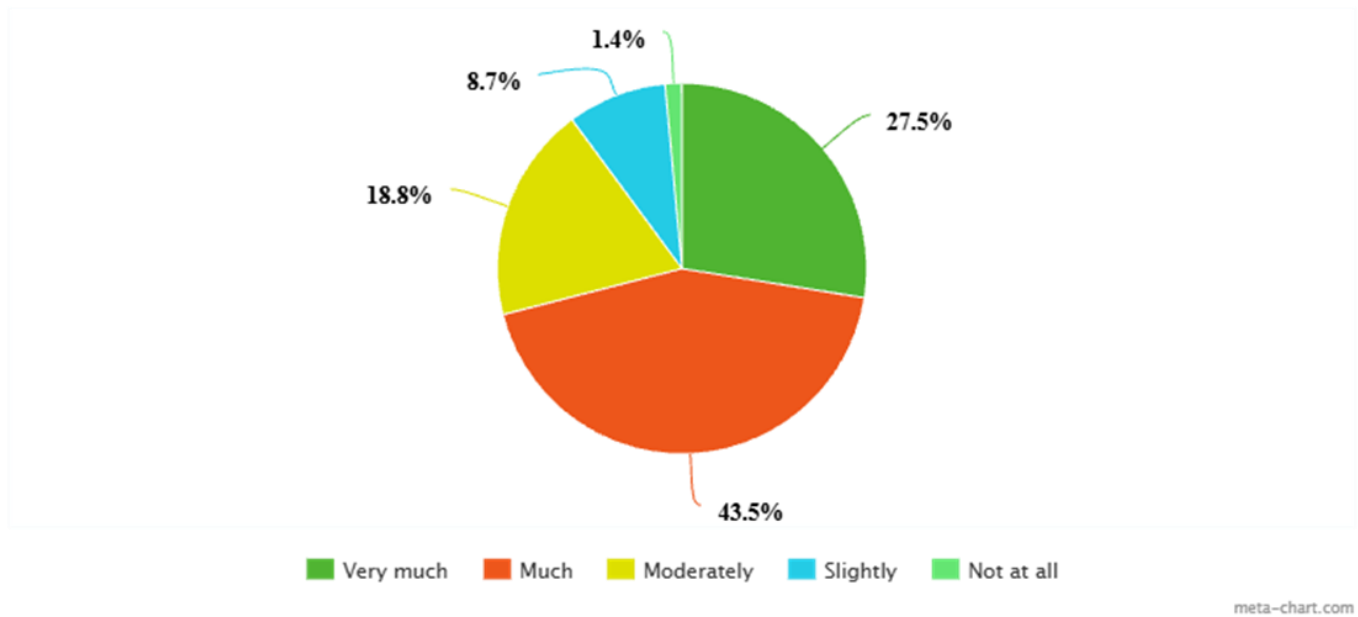


Figure 11: Students' Perceptions of ICTs in Showing Up-To-Date Cultural Differences in English

Students generally agree that Information and Communication Technologies are effective in presenting up-to-date cultural differences in English with 27.5% saying very much, 43.5% much, and 18.8% moderately. Only 8.7% reported slight effectiveness, and 1.4% reported none at all.

Question 3: Feeling confident grows when interacting with people from other cultures in English.

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

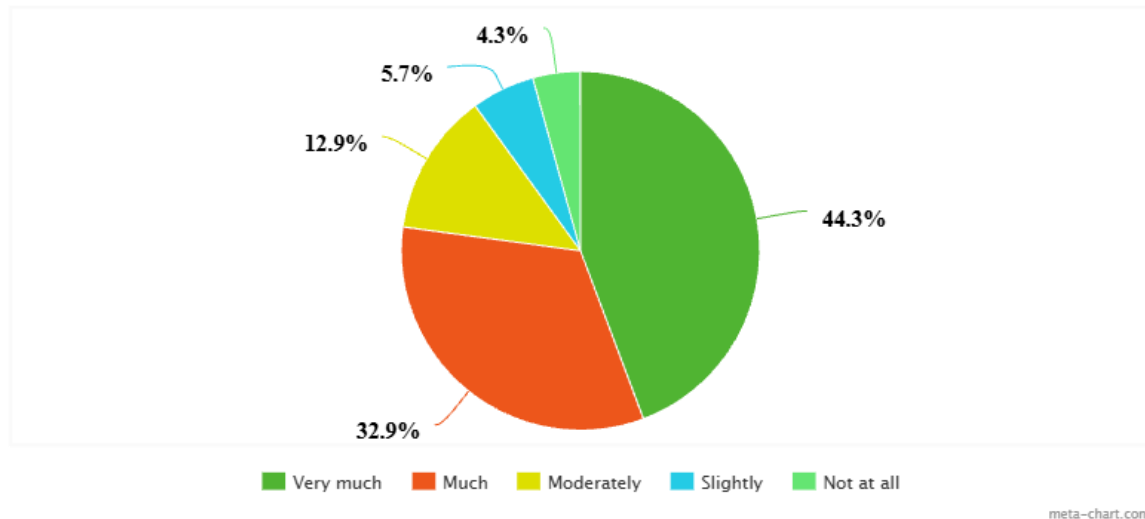


Figure 12: Students' Confidence in Using English When Interacting with People from Other Cultures

Most students reported that interacting with people from other cultures in English increases their confidence with 44.3% saying very much, 32.9% much, and 12.9% moderately. Smaller proportions reported slight (5.7%) or no increase in confidence (4.3%).

Question 4: Intercultural awareness and communicative competence expand gradually via daily authentic materials.

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

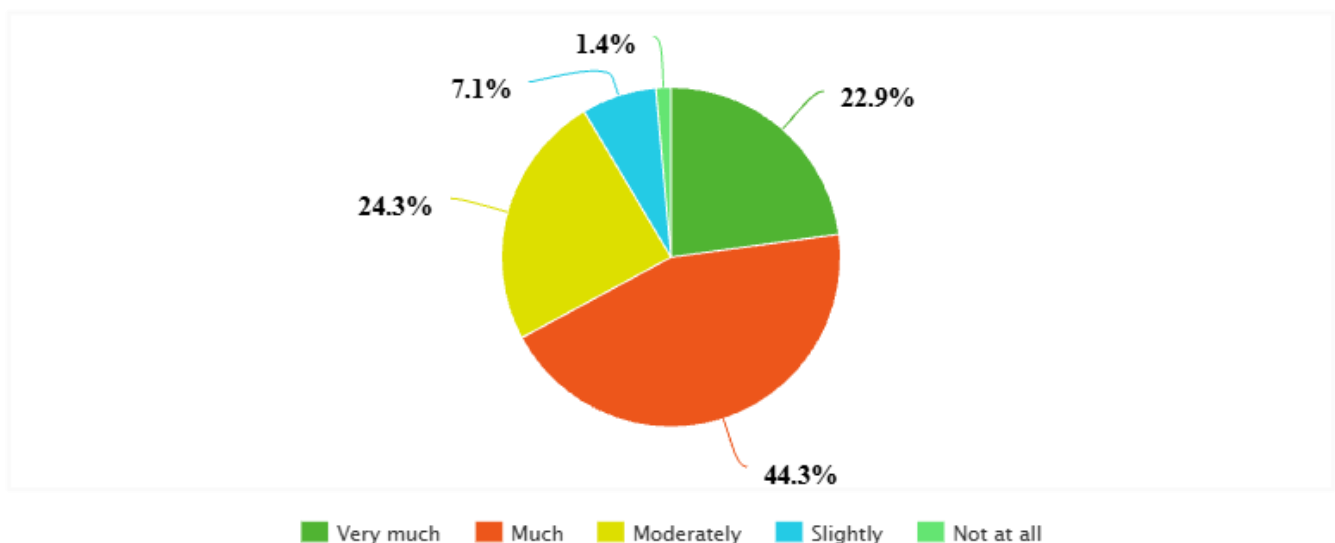


Figure 13: Development of Students' Intercultural Awareness and Communicative Competence Through Daily Authentic Materials

Students generally agreed that daily authentic materials support the development of intercultural awareness and communicative competence. Specifically, 44.3% selected “much,” 24.3% “moderately,” and 22.9% “very much,” whereas 7.1% indicated “slightly” and 1.4% “not at all.”

