

Developing and assessing the relationship between intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity in the EFL classroom

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop and assess the relationship between intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity in EFL college students in a southern Saudi Arabian university. The researcher followed an experimental design involving pretesting and posttesting on one experimental group. Participants were 123 EFL college students who were voluntarily selected for this study by convenience. A supplementary advanced reading addendum was used to develop intercultural communication competence (ICC) and intercultural sensitivity (IS) in the participants for one semester. Two scales for assessing ICC and IS were used for collecting data. Findings of bivariate correlation analysis indicated that the attributes of both scales were significantly positively correlated. This indicated that the constructs of ICC and IS were significant factors that enabled participants in the study to raise their intercultural sensitivity and enhance their intercultural communicative competence. Conclusions indicated that the concepts of intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity suggest important constructs that enable language learners to engage in proper intercultural interactions.

Keywords: *intercultural communication; intercultural sensitivity; intercultural communication competence (development and assessment)*

Introduction

Communicative competence is the speaker's mastering of communicative skills when communicating in the target language. Hammer, et al. (2003) suggested that intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity are that important terms that refer to the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways. In fact, learning and acquiring intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity is a

continuous process which continues throughout a learner's lifetime. Aguilar (2010) indicates that cultural learning as an aspect of foreign language learning in this matter continues even after school and university, in fact, this process continues throughout one's whole life.

However, Deardorff (2011) states that terms of intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity vary according to the discipline of knowledge these terms are used in. For instance, Arévalo-Guerrero (2009) indicates how the influence of culture on language has recently received more attention in the foreign language teaching curriculum. However, differences in conversational styles across cultures are not yet clearly integrated into the language curriculum.

Learners sometimes discover that their interaction with native speakers is not successful or not appropriate, yet they are not often aware of the cultural explanations behind these misunderstandings. Arévalo-Guerrero (2009) believes that when practicing the foreign language, learning should include verbal communication such as conversational styles in addition to nonverbal communication such as gestures and body language which is behavior that adds to spoken or written language. Thus, both types of communication codes are present in any communication act. Awareness of differences in conversational styles and the skills to adapt accordingly, can contribute to the success of communication whereas, lack of awareness may lead to misunderstanding and a feeling of disappointment or confusion.

Fritz, et al. (2005) suggested that intercultural sensitivity is an overarching concept that covers intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural adroitness These three factors that comprise intercultural competence reflect the cognitive, affective and behavioral nature of intercultural competence (Yilmaz, et al., 2016). Chen and Young (2012) further explained that intercultural sensitivity is the ability of an individual to use knowledge about the world, others and oneself to understand and respect others in cross-cultural

communication settings and situations. Some researchers suggested that “intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural sensitivity and cross-culture adaptation” are used interchangeably” (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Reichard, et al., 2015; Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2017; Sinicrope, et al., 2007).

Albeit, it is essential to distinguish whether intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence are the same or different, and in which ways these two concepts impact on each other. In this respect, some researchers assume that intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity are interrelated with the latter being subsumed in the former (Ameli & Molaei, 2012; Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2017). At the same time, high intercultural sensitivity is linked with the probable experiencing of competent intercultural communication (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).

Of relevance, too, is Byram’s grounded model (1997) which views intercultural communication competence as a set of knowledge, attitudes, skills and political education which marks aspects of cognition, behaviour and emotion (Fernández & Pozzo, 2017). This concept views intercultural communication competence as an aspect of linguistic competence that is developed through nurturing cultural intelligence, intercultural social knowledge, communication abilities and multicultural and diversity understanding.

Ameli and Molaei (2012) asserted that intercultural sensitivity is among the main factors that influence successful communication. At the same time, intercultural competence is among the important requirements to conduct successful interactions with different people, and to improve human relationships (Coffey, Kamhawi, Fishwick, & Henderson, 2013). According to Chen and Starosta (1996), the embedded misperception of intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural communication competence, which are closely related to one another but different concepts, is the main cause of confusion on understanding these concepts.

The core point of intercultural sensitivity is personal aspiration of a person to comprehend and appreciate different cultures and cultural norms which are not the same as his or her own cultural norms (Chen & Starosta, 1997; 2000). However, intercultural communication competence refers to the abilities that enable individuals to conduct effective interactions in a multicultural environment and to narrate in different cultural perspectives (Bennett & Bennett, 2003). According to Marrone (2005), intercultural communication competence is the skill for conducting peaceful interactions with individuals from diverse cultures, and this ability helps individuals to find their right places in multicultural settings.

