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**Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence through
Emotional Intelligence among EFL Learners**

*The Case of First-year Masters' Students of English at AbdElhafid Boussouf
University Centre-Mila*

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedication

In the name of **ALLAH**, the Most Merciful the Most Compassionate

I dedicate this humble work to :

My self, thank you for not giving up. For showing resilience in the face of doubt, for continuing
to move forward even when the path was unclear.

To the soul of my beloved **father** may you rest in eternal peace. Your memory is my silent
strength, and your love still echoes in my heart with every step I take.

To my precious **mother**, the power that keeps me alive. Your unconditional love, endless
patience, and prayers have carried me through my darkest and brightest days.

To my dear brothers **Hamza, Youcef, Lakhder**, and **Walid** thank you for your constant support
and encouragement.

To my wonderful sisters **Souad, Abla**, and **Linda**, your presence in my life is a true blessing.
Thank you for your kindness, warmth, and wisdom.

To my dearest nephews and nieces: **Anis, Ines, Assil, Anfel, Layan, Takwa**, and **Mohamed**
your joy and innocence bring light to my life.

To my cherished friends: **Douaa, Sousou, Lina, Fedwa, Nada, Malak, Khawla, Hadir, Samer,**
Hadil, Norhen, Rihab, Chourouk, and **Khawla** thank you for your genuine friendship, laughter,
and unwavering support throughout this journey.

With deepest love and gratitude, this thesis is dedicated to all of you.

Housna

Dedication

In the Name of **ALLAH**, the most Merciful the most Compassionate

I dedicate this work to:

To my **parents**, the soul of our family, your nurturing hands, patient heart, and unconditional love have molded me into who I am today. Every achievement I reach is a reflection of the dreams you've held for me once.

To my lifelong companions, **Aymen**, **Dhoha**, and **Abdsamed**, thank you for standing by me through it all. Our shared memories are a treasure I hold deeply, and your support has meant more than words can say.

Last but not least, to my friend and collaborator **BOUABDALLAH Housna**, this journey would have been far more difficult without you. Your patience, motivation, and tireless support carried me through moments of doubt. Together, we turned challenges into accomplishments. I will always cherish the memories and friendship we shared through it all.

Douaa

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Abstract

This study strives to explore how emotional intelligence influences the development of intercultural communicative competence among English as a Foreign Language students at Mila University Center. Within the context of this study, three research questions are addressed: (1) How do the different dimensions of emotional intelligence influence intercultural communicative competence? (2) What specific challenges do English as a Foreign Language students at Mila face in developing intercultural communicative competence? (3) How can emotional intelligence support overcome these challenges? In response to the questions, a descriptive research design is adhered to. To collect the necessary data, a questionnaire is administered to 55 first-year master's English as a Foreign Language students at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Mila. The main research findings reveal how crucial emotional intelligence is for helping students engage and connect with people from diverse cultures. Hence, learning how to understand and regulate emotions by leveraging the dimensions of emotional intelligence is essential for overcoming communication challenges. Eventually, the study proposes a set of recommendations for pedagogy and future research with the purpose of drawing more structured attention to improving learners' intercultural awareness through emotional intelligence.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence, emotional intelligence, challenges, dimensions of emotional intelligence, communication.

List of abbreviations

CC: Communicative Competence

ECI: Emotional Competence Inventory

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EI: Emotional Intelligence

EQI: Emotional Quotient Inventory

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

MSCEIT: Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test

TEIQ: Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

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Résumé

General Introduction

1. Background to the Study

The ability to communicate and learn a language depends on one's linguistic competence. Although the goal of a language's technical component is to communicate and comprehend people, genuine communication requires an awareness of a language's cultural context. Byram (1997) contends that effective cross-cultural communication requires more than just language ability. An awareness of how cultural norms influence emotions and reactions is therefore essential to being competent in a foreign language. Goleman (2006) argues that people with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better able to navigate complex social environments when facing cultural differences. In other words, EI is essential because it allows people to perceive, analyze, and respond to cultural differences and emotional cues in order to promote understanding and avoid misunderstandings.

The vital connection between EI and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been highlighted by recent research. They show that EI greatly improves people's ability to interact successfully across cultural boundaries by not allowing those emotional reactions to cultural differences that frequently result in misunderstandings to take place. Goleman (2006) notes that EI enables people to both manage their own emotions as well as comprehend the emotional signals of others to foster effective intercultural communication. Deardorff (2006) goes on to emphasize that ICC requires emotional sensitivity and receptivity to different viewpoints in addition to having the target cultural knowledge. According to Mayer et al. (2008), empathy, which is a core component of EI, is crucial for promoting cross-cultural interactions because it allows people to comprehend

the feelings and perspectives of persons from different cultural backgrounds. According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), cultural intelligence which is closely related to ICC also gains from the emotional awareness and self-control that EI offers to enable people to modify their behavior to suit various cultural circumstances. Brislin (2000) points out that people with high EI are better at handling interpersonal disputes brought on by cultural differences, indicating that the emotional awareness and adaptability that EI fosters also play a substantial role in resolving problems during international interactions. Additionally, studies by Johnson et al. (2006) show that EI has a favorable effect on the development of intercultural competence because it makes people more adaptable and sensitive to different social and emotional cues, which facilitates successful cross-cultural communication. When taken as a whole, these findings indicate that EI plays a significant role in developing ICC among EFL learners, yet there are still several gaps that need further investigation. While EI helps improve learners' emotional awareness and empathy, its effect on ICC can vary very much among students. This variation takes place due to differences in emotional sensitivity, the degree of cultural exposure, and the level of intercultural knowledge. Hence some inconsistencies are found in the application of EI in a variety of intercultural scenarios. Additionally, much of the current research tends to focus mainly on the emotional regulation aspect of EI rather than examining other important components such as cultural self-awareness and cognitive flexibility in intercultural communication. For that, future educators and research should highlight different aspects of this intelligence as well as investigate how integrating it with focused intercultural education and practical learning experiences could enhance EFL learners' capacity to navigate complex cultural interactions successfully.

2. Statement of the Problem

Linguistic proficiency is key to language learning and communication. It includes the Mastery of syntax, grammar, and vocabulary to understand and interact with others. While the core skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing focus on the technical side of communication, understanding the cultural background of a language is essential for real communication. Byram (1997) says that culture influences how language is used in real-life contexts, not just the meaning of words but also the social and cultural behavior associated with them. In fact, the need for cultural competence has never been more evident in global communication where cross-cultural exchanges are more frequent. Therefore, a crucial component of being fluent in a foreign language is having an understanding of how cultural norms affect feelings and responses. In other words, EI is crucial as it enables people to recognize, interpret, and react to emotional cues as well as cultural differences to foster understanding and prevent miscommunications.

In EFL classrooms there is often a gap between teaching intercultural competence and EI. In fact, many students struggle to communicate effectively in culturally diverse settings because they lack the EI to understand and navigate cultural differences. This often arises when pupils' emotional responses prevent their capacity to behave in a way that is culturally appropriate. For this reason, students may seem disinterested or even distant in an intercultural interaction, even if they are aware of intercultural communication. Speaking too quickly, avoiding eye contact, and displaying protective body language are common behaviors for students who experience nervousness during cross-cultural interactions. That is to say, students may rush with their speech in order to hide their discomfort or somehow get through the conversation as fast as possible. Such speed causes unclear communication and prevents their message from being understood by others. Moreover, anxiety in students leads them to avoid eye contact. Eye contact is one of the major

nonverbal cues; however, its meaning does vary across cultures. Cultural norms that do not value eye contact might clash with the expectations in cultures where direct eye contact is seen as a sign of engagement and confidence. As a result, when students lack EI they may avoid eye contact while others interpret them as disinterested, insecure, or uncomfortable, though they may have the cultural knowledge to know eye contact is important. These feelings are further expressed in defensive body language such as crossed arms which can also create an impression of disengagement or discomfort. These emotional responses prevent them from applying their cultural knowledge effectively, even being aware of the relevant cultural norms. Ultimately, this will lead to misinterpretations and communication breakdowns in intercultural connections.

3. Aim of the Study

In our increasingly interconnected world, having intercultural competence is crucial for effective communication across various cultural settings. This study aims to explore how EI influences the development of intercultural competence. Additionally, this research discovers how EI can improve the development of intercultural competence by emphasizing the emotional and social dimensions of communication, including empathy, self-regulation, and emotional awareness. Lastly, the research underscores the role of EI in overcoming communication barriers and minimizing misunderstandings in intercultural exchanges. By highlighting EI as a vital component for developing ICC, this study could lead to more effective teaching strategies that prepare students with the essential skills needed to thrive in global, multicultural settings.

4. Significance of the study

This study will provide great benefits to both teachers and EFL learners. For teachers, findings can offer useful techniques for developing a classroom environment that stresses emotional

awareness to help assist students in handling cultural differences confidently and respectfully. Teachers can also employ EI in classroom activities to foster interpersonal skills and communication in a variety of situations. For EFL learners, the dissertation offers practical tools for managing emotions, building empathy, and enhancing cultural awareness. Ultimately, both educators and learners will gain insights that promote deeper cultural understanding, emotional resilience, and meaningful global interactions.

5. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- .How do the different dimensions of emotional intelligence influence intercultural communicative competence?
- .What specific challenges do EFL students at Mila face in developing intercultural communicative competence?
- . How can emotional intelligence support overcome these challenges?

6. Research Methodology and Instrument

This study utilizes a questionnaire for students to achieve its objectives and address the research questions. The questionnaire is given to first-year Master's students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Center. The random sample includes 55 students, representing a target population of 107. This questionnaire collects valuable insights into how EI affects learners' interactions with various cultures and their overall language-learning experience. The questionnaire is sent in Google Form format to their Messenger groups so that data can be gathered effortlessly.

7. Structure of the Study

This dissertation consists of two main chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical aspects related to the topic, and it is divided into two sections. The second chapter is dedicated to the current research fieldwork.

The first section provides some theoretical considerations about ICC starts with the definition of the term given by various scholars. Moreover, it represents its components and several significant models in the field. Additionally, it highlights the means through which this competence is developed. In the last part, it introduces the notion of assessing this type of competence. As for the second section, it provides theoretical reflections on the notion of EI, commencing with definitions from various authors. Furthermore, it declares its dimensions and some relevant domains and theoretical models in the field. Additionally, it highlights how EI might be measured. Finally, an attempt is made to identify various means by which EI can be developed.

Chapter two is aimed at presenting the fieldwork of this particular research. In this chapter, the researchers account for data collection, analysis, and discussion of the findings. To close, chapter two ends by mentioning the various limitations of the study while providing a range of suggestions for pedagogy and the future research agenda.

Chapter One: Intercultural Communicative Competence and Emotional Intelligence

1.1. Section one: Intercultural Communicative Competence

Introduction

Mastering a foreign language does not revolve only around vocabulary and grammar; it also entails being aware of the culture in which the language is used. When students focus only on language rules, they struggle to interact socially with people of various cultures. Byram and Morgan (1994) argue that language is bound to culture and that cultural learning should be an essential part of language learning. In this regard, the ICC enables language learners to negotiate complex cultural settings and to have conversations that conform to a wide range of sociocultural norms. A person who possesses ICC cannot only speak the language fluently but also understand the nuances of different cultures, comprehend cultural differences, and change their ways of communicating as needed. Without ICC, communication may not be effective due to the cultural meanings influencing interpretation, leading to misunderstanding. Therefore, it is essential to integrate culture into language teaching to prepare competent and confident cross-cultural communicators.