Section 5: Motivation and Attitudes

Question 1: Learning various English subjects through ICTs makes language classes much more interesting.

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

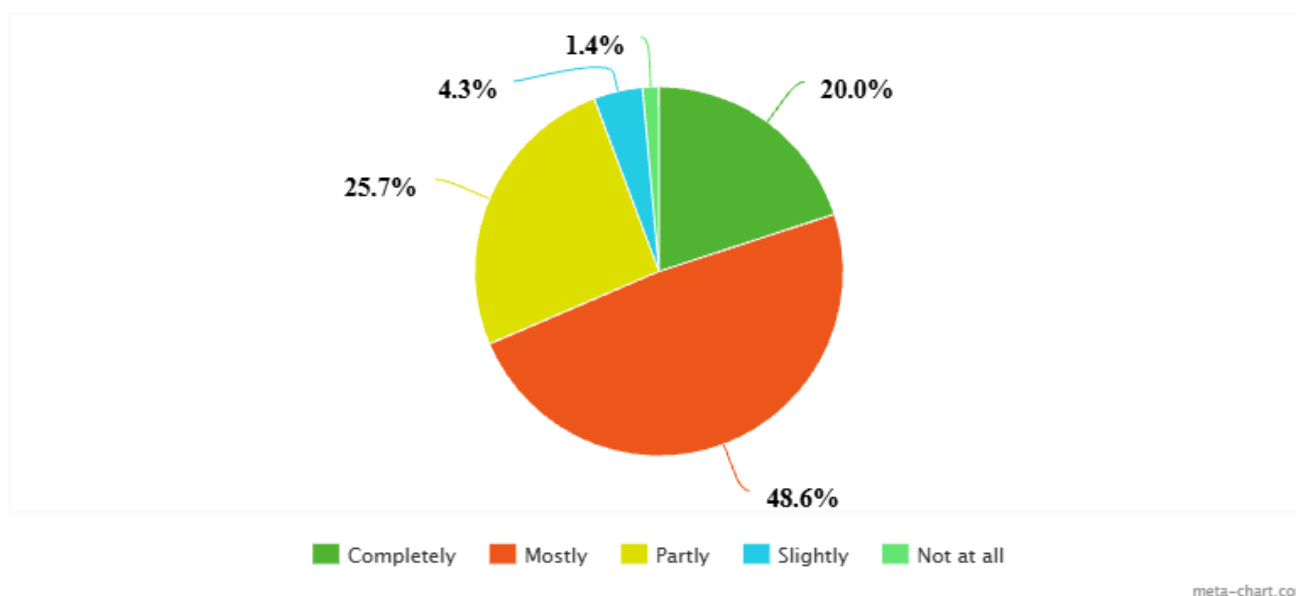


Figure 14: Students' Perceptions of ICTs in Making English Classes More Interesting

Most students feel that using ICTs makes English classes more interesting, 20% said completely, 48.6% mostly, and 25.7% partly. Only 4.3% said slightly and 1.4% not at all.

Question 2: Learning various English subjects through Information and Communication Technologies makes language classes much more interesting.

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

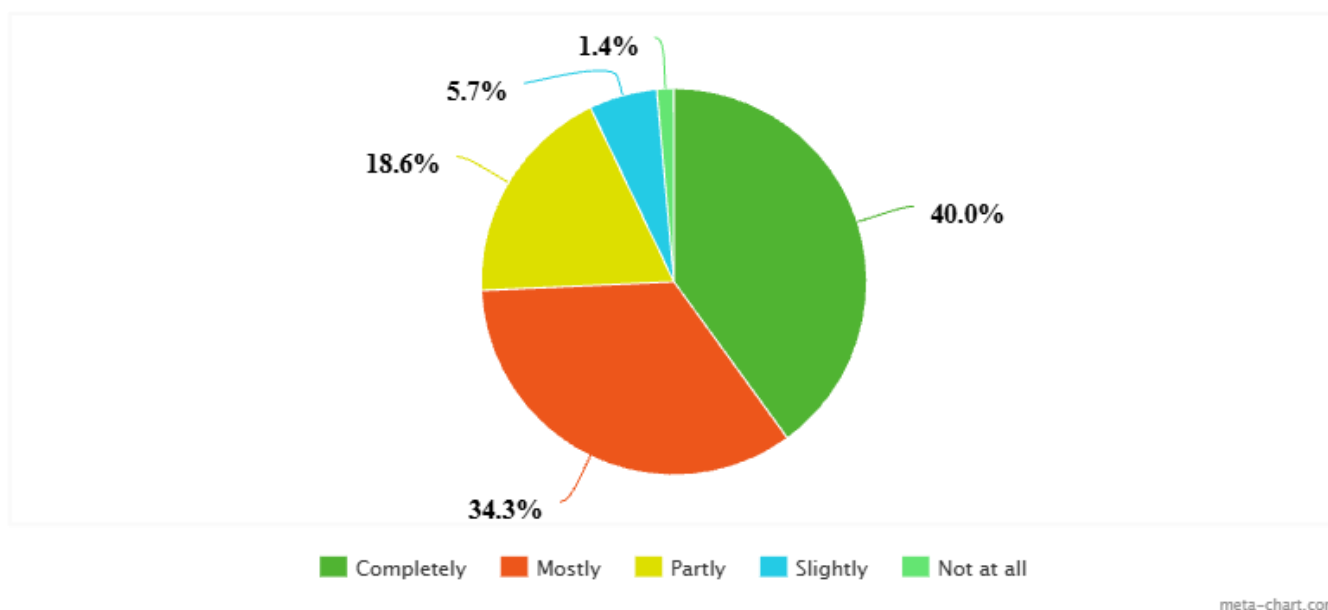


Figure 15: Students' Perceptions of ICTs use in English Classes

Technologies in English classes. Most students have a positive view. 40% said completely and 34.3% said mostly, which means the majority find ICTs interesting.

Also, 18.6% said partly, showing a moderate opinion. Only a few students had a negative view, with 5.7% saying slightly and 1.4% not at all.

Question 2: ICTs encourage me often explore other cultures independently

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

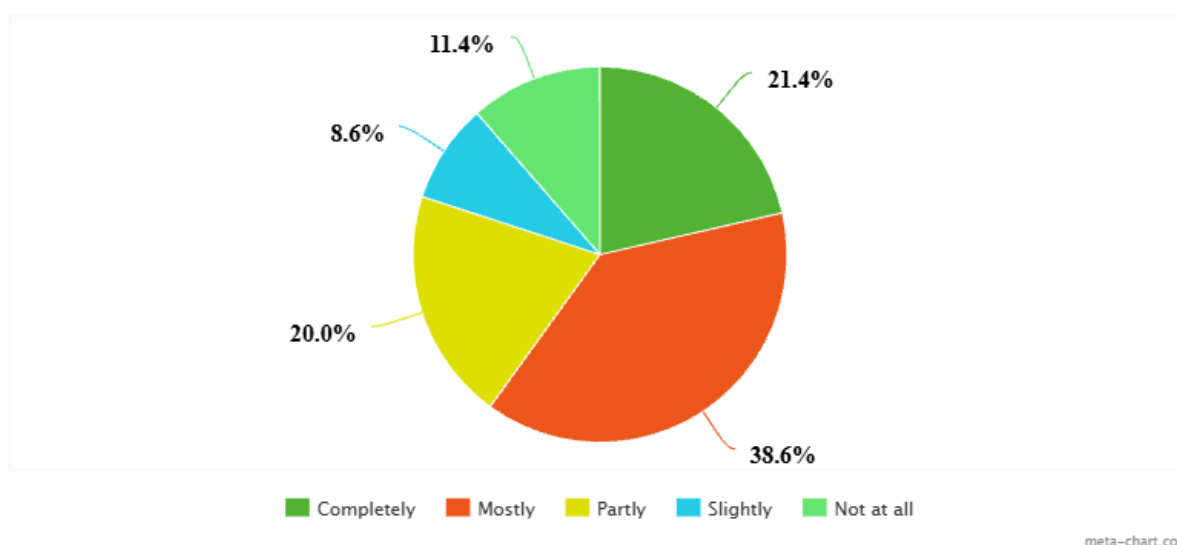


Figure 16: Students' Opinions on Independent Exploration of Other Cultures Through ICTs

In this question, students reported that Information and Communication Technologies encourage them to explore other cultures independently, with 38.6% saying mostly, 21.4% completely, and 20% partly. Smaller proportions indicated slightly (8.6%) or not at all (11.4%).

