



An Intercultural Approach-Based Program for
Developing Al-Asun Sophomores' Informative
Speaking Skills and Their Awareness
of English as a Language of Diplomacy

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Abstract

The study aimed at developing Al-Alsun Sophomores' informative speaking skills as well as their awareness of English as a Language of diplomacy by using an intercultural-based program which was conducted over forty second level students who were randomly selected from Hurghada Faculty of Al-Alsun (Languages). The study followed the one-group quasi-experimental design with its pre and post-testing procedure. It utilized these instruments and materials: an informative speaking skills questionnaire, an informative speaking test, an informative speaking rubric, English for Diplomacy Purposes awareness scale, and a program based on the intercultural approach. The instruments and materials of the study were validated in terms of content validity and the reliability. The informative speaking skills included: demonstration, definition, description, and explanation. English as a language for diplomacy purposes awareness scale included different items that aim to identify participants' awareness of these items using the Likert scale. Results of the test and the scale showed significant mean differences between the participants in the pre and post-testing procedures favoring the post-testing. They also confirmed that there were significant mean differences between the participants in both their informative speaking skills and their awareness of English as a language of diplomacy due to the program of the study favoring the post-testing. Recommendations of the study included using the intercultural approach for developing students' speaking and compiling ESP courses for developing diplomacy-oriented language skills; running further research on using the intercultural approach over different types of participants.

Keywords

Intercultural Approach - Informative Speaking – Diplomacy

برنامج قائم علي المدخل البين ثقافي لتنمية مهارات التحدث الإخبارية باللغة الإنجليزية
والوعي بها كلفة للدبلوماسية لدي طلاب المستوى الثاني بكلية الألسن

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المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة إلي تنمية مهارات التحدث الإخبارية لدي طلاب المستوى الثاني بكلية الألسن وكذلك وعيهم باللغة الإنجليزية كلفة للدبلوماسية. واستخدمت الدراسة برنامجاً قائماً علي المدخل البين ثقافي، والذي تم تطبيقه علي عينة قوامها 40 طالباً بالمستوي الثاني بكلية التربية بالگردقة حيث تم اختيارهم عشوائياً. واتبعت الدراسة التصميم شبه التجريبي ذا المجموعة الواحدة باختباريه القبلي، والبعدي. وقد استخدمت الدراسة الأدوات والمواد التالية (من تصميم الباحث) : استمارة مهارات التحدث الإخبارية، اختبار مهارات التحدث الإخبارية، بطاقة ملاحظة مهارات التحدث الإخبارية، مقياس الوعي باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الدبلوماسية، وبرنامج قائم علي المدخل البين ثقافي. تم التحقق من صدق وثبات أدوات ومواد الدراسة. وقد شملت مهارات التحدث الإخبارية كلا من التوضيح والتعريف والوصف والتبرير. وقد اشتمل مقياس الوعي علي عبارات هدفت إلي تحديد مدي معرفة، ووعي الطلاب بهذه الجوانب من خلال مقياس ليكرت المتدرج. توصلت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الاختبار والمقياس إلي فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المشاركين في الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي لصالح الاختبار البعدي. وأشارت النتائج إلي وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المشاركين في كلٍ من مهارات التحدث الإخبارية ووعيهم باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة للأغراض الدبلوماسية بسبب استخدام برنامج الدراسة لصالح الاختبار البعدي. وشملت توصيات الدراسة استخدام البرنامج القائم علي المدخل البين ثقافي لتنمية مهارات التحدث لدي الطلاب وتصميم مقررات للغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة لتنمية مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الدبلوماسية. كما توصي الدراسة بإجراء بحوث مستقبلية باستخدام المدخل البين ثقافي علي عينات أخرى من المشاركين.

الكلمات المفتاحية المدخل البين ثقافي - التحدث الإخباري - الدبلوماسية

Introduction

Language coins communication through different purposes, contexts, forms, and functions. These purposes include different social interactions such as academic, entertainment, and cultural preservation. The channels of language communication are its four skills which are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in addition to vocabulary and grammar. For better cultural and intercultural communication, students should develop their communicative competencies during their learning cycle communicatively. These notions are guided by a paradigm shift in ELT from teaching literature separately to teaching language communicatively through culture. Effective use of culture-oriented language teaching promotes effective communication.

A key performative skill that is crucial for communication performance and the communicative competence of the students is speaking. This is due to the different purposes that the speaking skill adds, which include: expressing thoughts, building relationships, career advancement, public speaking, leadership, and personal growth (Marzouq, 2012; Hashem, 2021; Krishnan, 2021). Therefore, Speaking is looked upon as an indispensable vehicle of human communication and a major skill to be developed in EFL classes. Sirisrimangkorn (2021) stressed the view that speaking skill is a crucial tool for students to deliver a message and to communicate for different purposes effectively. In his study, Sirisrimangkorn examined the effects of project-based learning using presentation on EFL students' speaking skills and their communicative competence. The study revealed that using interactive approaches such as project-based learning can enhance the speaking skills of the students. The study also emphasized that students' communicative competence can be developed through different strategies and approaches that target set skills and sub-skills like presentations, role playing, discussions, debates etc. These approaches enhance various strategies adopted by the students themselves to involve into discussions.