This section deals with the first theoretical dimension of this research. It defines ICC before exploring the concept in detail. Later, it examines its key components and analyzes the various models that have been proposed in the field. Further on, the chapter presents the methods and tools for developing ICC to communicate effectively in intercultural contexts. In the end, it tackles how to assess ICC, looking at the criteria and methods that assess learners. In conclusion, the chapter summarizes the key points.

1.1.1. Definition

ICC has been a subject of interest for many scholars who have given a variety of definitions to explain its meaning. To begin with, Byram (1997) defined ICC as “the ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries” (p.7). That is to say, ICC is a complex ability that extends beyond language proficiency. It involves acknowledging and adjusting to linguistic, behavioral, and social norm variations to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Respecting and understanding one’s cultural norms, values, and customs is essential for a respectful and fruitful conversation.

Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) stressed that ICC involves actively putting cultural differences into practice in real-world encounters rather than only understanding them. It entails utilizing cultural awareness to modify attitudes, behaviors, and communication styles to fit various cultural circumstances. This real-world implementation guarantees polite and productive interactions to create deep cross-cultural bonds. Additionally, Fantini (2000) described ICC as “the ability to deal with differences in a positive manner” (p.12, as cited in Gu,2005). In other words, ICC is understood to be the capacity to communicate in a certain scenario acceptably and effectively to obtain the desired response. This demonstrates that competent individuals need to be able to communicate with others appropriately and successfully to harness this skill to accomplish their communication objectives.

According to Chen (1996), ICC is “the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other’s cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment” (p. 15). This refers to the skill of engaging in communication that honors and respects the cultural identities of everyone involved in a diverse environment. It means being able

to interact in ways that recognize and appreciate people's cultural backgrounds, while also adjusting communication behaviors to avoid misunderstandings.

Moreover, Young and Sercombe (2010) explained ICC as “a dynamic process by which people draw on and use the resources and processes of cultures with which they are familiar but also those they may not typically be associated with in their interactions with others” (p. 181). Accordingly, developing intercultural competence requires more than just applying one's cultural knowledge when interacting with others, but also widening perspectives and adapting behaviors to fit those new cultural circumstances. In order to develop ICC, one must practice appropriate behavior and engage with people from different cultures to conform to various social and cultural norms.

In light of the aforementioned, ICC is the ability to communicate and interact effectively with people from different cultures. It involves understanding one's own culture and being open to adapting to others. It helps navigate cultural differences with respect and flexibility. Ultimately, it is a skill that everyone can develop over time and through experience.

1.1.2. The Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The rising concept of foreign language teaching of CC was expanded by Byram's (1997) theory of ICC. Previous CC models, such as those published by Canale and Swain (1980), Halliday (1975), Hymes (1972), and van Ek (1986), primarily addressed the skill of using language in a way that is appropriate to the context and purpose. Byram (1997) contended that such models neglected learners' social identity and cultural awareness in cross-cultural communication, concentrated instead on the hypothetical native speaker and imposed an unrealistic goal on foreign language learners. His solution was to conceptualize an integrated model of ICC that brought in ICC as a

model that did not fit in any language or culture. To emphasize the idea that people play different roles while communicating outside of their environment, he refused to use the word speakers to describe people engaging in intercultural conversation. He describes an intercultural speaker as having a general understanding of the culture of the speaker, having an open-minded attitude, and being capable of making a connection between knowledge from a foreign culture and his or her own. The notion reflects the significance of the five *savoirs* at the center of Byram's ICC model.

1.1.2.1. Knowledge (Savoir)

Byram (1997) underlines the key position of information in creating cross-cultural relations. An intercultural speaker has two kinds of knowledge, he explains. The first kind of knowledge is one's own culture and is often acquired incidentally through family interactions, education, and social interactions. This is a process of primary socialization within the family and secondary socialization through schooling. Human beings' knowledge about their culture and habits is derived from this and may affect the way of socializing with others.

Knowledge about the modes of social interactions among cultures is the second category. It is a type of knowledge of other civilizations' histories, beliefs, and customs. Byram (1997) holds that this is crucial knowledge to enable effective cross-cultural communication, as it will help individuals negotiate cultural differences in social encounters. However, he emphasizes that communication is above mere knowledge. It must be accompanied by the appropriate mindset and skills to understand and respond to new situations that may arise in the course of cross-cultural communication.

Drawing on this concept, Byram (1997) describes knowledge as a knowledge of how identities and social groups operate. It calls for consciousness of one's cultural production and practice as

well as that of the interlocutor. It also calls for awareness of the overall mechanisms of peoples' and societies' interactions enabling intercultural speakers to recognize cultural differences and adjust their communication strategies accordingly, leading to more meaningful and productive cross-cultural interactions. This deep understanding enables intercultural speakers to recognize cultural differences and adjust their communication strategies accordingly, leading to more meaningful and productive cross-cultural interactions.

1.1.2. 2. Intercultural Attitudes (Savoir-Etre)

Intercultural attitudes are centered on the individual's capacity to manage the diversity of cultures in terms of being open, curious, and tolerant. An intercultural communicator should be receptive to new habits, values, or practices that he or she might adopt in communicating with those from other cultures, as proposed by Byram (1997). This involves perspective-taking, where one takes on the other person's worldview and avoids responses that could be offensive or uncomfortable. Intercultural communication also involves a willingness to understand various perceptions and remain calm and respectful even in the event of unexpected or strange cultural practices. The main point of this dimension is pointing towards the centrality of attitude in cross-cultural interaction. He stresses that effective communication is based on curiosity regarding one's own culture and other cultures and an awareness that there are differences between cultures. Intercultural communicators must be open to accepting these differences and trying to comprehend messages both from their own and the other person's point of view. This interest will not be passive but should be such that people will actively go and learn more, thus preventing stereotypes, prejudice, or misconception from hindering the conversation.

Byram (1997) further highlights that instead of than looking at their assumptions as being the only valid ones, individuals must attempt to see their values from another person's cultural

perspective. To be open to letting go of one's prejudice and to accept other understandings is the first step towards successful intercultural communication. Intercultural communicators foster a setting in which ideas, beliefs, and concepts can be shared without judgment, and this leads to effective and respectful communication.

1.1.2.3. Skills of Interpreting and Relating (Savoir Comprendre)

The third level of Byram's (1997) ICC model is interpreting and relating skills (*savoir comprendre*). The third one supplements the first two_ knowledge and attitudes_ by adding that successful intercultural communication requires more than just having knowledge of other cultures or a good attitude. Byram (1997) outlines that declarative knowledge is required but must be complemented by procedural knowledge, which allows a person to know how to act in a specific situation. In effective communication, an intercultural speaker must be capable of recognizing and interpreting messages from what they previously know and aligning them with similar concepts within their own culture. This skill also involves understanding cultural nuances, such as metaphors and implications, which otherwise would be confusing. Students use their own culture and other cultures to comprehend documents or events to explain them and to establish connections between different cultural contexts (Byram, 2008; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). From what they go through, individuals are capable of making up their minds and coming up with strategies to cope with unfamiliar cultural and social environments so that they can perform better.

1.1.2.4. Discovery and Interaction Skills (Savoir Apprendre/Faire)

The discovery and interaction component of intercultural competence (*savoir apprendre/faire*) pertains to the functional dimension of intercultural communication, paying attention to the way one should act and respond in real situations of contact with foreign cultures. Unlike the rest of the determinants, this factor emphasizes rapid learning of new cultural knowledge and applying it when interacting, regardless of whether the speaker possesses some prior knowledge about what occurs. Byram (1997) explains how these skills enable individuals to learn and adapt to new cultural elements while communicating. Subsequently, they can improve their knowledge and respond appropriately to different communication settings. To successfully achieve this level, intercultural speakers must have developed the above factors—knowledge, attitudes, and interpretation skills—because these lay the foundation for effective and respectful communication. Without prior preparation, a speaker may accidentally appear to be disrespectful. Therefore, being able to search, locate, and integrate new cultural information into one's communication style is required for effective interaction (Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002)

1.1.2.5. Critical Cultural Awareness (Savoir s'engager)

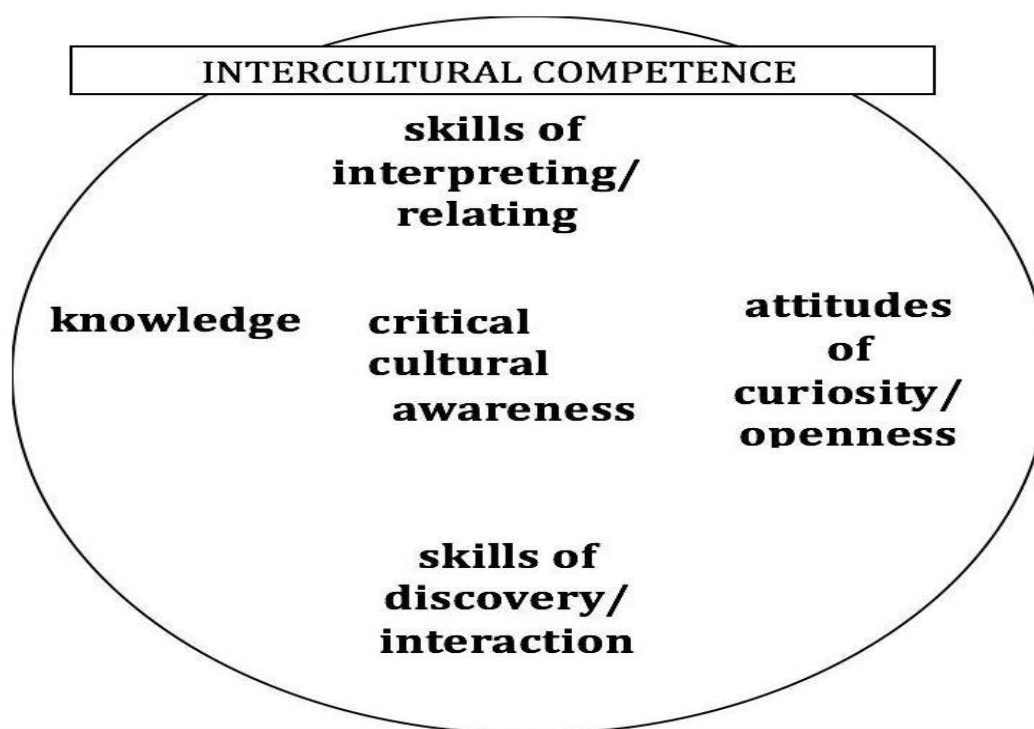
The final component of Byram's (1997) model of ICC addresses the ability to critically evaluate the products, practices, and views of the home culture and other cultures based on clear and explicit criteria. The sole factor that gives priority to the pedagogical aspect of intercultural communication, emphasizes the necessity for the cultivation of awareness through study and not by simple informal contact. Byram (1997) argues that an intercultural speaker should not only be culturally sensitive but also respect and appreciate diverse traditions, behaviors, and beliefs. Such sensitivity can reduce cultural conflicts and make communication more effective. In the realm of education, Byram (2008) urges teachers to facilitate intercultural awareness among students as it enables them

to study both their culture and the target culture. The development of this competence allows learners to study and understand differences between cultures, thus allowing them to communicate effectively in a globalized society (Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002; Moeller & Nugent, 2014).

The following diagram gives an overview of the components that Byram deems required for building ICC.