Section 6: Open-Ended Questions. Provide your own full answers

Question 1: How do ICTs help you develop your intercultural communicative competence?

This question was answered by 59 students.

Table 1: Students' Views on the Role of ICTs in Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence

Theme	Explanation	Sample of Answers	Frequency
Exposure to different cultures	Learning about traditions, lifestyles, accents, and ways of thinking	"ICTs help me learn different cultures and communicate with people from different backgrounds"	High (~70–75% of answers)
Communication / Interaction	Talking with people from other countries / native speakers	"By allowing me to communicate with people from different cultures through social media"	High (around 60–65% of responses)
Language Improvement	Enhancing English skills, vocabulary, pronunciation	"By watching videos, they enrich my linguistic background and help me understand the others' culture"	Moderate (~40–50% of responses)
Learning through Multimedia	Using videos, presentations, digital resources	"ICTs help us develop our ICC by exploring us to different cultures through videos"	Moderate (~35–40% of responses)
Personal Growth / Confidence	Increasing confidence, respect for cultural differences, independent learning	"By accepting other differences, it helps improve your confidence towards foreign cultures"	Low (~15–20% of responses)

Negative / Neutral Feedback	ICTs not sufficient alone	"ICT don't help me developing icc the important is to attend the class and study"	Very low
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The analysis of students' responses showed that ICTs help develop intercultural communicative competence in several ways. Most students stated that ICTs allow them to learn about different cultures and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. Others mentioned that ICTs improve their language skills, especially speaking and listening, through videos and online interactions. Some students also highlighted that ICTs provide access to authentic materials and help them better understand cultural differences. Overall, the findings indicate that ICTs play an important role in enhancing students' intercultural awareness and communication skills.

Question2: What difficulties do you face when using ICTs in learning English topics both in and outside university?

50 students answered this question

Table 2: Difficulties Faced by Students When Using ICTs in Learning English Topics Inside and Outside University

Theme	Explanation	Sample of Answers	Frequency
Poor Internet Connection	Slow or unstable internet	"Poor internet connection" "Slow Internet" "Internet is not always available" "Yes, always i have difficulties because the internet" "Poor internet connection sometimes affects my learning"	Very High (~45–50%)

Technical Problems	Moodle, apps, devices issues	"Yes I face many difficulties with Moodle platform it's very slow" "Technical problems" "Technical problems (apps, devices, etc.)" "I face problem with using moodle because sometimes I can't get in"	High (~30%)
No Difficulties	Students reported no issues	"I didn't face difficulties" "There is no difficulty" "I have no difficulties to use ICTs it's easy"	High (~25–30%)
Difficulty Understanding Content	Fast speech, unclear materials	"Sometimes the materials are difficult to understand" "When the native speakers talk very fast" "I often find it difficult to understand the lesson"	Moderate (~20%)
Distractions	Social media distractions	"It causes distraction" "Sometimes I get distracted by social media" "Distractions of social media platforms instead of focusing on learning"	Moderate (~15–20%)
Lack of Equipment	No devices available	"Low internet and there is no equipment" "Lack of good devices"	Low (~10%)
Lack of Digital Skills	Difficulty using technology	"I don't know how to use them well" "Maybe the use of computer"	Low (~10%)

The analysis of students' responses showed several difficulties when using ICTs in learning English. The most common problem was poor internet connection, which limited students' access to online resources and platforms. Some students also mentioned technical

issues, especially with learning platforms such as Moodle. Others reported distractions from social media and difficulties understanding online materials without teacher guidance. A few students pointed to the lack of devices and limited ICT skills as additional challenges.

However, many students stated that they did not face any difficulties when using ICTs.

Overall, the results suggest that although ICTs provide valuable learning opportunities, technical and infrastructure problems still affect their effective use.

Question 3: What suggestions would you give other learners to improve their ICT-based intercultural learning?

Table 3: Students' Suggestions for Improving ICT- Based Intercultural Learning

Theme	Explanation	Sample of Answers	Frequency
Using Online Resources and Educational Platforms	Websites, apps, platforms	"Learners should use online resources" "Use reliable websites and educational platforms" "Use different applications that helps to learn English" "Use good learning apps and websites"	Very High (~45–50%)
Communicating with others	Native speakers / foreigners	"Practice with native speakers" "Interact with native speakers online" "Speaking more to others specially native speakers" "Communicate with foreign students"	High (~35–40%)

Watching Videos and Authentic Materials	Videos, podcasts	"Watch videos from different cultures regularly" "Watching videos of other cultures" "Watch more videos and podcasts" "Explore authentic materials online"	High (~30–35%)
Practicing Regularly	Continuous use of ICTs	"Practice makes perfect" "Practice English every day" "Use ICT tools actively to practice English"	Moderate (~25%)
Being Open-Minded	Accept cultural differences	"They need to be more open" "Be exposed to their culture and lifestyle" "Be open to others perspectives"	Moderate (~20%)
Improving ICT Skills	Digital literacy	"Learn how to use ICTs" "Learn basic skills" "Improve your ICT"	Low (~10–15%)

Students gave several suggestions to improve ICT-based intercultural learning. The most common suggestion was using online resources such as educational websites, applications, and learning platforms. Many students also recommended communicating with native speakers and interacting with people from different cultures. In addition, watching videos and using authentic materials were suggested to help learners better understand other cultures. Some students also stressed the importance of practicing regularly and being open to cultural differences. Others suggested improving ICT skills and managing time effectively.

Overall, these results show that students consider ICTs useful tools for developing intercultural communicative competence.

2.2.2 Analysis of Teachers' Interview

The Aim of The Interview

This interview aims to explore teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the use of authentic ICT-based instruction in developing students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in EFL classrooms.

Introductory questions

Question 1: How long have you been Teaching English at the university. Mr/Mrs/Miss ?

The reason behind this question is to identify the participants' teaching experience and provide background information about their professional profiles. The responses show a variety in the participants' teaching experience at the university level. Some reported having a considerable experience with teaching careers lasting over a decade (e.g., 12 and 13 years). These profiles suggest a good and solid understanding of the higher education context. They also indicate that they have well-established teaching practices thanks to their experience.

In contrast, others indicate a moderate experience starting from 7 to 8 years, revealing a strong but still developing professional progression. Meanwhile, one participant reported limited experience (1 year), demonstrating a novice perspective among the participants.

Notably, one response indicates a mixed teaching experience in both university (2years) and secondary school (8years). This suggests that some teachers who have varied prior experience across different levels may smoother adapt to higher education.

In general, the results reveal a varied sample of both beginners and experienced teachers. This diversity is beneficial as it enhances the study by offering an inclusive understanding of teaching practices and perspectives.

Question 2: Which subjects did you teach the learners of the English Department?

The reason behind this question is to identify which subjects the teachers has taught and to understand their teaching experience in the department of English.

1. Diversity of Taught Subjects

The responses show that teachers have taught multiple subjects in the English Department. These involve modules such as oral expression, ESP, lexical semantics, practical communication, academic writing, and study skills. This variety reveals that teachers are not restricted to one specialization, but they contributed to different language teaching fields.

2. Emphasis on Communication-Oriented Modules

A remarkable point in the responses is the focus on communication-based subjects, especially oral expression and practical communication. This indicate that improving learners' communicative competences is a central concern in teaching practices. Such modules seek to develop learners' ability to effectively interact in real-life situations.

3. Integration of Methodological and Academic Skills

Many participants mentioned teaching methodology, academic writing, and study skills. This highlights the significance of equipping learners with both linguistic competences and academic capabilities. These subjects are very important in helping students succeed in higher education by enhancing their research, writing, and learning techniques.

4. Adaptability to Departmental Needs

Teachers declared that the subjects they teach rely frequently on departmental needs. This reflects a flexible teaching environment where instructors modify their modules to meet both curricular needs and institutional priorities.

