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THE IMPACT OF TEACHING MATERIALS ON INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

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Abstract. *This study employs a mixed-method quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design to investigate the mediatory effects of a culture-based teaching materials employing three types of teaching techniques, namely the cultural awareness, critical incident and cultural misunderstanding, in fostering intercultural competence (IC) development in a group of Tunisian higher education EFL students. A pedagogical intervention was implemented and evaluated in terms of its effectiveness in enhancing IC development in a voluntary group of 11 EFL-major students at a prominent Tunisian Higher Education Institute. Quantitative data were collected using pretests and posttests. Qualitative data were obtained from transcribed audio-recorded lessons, teacher fieldnotes, student diaries and post-course interviews. The results from the preintervention and postintervention tests and classroom observation indicate that the pedagogical intervention induced significant improvements on the three IC dimensions, namely knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The results from students' written artifacts and oral self-reports provide further support for the contributory effects of the three teaching techniques under investigation. The results of this work could form a knowledge base for future developments in course and teaching materials development.*

Key words: *intercultural competence, IC development, teaching materials, experiential learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Several foreign language teaching (FLT) departments have started to incorporate intercultural competence (IC) into their educational curricula and programs. English as foreign language (EFL) and as second language (ESL) researchers and practitioners have realized the need for coherent curricular and pedagogical frameworks for language-and-culture teaching. The position most commonly defended in the literature gives relevance to a glocal approach that aims to "develop in the learners an intercultural competence that would shortchange neither their own culture nor the target culture, but would make them into cultural mediators in a globalized world" (Kramsch, 2013, p.57).

Stern (1992) and Damen (1987) offer a comprehensive overview of the techniques available for integrating culture in the language classroom. One line of research highlights the

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distinct value of experiential culture-driven scenarios and include a wide range of techniques, such as the cultural awareness technique (CAT), the critical incident technique (CIT), and the cultural misunderstanding technique (CMT) (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Brislin & Cushner, 1996). These common problem-solving techniques have the advantage of providing authentic cultural situations that learners can easily relate to real life and personal experiences.

The literature presents several empirical classroom studies wherein pedagogical interventions were performed and the effects of training were measured qualitatively and/or qualitatively. Yang (2019) conducted a mixed method pre-test and posttest study to investigate the effectiveness of a self-produced CLIL culture coursebook in fostering the intercultural knowledge of higher education students in a Taiwanese polytechnic university. The findings indicated that the students underwent significant improvement in their cultural competence. Likewise, Kopylovskaya, and Ivanova (2014) explored the efficiency of global news reports in enhancing students' IC at Saint-Petersburg University. The authors concluded that global news reports had a significant potential for serving this purpose. Likewise, Lanucha (2018) investigated the importance of cultural competence for both native and non-native English students at the Language Unit in the Cambridge University Engineering Department. The results provided evidence on the effectiveness of cultural competence workshops in developing cultural competence.

Despite the large flow of data on IC instruction and assessment worldwide, little empirical work has so far been performed to explore the role of experiential TM in enhancing IC development. Accordingly, the present study aimed to investigate the mediatory effects of TM employing three types of experiential teaching techniques, namely the cultural awareness technique (CAT), critical incident technique (CIT) and cultural misunderstanding technique (CMT), on the promotion of IC development in an experimental group of Tunisian higher education EFL students.

2. Material and Method

The general research objective of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of language-and-culture training course incorporating three types of intercultural teaching techniques, namely the CAT, CIT, and CMT, in the enhancement of IC development in an experimental group of Tunisian higher education EFL students in terms of a) knowledge, b) attitudes, and c) skills. The general objective was subdivided into three specific research objectives (RO), namely a) RO1 aimed to determine the incoming students' IC levels in terms of the three components of IC (knowledge, skills and attitudes) prior to the pedagogical intervention; b) RO2 aimed to implement a pedagogical intervention (a training program consisting of TM containing CAT, CIT, and CMT); and RO3 aimed to evaluate the effects of the pedagogical intervention in terms of inducing improvements in participants' IC. The general hypothesis was that the implementation of the pedagogical intervention (using CAT, CIT, and CMT) would lead to significant improvements in students' IC (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).