Figure 1

Byram, M., (1997). Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence.



1.1.3. Models of the Intercultural Communicative Competence

There are a lot of research works and studies that are carried out to get to terms with modeling intercultural competence. They attempt to devise a multiplicity of models so that the concept of competence can be comprehended and therefore contribute to its development. Thus, there are a

wide number of models referred to as models of ICC that vary from simple to complex frameworks that involve higher-order dimensions. Spitzberg and Chagon (2009) provide a typology that describes the principal types of ICC models. In their own words, ICC models can be categorized into five general categories that share the same aim of conceptualizing ICC but differ in how to achieve this function. These forms are: compositional models, co-orientational models, developmental models, adaptation models, and causal path models. Below, it is not intended to provide a comprehensive description of these types; instead, they are simply mentioned briefly to indicate the frequency of assumptions that try to conceptualize ICC.

1.1.3.1. Compositional Models

These models attempt to define the components of ICC by presenting possible features and capabilities that are supposed to underlie competent interactions. One of the distinguishing features that set this category apart from others is the fact that compositional models are not interested in the relations that might link the hypothesized features of supposed competence (Spitzberg & Chagon, 2009). Therefore, a number of researchers stick to the basics of the composition kind of models in their efforts to conceptualize ICC.

1.1.3.2. Co-orientational models

Regarding the usefulness of this kind of models, it is assumed that such models enable one to emphasize the main importance of achieving certain levels of mutual understanding by various means of interaction. Besides, the usefulness of these models is explained by their efforts to offer answers to the main question of how individuals can adjust to each other's senses despite differing in their cultural backgrounds. Conversely, one of the primary challenges that such models would eventually meet is conceptualizing mutual understanding because the majority of typical

interactions between experienced interactants are characterized by ambiguity (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

1.1.3.3. Causal Path Models

Causal path models are set up to identify the assumed interrelations that pull the components of competence together; they are explained as the most convenient form that may be transformed into testable propositions. These models attempt in this regard to characterize ICC as a theoretical linear system that is empirically testable utilizing conventional cross-sectional multivariable techniques (Spitzberg & Chagon, 2009).

It is worth mentioning that the supporters of this category commonly assume that those models exist so that they are adaptable to the research purposes and needs. Apart from that, causal relations oversee the majority of the causal relationships between the items of competence, the factor in which one can pose explicit hypotheses as well as evident means to check them. From another point of view, this can be regarded as a disadvantage of the application of causal path models; it is argued that being freely exposed to hypothesis testing and changing processes might interrupt the usefulness of such models in delivering well-established theories of ICC (Spielberg & Chagon, 2009). It must be pointed out that the diversity of the aforementioned types of models reflects the significance accorded to the term ICC in intercultural communication. These models may be regarded as various ways that try to achieve the same objective which is a conceptualization of ICC, hence it is not possible to prove one model superior to another because each one of them is based on a different philosophy that certainly has strengths and weaknesses.

1.1.3.4. Developmental Models

The developmental type of models is designed to explain how our ICC evolves. These models focus on the various stages of development and maturity that competence experiences throughout its growth. They suggest that individuals can enhance their competence as time passes and through engaging in diverse interactions across different cultures (Spielberg & Chagon, 2009). According to Spitzberg and Chagon (2009), developmental models are thought to enrich theories of intercultural communication by proposing a sequence of stages that help clarify the concept of intercultural competence. However, it is important to recognize that these models have limitations, particularly in identifying the interpersonal and intercultural traits that contribute to the development of the desired competence.

1.1.3.5. Adaptation Models

In the adaptation Models of intercultural competence, individuals learn and change their behaviors, attitudes, and communication styles to a different cultural setting (Bennett, 1986). These models see adaptation as a process where people move through distinct phases to become more at ease and more interested in a different cultural context. These models make clear that adaptation is not only an instant development, but a profound personal transformation that occurs through experience, interaction, and effort. Additionally, the models indicate the importance of openness, flexibility, and social support in addressing culture shock and stress in international settings (Bennett, 1986). Eventually, individuals balance their original cultural identity with new cultural influences by adopting and valuing their own culture while interacting with others in ways that appreciate and respect their own cultural background. As a result, the models emphasize distinct aspects of intercultural adaptation by highlighting the idea that Intercultural competence develops over time through learning and experience.

1.1.4. Methods and Tools for the Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence

All along the ongoing effort to develop learners' ICC, it is essential for researchers in the field of intercultural communication to devise a variety of methods and tools on which practitioners can rely to promote both competence and awareness.

1.1.4.1 Methods for the Development of Intercultural Competence

According to Huber and Reynolds (2014), the methods that are used for the development of intercultural competence are:

1.1.4.1.1. Cognitive Methods

Cognitive methods can be used to collect data on cultural diversity such as political and social groups, behavioral norms, history, religion...etc. This information could be presented through lectures, seminars, and group discussions.

1.1.4.1.2. Metacognitive Methods

Metacognitive methods enable learners to learn about themselves and their possible reactions to others who are from different cultural backgrounds. Metacognitive methods are useful to help learners change their negative attitudes to the positive, especially when they can be applied in informal learning.

1.1.4.1.3. Behavioral Methods

Behavioral methods are viewed as an extension of the cognitive methods. The primary goal of these methods is to assist in gaining effective behaviors and to substitute inappropriate ones.

1.1.4.1.4. Experimental Methods (Learning by Experience)

1.1.4.1.4.1. Experience

Learning through experience forms, attitudes of openness, curiosity, respect, and provides knowledge of others' cultures. Maximum outcome can be achieved using this method while experience is earned directly through behaving and communicating with members of others' cultures.

1.1.4.1.4.2. Comparison

Using the comparison method, the learner can compare the rare to the frequent and consider the rare as distinct but not inferior. Differences here could be perceived in a non-judgmental manner. The power of comparison gives knowledge and understanding regarding individuals from diverse cultures and generates respect and receptive attitudes.

1.1.4.1.4.3. Analysis

The student can analyze the hidden meaning of other individuals' actions and seek a justification for the difference between these actions and his. This can be done during debates, observations, and questioning oneself about actions. Analysis can lead to curiosity, the power to interpret, and provide knowledge concerning cultural contexts.

1.1.4.1.4.4. Reflection

Reflection is a method used to allow learners to step out of their experience of learning to help them develop critical thinking and improve future performance through a review of their experience.

1.4.1.4.5. Cooperative Activity

The student must be participating in cooperative activities with people of different cultural backgrounds. Co-working with other people makes it easy to learn attitudes of respect, develops listening, observing, analyzing competencies, and leads to empathy.

1.1.4.1.5. Attribution Methods

The core of the attribution methods is based upon conclusions out of facts. That is to say, learners are enabled to explore the dimensions of a certain culture depending on the study of observable behavior demonstrated by individuals who belong to it.

1.1.4.2. Tools for the Development of Intercultural Competence

Huber and Reynolds (2014) provide some tools that can be used by teachers to develop intercultural competence; they are:

1.1.4.2.1. Verbal or Written Description

The description must be followed by a verbal or written description of the same event or others' behavior from various perspectives. Teachers must ask learners why people tend to perceive the same phenomena, events, or actions differently and what will occur if we judge people unjustly based on first impressions.

1.1.4.2.2. Role Play and Simulation

The tool improves the intercultural ability of the learners by acting distinctly from normal practice and habits and assuming a different identity. The benefit of the method is that the learners come to understand how it feels to be different. They also learn to understand that despite people expressing differences on every side, differences do not make them less valuable. As a result, these

activities build knowledge of similarities and differences and verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions. Eventually, they can also build attitudes of openness, curiosity, and skills of adapting.

1.1.4.2.3. Presentations

Presentations can be prepared about their home country and the host country to develop intercultural competence. It should aim to generate interest in the home country where students are residing as well as in knowledge construction in foreign nations. Students can reveal differences between the culture and foreign cultures by comparing them. For instance, one aspect of one culture can be compared with its counterpart from another culture. Presentations can be depicted using CDs, videos, and animations.

1.1.4.2.4. Social Media and Other Online Tools

Social media like platforms, chat rooms, and public forums represent powerful tools for teachers to develop intercultural competence in any learning context. As issues of religion, social class, ethnicity, and gender often become important in these interactions, interculturally competent communication in these contexts must imply both cultural awareness and sensitivity so that the views and comments exchanged are respectful even if they reflect disagreements.

1.1.5. Assessment of the Intercultural Communicative Competence

Teachers play a vital role in ensuring that students have the cultural competence to engage in cultural differences respectfully and appropriately. Educators should determine how well students recognize and deal with cultural differences with the help of the various assessment techniques available in the field. Those tests measure how students understand different perspectives, communicate effectively across cultures, and respond to challenges in diverse settings. Well-constructed assessments of intercultural competence develop students' awareness, empathy, and

communication which are so necessary in diverse environments. By employing diverse assessment methods, educators can ensure that students comprehend not just cultural differences but also how to handle them wisely and respectfully. Those assessments include: scenario-based assessments, peer assessments, interviews, and project-based assessments.

1.1.5.1. Scenario-based Assessments

Scenario-based assessments test students' intercultural competence by placing them in real-world situations where they are required to use their cultural awareness, adaptability, and problem-solving. Students analyze a given scenario by identifying possible cultural misunderstandings as well as suggesting appropriate responses. That is to say, if a team member avoids direct eye contact, it might be mistaken for disinterest. Students must assess the situation by navigating intercultural interactions with critical thinking and adaptability.

1.1.5.2. Peer Evaluations

Peer evaluations in intercultural competency help students assess the capacity of their peers to respond to different views when discussing ideas with classmates and producing collaborative work. In the case of a multicultural team-based project, students provide feedback to their peers. They evaluate their peers' willingness to hear other opinions without judgment, how they adopt each other's cultural norms to deal with one another, and how they tailor their communication styles to another's mindset. This technique of assessment promises self-reflection, more meaningful cross-cultural interactions, and the fundamental knowledge necessary for successful cultural exchanges.

1.1.5.3. Interviews

Interviews are an effective technique for intercultural competence evaluation. They evaluate students' grasp, perspective, and communication abilities in a small group or individually. They include open-ended questions on adaptability and cultural variations, as well as on global issues. This examination involves critical thinking, empathy, and cultural norms. Interviews also allow students to verbalize their thoughts in a way that written assessments do not, making them a valuable tool for measuring intercultural competence through conversation and immediate interaction.

1.1.5.4. Project-based Assessment

Project-based assessment tests students' intercultural competence through hands-on projects that value collaboration and problem-solving within various cultural settings. Students experience real-world challenges by finding solutions for cross-cultural communication issues or preparing presentations on global topics. This method improves students' critical thinking in addition to their cultural adaptability. This means that students will apply their knowledge in practical scenarios and work in teams so that they can develop empathy and an understanding of diverse perspectives. Although memorization and theoretical knowledge are adopted by traditional assessments, this approach allows students to apply their learning in real-world settings and showcase their ability to navigate cultural differences effectively in diverse environments.

Conclusion

This section sheds light on the theoretical aspects related to ICC. It started by spanning fundamental definitions provided by scholars while showing its components and introducing the

prevailing models in the field. Furthermore, the ways through which intercultural competence is developed were dealt with. Lastly, the section highlight how to assess this type of competence.