5. Inclusion of Specialized Language Areas

The reference to modules such as lexical semantics and ESP indicates that certain teachers are more specialized in language teaching, aiming to deepen learners' linguistic knowledge and align teaching with specific academic or professional contexts.

6. Overall Interpretation

The findings show that teachers in the department of English adopt a diverse approach to their teaching. They incorporate communicative, academic, and specialized subjects while remaining flexible to institutional requirements. This variety improves the learning experience and supports enhancing both language proficiency and academic skills.

Question 3: Have you tried to often develop your learners' intercultural communicative competences?

The reason behind this question is to explore teachers' practices and attitudes toward developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

1. Frequency of ICC implementation

The majority of teachers reported integrating intercultural communicative competence (ICC) into their teaching process. Responses like "Yes, I often do so" and "Yes, I often try to develop my learners' ICC" shows that teachers are really conscious of the significance of ICC. This reveals a positive attitude toward intercultural awareness.

2. Methods Used

Teachers characterized several techniques of boosting ICC during in-class discussions. Some teachers provide discussions about culture and interculturality often at the end of sessions. These discussions are not tightly linked to the subject matter but serve to raise students' awareness of cultural differences and similarities.

Examples and real-life situations

One teacher stated using examples, discussions, and real-life communication situations to help learners understand cultural differences.

Module-dependent integration

A few teachers implement ICC only when the nature of the module allows it. It indicates that ICC is sometimes used occasionally not in a planned way.

3. Limitations and Focus

Not all teachers value the use of ICTs. One participant assert that the main focus was on digital literacy skills, which shows that in some contexts ICC is not the primary objective. This highlights that while ICC is valued, practical constraints or curricular priorities can restrict its integration.

4. Overall Interpretation

In sum, teachers demonstrate an awareness and positive attitudes toward ICC. A lot of do try to integrate cultural awareness into their teaching even when it is not explicitly required by the syllabus. However, the extent and consistency of incorporation vary depending on the teacher and the module content.

Section 01: ICT use in EFL teaching.

Question 1: Do you integrate ICT into your English teaching , Sir/Madam ? Why or why not?

This question aims to understand the frequency, objective, and challenges of ICT use in addition to the teachers' attitudes toward its role in improving teaching and learning processes.

1. Frequency of ICT Integration

Most teachers noted that they use ICT tools in their teaching. Some responses, such as “Yes” and “Yes, I do,” indicate regular use. However, a few teachers explained that the incorporation of ICT depends on the module being taught, which suggests that ICT integration is not always systematic. One teacher stated: “It depends on the module I am teaching. It is often integrated in oral expression sessions, but not that often in the other modules.” This difference can be explained by the nature of the modules themselves. Oral expression classes usually require interactive activities, audio materials, videos, and presentations, which make ICT tools more useful and necessary. In contrast, other modules may focus more on theoretical content, reading, or writing activities that rely less on technological support.

2. Purposes and Benefits of ICT Use

Teachers described many purposes for using ICT in teaching and learning:

Presentation of lectures

Many teachers use ICT such as the data show to present PowerPoint slides during lessons.

Enhancing digital literacy

Some teachers affirm that ICT is essential for enhancing students' academic and digital skills as declared: "Yes, I do, as digital literacy requires the use of technology to develop students' academic and digital skills."

Interactivity and real-life communication

One teacher mentioned that ICT makes lessons more interactive, authentic, and closer to real-life communication situations; showing understanding of its teaching benefits "ICT is almost unavoidable nowadays, and I find it very helpful to make lessons more interactive, authentic, and closer to real-life communication situations."

3. Challenges and Limitations

A few teachers mentioned constraints related to ICT availability "I would like to, but ICT tools are not available in our university except the data show."

This shows that teachers want to use ICT, but face real issues such as the lack of necessary devices which form practical limitations that restrict ICT's implementation.

4. Overall Interpretation

Generally, the responses show a positive attitude toward ICT use for teachers. Most of them incorporate ICT to some extent mainly for presentation purposes, but also for improving students' engagement, interaction, and digital skills. However, the extent of this integration differs depending on module content and institutional resources.

Question 2: What type of ICT tools or digital resources do you usually use?

This question identifies the tools that the teachers most use in their teaching, and what problems they face when using them.

1. Commonly Used ICT Tools

The analysis that teachers rely on a of ICT instruments, some resources used than others. The most common tools include :

Presentation tools

PowerPoint presentations and data show projectors are widely used to present lessons in a planned and visual way.

Multimedia resources

Videos, audio files, and YouTube clips are frequently mentioned, displaying the significance of audiovisual input in language learning.

Online platforms

Some teachers use platforms such as Google Classroom, along with educational websites and learning platforms to support teaching and communication with students.

These responses indicate that teachers prefer easy and useful tools that help them teach better and make lessons easier to support their students' understanding.

2. Variety and Diversity of Resources

Many teachers mentioned using different digital resources, including academic databases, online articles, podcasts, and even social media content when necessary.

This diversity shows that some teachers use basic tools and try to enrich the learning process and let learners be exposed to authentic and assorted materials.

3. Pedagogical Purposes.

The use of ICT tools supports various teaching purposes:

- Supports explaining and presenting the content.
- Provides authentic materials like videos and film adaptations.

- Enhances listening and comprehension skills using audio and visual input.
- Facilitates access to academic information via online articles and databases.

This recommends that ICT is used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

4. Limitations and Constraints

Though the diversity of tools pointed out, one teacher mentioned a “scarcity in digital tools,” demonstrating that the access to ICT tools is sometimes still a challenge. This limitation may affect how often and how well is ICT integrated in the classroom.

5. Overall Interpretation

The findings overall indicate that teachers use both simple and advanced ICT tools for mainly multimedia and presentations. Some teachers show a reached and varied use of digital materials, others are limited because they do not have enough resources. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers attempt to use ICT in a way that helps them reach their lessons’ objective and enhance students sometimes learning experience.

Question 3: How often do you exploit ICT-based materials during instruction?

The question above determines how frequently is ICT used, the contexts in which it is used, and what affects its integration is in the classroom.

1. Frequency of ICT Use

The responses reveal a variety in how often teachers use ICT materials.

Some use these materials regularly as shown in answers such as often, and quite often, I would say in most. These responses indicate that ICT is a common part of their teaching practices. It means that the integration of ICT is not uniform in all teaching situations.

However, not all teachers use ICT in the same way. For instance, one teacher stated, “Almost never”. while another mentioned, “It depends on their availability”, I would say

sometimes, not that much. This means that the integration of ICT is not the same in all teaching contexts.

2. Contexts of Use

Teachers also highlighted specific situations in which ICT is more commonly used. For example, one participant noted that ICT is used “quite often in oral expression,” suggesting that certain modules encourage more frequent integration.

Additionally, ICT is often used when introducing new topics, presenting cultural content, or stimulating classroom discussions. This can reflect a strategic use of technology to support particular teaching moments rather than continuous use throughout all sessions.

3. Pedagogical Purposes

Some teachers emphasized the role of ICT in enhancing classroom interaction. For instance, one response mentioned that ICT tools, such as interactive presentations, are used “to engage students and make learning more interactive.”

It indicates that ICT is not only used frequently but also purposefully, aiming to improve students’ engagement and participation.

4. Influencing Factors and Limitations

The availability of resources appears to be a key factor affecting ICT use. The statement “It depends on their availability” highlights that access to tools can limit how teachers often integrate ICT into their lessons. It explains the variation between frequent and limited use among participants.

5. Overall Interpretation

The findings generally show that many teachers use ICT-based materials quite often, especially in specific contexts such as oral expression sessions or when introducing new

content. However, the frequency of use varies due to factors such as resource availability and the nature of the module. Despite these differences, there is a general tendency to view ICT as a valuable tool for enhancing interaction and supporting effective teaching.

Section 02 : Authentic materials and culture.

Question 1: What do you perceive by authentic materials in EFL teaching?

The reason behind this question is to figure out the teachers' understanding and perceptions concerning authentic materials in EFL teaching context.

1. Definition of Authentic Materials

A lot of teachers had the same opinion and agreed that authentic materials like real-life resources are not created for teaching purposes, but for native speakers. They described them as tools used in real life communication.

2. Real Life and Communication Purpose

Most responses indicate that these resources are used for real world communication. This reveals that teachers see authenticity as connected to how language is used outside the classroom.