Due to the growing standards of the teaching profession, preparing EFL students to speak proper English that communicates target information is a key aim in any EFL class. Speaking as a performative skill has different purposes such as to describe, inform and criticize in different communicative settings. Brown (2004) identified five aspects of speaking skills that should be developed in speaking classes:

Vocabulary: it takes place at an early stage of learning a foreign language. Further, it is crucial for combining sentences and conveying ideas during communication. *Grammar* is the baseline that governs the structure of language through blocks of correct usage. *Fluency* refers to the flow of communication in an easy way. *Comprehension* refers to the correct understanding between the speaker and the listener in a communicative event. *Pronunciation* refers to how and where phonemes are uttered correctly. These five aspects should form the content of any speaking-directed program for EFL learners.

In this view, Gohar (2018) stated that "speaking is considered as an interactive process of constructing meaning that includes producing, receiving and processing information; it is an essential part of foreign or second language learning and teaching" (p.58). Further, Hashem (2021) utilized a different interactive strategy (the Six Thinking Hats) for developing English language speaking skills and attitudes toward it among EFL general diploma students. Participants of the study were one experimental group, thirty-two students. It utilized 3 main instruments: a speaking sub-skills checklist, a speaking test, and an attitudes scale. Results showed that the post-performance of the experimental group significantly exceeded its pre-performance. The study recommended using communicative strategies to develop the speaking skills of EFL learners. These studies highlight the value of effective speaking skills for better communication between students.

English for diplomacy is a growing course type in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) field. It deals with the use of the English language for effective communication between different cultures and backgrounds through demonstrating respect, understanding, and respecting values. English as a language for diplomacy can play a great role in citizenship and communication among nations. In this view, Bohatyrets (2022) stresses that "English as a Foreign Language classroom (EFL) can considerably contribute to a culturally versatile development of global citizenship education" (p.3). The role of the English language as a soft power in EFL classes can frame intercultural understanding between its speakers, therefore, intercultural understanding and sustainability.

Studying English for diplomatic purposes in EFL classes refers to class practices and activities that integrate English language skills for

better use and understanding of diplomacy-related vocabulary, expressions, and exercises. In their study, Kudachkina & Davletshina (2009) examined diplomatic discourse as an aspect of teaching English for specific purposes (ESP). They stressed the importance of training EFL students in English for diplomatic purposes. They also recommended integrating both the functional and interdisciplinary approaches for the instruction of English for diplomatic purposes. Thus, since students at the faculties of languages may pursue careers in different diplomatic contexts, they should be aware of how and why to use English for diplomatic purposes.

Albostan (2012) identified some of the language needs of diplomats speaking in English at the in-service level. The study highlighted the importance of English for occupational purposes and its role in preparing diplomats for proficiency in English. Results showed that English is the predominantly used foreign language in Diplomacy. English is used for a variety of professional and social life of the diplomats. Results also showed that pronunciation, writing, and grammar are less problematic skills than reading, speaking, listening skills, and English vocabulary. English for diplomacy is crucial for students and professionals pursuing their careers in diplomacy which is coined by interculturalism.

In TEFL literature, the intercultural approach to language teaching evolved in 1980 due to the paradigm shift from focusing on teaching literature to teaching language communicatively through culture. For instance, Abdalla (2017) stressed that teaching language is not through linguistic approaches only, rather, it should be coined with culture and this highlights the value of teaching through an intercultural approach. The intercultural approach highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences and using them as a resource in language teaching. In an age of globalization, EFL students in the faculties of languages are in need to master their English for future work using intercultural approach-based practices.

Within the intercultural approach practice, the teacher acts as a facilitator to target culture acquisition. This requires class discussions, debates, speaking activities, and creating opportunities for students to engage in intercultural communication. Different studies emphasized the inseparability between language and culture (e.g. Alptekin, 2002;

Kudachkina & Davletshina, 2009; Al Hasnan, 2015). In this view, Alptekin (2002) concluded that " A new notion of communicative competence is needed, one which recognizes English as a world language. This would encompass local and international contexts as settings of language use, involve native–nonnative and nonnative–nonnative discourse participants, and take as pedagogic models successful bilinguals with intercultural insights and knowledge" (p.1). This approach can enhance participants' speaking and interaction skills in an intercultural context.

Principles of intercultural approach to language teaching can be grouped in five broad principles (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003). First is "Active Construction" which means that students should build their schemata about culture during their course of learning. The second is "Making Connections" which implies connecting their existing culture, language, knowledge, and their stimuli. Third is "Social Interaction", which refers to peers' experiences and group discussions. Fourth is " Reflection" which refers to positive or negative reflection on culture-related experiences. The fifth is "Responsibility" which refers to developing perspectives and values about the culture of others. EFL classes should consider these principles during an intercultural approach-based program of teaching.

Accordingly, the present study sought to develop Al Alsun sophomores' English informative skills and awareness of using English for diplomacy purposes by using a proposed program based on the intercultural approach.