To sum up, a crucial component of being fluent in a foreign language requires more than just mastering grammar and vocabulary, it also involves a deep understanding of how culture may affect responses and language use. By knowing the cultural aspects of ICC people can adjust their actions and language style to meet the expectations of speakers. As society rapidly diversifies, this competence needs to be developed to foster understanding, peace, and cooperation in global settings. In fact, teaching ICC plays a vital role in its overall advancement. There are many methods that teachers can use to develop a better understanding of cultural differences and help students perform better in various situations. To prepare learners to engage with numerous people from various cultural backgrounds, ICC should be taught with suitable theoretical knowledge in addition to the required skills involved in interculturalism. The process of teaching this competence demands the act of inciting people to get to know not just a culture that is different from theirs, but also to develop their attitudes and behaviors accordingly. Measuring someone's ICC can be quite a challenge as the nature of ICC tends to be complex and dynamic. To overcome the shortcomings of traditional assessments, reasonable methods are being used to test ICC. These methods enable a more complete assessment of the abilities and mindsets that lead to successful communication across cultures. Eventually, it is essential to reflect and gain feedback to continually reinforce ICC development and improve abilities over time.

1.2. Section Two: Emotional Intelligence

Introduction

Humans are emotional creatures. They make many decisions based on their emotions to establish and maintain stronger relationships. Today's overwhelming era requires one to be more emotionally intelligent than ever. In fact, EI requires people to see feelings coming, recognize their impact, and manage them effectively. Those with higher EI have the ability to align their hearts with their minds. They channel their feelings and cope with their changing moods proficiently. Goleman (1995) suggests that people with lots of EI realize their own emotions and can identify them in others. This allows them to adjust their inner state and communicate better. EI promotes improved emotional stability to respond to any situation in a more measured and as well as mindful way.

This second section provides theoretical reflections on the notion of EI. To begin with, it gathers and synthesizes definitions from various authors. Furthermore, it breaks down its constituents and sheds light on the relevant theoretical models in the field. Additionally, it highlights its main areas and how EI might be measured. Finally, an attempt is made to identify various ways in which EI can be developed.

1.2.1. Definitions

1.2.1.1. Emotions

Emotions have been a subject of interest for many scholars who have given a variety of definitions to explain its meaning. Goleman (1995) claims, "The very root of the word emotion is *motere*, the Latin verb "to move," plus the prefix "e-" to connote "move away," suggesting that the tendency to act is implicit in every emotion." That is to say, emotions play a big role when making

decisions or reacting to situations. They act like signals or internal stimuli that influence how one responds. Goleman (1995) suggests that feelings often guide what people do, and they can support their thinking when making choices. He explains that emotions and reason usually work hand in hand to help people handle daily situations more effectively. Additionally, emotions can be defined as “a complex experience of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behavior that reflects the personal significance of a thing, an event, or a state of affairs” (Solomon, 2019, p.1). Accordingly, emotions are made up of thoughts, body feelings, and actions. They are not just feelings people passively experience, but responses that reflect what something means to them personally. Emotions are deeply tied to what others value and care about, and they help humans respond effectively to different situations in life.

As specified by Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2007), an emotion is a sophisticated psychological condition that incorporates three different stages: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response. Meaning that emotions significantly influence our thoughts, behaviors, and interactions. They are complex feelings that influence how one thinks and acts. They are not just feelings but also involve physical changes in people's bodies and how they express themselves. They serve as internal signals that guide our decision-making as well as affect one's judgments and behaviors. Lazarus, R. S. (1991) explained that emotions are shaped by how individuals assess and interpret events. He believed that humans do not simply react to situations, but also assess whether the situation affects them personally and whether they have the resources to deal with it. Therefore, emotions help them adapt to their environment, guide their choices, and prepare them to act. Without this cognitive appraisal process, their emotions would be less meaningful or helpful.

In short, emotions are a natural and important part of peoples' character. They help individuals understand what they are going through, how to respond to different situations, and how to relate to others. They also play a significant role in the choices they make every day, from small decisions to big life changes. When humans understand and manage their emotions well, they can handle problems better, improve their relationships, and feel more in control.

1.2.1.2. Intelligence

Numerous scholars have offered varying definitions of the term intelligence. To begin with, Piaget (1963) defines intelligence as an " ... assimilation to the extent that it incorporates all the given data of experience within its framework . . . there can be no doubt either, that mental life is also an accommodation to the environment. Assimilation can never be pure because by incorporating new elements into its earlier schemata, the intelligence constantly modifies the latter in order to adjust them to new elements." p(6-7). That is to say, intelligence involves both assimilation putting new knowledge in what we already know and accommodation changing our perspective when new knowledge is not a fit. This continuous process allows us to learn and adapt to the world.

Additionally, Stoddard (1943) stresses that intelligence is the ability to perform challenging tasks and call for expertise. These tasks can be complex, entail sophisticated thinking, and require an understanding of abstractions. Intelligent thinking also encompasses the ability to solve problems efficiently and make sure actions lead to the achievement of a specified objective. It encompasses coming up with valuable contributions to society and creating new ideas. To accomplish these jobs, one has to remain concentrated, be active, and avoid allowing feelings to get in the way of thinking.

Moreover, Gardner (1993) explains Intelligence as "the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings"(p. 33). In other words, Intelligence is the capacity to solve problems or produce things that are meaningful and valuable within a particular culture. Each culture places a different set of abilities, so intelligence is not just a question of being skilled at school subjects. For example, in one culture, it would be intelligent to be a great storyteller, while in another, it would be intelligent to be a good engineer or artist. Intelligence is using your abilities in a way that is meaningful to the people around you.

Based on the foregoing, Intelligence is the ability to learn, think, solve problems, and adapt to new situations.

1.2.1.3. Emotional Intelligence

The concept of EI has grown in popularity over the last two decades, generating interest both at a social and a professional level. Many scholars presented a variety of definitions to establish its meaning. Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first who come up with a definition for the term EI//// "subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p.189). In other words, EI is the power to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. After further research, Salovey and Mayer(1997) fine-tuned the definition to be more clear "emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional intellectual growth" (p. 10). That is to say, comprehending the difference between feelings such as frustration and disappointment, or between happiness and excitement, which helps in self-regulation and in understanding others' feelings as well.

In the same regard, Daniel Goleman (1995) defines EI as a set of important skills that help people manage their emotions and behavior. Emotionally intelligent people, according to him, can maintain their motivation and keep going despite challenges. It involves the ability to control one's emotions such as sadness and stress. It further includes empathy as a way to understand and worry about other people's feelings as well as an optimistic attitude concerning the future (hope).

On the other hand, Bar-On (2006) defines EI as “a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands” (p. 14). He addresses that EI is the capacity to express oneself and understand one's feelings in a way that other individuals can also understand, and to listen and answer others' feelings, the capacity to effectively manage social situations, deal with conflict constructively, and remain composed under stress.

According to Nordin (2012) and Shafiq and Rana (2016), EI is the ability that allows a person to perceive, understand, manage, use emotions to their benefit, and be in control of emotions instead of being controlled by them. It also involves using emotions in a wise way to solve issues, make productive decisions, and adapt to different situations.

From all that has been said, EI is the ability to understand, manage, and use emotions in a positive way to communicate well, handle stress, solve problems, and build good relationships.

1.2.2. Components of EI

1.2.2.1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the capacity for one to acknowledge and comprehend individual feelings and all their effects on thoughts and actions. When people are self-aware, they can accurately label their

emotions of frustration, joy, or anxiety and grasp what sparks such feelings. It is also truly about completely understanding how emotions truly determine interactions with others. This awareness of others enables people to manage their responses as well as prevent emotional reactions from negatively affecting their judgment. In its very essence, self-awareness provides a much clearer mirror of one's own inner emotional world and allows for even more conscious and intentional behavior.

1.2.2.2. Self-regulation

Self-regulation is the natural capacity for controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions in manners that are helpful and constructive. It is about managing an individual's emotions in quite challenging situations without actively letting emotions drive behavior in negative directions. Certain people with strong self-regulation skills are quite able to stay calm as well as focused under pressure rather than reacting quite impulsively. They are able to pause for reflection at the moment and then choose certain responses that align fully with their goals as well as values. This certain ability helps many people to remain in quite flexible form, managing stress, and making more considerate decisions even in the emotionally charged of certain environments. Overall, self-regulation generally promotes improved emotional stability to respond to each situation in a more measured and also mindful way.

1.2.2.3. Empathy

Empathy is about people having the ability to understand how others feel due to a shared past experience or by putting themselves in their shoes. It can also look different, depending on the situation, the people involved, and cultural or social norms. It often involves active listening and validation. People with a high sense of empathy do not judge others' thoughts, feelings, or

perspectives. Instead, they treat them with dignity and help them cope with their emotions and experiences. By showing them that they are not alone, a substantial difference can be made to a person's health and happiness.

1.2.2.4. Motivation

Motivation is the internal or external force that energizes and directs people's behavior toward specific goals or outcomes. It is what pushes them to take action, persevere through challenges, and strive for success. It is the engine that boosts people forward in their journey and helps them know their full potential.

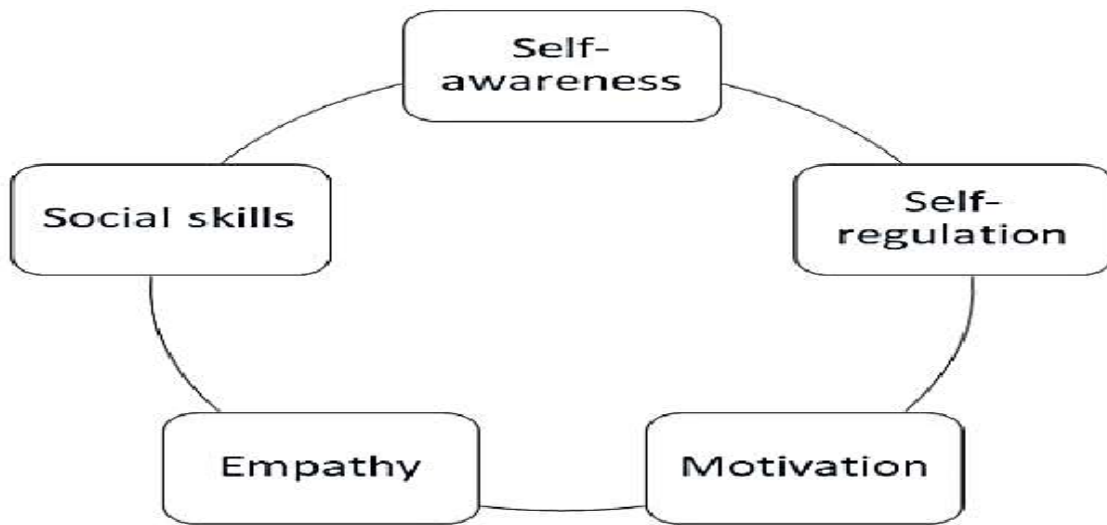
1.2.2.5. Social Skills

Social skills involve competently handling and keeping up connections with people. It involves communication and cooperation. It also involves the ability to rapport with people, even in challenging situations. People with strong social skills are good at networking, conflict resolution, and collaboration. They are able to influence others quite positively and foster a true sense of trust and cooperation. It plays a crucial role in determining their level of engagement, effort, and achievement.

The following figure presents the components of EI

Figure 2

Components of Emotional Intelligence.



1.2.3. Domains of Emotional Intelligence

1.2.3.1. Knowing Emotions

Knowing emotions is all about self-awareness. To be effective in this domain, individuals must have an understanding of how they feel at different points in time and in various situations, and be able to express those feelings. It is also important to understand baseline emotions. Recognizing what triggers new emotions, along with the mental and physical signs that indicate emotional changes is essential.