In this regard, too, Chi and Suthers (2015) focus on the achievement of intercultural communication competence and cultural information through the existence of close ties and collaborations among members of different cultures. The intercultural communication is a new concept which was introduced by Hall (1959), and so far many researchers have evaluated this concept from different perspectives. At the same time, besides the increased attentions to intercultural sensitivity concept in the recent decades, confusions relating to intercultural sensitivity have also increased during this time, and this concept is not broadly understood yet (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Therefore, this study is aimed to develop and assess the relationships between intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence as two interrelated issues that help EFL learners from to conduct successful interaction with native speakers of English and others from different cultures.

Methodology

This is an experimental study that employed a pretest, an intervention and a posttest design involving one experimental group.

Participants

The participants in this study were 123 students (90 males and 33 females) who were enrolled in the languages and

translation program in a public Saudi university at the time of the study. The participants were drawn by convenience sampling. The researcher collected the study data from the population of students based on availability.

Materials and Procedure

A supplementary material manuscript comprising reading articles that were specifically selected to enrich the participants' knowledge and awareness of ICC has been used as an enrichment addendum in an advanced reading course for the participants in the present study. Two sessions per week of 50 minutes each along one semester were delivered as supplementary teaching of reading in the LEP lab. The materials also included audio and video materials that were mashed up in the ICC tutorials with the aim of stimulating and awakening the participants' ICC. The tutorials were given during the second academic semester of the year 2017-2018 for twelve continuous weeks by three native speakers, a British EFL teacher, an American instructor and a South-African teacher. At the beginning of each tutorial, the researcher introduced the article and asked the participants to critically think and reflect on the topic presented. Then the participants were divided into collaborative learning groups and were required to silently read and discuss the questions provided at the beginning and end of each article. The articles pertained to different intercultural topics such as verbal communication styles and culture, diversity and cultural differences, cultural values, barriers to effective intercultural communication, social class and intercultural communication, how to relate to others in an e-world, different communication codes, discrimination and ethnicity, similarities and differences between people and how to improve IC. At the end of each tutorial, the students were asked to relate what they read, listened to or viewed and comprehended to their real-life experiences and situations in their medical field.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for purposes of the present study:

1. The Intercultural Communication Competence Survey by Aldosari & Mekheimer (2018)

The Intercultural Communication Competence Survey of Aldosari and Mekheimer (2016, in press) is made up of an introduction, demographic information and the main part which comprises 5 sections comprising 20 items on a five-point Likert scale. The final part is designed to seek written comments, if any. The five sections of the questionnaire are:

1. Motivation: 3 items
2. Self-knowledge: 4 items
3. Other-knowledge: 4 items
4. Mindfulness and Cognitive flexibility: 5 items
5. Tolerance for Uncertainty: 4 items

The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been confirmed in the validation study by Aldosari and Mekheimer (2016 in press) and in the present study.

2. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) of Chen and Starosta (2000)

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) of Chen and Starosta (2000) was used to assess intercultural sensitivity among the participants. The ISS questionnaire has 24 items and measures the level of intercultural sensitivity based on the Likert Scale with five options per item from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). This instrument assesses intercultural sensitivity under **five factors**, which are:

1. Interaction engagement
2. Interaction confidence
3. Respect for cultural differences
4. Interaction enjoyment, and
5. Interaction attentiveness.

Interaction engagement is the ability of interaction commitment, and the respect for cultural differences prevents from cultural bias and wrong judgment towards other cultures,

and enables individuals to be open-minded to others. Interaction confidence refers to the self-confidence of individuals when interacting with others. Interaction enjoyment indicates individuals' eagerness in involvement in interactions with others, and lastly interaction attentiveness shows the treatments and the ways that individuals behave when interacting with people from different backgrounds (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Kim, 2012).

Data analysis

The essential tests from IBM SPSS (Vers. 25) were applied to analyze the data from the two questionnaires used in this study. **Descriptive** tests were run to generate the frequencies and percentages. A **bivariate correlation** test was run to find out the probable correlations between the attributes of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence. A **paired samples t-test** was used to compare the mean scores of the attributes of the scales with each other.

Literature Review

Competence is knowledge in action as used by language learners/users whereas performance is how the speaker actually performs and speaks the language. Therefore, Hymes came up with the term communicative competence in the belief that not only language structure and linguistic competence was important but efficient language use was also necessary to obtain effective communication and comprehension between interlocutors. The historical development of ICC has evolved in the field of foreign language teaching for decades.