The present study was carried out at the English department of a prominent Tunisian HEI. The latter had a large student population majoring in English (i.e., for whom the socio-cultural and pragmatic aspects are central). A total of 11 voluntary Tunisian EFL-major students were selected to form a single experimental group, 6 males and 5 females. They were from the 20-26 age category, 5 in their second year of a four-year EFL program and 6 in the third year. All

participants have been learning English for several years since elementary school. None of them had a stay-abroad experience in any English-speaking country. All participants experienced intercultural encounters with foreign tourists in Tunisia. They had an intermediate level of proficiency and never took any course related to IC prior to attending the training course. Participants in the experimental group, therefore, showed equal distribution on the scales of gender, age, and levels of proficiency, thus ensuring that a valid comparison in terms of those variables would be achieved. All ethical aspects and procedures were observed, and participants were assured of privacy and confidentiality.

The study adopted a mixed-method quasi-experimental single-group pretest-posttest approach based on a sequential three-phase design wherein the data collected in one phase informed the subsequent phase. The three phases of the study and their corresponding data gathering instruments are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 The three phases of the study

Three Phases of the study	Research instruments	Aims
1. Identification Phase	Pretest	Exploratory Phase: elicit information that can help construct a tentative profile of each incoming student prior to the pedagogical intervention
2. Implementation Phase		Course delivery phase: implement a training course that aimed to develop students' IC (knowledge, skills and attitudes).
3. Evaluation Phase	a. Audio-recorded sessions	Interpretation Phase: elicit information on potential a) classroom evidenced intercultural learning, and b) effects brought by the pedagogical intervention on participants' IC.
	b. In-class fieldnotes	
	c. Student reflective diaries	
	d. Posttest	
	e. Follow-up Interviews	

The quantitative phase of the study involved the administration of two tests. The first test was administered before the pedagogical intervention (pretest) and the second following the intervention (posttest). The pretest and posttest were the same. They had a tripartite structure. Part 1 of the test used CAT-based items to elicit information on the cognitive (knowledge) domain of IC. It contained two major sections that aimed to gauge information on two aspects of students' knowledge, namely (1) institutions, and perceptions of them; and (2) the processes and institutions of socialization in one's own country and that of the interlocutor. Section 1 contained two subsections (A & B) of 4 multiple-choice items targeting culture-general knowledge. These included the understanding of the concept of culture itself (Subsection A, Questions 1 and 2), the nature of cultural adaptation (Subsection A, Questions 3 & 4), the impact of culture on communication and the construction of meaning through language (Subsection B, Questions 1 & 2), the pressures involved in intercultural communication and how to deal with them (Subsection B, Question 3), and the role of identity in intercultural communication (Subsection B, Question 4). Section 2 consisted of six subsections (A-F). In all, it had 14 items consisting of a stem and possible responses in the form of multiple-choice, matching and error correction options targeting culture-specific knowledge. These

involved aspects from 'Big C' and 'small c' aspects culture. In brief, Subsection A focused on information related to British geography (Question 1), politics (Questions 2, 3 and 4) and popular food (question 5); Subsection B focused on popular events in the USA. Subsection B dealt with popular events in American history (Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4). Subsection C asked about famous people in American history (Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4). Subsection D consisted of questions on popular food in the USA (Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4). Subsection E consisted of questions related to awareness of the impacts of culture on communication, including understanding ways to address people (Question 1), react to false invitations (Question 2) and respond to phone calls (Question 1). Subsection F covered aspects of cultural awareness, including appropriate ways to apologize (Question 1), introduce oneself (Question 2) and inquire about health (Question 3).

Part 2 of the test used CMT-based scenarios to elicit information on the attitudes dimension of IC. It aimed to elicit data on two abilities, namely (3) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; and (4) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices. To gauge data on these competences, this part included an episode of a cultural misunderstanding where a problematic situation caused the interacting parties to become confused and offended due to ignorance of cultural differences. It asked the students to identify the problem and ascribe it to its causes. The assessment sought to elicit responses embodying the following broad categories of attitudes: willingness to 'decenter' affectively, that is, to 'relativize oneself' and value others' values, beliefs and behaviors (Question 1); willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness (Question 2); interest in seeing and experiencing cultural products or practices from an 'insider's perspective' (Question 3), readiness to 'suspend disbelief and judgment' with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviors (Question 4).