1.2.3.2. Managing Emotions

Managing emotions focuses on self-regulation. To be effective in this domain, individuals need the ability to regulate their behavior regardless of the emotions they are experiencing. This can be achieved in part by developing strategies to return to an emotional baseline when disrupted. One

such strategy could be counting to 10. Emotional strength and resilience can also be boosted through activities such as exercise or meditation.

1.2.3.3. Motivating Oneself

Motivating oneself pertains to managing personal motivation, which is essentially another form of emotional regulation. Motivation is a critical factor for success in the workplace, often more influential than core ability. Maintaining motivation can be supported by pursuing personal passions, setting ambitious but achievable goals, celebrating successes, and striving to maintain a positive outlook.

1.2.3.4. Recognizing Others' Emotions

Recognizing others' emotions involves the ability to identify the emotions that others are experiencing. This can be understood as the capacity for empathy or the ability to adopt another person's perspective. This ability can be improved by developing closer relationships, understanding others' typical emotional states, reflecting on non-verbal communication, and being mindful of behavioral changes that may indicate emotional shifts.

1.2.3.5. Handling Relationships

Handling relationships emphasizes engaging effectively with others, regardless of the emotional states involved. By empathizing with and understanding the emotions of others, it becomes possible to recognize their emotional needs and desires. Responding appropriately to these emotional cues is a key part of maintaining strong relationships. EI involves understanding and managing both personal and others' emotions. In his book, Daniel Goleman breaks this concept down into the following five areas of EI.

1.2.4. Models of Emotional Intelligence

1.2.4.1. The Mixed Model

The mixed model was developed by Daniel Goleman in 1995. The concept behind the mixed model of EI is based on the belief that people's success at work and in life is not just about how smart they are, but also about how well they can understand and manage their emotions and those of others. This approach highlights the importance of blending emotional skills with personal traits like motivation and empathy. It suggests that EI goes beyond mere intellectual capability; it is about how we use that intelligence in everyday situations. It sees people as capable of developing their emotional skills through learning and experience to reinforce the idea that EI can be nurtured over time. This approach contrasts with the ability model which focuses solely on cognitive skills, and the trait model, which emphasizes personality aspects. This comprehensive perspective is particularly valuable in various settings. It emphasizes the role of emotional competencies in fostering effective communication, leadership, and interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, the mixed model of EI offers a framework for enhancing emotional functioning to contribute to personal growth and professional success.

1.2.4.2. The Ability Model

The ability model was developed by Mayer and Salovey in 1990. This model considers EI as a set of skills that enables people to understand and manage emotions. These skills include understanding emotions in oneself and others by using emotions to reason better, understanding emotional changes, and managing emotions intelligently. The ability model differs from the mixed model and the trait model. The mixed model incorporates personality traits and other skills like motivation while the trait model considers EI as part of an individual's personality. The ability model addresses only mental abilities related to emotions. The model is typically assessed through performance-based tests, where people perform tasks related to emotions. It is more scientific and

based on how well a person can actually deal with emotions, as opposed to how they feel about their capabilities. This model is often used in schools and the workplace to help improve communication and relationships.

1.2.4.3. The Trait Model

The trait model of EI was created by K. V. Petrides in 2001. The philosophy behind the trait model of EI is grounded in the field of individual differences in psychology. It suggests that EI is better understood as a part of one's personality structure, rather than just a cognitive skill. This model highlights that EI consists of a stable set of traits and tendencies that shape people's behavior in various situations. It acknowledges that each person has a distinct emotional profile molded by his or her personality and that these traits play a significant role in influencing well-being, decision-making, and social interactions. The Trait Model of EI plays a crucial role in fostering a positive environment in both individual and organizational contexts.

1.2.5. Measurement of Emotional Intelligence

As EI gained recognition in psychological research, the need to measure it objectively became increasingly important. The complexity of EI has led to the development of multiple measurement tools, each aiming to capture different aspects of emotional functioning. Those measurements include : Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test(MSCEIT) ,Emotional Quotient Inventory(EQI), Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire(TEIQ), Emotional Competence Inventory(ECI).

1.2.5.1. Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test

MSCEIT is a performance-based test that examines one's ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions. It uses emotion-based tasks (e.g., recognizing emotions in faces or photos) to score emotional abilities based on objective testing without self-reports.

1.2.5.2. Emotional Quotient Inventory

EQI is among the most commonly used self-report measures and was designed by Reuven Bar-On. It evaluates several emotional and social abilities such as emotional self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, stress tolerance, and decision-making.

1.2.5.3. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

TEIQue is another self-report instrument that has been developed by K.V. Petrides, which measures emotional self-perceptions. It provides a wide range of characteristics such as well-being, emotional control, and sociability, which are all considered to be part of EI.

1.2.5.4. Emotional Competence Inventory

Based on Daniel Goleman's model of EI, the ECI is a 360-degree survey. It gets information from the subject and his or her colleagues supervisors or peers to assess emotional and social skills relevant to work performance.

1.2.6. Means of Developing Emotional Intelligence

1.2.6.1. Understanding Self-emotions

The first step toward improving EI is to recognize and identify the source of one's own emotions and their possible triggers. A big part of EQ is acknowledging and understanding one's own feelings as well as the possible impacts on the people around them. Self-emotional understanding includes

knowing what and why one is doing something as well as When he or she has to make a particular decision. It also involves identifying one's driving principles and motivation. That fundamental understanding of one's own emotions helps with expressing needs and advocating for meaningful ideas. People with high EI navigate conversations assertively without coming off as aggressive or passive-aggressive.

1.2.6.2. Active Listening

Active listening is the practice of listening to understand. It is about focusing all of your attention on what the other person is saying rather than waiting for a chance to speak. It often involves making a conscious effort to hear not only the words being spoken, but also the complete message behind them. Showing active listening can be achieved by using body language and eye contact as well as paraphrasing what the speaker is saying to show understanding. Good listeners always make others finish talking before they actually respond and give meaningful honest feedback. Active listening is a fundamental part of communication. Making an effort to show the people involved in the conversation that their words are being heard can build empathy, trust, and connection.

1.2.6.3. Practicing Mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness is a powerful tool to develop EI. It boosts awareness of people's thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they occur without judgments or immediate reactions. It can be developed through regular meditation where one focuses on his or her breath and observes thoughts and emotions as they arise or pass. However, it is not limited to meditation alone, it can be practiced at any moment of the day by fully engaging with the present task. The key is to do so with full attention and without judgment. This practice increases patience and strengthens the ability to choose relevant responses.

1.2.6.4. Nourishing the Body

Nourishing the body's physical well-being and emotional health go hand in hand. Adopting healthy lifestyle habits can boost emotional regulation. Regular exercise improves sleeping and a balanced diet contributes to overall emotional resilience. Exercising in particular stimulates the release of relaxing hormones which can improve mood and reduce stress. Prioritizing sleeping and nutrition enables better emotional regulation to support both one's body and mind.

Conclusion

This section explores the basic theoretical foundations of EI by departing from exploring the main definitions given by various researchers. It then determines its major components and illustrates several important frameworks in the field. Subsequently, it spans the methodologies used to measure and quantify this kind of intelligence. Finally, it describes the means through which EI can be developed.

In summary, EI consists of crucial factors such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. All these factors make individuals recognize and control their emotions, stay motivated, and maintain healthy relationships. All these are the foundation of proper social and personal functioning. There are several models that describe EI, including the ability model, the mixed model, and the trait model. Each model has a different structure for describing the make-up of emotional abilities and how they are applied. These perspectives have both theoretical and real-world applications. EI is assessed with various instruments such as the MSCEIT, the EQI, the TEIQ, and the ECI. The instruments assess emotional skills and traits across varying contexts. They provide helpful feedback for career and life development. EI can be developed by paying attention to one's own emotions, staying present, and actively listening to others. These become habits that

make a person more emotionally aware, empathetic, and resilient. Over time, they develop stronger relationships and a healthier lifestyle.

Chapter Two: Fieldwork

Introduction

Further to the first chapter, which provides a theoretical framework for the topic under study, the present chapter is devoted to the fieldwork that is conducted by collecting the data required to address the research questions and attain the aims of the study. It seeks to explore how EI, through its different dimensions, influences the development of ICC, the specific challenges that EFL learners of Mila University face in developing ICC, and how EI supports overcoming these challenges.

This chapter presents the study population and its sample to which the questionnaire was administered. More importantly, it focuses on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data obtained from the questionnaire, and the discussion of the major findings. Furthermore, it outlines the study's limitations and provides a range of recommendations and suggestions for students, educators, and future researchers based on the analysis and interpretation of the results.

2.1. Sample of the Study

This study was conducted within the Department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Centre. This study focuses only on a group of first-year master EFL students during the academic year 2024/2025. The total research population consists of 107 students, from which 55 were selected randomly as the sample for research. The research population and sample were chosen because they are more familiar with the concept of ICC and have likely been exposed to Intercultural situations compared to other students.

2.2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is aimed at exploring how EI influences the development of ICC among EFL learners at Mila University Center. To begin with, the respondents are informed about the importance of their answers for this research, and that their responses are intended to be utilized for study purposes only. Additionally, students are also informed that filling in the questionnaire through ticking remains anonymous and voluntary. The questionnaire included 22 total main questions, along with a few spaces where students could share extra comments, explanations, or suggestions. The questions were divided into four main sections.

The first section has three questions. Two of them are multiple-choice, and one is open-ended. These questions ask about students' experiences in learning English, their motivation to learn, and what helps or stops them from learning.

The second section includes five questions. Some are yes or no questions, and others allow students to pick more than one answer or explain their ideas. This part looks at students' awareness of their feelings when using English and whether they believe EI helps them communicate better. It also inquires about their emotional challenges and the most important emotional skills to focus on in their classes.

The third section is focused on ICC. It contains five questions to find out whether students believe that understanding other cultures helps them communicate more effectively, what causes cultural misunderstandings, and how respectful and open they are to cultural differences.

The fourth section includes nine questions. These questions are about how EI helps students talk to people from different cultures. It looks at how students use their feelings to understand others,

how they deal with tough emotions, and if being emotionally smart helps them avoid or fix problems when talking to people from other cultures.

Eventually, this questionnaire is based on the idea that EI and being culturally competent among people from other backgrounds are connected. These ideas were explained earlier in the study and are the main focus of this research.

2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire analysis provides a thorough insight into the data gathered from first-year Master's students of English at Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila University Centre. By analysing students' answers, invaluable insights can be gained about how EI influences the development of ICC among EFL learners. In particular, how the different dimensions of EI influence ICC, as well as the specific challenges faced by students when developing ICC, and how EI can assist in avoiding them. In the subsequent sections, a thorough analysis and interpretation of the four sections of the students' questionnaire is presented.

Section One: Background Information

1. How long have you been studying English?

Table 1

Students' duration of learning English

Options	Number	Percentage
1-3 years	2	3,6%
4-6 years	24	43,6%
+ 7 years	29	52,7%

Total	55	100%
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Aiming at exploring some aspects of students' background, this question is set to determine the period of time spent learning English. The table clearly showed that the majority of students (52.7%) have been learning English for more than seven years. This could be explained by the fact that many students start studying English at an early stage, either during middle school or even before, and continue learning it throughout secondary school and university. A considerable group of the participants (43.6%) reported having studied English for a period of four to six years, suggesting that they might have started learning English at a later stage, such as during secondary school. A small minority (3.6%) indicated that they have been learning English for only one to three years, which might be attributed to either late exposure to the language or a recent change in their educational curriculum.