3. Types of Materials

Participants highlighted different examples like videos, podcasts, websites, news articles, interviews, social media content, and online books. This means that teachers are aware of a diversity of authentic resources.

4. Digital Resources

Some teachers mentioned digital tools like websites and podcasts. They believe these materials help students enhance both language skills and digital literacy.

5. Effectiveness in Teaching

A few responses indicate that authentic materials are really effective. They help catching students' attention, facilitating teaching and making sessions easier to understand, and save time and effort.

Question2: Do you target cultural contents through authentic digital materials (videos, websites, online texts)?

The aim from this question is to evaluate the extent to which teachers use authentic digital materials to integrate cultural content and support learners' cultural awareness.

1.Frequent and Purposeful Use of Authentic Materials

Some teachers regularly use these materials saying they help students understand how language is used in real-life cultural contexts. For example, one teacher said authentic texts help students see how language works in its social and cultural environment. Another uses videos and websites to show how English is used in different cultures.

2.Limited or Occasional Integration

Some teachers only sometimes use authentic materials, or only in certain classes (like oral expression sessions).

3. Absence of Use

A few teachers do not use authentic digital materials at all, with responses like No or Unfortunately, no.

The findings highlight that some teachers frequently use authentic digital materials to promote cultural understanding, while others use them occasionally or not at all.

Question 3: How far do these materials help students understand cultural aspects of the English language?

The aim of this question is to find out how authentic ICT tools help enhance students' cultural understanding of the English language

1. Enhancement of Cultural Understanding

A number of teachers highlighted that authentic materials improve learners' understanding of cultural aspects. By exposing students to real language use in sociocultural contexts, these resources make cultural elements more tangible and relatable compared to traditional texts.

2. Exposer to Real Behaviors and Communication Styles

A common idea is that digital resources allow students to observe real behaviors, attitudes, accents, and ways of communication, making it easier for them to effectively understand and learn cultural norms.

3. Variability Based on Prior Exposer

Some teachers mentioned that students with prior cultural knowledge gain more from materials, indicating that students' background influence the effectiveness of authentic resources.

4. Recognition of Potential Importance

Even teachers who focus directly on cultural content acknowledge that authentic digital materials can have a strong effect, highlighting their importance in promoting cultural learning.

5. Overall interpretation

The findings in this study indicate that authentic digital materials are valuable tools for teaching the cultural aspects of English, providing realistic, interactive, and context-rich exposer that helps learners understand both language and culture more deeply.

Section 03 :Intercultural communicative competence.

Question 1: Is intercultural communicative competence important for learners?

1. ICC as a link between language and culture

Most participants declared that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) helps students use language in cultural contexts. It is about understanding social language elements, not only about linguistic knowledge.

One response indicates that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) combines “linguistic knowledge with sociocultural understanding,” revealing that language learning extends beyond grammar and vocabulary.

2. Effective communication in a global world

Another repeated idea is that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) helps students communicate effectively with people from different cultures. Participants consider it decreases misunderstanding and supports interaction in real-life contexts.

One participant said that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) allows students to “act and react effectively with different people around the world without being misunderstood.”

3. Digital intercultural awareness

One response links Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) with the use of digital materials. It proposes that students need Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) to communicate effectively online while respecting cultural diversity.

This reveals that intercultural communicative competence is also significant in online communication settings, not only in face-to-face interaction.

4. Shift from exam-focused learning to real communication

Some teachers disagree with traditional learning objectives that primarily focus on exams. They see that English is currently needed for real communication with people from different cultures.

One response said that students are often “just learning English for exams,” but Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is essential for “real communication with people from different cultures.”

5. Strong positive attitude toward ICC

In general, all teachers show a positive feed-back. They agree that Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is essential, even when it is expressed briefly like “Yes,” “of course,” or “Absolutely.”

The results show a general agreement that ICC is necessary for language learners. It encourages useful communication, intercultural awareness, digital interaction, and learning for real life not only for exams.

Question 2: How does ICT-based instruction contribute to learners’ communicative competence?

The aim of this question is to explore how technology-based learning helps students improve their communication skills — not only using language, but also understanding meaning, context, and different cultures — through real and engaging online activities.

1. Exposure to Authentic Language and Real-Life Contexts

A lot of teachers emphasized that ICT exposes learners to real language use, different English varieties, and everyday situations. This exposure helps students understand how language is used in real social and cultural contexts, which improves their natural communication skills.

2. Interactive and Collaborative Learning

ICT tools encourage interaction and collaboration. They allow learners to practice language, exchange ideas, and communicate with others. This active participation helps students improve their linguistic, pragmatic, and overall communicative abilities.

3. Importance of Thoughtful Material Selection

Several teachers highlighted that choosing the right digital materials is very important. Resources should be relevant, engaging, and meaningful. When materials are well selected, learners become more motivated and take more benefits from the learning process.

4. Development of Intercultural Competence

Some teachers also noted that ICT-based instruction exposes learners to different cultures and communication styles. This helps students develop intercultural awareness along with their language skills.

5. Overall Interpretation

The findings suggest that ICT-based instruction improves learners' communicative skills by providing authentic experiences, encouraging interaction, and promoting cultural awareness. However, its success depends on selecting appropriate digital materials and using them effectively in teaching.

Question 3: Is learners' intercultural awareness easily improved through ICT use?

The aim of this question is to examine whether and how ICT use can improve learners' intercultural awareness, including the factors that influence its effectiveness.

1. ICT as an Effective Tool for Cultural Exposure

A lot of teachers agreed that ICT can enhance learners' intercultural awareness by exposing them to diverse global content and cultural perspectives. Digital resources such as

videos, online texts, and websites make access to other cultures in faster, richer, and more authentic ways.

2. Dependence on Learner Engagement and Guidance

A recurring theme is that effectiveness depends on learners' willingness to engage. Teachers emphasized that students must be open-minded and reflective, and that guidance from the teacher is often necessary to interpret and reflect on cultural content correctly.

3. Challenges and Contextual Factors

It has been noted that improving intercultural awareness is not always easy. Factors such as limited access to ICT tools, the learning environment, time constraints, and institutional resources can hinder language development. In such cases, alternative strategies like printed authentic materials, simulations, or teacher-led activities may partially compensate.

4. Overall Interpretation

Overall, the findings show that authentic digital resources are useful for teaching English culture, providing real-life, interactive, and meaningful exposure that support students' better understanding both language and its cultural contexts.

Section 04: Students' Engagement and Skills

Question 1: How do students respond to ICT-based intercultural activities?

This question aims to explore students' attitudes and reactions toward ICT-based intercultural activities, and to identify whether these activities enhance engagement, motivation, and participation in the learning process.

1. Good Interaction and Motivation

Most teachers said that students enjoy cultural activities that use ICT. They said that they were interesting and motivating. Students also become more active and more likely to join in on conversations. Accordingly, cultural activities that use ICT can make students more interested in school and get them to participate more.

2. Different Reactions from Students

Some teachers said that not all students react the same way. One teacher said that how students react depends on their skills, interests, and past experiences. This means that things like how well students know how to use computers, how well they speak English, and what they like to do can all affect how they use ICT in school.

3. Limited or Negative Responses

Some teachers said they did not get as many good responses. One teacher said that the students' responses were not good, and another said that only a few students reacted positively. This means that ICT-based cultural activities might not always go smoothly, like when students are not interested or do not want to participate.

4. Lack of experience

One teacher said they had never done these kinds of things before. This might mean that ICT-based cultural activities are not used very much in some situations, which could change how teachers think and how students react.

5. Overall Interpretation

The results show that students generally like ICT-based cultural activities, especially when it comes to motivation and participation. But students' reactions may be different depending on their skills, interests, and how often they do similar tasks.

Question 2: Are learners' engagement and motivation obvious and similar in all sessions?

The aim of this question is to find out whether learners' interaction and motivation stay the same in all classroom sessions, and to identify the factors that may cause differences, especially when using ICT.

1. Lack of Consistency Across Sessions

Most participants declare that interaction and motivation are not the same in every session. They denied saying no, not always, or not the same which means that these change from one session to another. It shows that how learners' interaction is not fixed and can change overtime. Learners' interaction is not the similar all time. It actually varies a lot from session to session.