Aguilar (2010) indicates the beginning of ICC was the introduction and revision of different authors regarding models of competence. In this regard, Chomsky (1965) introduced the concept of "linguistic competence" which briefly explains the aim to be achieved by a speaker. Then a few years later, Hymes (1972) added that the recognition of when and how to use language in specific situations and contexts refers to a concept he called "communicative competence" (CC). In the 1980's, the idea was expanded and developed by Canale and Swain (1980).

Currently, ICC is based on the development of the learner on several “saviors” as Byram calls them.

Similarly, Celce-Murcia (2008) states that for around forty years, the term CC has been used widely to justify and explain communicative language teaching. The term CC started by Dell Hymes (1972), he coined the term communicative competence in response to Noam Chomsky’s theory of linguistic competence. To account for language acquisition and language use, Hymes (1972) believed that one also needs sociolinguistic competence in addition to linguistic competence.

From the earliest applied linguists to develop Hymes’ communicative competence model was Canale and Swain 1980. They added strategic competence to Hymes’ proposition of linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence. Then Canale (1983) added discourse competence to the model. Actional competence, the ability in comprehending and producing appropriate speech acts, was proposed by Celce-Murcia et al.

In the mid-nineties, which was believed to be a part of CC. Celce-Murcia still believed that there were some gaps, she proposed a model describing communicative competence and added formulaic competence. Formulaic competence is the fixed chunks of language used daily interactions.

Arévalo-Guerrero (2009) indicates that communicative competence and its application to FL teaching is not a recent matter. In addition, Aguilar (2010) elaborates that the connection between culture and attitude with foreign language teaching is not new. In fact, the concept of intercultural communication had appeared in the 1930s in connection to cross-cultural psychology. Then the concept was advanced when researchers realized in the postwar years that some aspects such as “organizational behavior, educational systems, civic studies” and psychology influenced the success of business, military and diplomatic personnel on settlements in foreign countries.

Thus, as years passed, cultural aspects have continued to gain importance and authors have been presenting models in introducing culture in the foreign language classroom. During the last three decades, CC in foreign language teaching had prevailed. However, some language teachers have become dissatisfied with functional language use and asked to supplement traditional acquisition of communication skills with cultural content. By time, the connection between CC and IC was developed. Since the mid-1990s, Michael Byram has broadly developed the applications and concept of ICC. Liu (2009) indicates that ICC in an EFL context is defined as the person's abilities to use the target language flexibly, effectively and appropriately in IC by negotiating meanings of the interlocutors in a particular communicative event.

In addition, Liu, et al. (2014) state that "culture is not instinctive or innate; culture is learned, communication and culture are inseparable." On the other hand, Aguilar (2008) believes that non-native teachers are preferred in developing the students' competence by connecting between their own culture and other cultures in addition to awakening their curiosity about differences in cultures. Hence, Aguilar (2010) emphasizes that the best teacher is not a native or non-native speaker, but one who helps students connect their culture to other cultures in addition to awakening the learners' curiosity about cultural differences and otherness. Alptekin (2002) states that bilinguals who are interculturally aware serve better than monolingual native speakers in instruction and instructional material should comprise international and local contexts which are related to the learners' lives.

Finally, Arévalo-Guerrero (2009) believes enhancing ICC can be through learning activities and discussions of cultural values, stereotypes and cultural misunderstanding. Discovering one's culture and identifying the differences between other cultures require certain levels of tolerance and willingness to reflect critically about prejudices and assumptions. This ability is referred to as intercultural sensitivity and it is in this light that we think it is integral to intercultural communication competence.

Results

Data analyses were performed to identify gains in intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity as measured by (a) Intercultural communicative competence in EFL College Students and (b) The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) of Chen and Starosta (2000).

Validity and Reliability

The sample consisted of 123 participants to investigate students' intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity in EFL college students. In the early stages of research on an assessment instrument, reliabilities of 0.7 or higher are considered sufficient for narrow constructs (Van DeVen & Ferry, 1980) As a result, the reliability of the constructs was measured at an aggregate level; the Cronbach alpha test was used on IBM SPSS 25 for Windows and the test results had good internal consistency with the alpha coefficients of 0.969 and 0.957, respectively for the surveys used in the present study.