Problem of the study and its context

Language has a main communicative purpose, which is mutual understanding using different language skills. This understanding can happen through realizing one's own culture and the culture of the other. Literature in TEFL confirmed the communicative role of language in mutual and cultural understanding (Alptekin, 2002; Agudelo, 2007; Kudachkina & Davletshina, 2009; Al Hasnan, 2015). English for diplomacy purposes is a fairly new line in the literature that coins English for Occupational Purposes field. According to Albostan (2012), diplomacy is one of the professions in which English is used in handling international relations, doing office work, and negotiating.

Based on the researcher's experience in teaching English language courses for second-level students at Hurghada Faculty of Languages, he observed that students lack key speaking skills that include how to describe, define or comment on an event, person, or entity. During the researcher's participation in students' oral exams, he also noticed that they face challenges in organizing their speeches, responding properly to a descriptive question, or adding information about an excerpt.

Thus, the problem of the study was stated in the need to develop sophomore students' informative speaking skills (such as definition, description, demonstration, and explanation). In addition, there was also a need to assess their awareness of using English for diplomatic purposes, which is part of their study in English as a second language in the Faculty of I Alsun (Languages).

Objectives of the study

The study aims at the following:

1. Identifying the informative speaking skills that are needed for the students at the Faculties of AL Alsun (Languages).
2. Designing an English language program based on the intercultural approach for the students at the Faculties of AL Alsun (Languages).
3. Identifying the effect of a program based on the intercultural approach on the informative speaking skills at the faculties of languages (Al-Alsun).
4. Identifying the effect of a program based on the intercultural approach on the awareness of the participants of English as a language of diplomacy.

Significance of the study

The current study is thought to be significant for the following:

1. It proposes an English language program that may develop the speaking skills of the sophomores at the faculties of languages.
2. It assesses the awareness of English as a language of diplomacy among students of English at the faculties of languages.)
3. It adds to the theory of TEFL research using the intercultural approach in a different EFL context in Egypt.

4. The study can be useful for course designers as it proposes a program with different materials and tests based on the intercultural approach.
5. The proposed program of the study can be used as supplementary material for students studying English as a foreign language at the faculties of languages.
6. The program can be used in the in-service training context as it provides English for Diplomacy course that develops the speaking skills of the students.

Questions of the study

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the informative speaking skills that are needed for sophomore students at the Faculties of Al Alsun (Languages)?
2. What is the effect of the program based on the intercultural approach on developing participants' inferential reading skills?
3. What is the effect of the program on developing participants' awareness of English as a language of diplomacy?

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There would be no statistically significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post-testing of informative speaking skills.
2. There would be no statistically significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post-testing of their awareness of English as a language for diplomacy.

Delimitations of the study:

1. Specialization: Non-English specialized (Russian, German, and Italian Departments) who study the course "English as a Foreign Language".
3. Place: Hurghada Faculty of Al Alsun (Languages), South Valley University.
4. Academic delimits: the independent variable is the intercultural approach, while the dependent variables are informative speaking skills and awareness of English as a language of Diplomacy.

5. Duration of treatment: the study lasted for one semester (Academic year 2022 - 2023).

Definition of Terms:

Some terms were repeatedly used in the study. The definition of these is presented below:

A. The Intercultural Approach

The intercultural approach was early introduced to EFL literature in 1986 by the Council of Europe and has been linguistically formulated to mean "The prefix inter- its full meaning, interaction, exchange, elimination of barriers, and reciprocity. If the term "culture" implies recognition of the values, ways of life, and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relations with others and in their conception of the world". Another definition was by Kerzil and Vinsonneau (2004) the intercultural approach is " both a mental and a behavioral attitude of the teacher that consists of listening to the sociocultural experiences of children; taking these experiences into account in the pedagogy of learning; promoting the multifaceted expression of these socio- cultural experiences through the correct and enriched use of the language and differences" (p.106).

B. Informative Speaking Skills

Schreiber (2011) early described informative speaking as sharing knowledge, ideas, or information in a clear, concise, and engaging manner with the listener. He further stated that this genre of public speaking has a different aim, which is not to persuade the audience, but rather to provide them with new knowledge on a topic. It was defined differently by (Hollingsworth et al., 2021) to mean "a speech based entirely and exclusively on facts; an informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that every person engages in every day in some form or another" (p. 344). Informative speaking or speech conveys describing persons, things and events.

C. English as a Language of Diplomacy

Kornprobst (2017) defines using language for diplomacy as "the strategic use of language and communication in international relations to achieve diplomatic objectives" (p. 1). It can be procedurally defined as a

genre of English for Specific Purposes that denotes diplomacy-oriented purposes.

Method

This section deals with the design of the study, participants, instruments, and procedures. In addition, it describes the program as well as the treatment.

Design

This study followed the one-group quasi-experimental design with its pre and post-testing procedure. It was delimited to the following delimits:

Participants

Participants of the study were 40 students; they were enrolled at level two (sophomores) at Hurghada Faculty of Al Alsun (Languages). They were selected from non-English specialized departments (German- Italian-Russian). Participants were adjusted according to specialization, course enrolment, and level of study.