2. Influence of Activities and Topics

Teachers reveal that interaction really depends on what activity you are doing and what you are talking about. Their responses showed that students are more engaged if the task is interesting or relevant to their interests. When activities need participation and interaction, they usually make learners much more motivated.

3. Role of Learners' Interests and Individual Differences

In fact, what students like or do not like is a deal. They also said that how they teach each student is different because these are different. Some students can prefer something and therefore it makes them want to learn. This may show that what is going on with each student personally affects how much they want to learn and when they take part in class.

4. Impact of ICT Use

One of the instructors in this study said that using Information and Communication Technology can help students interact more because a lot of students learn better when they see things. Another teacher also said that activities that use Information and Communication Technology usually make students more motivated to learn. It may mean that Information

and Communication Technology can be really good, for students although it does not mean that every class will be interactive because Information and Communication Technology does not work the way every time.

5. Contrasting Opinion

Only one participant among the total number agreed saying yes to mean that interaction and motivation are consistent. However, this view is different from most responses, which highlighted variation.

6. Overall Interpretation

The results show that learners' interaction and motivation vary across sessions. They depend on activities, topics, learners' interests, and the use of ICT. While ICT can improve motivation, it does not guarantee consistent engagement in every session.

Question 3: Is learners' communication expected to be appropriate to people from different cultures?

The aim of this question is to explore whether developing the ability to communicate appropriately with people from different cultures is considered an expected outcome of language learning, especially in intercultural contexts.

1. Communication as an Expected Goal

Most of the people who took part in this study agreed. They think that students should be polite and respectful when talking to people from other cultures. One teacher even said that this is one of the main goals of teaching English as a second language. A lot of teachers think that learning a language means being able to communicate in a way that is culturally appropriate.

2. Importance of Respect and Appropriateness

Some answers made it clear that communication should be respectful and appropriate. This means that students need to be aware of other cultures and social situations, not just language skills to avoid misunderstandings when they are in different cultures.

3. Conditional or Flexible Perspective

A few participants had an opinion. One teacher believed that knowing other cultures and being able to adjust the way you communicate might be enough. They said this is not necessarily required.

Some teachers think it depends on culture and learners' readiness. Some participants think good communication depends on the situation. They do not think there is one way to communicate.

4. Minority negative view

Only one participant answered using the word no. This shows that not all teachers see appropriate intercultural communication as an expected outcome, but such opinion is not common.

5. Overall Interpretation

Most teachers think that learners should be able to talk to people from other cultures in a better way. The results show this is what most participants believe about learners and communication. However, some teachers have their own view. They say it depends on how aware the learners are. If they are ready and the situation they are in suits the people from other different cultures.

This is what some teachers think about learners communicating with people, from different cultures.

Section 05 : Challenges and Constraints

Question 1: What are the challenges of ICTs' integration in EFL teaching?

This question aims to identify the main challenges of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

1. Limited resources and access

One of the problems that teachers face is that the technology they need is not available. Teachers said that a few classrooms have means like data projectors or digital tools. So it may be hard for teachers to use Information and Communication Technology regularly in their lessons. Teachers have to find ways to teach without these tools, which is not easy for them. The lack of resources can be a major issue.

2. Technical problems

Technical issues are a major problem. Teachers reported issues such as poor internet connection and broken devices. These problems can interrupt lessons and make Information and Communication Technology activities less effective. Technical issues can cause difficulties for both teachers and students when they are trying to use Information and Communication Technology.

3. Lack of training and digital skills

Many teachers said they did not receive enough training and have limited digital skills. This makes it harder for them to use ICT effectively in their teaching.

4. Lack of time

Time is also an important challenge. Teachers explained that preparing ICT-based lessons takes extra time and effort, which is not always available.

5. Student-related challenges

Some teachers said that students get really bored or demotivated especially when ICT is not part of their study area. Students can get distracted using ICT tools. Lose focus during lessons. This can be a problem for teachers. ICT tools are not always helpful. They can make students less interested.

6. Classroom management issues

Managing the classroom while using ICT can also be difficult. Students may get distracted, and technical problems may appear during the lesson.

The results show that the main challenges are resources, technical problems and not having enough training. These things all get in the way of using Information and Communication Technology in English as a foreign language classroom. The main challenges like resources, technical problems and lack of training affect the way we use Information and Communication Technology in English as a Foreign Language.

Question 2: Are there any serious institutional, technical, or pedagogical barriers?

This inquiry seeks to determine whether and what kinds of obstacles teachers encounter when incorporating ICT into their lessons.

1. Technical obstacles

This theme is evident in a number of responses. A weak network, for instance, was mentioned by one teacher while poor internet connectivity and insufficient digital resources were mentioned by another. These answers demonstrate that a significant barrier to ICT integration is technical difficulties.

2. Institutional obstacles

A few educators brought up issues pertaining to the school. One response, for example, mentioned « limited access to well-equipped classrooms. » This suggests that the use of ICT in education is impacted by a lack of institutional support and infrastructure.

3. Insufficient training

Teacher preparation is another crucial topic. While others noted the need for more training in advanced ICT use, one educator clarified that the issue is mainly technical due to the lack of trainings on how to use technology in education. It demonstrates that educators believe they are underprepared to use ICT efficiently.

4. Pedagogical obstacles (less common)

A few educators brought up pedagogical concerns. Some responses, for instance, made reference to pedagogical challenges, but they were vague. This implies that although such obstacles do exist but they are not as important as institutional and technical ones.

Section 06: Suggestions and Future Perspectives

Question 1: What strategies do you suggest to improve ICT-based intercultural instruction?

The question asks about ways to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to teach students about different cultures and help them communicate better.

1. Train and support teachers

Teachers need training on how to use digital tools and how to teach using ICT. Giving teachers ongoing support helps them give lessons supported with activities that show different cultures.

2. Use digital materials from different cultures

Students should see online materials, videos, and interactive websites reflecting other cultures. It can allow them learn about and understand different ways of life.

3. Use interactive and group activities

Group projects, small research tasks, and guided discussions are very useful. They let students think, compare cultures, and work together.

4. Focus on learning not just technology

ICT are not to be used as a supporting tool. Activities can help students improve communication, think carefully, and understand cultural content.

5. Make sure technology works and is available

Good computers, internet, and other tools are needed so both teachers and students can use ICT easily. In short, teaching about cultures using ICT works best when teachers are trained, students have access to good materials, activities are interactive, learning is the focus, and technology is reliable.

Question2: What would you recommend teachers for an effective Intercultural and Communicative Competence?

This question asks how teachers can help students communicate better across cultures while being in English language classes.

1. Train and develop teachers

Teachers are required to first learn about other cultures and improve their own skills. Ongoing training helps them guide students well and play a good role model.

2. Include culture in language lessons

Culture can be part of the language lessons, not a separate topic. This helps students use culture naturally when communicating.

3. Use real cultural materials

Teachers can use realistic materials through videos, online exchanges, and discussion forums. These show students different cultural viewpoints and may help them communicate meaningfully.

4. Encourage reflection and interaction

Students often think using their own culture, compare it with other ones, and join open discussions. Homework, with digital tools followed by class talks works well.

5. Make a supportive classroom

Create a safe and open classroom where students feel comfortable talking about cultural topics can build confidence and sensitivity to other cultures.

In short, improving intercultural communication works best when teachers are trained, culture is part of lessons, real materials are used, students reflect and interact, and the classroom feels safe and supportive.

Question 3: Which administrative measures could support intercultural learning?

This question aims to find out the administrative measures that can promote and improve intercultural learning.

1.Provision of ICT Resources and Internet Access

Participants repeatedly emphasized the significance of technological resources. Stable internet access and ICT tools are considered as crucial for accessing authentic cultural materials and encourage communication beyond the classroom Teacher Training in Digital and Intercultural Competencies.

Several responses stressed the importance of continuous regular training for teachers. Mastery of both technological competence and intercultural awareness is necessary for effectively integrating intercultural learning in teaching practices.

2. Integration of Intercultural Objectives into the Curriculum

Some responses pointed out that intercultural learning should officially include in the curriculum. This incorporation emphasized that intercultural learning is enhanced methodically instead of being optional.