1. The Intercultural Communication Competence Survey (Aldosari & Mekheimer, 2016):

In Motivation, Cronbach's alpha value was computed to check the reliability of the given responses, and it has been confirmed at 0.947. For self-knowledge, the reliability was also computed by a Cronbach's alpha value that has been confirmed at 0.970. For other-knowledge, Cronbach's alpha value has been confirmed at 0.975. For Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility, the alpha value has been confirmed at 0.978, while the Cronbach alpha value has been confirmed at 0.846 for Tolerance for Uncertainty. Overall, the Cronbach alpha value has been confirmed at 0.969 for all five factors. The method of measurement used has been endorsed, meaning that the scale used in this research is reliable since all values indicate a reliability co-efficient of above 0.70, which is an acceptable level of reliability.

Table (1): Correlation analysis of the Motivation factor items

| No | Motivation | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | I am curious to communicate in English with people from different cultures. | .967** | 0.000 | 0.947 |
| 2. | I like to speak English with foreigners who come to work in Saudi Arabia. | .940** | 0.000 | |
| 3. | I communicate with expatriates in Saudi Arabia in English because it is easier for me to understand them, make requests or ask for information, etc. when I speak in English. | .947** | 0.000 | |

Table (2): Correlation analysis between for the Self-Knowledge factor

| No | Self-Knowledge | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 4. | Learning English helps me understand and learn about English-speaking communities. | .966** | 0.000 | 0.970 |
| 5. | The courses I study in English language, literature, linguistics, etc. help me learn more about how native speakers of English think and behave. | .968** | 0.000 | |
| 6. | The English courses I take at the college develop my knowledge about the cultures, identities, and communication patterns of native speakers of English. | .958** | 0.000 | |
| 7. | Learning English through native speakers of the language helps develop my empathy with people from these countries. | .942** | | |

Table (3): Correlation analysis for the Other-Knowledge factor

| No | Other-knowledge | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 8. | I learn more about communication behaviors of native speakers of English, which contributes to my other-knowledge. | .967** | 0.000 | 0.975 |
| 9. | Listening to native speakers of English who are different from us in language and culture is a key component of developing my self-knowledge and my self-awareness about others' cultures. | .983** | 0.000 | |
| 10. | The most effective way to develop other-knowledge and awareness of other-culture is by direct and thoughtful encounters with native speakers in class and outside of the classroom. | .926** | 0.000 | |
| 11. | I learn English because it is an effective way to learn about others' cultures as I can read the news or watch movies in English, which can offer insights that are lost in translation. | .986** | 0.000 | |

Table (4): Correlation analysis for the Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility factor

| No | Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 12. | Linguistic competence in English helps me to later reflect on communication interactions with native speakers of English. | .986** | 0.000 | 0.978 |
| 13. | I can adapt my communication in English with non-speakers of Arabic based on my understanding of the other culture. | .982** | 0.000 | |
| 14. | When I fail to understand a communication due to its cultural particularity, I usually ask explanatory questions to my interlocutor(s). | .981** | 0.000 | |
| 15. | I should know more about others and myself to be able to reflect on and adapt my knowledge as I pass through new experiences. | .885** | 0.000 | |
| 16. | The English courses I take enrich my cultural knowledge of others and help me avoid forming stereotypes or prejudiced judgments about others. | .965** | 0.000 | |

Table (5): Correlation analysis for the Tolerance for Uncertainty factor

| No | Tolerance for Uncertainty | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 17. | As I learn English, I learn how to tolerate with discomfort in uncertain situations of communication with native speakers. | .982** | 0.000 | 0.846 |
| 18. | Whether communicating with someone of a different gender, race, or nationality, I often wonder what I should or should not do or say. | .989** | 0.000 | |
| 19. | Situations of uncertainty most often become clearer as I progress in communication with native speakers of English. | .983** | 0.000 | |
| 20. | The more I become worried or feel anxiety speaking English, the more likely I tend to leave a conversation or communicate in a less competent manner. | .985** | 0.000 | |

Table (6): Correlation analysis for The Intercultural Communication Competence Survey items

| Variables | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Motivation | .969** | .000 | 0.969 |
| Self-Knowledge | .974** | .000 | |
| Other-knowledge | .965** | .000 | |
| Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility | .971** | .000 | |
| Tolerance for Uncertainty | .264** | .003 | |

2. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) of Chen and Starosta (2000):

For the factor of interaction engagement, the Cronbach's alpha value has been confirmed at 0.947. For the factor of Respect for cultural differences, the reliability analysis of these questions, the Cronbach's alpha value has been confirmed at 0.970. For the factor of Interaction confidence, Cronbach's alpha value has been confirmed at 0.975. For Interaction enjoyment, the alpha value has been confirmed at 0.978. For Interaction attentiveness, the alpha value has been confirmed at 0.846. For all five factors, the alpha value has been confirmed at 0.969. This means that this measure used in the present study has been endorsed as a reliable scale, since all the Cronbach alpha values indicate a reliability co-efficient of above 0.70, which is an acceptable level of reliability.