2. How motivated are you to learn English?

Table 2

Students' level of motivation in learning English

Options	Number	Percentage
Not at all	3	5,5%
Slightly	5	9,1%
Moderately	17	30,9%
Very	19	34,5%
Extremely	11	20%

Total	55	100%
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In an attempt to explore certain aspects of students' background, this question aims to assess their level of motivation in learning English. The results revealed that the majority of students (34.5%) reported being very motivated to learn English. This suggests that a significant number of students maintain a strong interest and commitment toward developing their English skills. A considerable group of participants (30.9%) indicated being moderately motivated, implying that while they recognize the importance of learning English, their level of motivation might vary depending on external factors. Furthermore, (20%) of the students described their motivation as extremely high, demonstrating an intense and persistent desire to achieve a high level of proficiency. On the other hand, a smaller group (9.1%) reported being only slightly motivated, and a minority (5.5%) stated that they were not at all motivated to learn English, which could be due to a lack of personal interest or other external barriers affecting their engagement.

3. What motivates or demotivates you in learning English?

This question was designed to explore the factors that motivate or demotivate students in learning English. Many students are motivated by goals like career opportunities, becoming fluent speakers, and connecting with different cultures. Others are driven by their passion for the language and its importance in areas like science, business, and global communication. Activities like watching movies, learning new vocabulary, and using body language while speaking also motivate them. However, anxiety, the fear of making mistakes, and challenges with pronunciation were common demotivators. Some students expressed frustration with traditional teaching methods, lack of practice opportunities, and time constraints. Exam stress, the university environment, and unengaging teachers also hinder motivation. While many students are motivated by personal and

academic goals, challenges like anxiety and ineffective teaching methods create barriers to learning.

Section 2: Emotional Intelligence Among EFL Learners

4. Are you aware of your emotions when communicating in English?

Table 3

Students' awareness of their emotional states when using English

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	51	92,7%
No	4	7,3%
Total	55	100%

The purpose of this question was to assess participants' awareness of their emotional states when using English in intercultural contexts. The results from the questionnaire showed that a large majority of 51 respondents (92.7%) reported being aware of their emotions when communicating in English, while only a small minority of 4 students (7.3%) said they were not. This suggests that most individuals are capable of recognizing their emotional states while using a second language, and have a strong level of emotional self-awareness, which is a fundamental component of EI.

5. If yes, in what situations are you most aware of your emotions?

Table 4

Situations' students are most aware of their emotions in an intercultural setting

Options	Number	Percentage
Public speaking	23	41,8%
Writing	8	14,5%
Group discussions	12	21,8%
One-on-one conversations	11	20%
Listening to podcasts	1	1,8%
Total	55	100%

Most students said they feel their emotions the most when they have to speak in public. Out of 55 students, 23 (41.8%) picked public speaking as the situation where they noticed their feelings the most. This makes sense because speaking in front of others can be stressful or make people nervous. Some students, 12 (21.8%), said they feel their emotions most during group discussions, and 11 students (20%) said one-on-one conversations made them most aware of their feelings. Only 8 students (14.5%) chose writing, and just 1 student said listening to podcasts. These results show that students mostly feel their emotions when they are talking with others, especially in situations where they might feel judged or nervous. In other words, social situations bring out stronger emotions because students care about how they seem to others.

6. Do you think emotional intelligence helps you communicate effectively in English?

Table 5

Students' attitudes toward the importance of emotional intelligence when speaking English

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	55	100%
No	0	0%
Total	55	100%

In response to this question, all of the 55 students (100%) opted for “yes” revealing that they believe that it is important for learners to be emotionally intelligent to effectively communicate in English. This means that they see communication as more than just using the right words, but also about being aware of their feelings and using that awareness to communicate better with others.

7. If no, please explain:

No students answered "no" to the question, which could mean that they truly believe EI helps them communicate better in English. It might also mean that some students did not want to choose "no" because they were not sure how to explain their answer or thought it was not the right thing to say. This shows that most students think EI is really helpful when it comes to understanding their own feelings and others' too, which makes it easier to talk, listen, and feel more confident.

8. If yes, why is emotional intelligence important in communication?

Table 6

Students' views about reasons for the importance of emotional intelligence in communication

Options	Numbers	Percentage
It helps you manage anxiety when speaking	15	27, 3%
It improves your ability to express yourself clearly	27	49,1%
It helps you understand others' emotions	11	20%
Helps us when using different apps in different situations like ,chatting, working, and even in daily life	1	1,8%
All of the above	1	1,8%
Total	55	100%

By including this question, attention is directed towards the reasons why EI is seen as important in communication. Twenty-seven respondents (49.1%) reported that it improves their ability to express themselves clearly. Fifteen students (27.3%) indicated that it helps them manage anxiety when speaking. Eleven other participants (20%) believed that EI helps in understanding the emotions of others. In addition, one participant (1,8%) indicated that it helps him when using different apps in different situations like in studying, chatting, working, and even in daily life. However, only two respondents (3.6%) opted for the view that all of the provided reasons are

equally important. These results highlight that EI is especially valued for enhancing clarity in communication and reducing nervousness in spoken interactions.

9. What are the difficulties you face in communication due to emotional factors?

Table 7

Students' difficulties in communication due to emotional factors

Options	Number	Percentage
Fear of making mistakes	23	41,8%
Anxiety about speaking in front of others	25	45,5%
Difficulty understanding others' emotions	8	14,5%
Fear of not clearly expressing a feeling or thought	1	1,1%
All of the above	11	20%
Total	55	100%

Through this other question, attention is directed this time toward the emotional difficulties that prevent effective communication in English. Twenty-three respondents (41.8%) reported that fear of making mistakes is the most significant challenge they face. Twenty-five students (45.5%) identified anxiety about speaking in front of others as their main obstacle. Eight participants (14.5%) opted for difficulty understanding others' emotions. One respondent (1.8%) reports fear of not clearly expressing a thought or feeling. However, eleven students (20%) believed that all of the provided difficulties contribute to communication problems, indicating that emotional barriers

often overlap and influence learners' ability to communicate successfully. The findings indicate that public speaking situations and fear of error strongly affect students' ability to communicate effectively in English.

10. Which aspects of emotional intelligence should be emphasized in communication training in EFL classrooms? Please rank the following in descending order of importance.

Table 8

Students 'order of importance of EI aspects

Option	Number	Percentage
Self-awareness	28	50,9%
Emotional regulation	16	29,1%
Empathy	3	5,5%
Adaptability	8	14,5%
Total	55	100%

In this last question, students were asked which part of EI is most important for learning to communicate in English. Twenty-eight of them (50.9%) said self-awareness is the most important because it helps them understand their own feelings. Sixteen students (29.1%) chose emotional regulation, saying it helps them stay calm and manage stress. Eight students (14.5%) picked adaptability, and only three (5.5%) said empathy was most important. These results reflect that students think internal emotional management is considered more crucial than social-emotional skills when learning to communicate in English.

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Section 3: Intercultural Communicative Competence among EFL Learners

11. Do you think learning about other cultures can make you a better communicator?

Table 9

Students' perceptions of the relationship between cultural understanding and their ability to communicate

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	98,2%
No	1	1,8%
Total	55	100%

In response to this question, fifty-four out of fifty-five students (98.2%) opted for “yes,” revealing that they believe learning about other cultures can help them become better communicators. This question attempted to explore students’ perceptions of the relationship between intercultural awareness and communicative competence. This high percentage reflects a strong awareness among Master One students of the value of cultural knowledge in enhancing communication. Only one student (1.8%) answered “no,” which shows that everyone shares a belief in the connection between cultural understanding and communicative ability.

12. Do you think knowing about cultural differences makes communication easier?

Table 10

Students' awareness of the importance of cultural awareness in successful communication

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	98,2%
No	1	1,8%
Total	55	100%

This question included to determine whether students believe that understanding cultural differences facilitates communication. As illustrated in the Table, fifty-four students (98.2%) responded affirmatively, indicating that they think knowing about cultural differences makes communication easier. In contrast, only one student (1.8%) responded negatively. Given the overwhelming agreement, it can be inferred that the vast majority of students are aware of the importance of cultural awareness in successful communication.

13. Can you give an example of how cultural knowledge helped (or failed to help) you in communication?

This question aimed to gather qualitative data about the participants' personal experiences with cultural knowledge and its role in communication. It asked them to provide an example where such knowledge either helped or failed to help in an interaction. It is worth mentioning that only 41 students provided examples out of 55 students while 14 students did not provide any examples. These responses suggest that most students were able to reflect on and share relevant experiences.

However, the non-responses may indicate that some students lacked sufficient exposure to intercultural situations or felt uncertain about how to express such experiences.

14. What do you think causes the most misunderstandings in intercultural communication?

Table 11

Obstacles of intercultural understanding

Options	Number	Percentage
Language barriers	23	41,8%
Stereotypes and prejudices	7	12,7%
Different nonverbal communication styles	8	14,5%
Differences in politeness and etiquette	13	23,6%
All of the above	23	41,8%
Total	55	100%

This question focused on uncovering the key factors behind misunderstandings in intercultural communication. According to the responses, 23 participants (41.8%) identified language barriers as the main cause of misunderstandings. Meanwhile, 7 participants (12.7%) attributed it to stereotypes and prejudices, and 8 others (14.5%) pointed to differences in nonverbal communication styles. Additionally, 13 students (23.6%) chose differences in politeness and etiquette as a primary cause. Notably, another 23 participants (41.8%) selected “all of the above” as their answer, indicating that they view these issues as interconnected and collectively responsible for breakdowns in intercultural communication.

15. Do you believe that having an open mind is essential for effective intercultural communication?

Table 12

Students' perceptions of the role of open-mindedness in successful intercultural communication

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	51	92,7%
No	4	7,3%
Total	55	100%

The purpose of this question was to examine participants' perceptions of the role of open-mindedness in successful intercultural communication. A significant majority of the respondents, 51 students (92.7%), agreed that having an open mind is essential, while only 4 participants (7.3%) disagreed with this view.

16. Explain why:

In this follow-up question, only 41 participants explained their views on the importance of open-mindedness in intercultural communication. Most emphasized that it helps accept cultural differences, avoid misunderstandings, and foster respectful, adaptable communication. Some also linked it to personal growth, empathy, and curiosity. One participant argued that adapting to cultural norms is more important than open-mindedness. Overall, open-mindedness was seen as essential for effective intercultural communication.

17. How would you rate your level of respect and tolerance for cultural differences?

Table 13

Students' self-perceived levels of respect and tolerance toward cultural differences

Options	Number	Percentage
1	2	3,6%
2	5	9,1%
3	18	32,7%
4	23	41,8%
5	7	12,70%
Total	55	100%

This question aimed to assess participants' self-perceived levels of respect and tolerance toward cultural differences. Participants were asked to rate themselves on a 5-point ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). According to the responses, only 2 participants (3.6%) rated themselves at level 1, and 5 participants (9.1%) at level 2, indicating a relatively low level of respect and tolerance. A total of 18 participants (32.7%) chose level 3, showing a neutral position. The largest group of respondents, 23 participants (41.8%), rated themselves at level 4, while 7 participants (12.7%) selected level 5. These results suggest that most participants consider themselves generally respectful and tolerant of cultural differences, although some still see room for improvement. The high number of neutral responses may reflect uncertainty or a developing awareness of intercultural issues.