3. Promotion of Authentic Intercultural Experiences

The results highlight the importance of offering opportunities for authentic intercultural engagement. Activities like virtual exchanges, digital communication, and collaboration with international partners are considered as effective strategies to expose students to different cultural perspectives.

4. Institutional Support, Motivation, and Recognition

Finally, participants highlighted the significance of the institutional encouragement. By supporting teachers, appreciating their efforts, and promoting intercultural initiatives can strengthen motivation and increase.

Introduction

This chapter, entitled Findings and Recommendations, presents and explains the main results obtained from two research tools: Students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. The findings are discussed in relation to the role of authentic supportive ICT-based instruction in improving intercultural communicative competence among second-year EFL students. The chapter aims to answer the research questions and check the validity of the proposed hypotheses.

This chapter also gives some recommendations about the effective use of ICT tools and authentic digital materials in EFL classrooms, in addition to mentioning the main limitations faced during this research.

3.1 Summary of the Main Results

3.1.1 Summary of Students' Questionnaire Findings

3.1.1.1 Students' Attitudes toward ICT-Based Instruction

The questionnaire showed that most second-year EFL students have positive opinions about using ICT tools in learning English. Most students said that technology makes English lessons more interesting, enjoyable, and interactive than traditional methods. Many participants explained that videos, online platforms, PowerPoint presentations, and digital activities make lessons more active and less boring. Students also said that ICT tools help them participate more in class. Some learners explained that visual and audio materials help them understand lessons easily. Others mentioned that using technology in class makes learning more comfortable and motivating.

Generally, the findings showed that students enjoy learning English with technology

because it creates a better and more enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

3.1.1.2 Authentic Digital Materials and Language Learning

The results that authentic digital materials help students improve their English skills. Most participants agreed that real English content such as videos, podcasts, films, songs, and social media help them to understand how English is used in interaction in real life situation far away from the classroom environment which can be so rigid.

Many students explained that these materials improve their listening and speaking skills because they hear everyday conversations and people's pronunciation as normal as it is. Some learners also see authentic materials help them to learn new and most often vocabulary and common expressions used in everyday communication.

Additionally, students mentioned that authentic digital materials make learning much more useful since they connect classroom learning with real-life situations. This teaching technique made them perceive English as all non-native speakers today a language for worldwide communication, not simply a school subject to be practiced in order to get good marks so as to shift from one lower level to another upper one.

3.1.1.3 ICT and Intercultural Awareness

The most important idea that the findings provided is that ICT-supported learning do strengthen students' learning and mostly develops gradually their background especially when dealing about other cultures. Many participants say that authentic digital materials not only introduce different traditions to them, but attracted their attentions to new lifestyles, accents, and ways of communication.

Students explained that watching videos and using online contents made things clearer to them by understand how people from different cultures express themselves and try to

communicate suiting various situations in life. This enabled them to be much more open minded and more respectful towards cultural differences.

Some learners also said that ICT tools helped them compare their own culture with other cultures, which increased their understanding of different people and societies.

3.1.1.4 Students' Confidence in Communication

The obtained results of the questionnaire showed that ICT tools help students feel more confident when speaking English. Many participants explained that technology-based activities make communication easier and less stressful as it teaches new realist ways of practicing the language.

Some students said that authentic materials fired out fear and stress as it showed how to avoid making mistakes because they since more familiar with real English conversations. Others explained that practicing English through digital tools improved their pronunciation and speaking abilities.

The findings also showed that many students feel more comfortable participating in classroom discussions and expressing themselves in English after using ICT tools and authentic materials.

3.1.1.5 Motivation and Classroom Participation

The results revealed that ICT-based instruction increases students' motivation and participation in learning English. Many participants said that technology made interesting lessons as they found in them fun and joy, which increased their courage to pay much more attention and participate more during class activities.

Students also explained that videos, online discussions, and multimedia activities made learning less stressful and gave excitement. Some learners mentioned that ICT tools encouraged them to practice English outside the classroom using applications, websites, and social media.

This helped students become more independent and more interested in improving their English skills by own efforts.

3.1.1.6 Overall Findings

Overall, the questionnaire findings showed that authentic supportive ICT-based instruction has a positive effect on students' English learning. Most participants had positive opinions about using ICT tools and authentic digital materials in EFL classes.

The results showed that technology helps students improve their communication skills, confidence, motivation, classroom participation, and understanding of other cultures. Students also confirmed that authentic materials help them understand real English and make learning more useful, enjoyable, and effective.

3.1.2 Summary of Teachers' Interview Findings

3.1.2.1 Professional Profiles and Teaching Flexibility

The findings about the participants show that the English Department includes teachers with different periods of experience. Some teachers are still beginners with only one year of teaching, while others have more than twelve years of experience. This variety helps provide different teaching ideas and methods. Experienced teachers contribute with classroom management skills and teaching experience while younger teachers often bring new ideas and greater use of technology. The findings also show that teachers are flexible because they teach different modules such as Oral Expression, ESP, and Lexical Semantics.

This means that teachers try to adapt to the department's needs and changing programs instead of focusing on only one specialization.

3.1.2.2 ICT Integration and Digital Skills

The findings show that most teachers consider ICT an important part of modern education, even though they do not all use it with the same frequency. Teachers mainly use technology for presentations, videos, and audiovisual materials during lessons. However, the use of ICT is not regular in all modules. It is used more in practical subjects like Oral Expression and less in theoretical subjects like Written Expression. The findings also reveal that teachers see ICT as useful not only for teaching lessons but also for helping students improve their digital skills and become more independent learners.

3.1.2.3 Authentic Materials and Their Use

Teachers generally define authentic materials as real-life resources used by native speakers in their daily lives, not materials specially designed for teaching in classrooms. These materials include podcasts, videos, articles, and other real-world content. Teachers believe that authentic materials help students learn about culture and understand real communication better than textbooks. They also expose learners to authentic accents and social situations. However, the findings show a difference between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice. Because of problems such as poor internet connection and lack of equipment, teachers cannot always use these materials regularly and sometimes return to traditional teaching materials.

3.1.2.4 Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

One important finding is that teachers strongly support the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). They believe that learning English should not only focus on exams but also on helping students use English to communicate with

people from different cultures, understand cultural differences, exchange ideas, and avoid misunderstandings during interactions. The findings show that technology alone cannot develop intercultural awareness. Teachers still play the most important role because they guide students, explain cultural differences, and encourage discussion and reflection. The results also suggest that ICC is necessary for students to communicate respectfully and effectively in online intercultural situations.

3.1.2.5 Institutional and Technical Challenges

Although teachers are motivated to use ICT and intercultural activities, they face many difficulties. The findings show that unstable internet access and the lack of digital tools are major problems at the university. Another important issue is the lack of training. Many teachers said they need more professional trainings on how to combine technology with intercultural teaching. In addition, searching for and preparing authentic digital materials takes a lot of time, which discourages some teachers from using them regularly.

3.1.2.6 Student Engagement and Intercultural Learning

The final findings show that ICT-based cultural activities generally increase students' motivation and participation in class. Students often enjoy these activities because they are interactive and interesting. However, students' engagement depends on both the topic and students' digital abilities. Teachers also expect students to communicate respectfully with people from other cultures. At the same time, they recognize that achieving this level of intercultural competence depends on students' personal readiness and previous cultural experiences.

3.2 Recommendations for the Integration of ICTs in the Teaching Process and Enhancing Students' Cultural Awareness

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be suggested to improve the integration of ICTs in the teaching process and enhance students' cultural awareness in EFL classrooms.

3.2.1 Increasing the Use of Authentic ICT-Based Materials

Teachers are encouraged to use authentic digital materials such as videos, podcasts, online articles, documentaries, blogs, and social media contents in their lessons. These materials help students see how English is really used in daily life and learn about different cultures; which improves both their language skills and cultural understanding.

3.2.2 Encouraging Intercultural Communication

Teachers should give students chances to communicate with people from different cultures through online platforms, virtual exchanges, video calls, and international group projects. These interactions can help students improve their intercultural communication skills and become more open to other cultures.

3.2.3 Providing Teacher Training in ICT Integration

Schools and educational institutions should organize training programs and workshops to help teachers improve their technology and teaching skills. Continuous training can help teachers use ICT tools more effectively and with more confidence in language teaching.