Part 3 contained two sections. Section 1 aimed to elicit data on the attitudes dimension of IC using a CMT-based scenario. This item of the test described a problematic situation in an intercultural encounter between a non-native speaker and other natives where confusion and frustration arose. The students were asked to identify the problem and relate it to its underlying causes (Question 1), and to produce a written text in which they play the role of a 'mediator' between native and target cultures (Question 2). Section 2 aimed to elicit information on students' behavior in cultural interactions as revealed in their reflective writing. It used the critical incident technique (CIT) and required the students to reflect on a problematic scenario and make reactions and decisions as to (5) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present, and (6) elicit the concepts or values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena.

The qualitative phase of the study sought to elicit information related to the RO3, namely evaluating the effectiveness of the pedagogical intervention in enhancing students' IC development. Qualitative data were obtained from a battery of data collection instruments. The researcher employed audio-recorded classroom sessions. Classroom recordings were meant to elicit four main areas, namely a) document classroom practices (topics, activities, techniques) and the role they might have played in achieving learning goals and objectives; b) capture discussions among students and between the students and the teacher that indicate actual classroom learning; c) record students' progress on three planes: cognitive, affective and behavioral; and d) trace students' progress over time.

The study also used brief in-class fieldnotes. The latter were used for three purposes, namely a) keep record of classroom phenomena that could not be documented otherwise, such as the atmosphere and mood during the sessions; b) jot down some instant reflections on the observed events, such as students' interactions and reactions to particular activities; and c) provide a reminder of the context of observed events, such as situation and task, needed for subsequent data analysis.

Moreover, participant students were encouraged to keep reflective diaries where they record and reflect on their daily learning experiences and progress over the two weeks of the pedagogical intervention. They were guided to include two major parts in their diaries. The first section inquired about self-perceived learning outcomes (part1; item 1 and 2). The second section required the students to reflect upon their planning for further learning (part 2: item 1 and 2), to express their reaction to the teaching tasks and activities (part 2; item 3 and 4), and to verbalize any perceived changes in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors due to the course (part 2; items 3 and 4).

The evaluation phase included the administration of a posttest after the completion of the pedagogical intervention. The posttest had the same content described for the pretest and analyzed using the same procedures. The posttest scores were used to serve a dual purpose. They were intended to provide a baseline for comparison with the scores obtained on the pretest to see if any changes have occurred in response to the pedagogical intervention. They were also meant to serve as a springboard for evaluating the effects of the TM on the enhancement of IC development in the student participants.

Finally, the evaluation phase built on data obtained through individual 15-to-30 minute face-to-face semi-structured follow-up interviews seeking further information on the effectiveness of the pedagogical intervention from the participants' point of view. The researcher constructed a loose agenda that aimed to guide, but not direct, the interview. This included questions that invited participants to identify the a) parts of the training program that were helpful to them in retrospect and b) changes they saw in themselves in response to the pedagogical intervention.

The implementation phase corresponded to RO2, namely the realization of a pedagogical intervention. The intercultural training course developed to serve the purposes of the study is described in detail in a previous study by the author (Smaoui, 2021). In brief, the course builds on the basics of intercultural English as a Foreign Language (iEFL) and draws on Byram's (1997) framework of IC teaching and assessment. It aims to provide learners with the cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes) and behavioral (skills) tools needed to operate effectively in multicultural academic and professional settings by strengthening their skills in critical reading and writing. The program sought to achieve three major course learning outcomes (CLOs) framed within the three learning domains (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) described in the literature. The cognitive (knowledge) orientation of the course sought the development of students' knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (Byram,1997). The affective (attitudes) orientation sought the development of curiosity & openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. The behavioral (skills) orientation sought the development of two aspects. The first was the skills of interpreting & relating, namely the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own. The second was the skills of discovery and interaction, namely the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and

cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. Two specific learning objectives were included under each orientation. The learning objectives for the knowledge component of IC learning included knowledge of a) the processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country; and b) institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and in one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them. The learning objectives for the attitudes component of IC learning included a) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or to profit from others; and b) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices. The learning objectives for the skills component of IC learning included the ability to a) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present; and b) elicit from an interlocutor the concepts or values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena.