Instruments and Materials

The study utilized the following five instruments and materials which were designed by the researcher and were validated in terms of content validity and reliability as follows:

1. A needs assessment questionnaire. It was designed to identify participants' concepts, needs, and expectations from the English for Diplomacy Purposes course. The questionnaire was submitted to a jury of college staff members to state how far it identifies participants' concepts, needs, and expectations from the English for Diplomacy Purposes course (Refer to Appendix). Based on the jury members' remarks, modifications, items of questionable validity were revised or deleted; in addition, other new items were added.
2. Informative speaking skills checklist. It aimed to identify the informative speaking skills that are needed for the participants. The questionnaire was submitted the jury (Refer to Appendix) to state how far it identifies the informative speaking skills that are needed for the participants, and to make the necessary modifications to the items. The researcher adapted the questionnaire according to the comments of the jury and their recommendations.

3. An informative speaking test. It aimed to assess participants' informative speaking skills. The test was submitted to the jury to state how far they measure the participants' informative speaking skills and make the necessary modifications (Refer to Appendix). Based on the jury members' remarks, items of questionable validity were revised or deleted. In addition, other new items were added. Test instructions, time, answer sheet and key answer were determined in the light of the jury comments. The inter-rater method was used to determine the test reliability. To ensure more rating accuracy, each rater scored the test sheets independently, using the same rating rubric. Pearson Correlation coefficient (0.87) was also calculated between the scores of the two raters and proved the reliability of the test as the obtained value is a high reliability value.
4. An informative speaking rubric. It was used to score the participants' performance in the informative speaking test. Content validity of the rubric was run by a jury of experts who added their comments and suggestions to reach to the final version of the rubric. The rubric (see appendix) included these areas: speaking clearly – vocabulary – content – enthusiasm – relevance); the performance indicators were categorized in 4 main areas.
5. An English as a language for diplomacy purposes awareness scale. It was used to identify participants' awareness of English use for diplomacy purposes. The scale was also validated by the jury and the reliability value was statistically calculated ($r = 0.79$), which indicates the reliability of the scale.
6. Intercultural approach-based program. The program was used to develop participants' informative speaking and awareness of English for diplomacy. The program was also validated by a jury of TEFL members and educational experts. Comments and suggestions of the jury were adopted and were added in the final version of the program. The final form of the program included the following six themes (Types of informative speech – Speaking clearly – Phrases and structures – Key concepts – Readings in Diplomacy- Diplomacy vocabulary dictionary).

Theoretical Framework

The following review discusses the theory and research literature about three main variables: informative speaking skills, intercultural approach, and English for diplomacy purposes. It aims to review the variables of the study within literature and pertinent research to highlight the theory and practice generated from this study.

The literature related to speaking skills instruction in the EFL context included different studies at the pre-university level, university level, and post-graduate levels. These studies utilized various approaches, strategies, and techniques for developing speaking skills, speaking competence, or communicative competence as a whole (e.g El-Bassuouny, 2010; Marzouq, 2012; El-Sawy, 2013; Gohar, 2018; Bohari, 2019; Hashem, 2021; Krishnan, 2021). For instance, Bohari (2019) examined the effect of small group discussions on improving speaking skills among seventh-grade students. Over a group of 28 students and using the one-group design, the study showed the positive impact of discussion strategy on developing speaking skills. Developing the speaking skills of the students relies on the type of targeted sub-skills and the level of the students.

Similarly, El Sawy (2013) stressed that speaking is a neglected skill in many Egyptian classes. She recommended using authentic tasks for developing the communication and speaking skills of the students. At the secondary level too, a study by El-Bassuouny (2010) revealed that secondary-stage students face challenges in speaking skills. She utilized *Readers Theatre* in overcoming this problem which resulted in significant differences in participants' speaking skills. Different studies confirm the need to use authentic approaches to develop EFL students' speaking and communicative skills. These studies highlight the importance of developing students' speaking skills for better communication. At the university level, a study was run by Hu (2012) that aimed at developing first-year students' speaking skills using task-based learning. The study highlighted the issue of speaking skills lack of materials, and practices at the university level. It also confirmed the need to enhance university students' speaking skills for better communicative competence. The results of the study came up with a workbook as material for developing the speaking skills of first-year university students to overcome their speaking challenges.

Challenges of speaking skills instruction in the EFL context have been a subject of different studies (e.g. Al Hosni, 2014; Tuan & Mai, 2015; Al-Tamimi, Abdullah & Bin-Hady, 2020). For instance, Al-Tamimi, Abdullah & Bin-Hady (2020) examined Yemeni EFL students' perceived problems with speaking and enhancing their speaking performance. The study utilized a different authentic strategy, which is a task-based instruction strategy. The study was run at the university level over a group of 20 first-year college students at Socotra Faculty of Education using the one-group quasi-experimental design. The findings of the study showed that students face many speaking-oriented challenges such as knowledge of phonology, vocabulary, grammar, and problems of oral interaction, as well as psychology-related problems. The study also revealed that using interactive approaches such as task-based instruction can develop students' speaking skills and can foster the instruction of speaking.