Table (7): Correlation analysis for interaction engagement

| No | Interaction engagement | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. | .706** | 0.000 | 0.680 |
| 2. | I am open-minded to people from different cultures. | .673** | 0.000 | |
| 3. | I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts. | .589** | 0.000 | |
| 4. | I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction. | .467** | 0.000 | |
| 5. | I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons. | .515** | 0.000 | |
| 6. | I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues. | .460** | 0.000 | |
| 7. | I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me. | .684** | 0.000 | |

Table (8): Correlation analysis for students' respect for cultural differences

| No | Respect for cultural differences | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 8. | I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded. | .681** | 0.000 | 0.601 |
| 9. | I don't like to be with people from different cultures. | .630** | 0.000 | |
| 10. | I respect the values of people from different cultures. | .699** | 0.000 | |
| 11. | I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. | .674** | 0.000 | |
| 12. | I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures. | .405** | 0.000 | |
| 13. | I think my culture is better than other cultures. | .394** | 0.000 | |

Table (9): Correlation analysis for interaction confidence

| No | Interaction confidence | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 14. | I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures. | .950** | 0.000 | 0.958 |
| 15. | I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. | .909** | 0.000 | |
| 16. | I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures. | .918** | 0.000 | |
| 17. | I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures | .950** | 0.000 | |
| 18. | I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures. | .927** | 0.000 | |

Table (10): Correlation analysis for interaction enjoyment

| No | Interaction enjoyment | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 19. | I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures. | .833** | 0.000 | 0.737 |
| 20. | I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures. | .798** | 0.000 | |
| 21. | I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures. | .789** | 0.000 | |

Table (11): Correlation analysis for interaction attentiveness

| No | Interaction attentiveness | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 22. | I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures. | .943** | 0.000 | 0.961 |
| 23. | I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures. | .980** | 0.000 | |
| 24. | I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction. | .979** | 0.000 | |

Table (12): Correlation analysis for The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)

| Variables | Correlation | significant | Reliability |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Interaction engagement | .444** | .000 | 0.751 |
| Interaction confidence | .240** | .008 | |
| Respect for cultural differences | .793** | .000 | |
| Interaction enjoyment | .278** | .002 | |
| Interaction attentiveness | .756** | .000 | |

Bivariate Correlation between the ICC Survey and ISS

A bivariate correlation test was run to explore the correlations between the attributes of The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and intercultural competence of EFL students who were participants in the present study. All significant correlations were found between the attributes of the mentioned variables. There were positive correlations between all the attributes of The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and intercultural competence of EFL as is shown in the following table.

Table 13: Correlations between the attributes of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the Intercultural Communication Competence Scale

| | Interaction engagement | Interaction confidence | the respect for cultural differences | interaction enjoyment | interaction attentiveness | Motivation | Self-Knowledge | Other-knowledge | Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility | Tolerance for Uncertainty |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Interaction Engagement | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Interaction Confidence | .983** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| The Respect for Cultural Differences | .967** | .980** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Interaction Enjoyment | .953** | .972** | .965** | 1 | | | | | | |
| Interaction Attentiveness | .974** | .974** | .950** | .962** | 1 | | | | | |
| Motivation | .972** | .970** | .955** | .944** | .968** | 1 | | | | |
| Self-Knowledge | .941** | .943** | .911** | .927** | .956** | .956** | 1 | | | |
| Other-Knowledge | .956** | .958** | .926** | .963** | .964** | .955** | .966** | 1 | | |
| Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility | .966** | .952** | .910** | .928** | .964** | .959** | .965** | .974** | 1 | |
| Tolerance for Uncertainty | .975** | .976** | .955** | .958** | .967** | .970** | .949** | .955** | .950** | 1 |

T-test results

The two scales of Intercultural Communication Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity were administered before the participants were given the intervention in intercultural

communication and intercultural sensitivity development. The same scales were given three months after the intervention. Results were analyzed by paired t- tests. Paired t- tests were run on the scores on pretesting and posttesting values.