The intercultural training program consisted of six teaching units (3 units per week) corresponding to six culture-related topics, namely a) values, norms and beliefs, b) cultural contact, c) customs and traditions, d) marriage, e) prejudices and stereotypes, and ethnography. Classes took place over a period of 12 days (Monday to Saturday for 2 weeks). Students were required to attend 2 morning classes of 45 minutes per day, with a 15-minute break in between. Coursework included a wide range of experiential learning activities (CAT, CIT, and CMT) that engaged the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of the learning process. Training sessions followed the same procedures. Table 2 illustrates the main instructional and assessment features employed in Unit 1.

A posttest was administered immediately after the pedagogical intervention. Students' responses to the test items were assessed using a simplified version of the assessment sheet provided in the INCA (2004) assessment manual as previously described in Smaoui (2021). In brief, an assessment sheet was prepared, containing a list of the IC dimensions to be assessed (criteria) and an illustrative system of categories (descriptors) that describe each level of competence, corresponding to three levels of performance, namely 'basic', 'intermediate' and 'advanced' (scale). To make assessment more manageable and looking for an assessment approach that is applicable to the Tunisian context, a scoring scheme was devised, with fixed marks for different items in the test. The marking scheme assigned points for different types of questions on the test. Accordingly, a maximum mark was calculated for each individual part in the test, and the marks were then combined to determine a total score for the whole test. The knowledge part of the test included items that could be immediately measured quantitatively. The latter were scored using a scale from 0 to 1. In other words, '1' mark designates the presence of an appropriate response, and '0' mark denotes its absence. Considering that this part of the test contained 31 items, the maximum possible score for the knowledge dimension was calculated as 31. The attitudes part of the test included items that were qualitative in nature. Responses to these items were first submitted to content analysis, using a list of categories and descriptors, and then converted into quantitative data. Each emerging element was scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 2. A score of 1 was indicative of a 'basic' level response, a score of 1.5 to an 'intermediate' level response, and a score of 2 to a 'advanced' level response. Considering the that the test contained 4 items from the attitudes dimension, the maximum score for the attitudes part of the test was calculated as 8. Similarly,

Table 2 The main pedagogical and assessment features of Unit 1

Unit 1: Values, norms and beliefs	
Description	Procedure
Learning outcomes	By the end of this unit students will able to: ▪ identify and describe the concept of culture; ▪ describe and link visible and invisible aspects of culture; ▪ relate and contrast personal, cultural and universal attributes; ▪ articulate well-informed viewpoints on cultural identity and diversity; ▪ show awareness of the uses and abuses of stereotypes; and ▪ show interest, openness and curiosity regarding diversity.
Enabling Objectives	In this unit students will: 1. Discussion of the iceberg model of culture. In particular: a. What is the significance of an iceberg image? b. What aspects of cultures are visible and what are less visible? 2. Discussion of the onion metaphor of identity. In particular: a. What is the significance of an iceberg image? b. What aspects of identity are personal, cultural, and universal? 3. Discussion of cultural stereotypes: a. What does stereotyping mean? b. Does it provide a useful way of thinking about people? c. Is a nation a culture?
Content	▪ The iceberg metaphor of culture; ▪ Personal, cultural and universal dimensions of culture; ▪ The onion metaphor of culture; ▪ The uses and abuses of stereotypes; ▪ Cultural identity and cultural diversity;
Activities	▪ Reading/writing ▪ CAT: individual work; Pair work; group work ▪ CMT: whole class guided discussions ▪ CIT: speaking activity; writing
Types of assessment	▪ Assessment For learning and Assessmet AS learning
Kind of evidence	▪ Factual knowledge elicited by question/answer in the readings; ▪ Deep learning knowledge elicited by guided discussions; ▪ Observation of students' knowledge, attitudes, skills in critical thinking and suspending disbelief during speaking activities; ▪ Responses to an in-class questionnaire; ▪ Writing compositions.
Materials	▪ Handouts ▪ Worksheet: in-class questionnaire ▪ Worksheet: What Did I Learn Today? ▪ Laptop, power point, data show

the skills part of the test contained qualitative items. Responses to those items were first submitted to the same content analysis procedures and then scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 2. A score of 1 was assigned to 'basic' level responses, a score of 1.5 was assigned to 'intermediate' level responses, and a score of 2 was assigned to 'advanced' level responses. The responses to the three multiple choice items embedded in this part of the test were scored on a scale of 0 to 1, thus making the maximum score for the skills part of the test as 11.