Informative speaking (Schreiber, 2011) refers to sharing knowledge, ideas, or information in a clear, concise, and engaging manner with the listener. This genre of public speaking has a different aim, which is not to persuade the audience, but rather to provide them with new knowledge on a topic. Schreiber determined four functions for informative speaking: providing knowledge, shaping perceptions, articulating alternatives, and allowing us to survive and evolve. She further assured the four types of informative speech: definitional, descriptive, explanatory, and demonstration. It was defined differently by (Hollingsworth et al., 2021) to mean "a speech based entirely and exclusively on facts; an informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that every person engages in every day in some form or another" (p. 344). There is a need to develop the different types of informative speaking skills for better public speaking communication and better EFL classes practice.

Crozet & Liddicoat (2000) expressed the view that intercultural approaches to language teaching have established four main activities as key common grounds for language and culture acquisition in EFL classes. The first core is an acquisition of different cultures; the second is comparing these cultures, while the third is exploring cultures in which the concept of culture is clearly understood. The fourth type is finding one's own 'third place' between cultures. These four types form the

basic framework of a program based on intercultural approaches for developing intercultural awareness of EFL students.

Developing speaking skills using the intercultural model at the university level in Indonesia was examined in a study by Rokhayati (2018). Although the study aimed to develop speaking skills in general it could prove that using an intercultural approach-based model can develop the speaking skills of EFL students. The study highlighted identity and awareness of one's culture as a step to developing an awareness of foreign cultures. It also assured that the intercultural approach stresses the importance of reflection on the comparison of L1 and L2 cultures. The study stressed the positive impact of intercultural awareness on foreign language learning.

As to English language learning, it can be for Academic Purposes EAP or Specific Purposes ESP which includes English for Diplomatic purposes. In a changing world of globalization-oriented issues, there is a need to train students to be aware of the diplomatic use of language especially in the faculties of languages in Egypt. Kornprobst (2017) defines using language for diplomacy as "the strategic use of language and communication in international relations to achieve diplomatic objectives" (p. 1). He further stressed the value of language for diplomacy in cross-cultural and mutual understanding between nations. He further explained the challenges related to language diplomacy integration, such as linguistic challenges, culture-related challenges, and miscommunication. In this view, Loschky (2011) stressed the value of context in using the English language for diplomacy as well as the role of language in international relations. Language and knowledge about language roles in particular are crucial learning competencies that should be developed in EFL classes.

Using English as a language for diplomacy purposes is one of the distinctive courses in intercultural communication settings. This is due to the coined linguistic and culture-oriented practices related to this type of language course. For instance, Nick (2002) discussed the various ways to communicate in world diplomacy outside the classroom where languages are different; first is when interlocutors speak the language of another, using neutral language, using interpreters, or using a different artificial language such as Esperanto. He stated that language is not a simple tool, but it is often the core of the diplomatic profession. Similarly, the evolving discipline of English for diplomacy purposes was discussed by

Brimelo (2008) stating that the term language for diplomacy denotes the language used by the representatives of a certain government or country. English has become the first commonly represented language of world diplomacy. Sutaryo, Komari & Hassan (2021) stressed the political, economic, and cultural value of the language aligned with its linguistic representations that convey ideas, concepts, and feelings.

In his study, Nazarov (2022) analyzed how English has become the official language of international diplomacy and international affairs. He pointed out that using English as a language for international diplomacy is not by chance but rather due to the economic and political position of its speakers. Further, communicating with English for diplomatic purposes adds more than the simple usage of a language for ordinary human communication. Besides, only English is the only language in which 85 % of scientific research and articles are published. Thus, in the EFL context, students need to be aware of using English for diplomacy purposes.

Kirkpatrick, Subhan & Walkinshaw (2016) examined English as a lingua franca in East and Southeast Asia to pursue implications for diplomatic and intercultural communication. The study utilized data drawn from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), a million-word corpus of naturally occurring spoken English as used as a lingua franca between Asian multilingual. These data were analyzed to answer the question of how Asians use English to discuss topics of mutual interest and importance. Results showed the variety of diplomatic discourses as well as other discourses to use English to fulfill these purposes. The study stressed that EFL learners focus on the message rather than the form during their communication; it also recommended training using a multicultural approach.

Culture coins language and they cannot be separated in effective EFL classes. In this view, Dobrovolskij & Piirainen (2006) and Colson (2008) expressed the view that culture is part of language and should be integrated as one component. Thus, in EFL classes, teaching English should be integrated with cultural components during activities and language practice. This instructional claim evoked the intercultural approach to language teaching along with the international demands after Second World War. This approach relates to *communicative competence* theory which was early pioneered by Canale & Swain in the 1980s; it

aimed to identify the relationship between language and culture. The Council of Europe in the 1980s contributed to the term "intercultural" through the description of communicative competence which later was included in the European Framework of Reference CEFR. This framework guides the European education and values multiculturalism.

According to Corbet (2003), the goal of the intercultural approach to language teaching is not to develop native speaker competence but rather intercultural communicative competence. He further explained that intercultural communicative competence includes the ability to understand the language and behavior of the target community as well as the home community. He stressed that "An intercultural approach trains learners to be 'diplomats', able to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding" (p.12). The instruction using an intercultural approach seeks to develop a learner's mentality that is linguistically and culturally competent.