Results from the ICC Survey

Table 14 Intercultural communicative competence

| Factor | | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|--------|-------|----------------|----------|------------------------|
| Motivation | before | 4.51 | 1.691 | -36.871 | 0.000 |
| | after | 9.97 | 1.760 | | |
| Self-Knowledge | before | 6.19 | 2.410 | -50.142 | 0.000 |
| | after | 13.63 | 2.600 | | |
| Other-knowledge | before | 6.34 | 2.419 | -56.481 | 0.000 |
| | after | 14.07 | 2.633 | | |
| Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility | before | 7.17 | 2.660 | -368.617 | 0.000 |
| | after | 17.07 | 2.756 | | |
| Tolerance for Uncertainty | before | 8.57 | 2.319 | -70.597 | 0.000 |
| | after | 16.10 | 2.735 | | |
| Intercultural communicative competence | before | 32.78 | 9.111 | -88.756 | 0.000 |
| | after | 70.83 | 9.450 | | |

Data from the intercultural communicative competence scale were analyzed using a paired t-test to compare the dependent variables before and after the intervention in the same group. The mean responses of factor 1 "Motivation" on pretesting and posttesting were 4.51 ± 1.691 and 9.97 ± 1.760 , respectively. Statistical findings revealed highly significant differences at ($p < .05$), indicating that the participants' mean scores on the motivation factor were higher on posttesting as compared to pretesting as shown in Table 14 above. The mean scores on the self-knowledge section were 6.19 ± 2.410 and 13.63 ± 2.600 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. These findings revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) on posttesting, which further suggests that the participants' performance on the self-knowledge section were higher on posttesting compared to pretesting mean scores (See Table 14 above). The mean scores on the other-knowledge section were post 6.34 ± 2.419 and 14.07 ± 2.633 , on pretesting and posttesting respectively.

These statistical results showed highly significant differences ($p < .05$) between pretesting and posttesting (See Table 14). The mean scores on the Mindfulness and Flexibility section were 7.17 ± 2.660 and 17.07 ± 2.756 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively, indicating highly significant differences ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting (See Table 14). The mean scores on the Tolerance for Uncertainty were 8.57 ± 2.319 and 16.10 ± 2.735 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting (See Table 14). Finally, the mean scores on the Intercultural communicative competence (all sections) were 32.78 ± 9.111 and 70.83 ± 9.450 on pretesting and posttesting ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting (See Table 14). Figure 1 below shows a comparison of the performance of respondents on pretesting and posttesting, indicating that the performance of the participants on intercultural communicative competence improved after the intervention.