The assessment sheet was designed in a way to indicate each participant's competence level in terms of the three separate IC strands. The overall level for an individual strand is determined by combining the total marks obtained for the items belonging to that strand of interest. The scores obtained on the three stands were then combined to get a total score for the whole test. For the sake of numerical assignment and interpretation, a knowledge score in the range of 0-16 was taken to reflect a 'basic' level; a score of 17-25 an 'intermediate' level; and a score of 26-31 a 'advanced' level. An attitude score in the range of 0-3 was taken to reflect a 'basic' level; a score of 4-6 an 'intermediate' level; and a score of 7-8 an 'advanced' level. A skills score in the range of 0-3 was taken to reflect a 'basic' level; a score of 4-8 an 'intermediate' level; and a score of 9-11 an 'advanced' level'. Furthermore, a total score in the range of 0-24 was taken to reflect a 'basic' level; a score of 25-40 an 'intermediate' level; and a score of 41-50 an 'advanced' level. The numerical assignments followed the INCA scale, that is: basic = 1, intermediate = 2, advanced = 3. Qualitative data were submitted to content analysis procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows software (trial version 22.0; IBM SPSS Statistics).

3. Results and Discussion

The results generated through the qualitative and quantitative instruments are discussed considering the research questions and theoretical framework presented above.

3.1. Quantitative Results

All participants completed the pretests and posttests (n = 11). The results from one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in student responses to the test across the research variables. The results from a paired samples test (Table 3) revealed a significant difference between the score mean values registered for the pretest and posttest at a 0.05 level of significance ($P \leq 0.05$), with the posttest mean (M= 38.3) significantly increasing to a higher level compared to the pretest mean (M= 28.3) in all IC dimensions. Further comparison of means revealed that the most significant improvements were recorded for the behavioral (from M= 3.4 to M= 7.2) dimension, followed by the cognitive (from M= 21 to M= 24.9), and affective (from M= 3.9 to M= 6.1) dimensions, respectively.

Table 3 Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	T1 Total - T2 Total	-10.00000	5.54977	1.67332	-13.72839	-6.27161	-5.976	10	.000

The results showed marked differences in all the key performance indicators of both tests (Table 4). Firstly, the mean value for the scores recorded for the pretest was M= 28.3 compared to M= 38.3 for the posttest. There was also a notable difference of 4 in the range values of the two tests (pretest, R=11; posttest, R=15). The standard deviation for

both tests was also different (Std= 4.6 for the pretest; Std= 3.6 for the posttest). While the pretest displayed slightly positive skewness (.014), the posttest displayed negative skewness (-.120), suggesting that the scores were skewed to the left. In both cases, however, the score distribution was normal, as the skewness value was very close to zero. Both tests exhibited slightly negative kurtosis values (-.649 for the pretest; -1.259 for the posttest), suggesting that the scores distribution tended to be flat. In fact, both cases showed normal score distribution, as the kurtosis and skewness values were close to zero.

Table 4 Comparison of key performance indicators of pretest and posttest results

		T1 Knowledge	T1 Attitudes	T1 Behavior	T1 Total	T2 Knowledge	T2 Attitudes	T2 Behavior	T2 Total
N	Valid	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		21.0000	3.9091	3.4545	28.3636	24.9091	6.1818	7.2727	38.3636
Std. Error of Mean		.79772	.43598	.49293	1.39005	.31492	.37703	.67542	1.11415
Std. Deviation		2.64575	1.44600	1.63485	4.61027	1.04447	1.25045	2.24013	3.69521
Variance		7.000	2.091	2.673	21.255	1.091	1.564	5.018	13.655
Skewness		1.188	-.537	-.573	.014	.213	.713	-.090	-.120
Std. Error of Skewness		.661	.661	.661	.661	.661	.661	.661	.661
Kurtosis		1.663	-.010	.982	-.649	-2.444	-1.123	-1.534	-1.259
Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.279	1.279	1.279	1.279	1.279	1.279	1.279	1.279
Range		9.00	5.00	6.00	15.00	2.00	3.00	6.00	11.00
Minimum		18.00	1.00	.00	21.00	24.00	5.00	4.00	33.00
Maximum		27.00	6.00	6.00	36.00	26.00	8.00	10.00	44.00