Abdalla (2017) investigated the potential benefits of using the intercultural approach to teaching English as a foreign language in the preparatory–year program (male branch), at Taif University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Participants of the study included 200 students and 50 instructors. The study highlighted the value of the intercultural approach in EFL classes due to its advances in class communication and learning outcomes. Results of the study showed that the intercultural approach can be used for mixed-ability classes with a range of class abilities and differences. According to teachers' views, this approach can be used for a variety of language skills. The results also showed that there were similarities between the different topics taught according to the multicultural approach. This approach has different merits to EFL classes for different types of students and learners.

According to Garus (2014), in an EFL class, students are usually "monolingual and they learn English while living in their own country; they have little access to the target culture and therefore a limited ability to become culturally competent" (p.4). He further explained that their aim for learning English is not only to communicate only with natives but also with non-natives. Accordingly, EFL learners are learners of English as an International Language (EIL). Providing students with the cultural ingredient of the target language helps them to be culturally

competent. Therefore, deploying the intercultural approach in EFL classes can enhance students' cultural competence.

Negi (2020) examined the perceptions of EFL teachers towards using the intercultural approach in their English language teaching practices. Results highlighted the need of practicing an intercultural approach in English language teaching though the implementation is challenging. The study also confirmed the shift from teaching literature to teaching language in cultural contexts. It also stressed that the intercultural approach aims to develop learners' intercultural competence.

Tran & Duong (2018) conducted a study that aimed to verify the effectiveness of the intercultural language communicative teaching model for EFL learners. The participants of the study were (47) EFL learners in Vietnam. The study utilized three instruments: a language test, an intercultural competence test, and a semi-structured group interview. Results showed that EFL learners' language competence and intercultural competence had similar patterns of improvement. These results confirmed that the ICLT model is effective in facilitating EFL learners' ICC development. The study also recommended using the model for similar groups of students.

In the Egyptian context, intercultural competence in EFL classes was examined by Kara (2019). The study aimed to evaluate the third-year secondary level English textbook 'Hello: English for Secondary Schools in terms of intercultural competence within its 'saviors' sub-category. Results showed that the textbook included culture-based topics, aids, and illustrations about culture. Results also showed that certain cultural topics were marginalized for the benefit of the big culture as part of the requirements of the standards-based approach connections umbrella. The study recommended enriching textbooks' intercultural components with little cultural ingredients. English language classes in Egypt should highlight culture as a crucial component of the target language.

A similar study over the same grade in Poland by Sobkowiak (2021) aimed to identify whether and to what extent students' intercultural competence is developed in EFL classrooms at the secondary stage. Differently, results showed that students in the class had very few opportunities to explore foreign cultures and compare and contrast one culture with another. Results also revealed that there was a lack of attention to teaching that promotes critical thinking skills among

learners. Comparing the two previous studies show that using culture as a key component in EFL classes may vary in different TEFL settings and systems.

Using the intercultural approach for EFL instruction was examined in different studies for better communicative skills development (see Auger, 2004; Dervin, 2009; Achieng, 2021). For instance, Achieng (2021) utilized the intercultural approach in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to French learners (middle school /university students) with the consideration of social representations (stereotypes) as a strategy to develop classroom participation in verbal communication. The study discussed how the approach can be used in practice by drawing examples from the teacher and the learners' experiences. Data was collected through participatory observations and questioning instruments. The results showed that the intercultural approach is a significant approach for developing EFL communication skills.

Summing up, although the intercultural approach was used in various EFL skills development at different grades and study levels, there is still a lack of studies that utilized the approach for informative speaking. English for diplomacy is a fairly recent discipline in TEFL and there is a gap in the literature to develop awareness about the use of English for diplomacy purposes and future careers related to diplomacy. Based on the above review, the present study aimed to implement a program based on the intercultural approach for developing sophomores' informative speaking skills and to identify their awareness of English for diplomacy purposes.

Results of the study

The following statistical procedures were run over the instruments to verify the hypotheses of the study. These instruments included a needs assessment questionnaire, a test, and a scale that are statistically analyzed to verify the questions and hypotheses of the study as follows. The needs assessment questionnaire aimed to identify participants' concepts, needs, and expectations from English for Diplomacy course. This tool answers the question "What are the needs of sophomore students from the English for Diplomacy course?" The following table shows the percentages of participants' responses to the questions of the questionnaire:

Table 1: Needs assessment questionnaire responses*

Items	Responses		
	<i>Language for diplomacy concept identification.</i>	<i>Yes (12.5%)</i>	<i>No (87.5%)</i>
<i>English for Diplomacy course / training experience</i>	<i>Yes (0%)</i>	<i>No (100%)</i>	
<i>Language for Diplomacy Training / expertise</i>	<i>Yes (2.5%)</i>	<i>No (97.5%)</i>	
<i>English as the first language of Diplomacy.</i>	<i>Agree 95%</i>	<i>Neutral 5%</i>	<i>Disagree 0%</i>
<i>Valuing English for diplomacy courses.</i>	<i>Agree 95%</i>	<i>Neutral 2.5%</i>	<i>Disagree 2.5%</i>
<i>University courses & English for diplomacy integration agreement.</i>	<i>Agree 97.5%</i>	<i>Neutral 2.5%</i>	<i>Disagree 0%</i>
<i>English language value and international relations agreement.</i>	<i>Agree 92.5%</i>	<i>Neutral 5%</i>	<i>Disagree 2.5%</i>
<i>English for diplomacy at pre-service level agreement.</i>	<i>Agree 75%</i>	<i>Neutral 10%</i>	<i>Disagree 15%</i>
<i>English for diplomacy at in-service level agreement.</i>	<i>Agree 90%</i>	<i>Neutral 5%</i>	<i>Disagree 5%</i>
<i>English for diplomacy and student knowledge.</i>	<i>Agree 67.5%</i>	<i>Neutral 25%</i>	<i>Disagree 7.5%</i>
<i>* No. of participants 40 students.</i>			