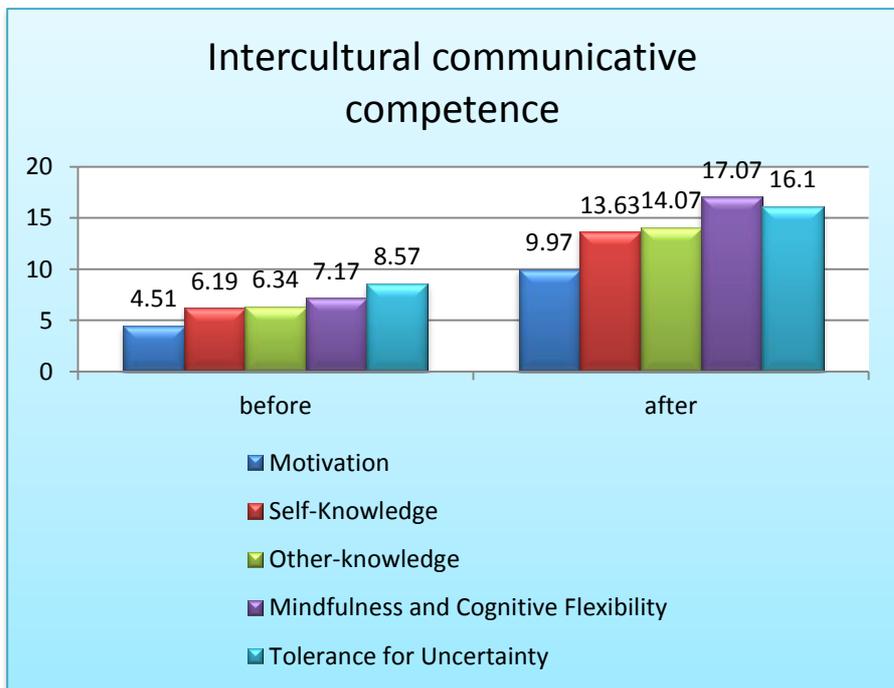


Figure 1: Performance on the ICC Survey on pretesting and posttesting

Results from the IS Survey

Table 15: Intercultural communicative competence

| Factor | | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|--------|--------|----------------|----------|------------------------|
| interaction engagement | before | 16.52 | 2.702 | -71.623 | 0.000 |
| | after | 29.19 | 3.498 | | |
| interaction confidence | before | 14.37 | 2.487 | -146.992 | 0.000 |
| | after | 25.98 | 2.681 | | |
| the respect for cultural differences | before | 11.70 | 3.445 | -23.106 | 0.000 |
| | after | 21.41 | 2.294 | | |
| interaction enjoyment | before | 6.89 | 1.810 | -71.073 | 0.000 |
| | after | 12.61 | 2.130 | | |
| interaction attentiveness | before | 7.24 | 1.438 | -118.276 | 0.000 |
| | after | 12.95 | 1.619 | | |
| The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) | before | 56.72 | 5.096 | -89.245 | 0.000 |
| | after | 102.14 | 6.664 | | |

The mean scores on the “interaction engagement” section were 16.52 ± 2.702 and 29.19 ± 3.498 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. These results showed highly significant differences ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting (See Table 15 above). The mean scores on the “interaction confidence” section were 14.37 ± 2.487 and 25.98 ± 2.681 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. These results revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting on this section. The mean scores on the “the respect for cultural differences” section were 11.7 ± 3.445 and 21.41 ± 2.294 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively, revealing significant differences ($p < .05$) to the advantage of posttesting on this section of the IS survey. The mean scores on the “interaction enjoyment” component of IS were 6.89 ± 2.660 and 17.07 ± 2.756 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. This shows statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) to the advantage of pretesting. The mean scores on the “interaction attentiveness” section were 7.24 ± 1.438 and 12.95 ± 1.619 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. These statistical results were found to

be highly significant at the $p < .05$ to the advantage of posttesting. The mean scores on the “The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) were 56.72 ± 5.096 and 102.14 ± 6.664 on pretesting and posttesting, respectively. These statistical results were found to be highly significant at the $p < .05$, suggesting that the performance on the ISS improved after the intervention. Figure 2 below shows these findings diagrammatically.

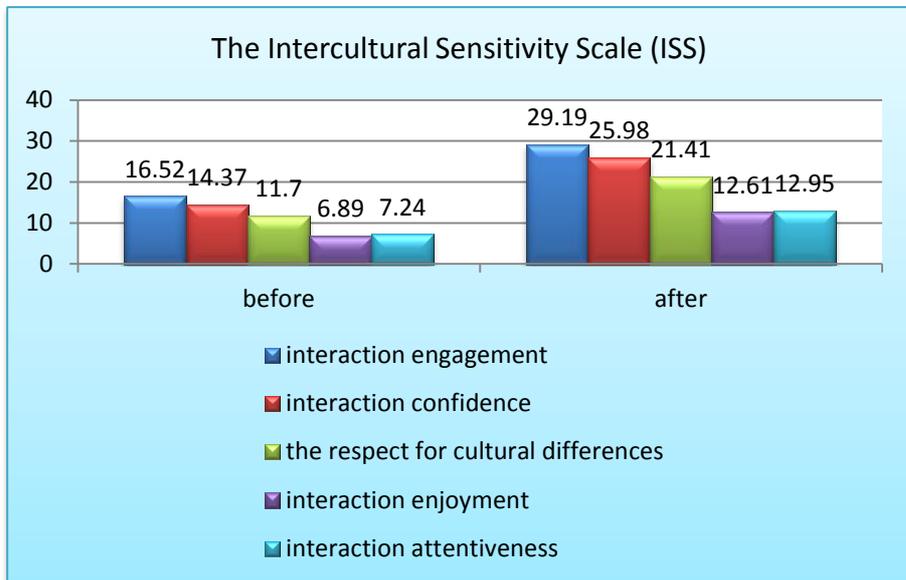


Figure 2: Performance on the ISS on pretesting and posttesting

Discussion

Intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity are basic elements of linguistic communication that allow language users belonging to different cultures to share information and experiences, and to create and maintain interpersonal and sociocultural relationships wherever they meet. Therefore, the development of intercultural communication in the foreign language curriculum has been recognized as crucial for enabling foreign language learners to establish effective cross-cultural relationships (Beard, Schwieger, and Surendran, 2008; Fernández & Pozzo, 2017; Mitchell, 2018; Malazonia, Maglakelidze, Chiabrishvili, & Gakheladze, 2017). This