Section 4: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Emotional Intelligence

18. Which of these do you rely on when trying to understand people from different cultures?

Table 14

Students' most common form of communication for intercultural understanding

Options	Number	Percentage
Verbal communication (spoken language)	23	41,8%
Non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body language)	20	36,4%
Emotional awareness (understanding feelings and reactions)	12	21,8%
Total	55	100%

The purpose of this question is to unveil the most common form of communication people rely on to understand individuals from different cultures. Twenty-three respondents (41.8%) reported that they depend primarily on verbal communication, highlighting the importance they place on the clarity and directness of spoken language. Twenty participants (36.4%) indicated that they rely on non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language to grasp meaning beyond words. Twelve respondents (21.8%) chose emotional awareness, showing that fewer individuals focus on understanding the emotions and reactions of others in intercultural settings. The findings suggest that observable and direct forms of communication are more commonly used, while emotional awareness is less frequently considered a primary strategy for intercultural understanding.

19. Do you believe emotional intelligence helps you adapt to different cultural environments?

Table 15

Importance of emotional intelligence in different cultural environments

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	36	65,5%
No	19	34,5%
Total	55	100%

The question examines whether EI is seen as helpful in adapting to different cultural environments. According to the results, (65.5%) of respondents believe that EI does support cultural adaptation. On the other hand, (34.5%) said no, which may reflect a belief that practical knowledge or direct communication is more important than emotional awareness. Overall, the results show a majority view EI as a key tool for navigating cultural differences effectively.

20. If yes, give an example of a situation where emotional intelligence helped you in an intercultural setting

This question was asked to find out how EI helps people in situations with different cultures. Most students gave good examples of times when they used EI to understand others better. Some said they noticed things like not making eye contact or speaking in a soft way as part of someone's culture, so they changed how they acted to be more respectful. Others talked about staying calm during tough conversations or trying to understand different opinions without being rude. A few students said they have not had these kinds of experiences yet, but they still believe EI is important.

In general, the answers show that EI helps people be kinder and communicate better with others from different cultures.

21. What is the most challenging emotional aspect of intercultural communication for you?

Table 16

Students' most challenging emotional aspects in intercultural communication

Options	Number	Percentage
Managing anxiety when speaking with people from different cultures	17	30,9%
Understanding different emotional expressions	20	36,4%
Adapting your emotions to different cultural expectations	13	23,6%
All of the above	14	25,5%
Total	55	100%

The purpose of this question was to investigate the most challenging emotional aspects that people encounter when communicating across cultural boundaries. According to the findings, (36.4%) of respondents said that comprehending various emotional expressions was their biggest challenge. Furthermore, (30.9%) of respondents said that their biggest difficulty is managing anxiety while interacting with persons from other cultural backgrounds. In addition, (23.6%) of people have trouble adapting their emotions to fit various cultural norms. Lastly, (25.5%) selected "all of the above". These answers highlight the necessity of increased EI and flexibility in cross-cultural communication.

22. Which emotional intelligence skill do you believe helps the most in overcoming intercultural communication challenges?

Table 17

Students' most reliable emotional intelligence skills when dealing with intercultural challenges

Options	Number	Percentage
Self-awareness (understanding your emotions in intercultural interactions)	13	23,6%
Self-regulation (controlling your emotions when facing cultural differences)	17	23,9%
Empathy (understanding and respecting others' emotions)	16	29,1%
Social adaptability (adjusting your emotions to different cultural norms)	9	16,4%
Total	55	100%

This question aimed at identifying which EI skills students find most helpful when dealing with challenges in intercultural communication. As far as EI skills are concerned, seventeen students (30.9%) believe that self-regulation, or being able to control their emotions when dealing with cultural differences, helps the most. Sixteen students (29.1%) think that empathy, which means understanding and respecting other people's feelings, is the most helpful skill. Thirteen students (23.6%) choose self-awareness, or knowing their own emotions in intercultural situations. On the other hand, nine students (16.4%) believe that social adaptability, or changing their emotions to fit

different cultural rules, is the most useful. These results show that most students see emotional control and understanding others' feelings as key to successful communication with people from different cultures.

23. Does emotional intelligence help you reduce conflicts in intercultural communication?

Table 18

Importance of emotional intelligence in reducing conflicts in intercultural communication

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	41	74,5%
No	14	25,5%
Total	55	100%

According to what is shown in the results, forty-one participants (74.5%) chose “yes” as their answer. This means that most of the students believe that EI helps them reduce conflicts when talking with people from different cultures. On the other hand, fourteen students (25.5%) answered “no,” meaning they do not think EI helps them in this way. These answers show that many students think EI is helpful to avoid problems and make talking with people from other cultures easier.

24. If yes, how?

Most students think that EI helps make intercultural communication easier. When asked how some said it helps them stay calm and not get angry when they see differences. Others said it helps them be patient, understand other people's feelings, and respect their opinions. A few said it helps them not feel upset when people from other cultures act in ways that are different. Some students

said they do not know or have not had this experience yet. In general, many students believe that EI helps people understand each other and avoid problems when talking with others from different cultures.

25. Does your emotional reaction change based on the cultural background of the person you are communicating with?

Table 19

The extent to which students' reaction change based on the cultural background of the speaker

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	46	16,4%
No	9	83,6%
Total	55	100%

The results show that the majority of students, 46 out of 55 (83.6%) said that their emotional reaction changes depending on the cultural background of the person they are talking to. However, 9 students (16.4%) said that their emotional reaction does not change based on culture. This means that most students feel their emotions are influenced by cultural differences during communication.

26. Which emotions do you feel most often when communicating with people from different cultures?

Table 20

Students 'emotions in intercultural communication

Options	Number	Percentage
Excitement and curiosity	22	40%
Anxiety and nervousness	10	18,2%
Frustration and confusion	5	9,1%
Openness and acceptance	18	32,7%
Total	55	100%

The goal of this question was to understand what feelings students usually have when they interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Twenty-two students (40%) said they feel excited and curious, showing that many students enjoy learning about new cultures. Eighteen students (32.7%) said that they felt open and accepting, which means they are comfortable with differences. Ten students (18.2%) said they felt nervous or anxious, and five students (9.1%) mentioned feeling frustrated or confused. These answers show that while the majority of students have positive emotions in intercultural communication, some still face challenges like nervousness or misunderstanding.

27. Do you believe that being emotionally intelligent makes you more open-minded toward cultural differences?

Table 21

Importance of being open minded toward cultural differences

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	53	96,4%
No	2	3,6%
Total	55	100%

This question was asked to find out if being emotionally intelligent makes students more open-minded toward cultural differences. As shown in the results, fifty-three students (96.4%) said "yes," while two students (3.6%) said "no." These results show that most students think EI helps a lot when talking to people from other countries or cultures. It helps them understand how the other person feels, so they do not say something that might hurt their feelings or cause a problem. This makes talking easier and helps everyone get along better

28. How would you rate the impact of emotional intelligence on your ability to communicate effectively across cultures?

Table 22

Students' rating of the impact of emotional intelligence on their ability to communicate across cultures

Options	Number	Percentage
1	1	1,8%
2	8	14,5%
3	21	38,2%
4	15	27,3%
5	10	18,2%
Total	55	100%

The last question was designed to find out how students rate the impact of EI on their ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. As shown, one student (1.8%) gave a rating of 1, eight students (14.5%) chose 2, twenty-one students (38.2%) selected 3, fifteen students (27.3%) picked 4, and ten students (18.2%) chose 5. These results show that most students think EI is pretty important when talking to people from other cultures. They believe it helps them understand how others feel and makes it easier to avoid problems or confusion when they talk.

2.4. Discussion of the Findings

Students' questionnaire analysis allows to obtain insightful glimpses into how EI influences the development of ICC among EFL students at Mila University Center. It also identifies the challenges that students encounter. Additionally, it demonstrates how EI can assist students in overcoming these challenges.

The introductory questions in section one highlight that most students have been learning English for many years and are interested in evolving for personal, academic, and cultural goals. However, things like anxiety, being scared of making mistakes, and other problems cripple their motivation.

Moreover, the analysis of the second section of the questionnaire intends to understand the challenges EFL students at Mila face in developing ICC and how EI can help overcome them. From the analysis of the questionnaire, students reported that fear of making mistakes and anxiety during public speaking are major emotional barriers that affect their ability to communicate efficiently in English. They also admitted that these feelings often appear in situations where they are being watched or judged, such as presentations or group discussions. However, they acknowledge that the aspects of EI, including self-awareness and emotional regulation help them manage these feelings better. In the same vein, when students know how they feel and can stay in control, they do not get as nervous and can talk more clearly and confidently. As highlighted in the responses, handling emotions effectively can support learners in building better connections and expressing themselves across cultures. Students see EI as very useful in overcoming emotional challenges and improving intercultural communication.

The answers in the third section help explain students' experience when trying to talk with people from other cultures, and how EI comes into play. Students think that understanding other cultures helps them talk more easily to people. Yet, not everyone has had the chance to do that. They also believe that things like speaking a different language or acting in a way that is not polite in another culture can make it hard to understand each other. Many also said being open-minded is very important as it makes them understand and accept others. Most students think they are respectful and open, while some are not sure. This shows that being emotionally intelligent by understanding personal feelings and being kind and open to others can really help students become better at talking with people from different cultures.

Additionally, the results of the fourth section showcase that students think that being aware of their feelings helps them get along better with people from other cultures. Many focused on the positive aspects, which shows they think EI is useful. Additionally, some gave examples of how it helped them by staying calm, being more understanding, or changing their behavior to avoid conflicts. Students think that understanding their own feelings, staying calm, and caring about others' emotions assist them to effectively communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. They believe this is even more useful than verbal and nonverbal communication. Many students said EI really helps them connect with others, but a few did not see how useful it is yet, maybe because they have not really had many chances to meet people from different cultures. Overall, Being open to new ideologies and being prepared to learn makes it easier to make friends and get along with all kinds of people.

In conclusion, the results from the last part support what was found in the earlier sections. Students clearly believe that EI is very important in helping them deal with feelings and communicate with people from other cultures. EFL learners at Mila University Center see EI as a

helpful tool for improving their ability to connect with others from different backgrounds. Students shared that knowing their own feelings, staying relaxed, and caring about others helps them feel less nervous, more sure of themselves, and able to speak better. It is worth noting that the main findings of this study align with those of Guntersdorfer and Golubeva (2018), who emphasized that being emotionally intelligent by understanding and controlling one's emotions and those of others is crucial for effective intercultural communication.

2.5. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, several recommendations are formulated to address EFL learners, EFL teachers, and future researchers.

2.5.1. Recommendations for Students

- . They should work on managing emotional responses such as anxiety, frustration, or fear that may arise when interacting with people from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. This can be developed through mindful engagement with intercultural scenarios presented in the literature classroom or real-life simulations.

- . When introduced to culturally different perspectives, students are required to cultivate empathy by placing themselves in others' emotional and cultural contexts to better understand diverse viewpoints.

- . Students should make use of emotionally intelligent behaviors, such as active listening and emotional regulation, to develop more respectful and effective intercultural dialogues. They are encouraged to recognize that emotional understanding can bridge cultural gaps and promote mutual respect.

- . In light of today's global connectivity, students are encouraged to engage in virtual exchanges or multicultural group work, using emotionally intelligent communication strategies to build trust and rapport across cultural lines.