The above table shows that the students had a low level of knowledge about English for diplomacy, though, they were aware of its importance. They were not aware of how to use English for diplomacy purposes at different levels (pre and in-service) but were willing to take English for diplomacy purposes. The table showed that they were aware of English for diplomacy value to their knowledge about language. The above results answered the question about sophomores' needs which clearly showed that they needed training courses in English for Diplomacy purposes for their future careers. Using SPSS statistical analysis, the obtained quantitative results verified the following hypotheses of the study:

H.1. There would be statistically significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post-testing of the participants' informative speaking skills favoring the post- testing.

To test this hypothesis, the following statistical procedure was run to verify the differences in means between the participants in the pre and post-testing of their informative speaking skills.

Table 2. Paired Samples Statistics

Variables	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 pre_speaking	10.98	40	1.074	.170
post_speaking	14.25	40	1.335	.211

The above table (2) shows that the mean of the participants in informative speaking was (10.98) in the pre testing compared to the post-testing (14.25). This shows that there was an increase in participants' means in their informative speaking skills. The following table (3) compares the means of the participants and shows the degree of significance between the pre and post-testing procedures.

Table3. Paired Samples T-Test

Variables	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
pre_ post speaking	3.275	1.585	.251	-3.782	-2.768	13.068	39	.000

Table (3) shows that there are statistically significant mean differences between the participants in the pre and post-testing of their informative speaking skills (.000) favoring the post-testing procedure. This shows that the performance of the participants was better in the post-testing due to the effect of the program over the participants. To identify the effect size, the following calculation was run to identify the eta square that represents the effect size.

Table 4. Effect size using Eta Square

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4.657 ^a	4	1.164	.628	.645	.067
Intercept	3418.082	1	3418.082	1.845E3	.000	.981
pre_speaking	4.657	4	1.164	.628	.645	.067
Error	64.843	35	1.853			
Total	8192.000	40				
Corrected Total	69.500	39				

a. R Squared = .067 (Adjusted R Squared = -.040)

The table shows the high effect size ($F = .628$) of the program based on the intercultural approach on the participants. The following hypothesis verifies the effect of the program on participants' language diplomacy awareness.

H.2. There would be statistically significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post-testing of their awareness of English as a language of diplomacy favoring the post-testing.

To verify the above hypothesis, the following table shows the differences in means in the pre testing of participants' awareness of English as a language of diplomacy (43.80) compared to the post-testing (49.60). This shows that the mean of the participants was higher after the application of the program based on the intercultural approach compared to the pre-testing before the teaching of the program.

Table 5. Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 pre	43.80	40	5.205	.823
post	49.60	40	4.284	.677

The following table (6) compares the means of the participants and shows the significance value (.000) due to these differences. This difference is significant when comparing the two testing procedures and this shows the impact of the program based on the intercultural approach on participants' awareness of English for diplomacy. The following statistical treatment was run to verify the hypothesis related to the language diplomacy awareness of the participants.

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

Variables	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper
Paired Sample Test	-5.800	4.719	.746	-7.309	-4.291	-7.774	39	.000

The above table shows the significance of these differences in means (.000) between the participants. These significant differences assure the alternative a hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. These treatments answer the two hypotheses of the study.

Summing up, the above results showed that there were significant mean differences between the scores of the participants in the pre and post-testing of participants' informative speaking skills and English as a language of diplomacy awareness favoring the post-testing. These differences also assure the significance of the program based on the intercultural approach to developing participants' informative speaking skills and awareness of English as a language of diplomacy.

Discussion

The obtained results showed the positive effect of using the program of the study based on the intercultural approach in developing both participants' informative speaking skills and awareness towards English as a language for diplomacy. The following discussion related the obtained results to the available literature that is relevant to the variables of the study and its obtained results.

There have been many studies that discussed the impact of using the intercultural approach in developing EFL-oriented speaking skills (see Abdalla, 2017; Agudelo, 2007; Rokhayati, 2018). The results obtained from this study agree with the results of the study by Agudelo (2007) which discussed the pedagogical experience of a teacher implementing an intercultural approach in an undergraduate foreign language teaching context. Both studies highlighted the value of the intercultural approach in coining both language and culture during instruction. These results also revealed that students have become conscious of the essential role of culture in language teaching.