The results informed that the total scores obtained for the pretest (three parts combined) ranged from a minimum score of 21 to a maximum of 36. The mean values recorded for student responses revealed that although not all students scored above the average, the mean value of students' scores was M= 28.3. Almost one quarter of the students (27.3%) scored below the average score of 25, therefore displaying a 'basic' IC level. By extension, almost three quarters (72.7%) scoring above the average, thus displaying an 'intermediate' IC level. On the other hand, the findings indicated that the total scores gained on the posttest ranged from a minimum of score of 33 to a maximum of 44. The mean value recorded for the posttest was M= 30.3. A comparison between students' total scores on the pretest and posttest is illustrated in Figure 1.

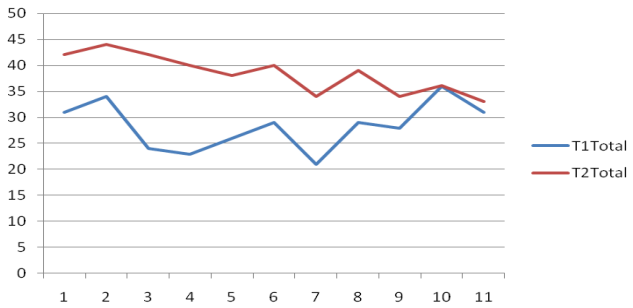

Fig. 1 Students' Total scores on the pretest (T1) and posttest (T2)

The results indicated that all the students' total scores on the posttest were above the average of 25, with 45,5 % of the students scoring 40 or higher. Accordingly, it could be concluded that 72.7% of respondents displayed an 'intermediate' competence and 27.3 % exhibited an 'advanced' competence. The posttest scores obtained for the three IC dimensions are illustrated in Figure 2.

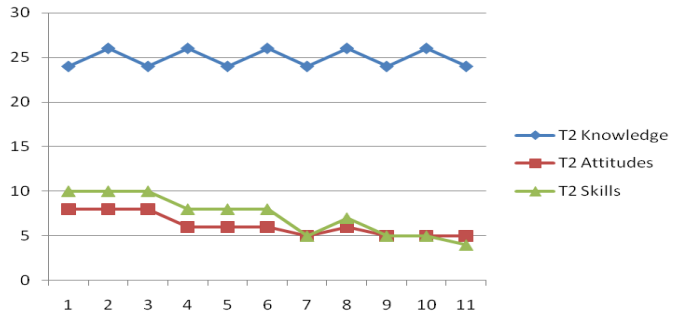

Fig. 2 Students' knowledge, attitudes and skills scores in the posttest (T2)

The case summary report (Table 5) revealed that the posttest scores were higher than their pretest scores, which was true for the total scores as well as for the scores for each of the three separate parts of the tests. No students were noted to obtain the same total pretest and posttest scores, and no students were noted to obtain lower total scores nor lower scores on one of the three constituent parts of the test, except one student (pseudo: Sammy) whose score on the behavior dimension of the test was noted to drop from 6 to 4. Further analysis showed, however, that the student left some sections in this part of the test, and his total score on the posttest improved compared to the pretest.

Table 5 Case Summary report

			T1K	T1A	T1B	T1Total	T2K	T2A	T2B	T2Total
Pseudo	Abe	1	20.00	6.00	5.00	31.00	24.00	8.00	10.00	42.00
	Bobby	1	24.00	5.00	5.00	34.00	26.00	8.00	10.00	44.00
	Cathy	1	18.00	3.00	3.00	24.00	24.00	8.00	10.00	42.00
	Davy	1	19.00	1.00	3.00	23.00	26.00	6.00	8.00	40.00
	Fancy	1	21.00	3.00	2.00	26.00	24.00	6.00	8.00	38.00
	Heidi	1	21.00	5.00	3.00	29.00	26.00	6.00	8.00	40.00
	Jamie	1	18.00	3.00	.00	21.00	24.00	5.00	5.00	34.00
	Mimie	1	20.00	5.00	4.00	29.00	26.00	6.00	7.00	39.00
	Nancy	1	21.00	4.00	3.00	28.00	24.00	5.00	5.00	34.00
	Ryrie	1	27.00	5.00	4.00	36.00	26.00	5.00	5.00	36.00
	Sammy	1	22.00	3.00	6.00	31.00	24.00	5.00	4.00	33.00
	Total	N	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