2.5.2. Recommendations for Teachers

- . Teachers should select materials that not only present diverse cultural content but also invite learners to engage emotionally and reflect on their reactions to cultural differences.

- . In the course of their teaching, teachers are advised to highlight emotional responses to cultural encounters and help students manage these reactions constructively, promoting a mindset of tolerance and openness.

- . Teachers should model emotionally intelligent behavior, such as empathy and active listening, and strive to instill similar attitudes in their students when addressing cultural differences.

- . Teachers must create emotionally safe classroom environments where students feel comfortable sharing and exploring intercultural experiences without fear of judgment.

- . Teachers should strive to balance their focus on emotional and intercultural development with curriculum goals, ensuring that the integration of EI supports rather than distracts from overall educational outcomes.

2.5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

This study strived to explore the influence of EI on the development of ICC among EFL learners at Mila University Center. It adhered to an approach that was both descriptive and exploratory in order to highlight the significance of EI in the development of ICC. Therefore, it is regarded as a

step that paves the way for further research to be carried out with the purpose of studying the prevailing themes of this study in a more profound way. That is to say, studies about the importance of EI in the development of ICC can be conducted based on other case studies which may offer a larger sample to represent a wider population. Another research pathway would be an experimental study that could be more informative and provide more valuable insights. This would allow researchers to measure and analyze the progress of students' level of intercultural awareness deeply.

2.6. Limitations of the Study

The most fundamental problem was encountered at the stage of collecting the data needed for the practical part of this study. Since the questionnaire was online, receiving responses from participants was challenging during the data collection process, resulting in the need for researchers to repeatedly ask participants to complete the questionnaire. Eventually, this compelled us to extend the data collection period to gather a reasonable number of answers. Additionally, the vast majority of participants did not really read the questionnaire wisely to provide reasonable answers. Hence, only a limited group of students managed to give logical answers that perfectly resonated with the questions mentioned. It is worth mentioning that the topic of this study is relatively new and has not been widely addressed by many researchers. As a result, we encountered some challenges in gathering the necessary information related to the study.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter focuses on the practical part of the study. It is concerned with describing, analyzing, and discussing the data gathered from the research questionnaire. Indeed, the obtained results demonstrated that when students understand their own feelings and those of

others, they will communicate better in intercultural interactions. This skill helps them feel more confident, respectful, and open when talking to others. The study also points out some problems students face, like being nervous, scared of making mistakes, or feeling shy when speaking publicly. These feelings can make it hard for them to speak clearly or stay motivated. Hence, EI is a key to solving these problems and making communication with people from other cultures much easier. Being kind, open-minded, and understanding others is just as significant as speaking the same language. Therefore, knowing and regulating emotions is very important when trying to understand and connect with people in intercultural settings.

General Conclusion

ICC is a vital skill for communication in today's increasingly interconnected and globalized world. It helps people deal with different cultural backgrounds with a sense of empathy and respect. To adapt to cultural differences, people must learn continuously and reflect on themselves for better intercultural interaction. Awareness of how cultural aspects influence emotions and reactions is therefore essential to being competent in a cultural setting. In fact, those with higher EI are able to communicate more effectively across cultures because they possess the EI needed to understand and navigate cultural differences. This can be seen when students' emotional responses support their ability to behave in ways that are culturally appropriate. As a result, this leads to clearer communication, fewer misunderstandings, and stronger intercultural connections.

An attempt is made to get insights into how EI influences the development of ICC among EFL learners at Mila University Center. By this token, this study sheds light on the challenges EFL learners at Mila face in developing ICC and how the different dimensions of EI support overcoming these challenges. In order to achieve the previously mentioned research aims and objectives, a questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 55 first-year Master's students of English (EFL) at Mila University Centre.

An analysis of the responses revealed that EI is significant for learning how to effectively communicate with people from different cultures. Students who reasonably utilize EI dimensions can understand their own feelings as well as those of others and are better at respecting other cultures and getting along with people from different places. Based on the findings, learning about emotions in the classroom helps students become more open-minded and more efficient at understanding others. Hence, teachers and students are highly recommended to leverage this tool and implement it as a teaching medium to enhance students' cultural awareness. Students also

should reflect upon how they can use EI to improve how they learn and communicate effectively in multiple cultural settings.

It is worth noting that this study is limited in scope and that the findings might be open for discussion and criticism. Therefore, further research in this area is encouraged to validate and expand upon these findings that highlight the instrumental role that EI plays in successful intercultural communication.

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Appendices

Appendix: The Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

We are kindly inviting you to answer the following questions needed to conduct our research. This questionnaire attempts to explore how emotional intelligence (EI) influences the development of ICC among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners at Mila University Center. We would like to inform you that this questionnaire is anonymous, and answers are kept confidential to be used for study purposes. Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer, and note that more than one answer is possible in some questions. Your comments and further suggestions are welcome.

Section 1: Background Information

1. How long have you been studying English?

-1-3 years ☐

-4-6 years ☐

-7+ years ☐

2. How motivated are you to learn English?

-Not at all ☐

-Slightly ☐

-Moderately ☐

-Very ☐

-Extremely ☐

3. What motivates or demotivates you in learning English?

.....

.....

Section 2: Emotional Intelligence among EFL Learners

1. Are you aware of your emotions when communicating in English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, in what situations are you most aware of your emotions?

-Public speaking ☐

-Writing ☐

-Group discussions ☐

-One-on-one conversations ☐

Other:

.....

2. Do you think emotional intelligence helps you communicate effectively in English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please explain:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. If yes, why is emotional intelligence important in communication?

-It helps you manage anxiety when speaking ☐

-It improves your ability to express yourself clearly ☐

-It helps you understand others' emotions ☐

Other:

.....

4. What are the difficulties you face in communication due to emotional factors?

-Fear of making mistakes ☐

-Anxiety about speaking in front of others ☐

-Difficulty understanding others' emotions ☐

-All of the above ☐

Other:

.....

5. Which aspects of emotional intelligence should be emphasized in communication training in EFL classrooms?

Please rank the following in order of importance:

(1 = Most important, 4= Least important)

-Self-awareness ☐

-Emotional regulation ☐

-Empathy ☐

-Adaptability ☐

Section 3: Intercultural Communicative Competence Among EFL Learners

1. Do you think learning about other cultures can make you a better communicator?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you think knowing about cultural differences makes communication easier?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Can you give an example of how cultural knowledge helped (or failed to help) you in communication?

.....
.....

3. What do you think causes the most misunderstandings in intercultural communication?

-Language barriers ☐

-Stereotypes and prejudices ☐

-Different nonverbal communication styles ☐

-Differences in politeness and etiquette ☐

-All of the above ☐

4. Do you believe that having an open mind is essential for effective intercultural communication?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Explain why:

.....

.....

5. How would you rate your level of respect and tolerance for cultural differences?

-Low ☐

-Average ☐

-High ☐

Section 4: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence through Emotional Intelligence

1. Which of these do you rely on when trying to understand people from different cultures?

-Verbal communication (spoken language) ☐

-Non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body language) ☐

-Emotional awareness (understanding feelings and reactions) ☐

2. Do you believe emotional intelligence helps you adapt to different cultural environments?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, give an example of a situation where emotional intelligence helped you in an intercultural setting:

.....
.....

3. What is the most challenging emotional aspect of intercultural communication for you?

-Managing anxiety when speaking with people from different cultures ☐

-Understanding different emotional expressions ☐

-Adapting your emotions to different cultural expectations ☐

-All of the above ☐

4. Which emotional intelligence skill do you believe helps the most in overcoming intercultural communication challenges?

-Self-awareness (understanding your emotions in intercultural interactions) ☐

-Self-regulation (controlling your emotions when facing cultural differences) ☐

-Empathy (understanding and respecting others' emotions) ☐

-Social adaptability (adjusting your emotions to different cultural norms) ☐

5. Does emotional intelligence help you reduce conflicts in intercultural communication?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how?

.....

.....

6. Does your emotional reaction change based on the cultural background of the person you are communicating with?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Which emotions do you feel most often when communicating with people from different cultures?

-Excitement and curiosity ☐

-Anxiety and nervousness ☐

-Frustration and confusion ☐

-Openness and acceptance ☐

8. Do you believe that being emotionally intelligent makes you more open-minded toward cultural differences?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. How would you rate the impact of emotional intelligence on your ability to communicate effectively across cultures?

-Very Low ☐

-Low ☐

-Moderate ☐

-High ☐

-Very High ☐

Thank you for your collaboration.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف كيفية تأثير الذكاء العاطفي على تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مركز جامعة ميله. في سياق هذه الدراسة، تمت معالجة ثلاث أسئلة بحثية: (1) كيف تؤثر الأبعاد المختلفة للذكاء العاطفي على الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات؟ (2) ما التحديات المحددة التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة ميله عند تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات؟ (3) كيف يمكن أن يساهم الذكاء العاطفي في التغلب على هذه التحديات؟ للإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة، تم اعتماد تصميم بحث وصفي. لجمع البيانات اللازمة، تم توزيع استبيان على 55 طالب ماستر سنة أولى في قسم اللغات الأجنبية بجامعة ميله. تكشف النتائج الرئيسية للبحث عن أهمية الذكاء العاطفي في مساعدة الطلاب على التفاعل والتواصل مع أشخاص من ثقافات مختلفة. لذا، فإن تعلم فهم وتنظيم المشاعر من خلال الاستفادة من أبعاد الذكاء العاطفي أمر ضروري لتجاوز تحديات التواصل. وفي نهاية المطاف، تقترح الدراسة مجموعة من التوصيات التربوية والبحثية بهدف تسليط الضوء بشكل منظم على تعزيز وعي المتعلمين بين الثقافات من خلال الذكاء العاطفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، الذكاء العاطفي، التحديات، أبعاد الذكاء العاطفي، التواصل.

Résumé

Cette étude cherche à explorer comment l'intelligence émotionnelle influence le développement de la compétence communicative interculturelle chez les étudiants EFL au Centre Universitaire de Mila. Dans le cadre de cette étude, trois questions de recherche sont abordées : (1) Comment les différentes dimensions de l'intelligence émotionnelle influencent-elles la compétence communicative interculturelle ? (2) Quels sont les défis spécifiques auxquels les étudiants EFL de Mila font face dans le développement de la compétence communicative interculturelle ? (3) Comment le soutien par l'intelligence émotionnelle peut-il aider à surmonter ces défis ? Pour répondre à ces questions, un design de recherche descriptif a été adopté. Pour recueillir les données nécessaires, un questionnaire a été administré à 55 étudiants de première année master EFL au Département des Langues Étrangères de l'Université de Mila. Les résultats principaux de la recherche révèlent à quel point l'intelligence émotionnelle est cruciale pour aider les étudiants à s'engager et à se connecter avec des personnes issues de cultures diverses. Ainsi, apprendre à comprendre et à réguler les émotions en s'appuyant sur les dimensions de l'intelligence émotionnelle est essentiel pour surmonter les défis de la communication. En fin de compte, l'étude propose une multitude de recommandations pédagogiques et de suggestions pour la recherche future, dans le but d'attirer une attention plus structurée sur l'amélioration de la conscience interculturelle des apprenants à travers l'intelligence émotionnelle.

Mots clés: Compétence communicative interculturelle, intelligence émotionnelle, défis, dimensions de l'intelligence émotionnelle, communication.