research, diverse as it is, showed that both intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity are significant factors that help language learners/users to get involved in effective intercultural interactions and that both factors are bivariately correlated. This finding is commensurate with prior research (e.g., Chen and Starosta, 1996; Kim and McKay-Semmler, 2013). Despite the fact that intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity are diligently related to each other as threads woven in a tapestry, they are still discrepant constructs. Intercultural communication competence primarily describe the linguistic, paralinguistic and socio-pragmatic skills of individuals that allow them to interact properly, whereas intercultural sensitivity refers to individuals' perceptions of the cultural differences among individuals and their personal readiness to participate in smooth communicative exchanges with people of different cultures. The findings this study revealed showed that intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity are bivariately correlated, though they are different constructs that perform different functions and are manifested in discrepant perceptions. In other words, the results from this study corroborate the existence of positive correlations between these two main elements of intercultural communication as assessed by the two survey employed for this research. These findings are congruent with prior research (Ameli & Molaei, 2012; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2017).

Findings from the present study also showed that foreign language teachers can develop and nurture intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity through incorporating special curricular or extracurricular components in the foreign language curriculum. The use of a program for developing intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity helped the participants in the study to develop these competences significantly beyond the baseline mean scores as compared by a paired t-test was run for mean scores on pretesting and posttesting on the Intercultural Communication Competence Scale (mean = 32.78± 9.111, $p < .05$

on pretesting; t -value = 70.83 ± 9.450 , $p < .05$ on posttesting). In the same fashion, for the The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), similar findings were reached (mean = 56.72 ± 5.096 , $p < .05$; mean = 102.14 ± 6.664 , $p < .05$ on posttesting). These findings also corroborate prior research findings (Beard, et al, 2008), suggesting the need to incorporate an intercultural competence component in the foreign language curriculum.

A sufficient amount of intercultural sensitivity will be developed in the presence of a sufficient intercultural communication competence. The relation between both constructs is mutually dependent. The findings from the present study confirmed the existence of positive correlations between these two main aspects of intercultural communication. These findings are consistent with prior research, too (Ameli and Molaei, (2012), suggesting that intercultural sensitivity is an elemental requirement for maintaining productive and effective intercultural communication. In addition, findings of the present study also demonstrate that intercultural sensitivity is crucially required in sociolinguistic interactions among language users from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The quantitative findings from the two questionnaires revealed higher mean scores for all of the main attributes of intercultural sensitivity and the attributes for intercultural communication competence which means that both are mutually dependent constructs.

Conclusion

The findings of the research indicated that intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity can be developed when the basic knowledge, skills, motivation, awareness, behaviors and attitudes towards intercultural competence are emphasized in the foreign language curriculum. Therefore, foreign language curriculum should be integrated in cultural education about the differences and similarities between the native cultures of the FL learners and the target cultures of the foreign language at issue. This integration of cultural awareness materials into the foreign language curriculum can be

done formally or informally by selecting resources, materials and teaching and learning strategies that emphasize intercultural understanding. It is also necessary to develop culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive audio and video materials to be specifically designed for increasing learners' awareness about intercultural relationships in the target culture/language.

Further research to be done on the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence is in high demand to clarify the nuances between the two concepts. In addition, a more maturely developed ICC development program for medical students is needed to identify the impact of developing ICC through integrating cultural topics in the FL curriculum.

Further research is recommended to examine the different aspects of ICC that are related to motivation, sociocultural and cognitive behavioral aspects of ICC. Future research is also needed to examine, for example, the effects of ICC development materials selected for the class and whether there is a correlation between the teachers' intercultural communicative competence, and how language educators integrate culture in their FL teaching. More research is also needed to tap into the attitudes, motivation and emotions that result from an intercultural approach to teaching FL.

Future research is needed, therefore, to tap into formal versus informal intercultural education in the foreign language classroom. Research also needs to explore students' attitudes towards intercultural competence development courses and teaching/learning strategies. More research is also needed to examine the effect of intercultural education on the FL students' perceptions of cultural diversity in the FL classroom.

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