The findings indicated that the scores recorded for the knowledge part of the pretest ranged between a minimum score of 18 and a maximum score of 27, with a mean value of M= 21. Taking the assessment scale used in the present work into account, 90,9 % of respondents were noted to display an 'intermediate' level and 9.1 % to an 'advanced' level of knowledge competence. By contrast, the scores obtained in the posttest ranged

between 24 and 26, with a mean value of (M= 24.9). It could, therefore, be inferred that 54,5 % of respondents showed an 'intermediate' level and 45,5 % an 'advanced' level of knowledge. A comparison between students' scores on the knowledge part of the pretest and posttest is illustrated in Figure 3.

Fig. 3 Students' scores on the knowledge component of IC (T1: Pretest; T2: Posttest)

The results related to the attitudes dimension of IC revealed that the pretest scores ranged between a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 6, with a mean value of M= 3.9. Based on the rating scale employed, 45,5 % of respondents belonged to the 'basic' level and 45.5 % to the 'intermediate' level of attitudes. By contrast, the scores obtained in the posttest ranged between 5 and 8, with a mean score of (M= 6.1). It was possible to conclude that 36,4 % of students displayed an 'intermediate' level and 27,3 % an 'advanced' level of attitudes. A comparison between students' scores on the knowledge part of the pretest and posttest is presented in Figure 4.

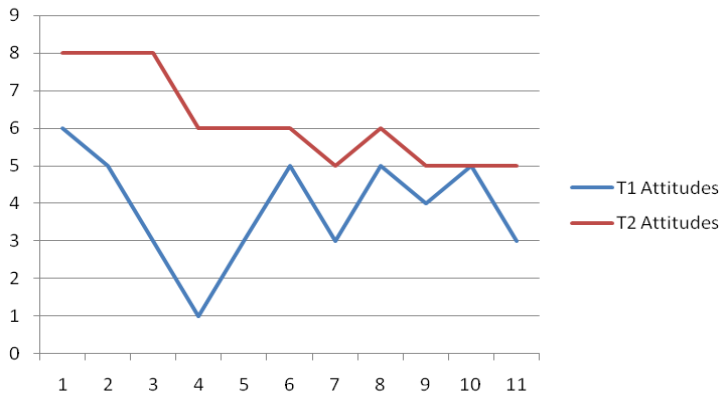

Fig. 4 Students' scores on the attitudes component of IC (T1: Pretest; T2: Posttest)

The results obtained for the skills dimension of IC revealed that the pretest scores ranged between a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 6, with a mean value of M= 3.4. It was, therefore, inferred that 54,5 % of respondents exhibited a 'basic' level, and 45.5 % an 'intermediate' level of skills. By contrast, the scores obtained in the

posttest ranged between 4 and 10, with a mean score of 7.2. This revealed that 9,1 % of respondents displayed an intermediate level and 90,9 % an advanced competence of skills. A comparison between students' scores on the knowledge part of the pretest and posttest is displayed in Figure 5. The minimum and maximum scores recorded for the whole test and for the three distinct parts of the test are summarized in table 3 above.