3.2.4 Improving Technological Infrastructure

Universities and schools should provide better technological resources such as stable internet access, computers, smart boards, projectors, and multimedia classrooms. Having access to technology is important for using ICTs successfully in the teaching process.

3.2.5 Promoting Student-Centered Learning

Teachers are encouraged to use student-centered approaches that include collaboration, discussion, problem-solving, and intercultural projects. ICT-based activities can help increase students' motivation, participation, and critical thinking skills.

3.2.6 Integrating Cultural Content into EFL Curricula

Curriculum designers should include more cultural topics and intercultural goals in EFL programs. Lessons should focus not only on grammar and vocabulary, but also on traditions, values, lifestyles, and communication styles from different cultures.

3.2.7 Encouraging Autonomous Learning Through ICT

Students should be encouraged to use ICT tools outside the classroom to improve their language and cultural knowledge. Watching English videos, listening to podcasts, reading online materials, and using educational platforms can help them learn independently.

3.2.8 Developing Critical Cultural Awareness

Teachers should encourage students to compare cultures in a respectful and thoughtful way. Discussing similarities and differences between cultures can help students avoid stereotypes and develop tolerance, respect, and intercultural awareness.

3.2.9 Supporting Collaborative Digital Activities

Group projects, online presentations, digital storytelling, and virtual discussions should be included in classroom activities. These activities can improve communication skills and provide meaningful intercultural learning experiences.

3.2.10 Conducting Further Research on ICT and Cultural Awareness

Future researchers are encouraged to study the long-term effects of using ICT on students' cultural awareness and their ability to communicate across cultures in different educational settings.

Conclusion

This chapter presents and discusses the main findings from students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews. The results show that using ICT and authentic materials helps improve students' intercultural communication skills in EFL classrooms. Both teachers and students agree that digital materials and ICT tools make learning more interesting, interactive, and meaningful.

The findings also show that ICT-based intercultural activities help students become more motivated, active, and open to other cultures. Teachers say that materials like videos, online resources, and social media give students real examples of culture and help improve their communication skills.

However, the study also found some challenges, such as limited technology, internet problems, and differences in students' participation. Despite these issues, the results overall show that using ICT and authentic materials in EFL teaching can positively improve students' cultural awareness and communication skills.

3.3 Study Limitations

During this study, several limitations were faced. One of the main problems was related to collecting data, especially the questionnaire and teachers' interviews. At first, the questionnaire was made using Google Forms and shared online with students and teachers. However, only a small number of responses were received.

Because of this, it was necessary to meet participants in person to ask them to fill in the questionnaire and take part in the interview. This took much time and efforts than expected and slowed down the data collection process. In total, it took about one month to collect enough responses.

Another limitation was that some teachers were not always available because of their busy schedules and teaching duties, which made it harder to arrange interviews. In addition, some participants gave very short answers, which reduced the amount of detailed information.

There was also a lack of technological resources, which made it impossible to carry out a pre-test and post-test with learners to better measure the effects of ICT use. These tests also needed enough time and organization; which was not possible within the time limits of the research.

Despite these limitations, the data collected was still useful and helped to achieve the goals of this study.

General Conclusion

This study focused on the role of ICT tools and authentic digital materials in developing intercultural communicative competence among second-year EFL students at Ahmed Zabana University-Relizane. The main aim of the research was to understand how the use of modern digital resources can support students in improving their intercultural communication skills in English.

To conduct this study, a mixed-method approach was used, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The data were collected through a questionnaire administered to students and an interview conducted with teachers. These research tools were chosen in order to obtain more complete and reliable information about the research problem. The study was carried out carefully with a selected population of second-year EFL students and English teachers, ensuring that the data reflected real classroom practices and experiences.

Throughout the research process, several challenges and barriers were encountered, such as limited access to ICT tools in some cases, time constraints, and difficulties in obtaining detailed responses from all participants. Despite these limitations, the research was conducted in a serious and systematic way in order to achieve meaningful results.

The findings of the study showed that ICT tools and authentic digital materials can play an important role in improving students' intercultural communicative competence. They help learners become more exposed to different cultures, more motivated, and more active in learning English.

However, this study also has some limitations, such as the small sample size and the focus on a single university context, which may limit the generalization of the results.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that this research represents only a small step in the larger “pyramid of knowledge” in this field. It contributes to existing studies, but it does not fully cover all aspects of the topic. Future researchers are encouraged to explore this area further and add more insights and evidence to enrich understanding of ICT use and intercultural communicative competence in EFL learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants

This questionnaire aims to investigate students' perceptions of authentic ICT-based instruction in enhancing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language learning.

All responses are confidential and used for academic research purposes only.

Key terms:

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

•Answer when necessary •

Section 1: Personal Information

Question1: Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

Question 2: Age:

☐ 18–20 ☐ 21–23 ☐ 24 or above

Question3: Years of learning English:

☐ Less than 5 yrs ☐ 5–8 yrs ☐ More than 8 yrs

Section 2: ICT Use in English language Learning

Question 1:• ICT tools are used in my English sessions

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Question 2: My teacher uses digital resources (videos, websites, presentations) to support learning.

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Question 3: ICTs allow me understand English lessons more effectively.

☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Section 3: Authentic Materials

Question 1: Authentic materials expose real English language use inside class-rooms

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

Question 2: ICTs enhance English language learning through real-life situations

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

Question 3: Online Authentic Materials provide cultural aspects of English-speaking communities

☐ To a very great extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all

Section 4: Intercultural Communicative Competence

Question 1: ICT-based learning improves the ability to communicate with people from different cultures

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Question 2: ICTs show frequent up-to-date cultural differences when using the English language

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Question 3: Feeling confident grows when interacting with people from other cultures in English

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Question 4: Intercultural awareness and communicative competence expand gradually via daily authentic materials

☐ Very much ☐ Much ☐ Moderately ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Section 5: Motivation and Attitudes

Question 1: ICT-based instruction motivates English language learning process

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Question 2: Learning various English subjects through ICTs makes language classes much more interesting.

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Question 3: ICTs encourage me to often explore other cultures independently and without help of anyone

☐ Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Partly ☐ Slightly ☐ Not at all

Section 6: Open-Ended Questions. Provide your own full answers**Question 1:** How do ICTs help you develop your intercultural communicative competence?

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.....

Question 2: What difficulties do you face when using ICTs in learning English topics both in and outside university?

.....

.....

Question 3: What suggestions would you give other learners to improve their ICT-based intercultural learning?

.....

Appendix 2: Teachers interview**Dear Teachers**

This interview aims to explore teachers' experiences in enhancing second year students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) using Authentic Supportive ICT-based instruction in EFL classrooms. All questions are for academic purposes and the responses will be strictly confidential.

Introductory Questions

- How long have you been teaching English at the university, Mr./Mrs./ Miss?
- Which subjects did you teach the learners of the English Department?

- Have you tried to often develop your learners' intercultural communicative competences?

Section 1: ICT Use in EFL Teaching

- Do you integrate ICT tools into your English teaching, Sir/Madam? Why or why not?
- What types of ICT tools or digital resources do you usually use?
- How often do you exploit ICT-based materials during instruction?

Section 2: Authentic Materials and Culture

- What do you perceive by authentic materials in EFL teaching?
- Do you target cultural contents through authentic digital materials (videos, websites, online texts)?
- How far do these materials help students understand cultural aspects of the English language?

Section 3: Intercultural Communicative Competence

- Is intercultural communicative competence important for learners?
- How does ICT-based instruction contribute to learners' communicative competence?
- Is learners' intercultural awareness easily improved through ICT use?

Section 4: Students' Engagement and Skills

- How do students respond to ICT-based intercultural activities?
- Are learners' engagement and motivation obvious and similar in all sessions?
- Is learners' communication expected to be appropriate with people from different cultures?

Section 5: Challenges and Constraints

- What are the challenges of ICTs integration in EFL teaching?
- Are there any serious institutional, technical, or pedagogical barriers?

Section 6: Suggestions and Future Perspectives

- What strategies do you suggest to improve ICT-based intercultural instruction?
- What would you recommend teachers for an effective ICC enhancement?
- Which administrative measures could support intercultural learning?