The obtained results highlight the value of culture in EFL class and in effective speaking. This also agrees with the studies of (Dobrovolskij & Piirainem; Colson, 2018 & Qilliam 2010). Speaking activities should include cultural ingredients that should be discussed within the aim of the activities. Students could inform about persons, places and things during their speaking activities. These informative skills should be contextualized with culture as the literature stresses and as the results of the study confirm. The results of this study are different in the informative speaking skills it included. The study included different culture-oriented characters, places, and things such as famous paints and persons as the program utilized them in drilling speaking. It is also different in the areas of informative speaking as it included academic courses- related activities such as drama characters, novel incidents, and artistic figures. Thus, both the compiled course and its language areas were different from other courses in the pertinent literature.

The results of this study also agree with the results of a study by Dossan (2020) which highlighted the position of the English language for diplomacy. Dossan's confirmed through its quantitative and qualitative approaches the importance of both written and spoken English in world diplomacy and international relations. Participants of the study (N.3000) were exchange students and different universities' students who confirmed the importance of English for diplomacy. Although the participants of this study were different from the participants in the main study but both of them valued and had an awareness of the importance of studying English for diplomacy purposes courses. Students' awareness of the courses they prefer to study (Kara, 219) may have a positive impact on their future learning aptitude and willingness to learn the language.

The results also agree with the literature related to teaching speaking skills in the Egyptian context. The studies of El Sawy (2013) and El Bassuouny (2012) early assured the need to utilize programs and courses that aim to develop the speaking skills of the students rather than mere exam-oriented courses and teaching materials. The main study is an attempt to propose an effective example of developing students' speaking skills in light of the intercultural approach. The results also confirm the positive impact of using the intercultural approach on students' informative speaking skills and their awareness of English as a language of diplomacy.

Literature related to students' awareness highlights the importance of students' awareness of their current and future learning. Studying awareness dates back to the 1950s powered by Halliday's ideas about helping students to master ideas about the language rather than the language itself (Farahian & Rezaee, 2015). The study agrees with the pedagogical principles that awareness can add in light of the obtained results. It could enhance the participants' competence and performance, their knowledge of the processes of language, and their acquisition of language sensitivity. Studying participants' awareness of English as a language of diplomacy measures their aptitudes to learn and value the important discipline of ESP related to their future professions including diplomacy. Since awareness targets getting insights about the subject, the results confirm that participants could get an insight of the course and English as a useful tool for diplomacy-oriented concepts.

The study is different in linking both ESP courses with mainly a performative skill which is speaking, particularly informative speaking skills. The obtained results could use the compiled course with participants; awareness of a future career which is diplomacy. During the activities of the course, they could value the use of English for communication and relating culture to a wider diplomatic context. This integration of speaking skills with other language areas agrees with the studies of (Kusciati & Fatkhiyati, 2018; Towairesh, 2021). This integration also led to positive results in their performance on the speaking test and awareness scale. These obtained results lead to the discussion of the following implication gained from the study.

Implications of the Study

In light of the obtained results, this study can be useful for the students, instructors, English for diplomacy course designers, diplomacy field practitioners, and the theoretical literature related to its variables.

- Students can make use of the proposed program in enhancing their English for diplomacy vocabulary, speaking skills, acquisition, and linguistic drills. They Students can make use of the course in their academic and vocational skills development.
- University instructors and lecturers at the faculties of languages can make use of the materials and tests of the compiled course in teaching English as a foreign language for non-English specialized departments.
- Practitioners in the field of international diplomacy can use the course of the study in their in-service professional development.
- Training units at the universities and training institutes can also use the course of the study in both pre-service and in-service trainings.
- The study can add to the theory and practice of TEFL instruction as it utilized a fairly recent approach "trilingualism" to a demanding field of study "English for Diplomacy".

Recommendations and suggestions for further research

During the application of the study, there were challenges related to students' tight schedules during the school year, course outline, assessment, and adjustment of the participants. As to the schedule, the course was linked to their training sessions of English as Second Language course. The outline of the course was adjusted to the outcomes of their ESL course and was adapted to the set language areas of the course. Assessing speaking, though challenging, was run with the help of the staff of the English department and the rubric designed with the help of the English department at Hurghada Faculty of Languages. Participants were adjusted to three departments (German, Italian, and Russian) purposefully based on their course registration.

The study recommends utilizing recent AI technology in compiling English for diplomacy purposes courses and instruction methods. It also recommends using the program of the study for similar participants at the faculties of languages and other related disciplines. It also recommends running similar research to investigate the effect of AI-based technologies on assessing the writing and speaking skills of the students in the departments of English. Further, it also suggests running research

that tackles other language skills such as reading and listening using the intercultural approach for different participants.

Conclusions

The intercultural approach has different merits that can be integrated to EFL courses and lectures at university level. Due to the communicative activities and tasks it adds, students can enhance their productive skills including speaking. The study utilized the intercultural approach to develop second-year students' informative speaking skills. The program included six units that aimed to develop students' speaking skills and their competence as well as performance in informing about persons, things and events. Further, the program of the study proved to be effective in enhancing both the participants' informative speaking skills and their awareness of English as a language for diplomacy which is needed for their future careers. Implementing this intercultural approach-based program could enhance students' awareness of using English language in various diplomatic contexts. This awareness can be the motive behind their pursuits for further English for Diplomacy purposes courses that are needed for their future careers. The obtained results can be valuable for students' fluency, teachers' class activities, and course designer's approaches and for the theory related to the intercultural approach.

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