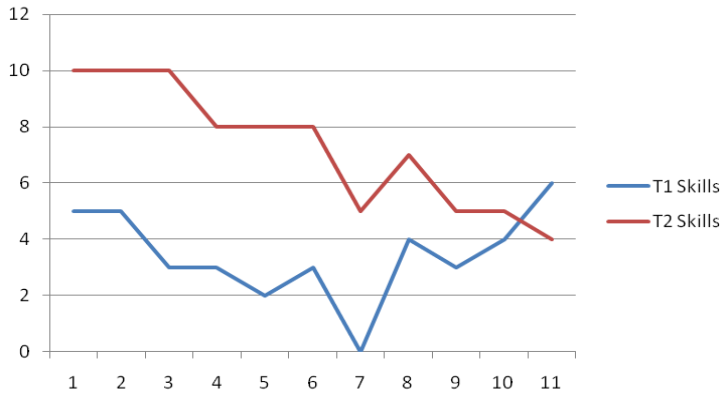

Fig. 5 Students' scores on the skills component of IC (T1: Pretest; T2: Posttest)

The results yielded strong evidence in support for the positive effects of the pedagogical intervention on learners' overall scores. In fact, the findings demonstrate that the maximum progress was achieved in the skills dimension, while the minimum was achieved in knowledge. Similar results were previously reported by Mason (2010) who described that the most effective results were attained with students' affective and behavioral skills. The significant progress in attitudes and skills was, in fact, logical as it reflects the ease of several stereotypes and prejudices that foreign language learners generally possess simply by providing them with experiential learning opportunities.

Overall, the results indicated that students' scores on the knowledge dimension of IC underwent a significant improvement (from 9.1 % belonging to the 'advanced' level of knowledge in the pretest to 45,5 % in the posttest). Students' scores on the attitudes and skills components also underwent marked improvements (from 0% belonging to the 'advanced' level to 27,3 % and 90,9 % belonging to the advanced level of attitudes and skills, respectively). The relevance of the experiential learning activities to the enhancement of IC development can be evidenced by the noticeable change observed in terms of students' scores on the three dimensions of IC over the course of the study.

4.2. Qualitative results

Three major themes emerged from qualitative data, namely a) learning the covert aspects of culture, b) valuing personal experience, and c) experiencing personal change. There were several instances where participants highlighted the value that the training course added to their learning about the covert aspects of culture. The findings indicated that participants were actively engaged in interpreting behavior from the insider's and outsider's perspectives and drawing comparisons and contrasts between cultures. Students' self-reports also reflected a variety of learning gains from the pedagogical

intervention, particularly in terms of recognizing the covert aspects of culture and their impacts on human behavior and practice. Moreover, the data revealed several occasions where the students linked the learning experiences to their own previous personal experiences and how they started to revalue them in retrospect. Of particular importance, the data reflected participants' growing awareness of the conducive role that sharing personal experiences could play in relation to becoming intercultural, which is in line with several research studies in the literature (Deardorff; 2006; Byram, 1997). Likewise, the data revealed several occasions where participants explicitly referred to experiencing moments of personal change and how they valued them, in ways that echoed Byram's (1997) notions of 'leaps in insights' and 'shifts in perspective'.

Overall, qualitative results provided ample evidence in support for the mediatory effects of the CAT, CMT and CIT based TM in the enhancement of IC development in student participants. The findings indicated that the three techniques provided students with opportunities to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills that mimic the intercultural experience of visiting the target cultures, an experience not easily available for several EFL learners. Classroom observation and students' self-reports on the learning experiences showed that culture-based scenarios helped the learners to develop expectations about how to deal with such situations in potential encounters with a new culture. These findings are encouraging considering the findings of Abid (2018) who reported that current Tunisian EFL textbooks do not play the role of cultural mediators for IC development. The results indicated that the CAT, CMT and CIT can be considered as potential strong candidates for consideration in future reforms related to textbook and material design in Tunisia and elsewhere.

4. CONCLUSION

The results presented in this study indicated that the culture-based TM were conducive to the development of the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of IC. The findings also revealed that EFL teachers can enact interculturality in a wide range of pedagogical choices and practices, including the use of TM that offer connections between language and culture and the creation of learning experiences and environments that lend themselves to experiential learning, leading students to learn about the target culture while experimenting with the target language and urging them to engage in interculturality. Building on the findings presented here, HEIs need to give greater attention to the conceptual understanding of IC and the methods of IC development and assessment, both in terms of teacher training courses and in-service teacher development initiatives. It seems also imperative to refer to IC explicitly in EFL syllabi and curricula and to offer maximum experiential learning opportunities for optimal IC development. Overall, the results of the present work could serve as a springboard for further research on curricular developments in the local and global EFL contexts and could form a promising foundation and blueprint for future projects on designing TM and activities for IC development and assessment.

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