

## **Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in one of QOU Textbooks: a content Analysis Study**

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### **Abstract**

The current quantitative and qualitative research basically aimed at analyzing one of QOU self-study textbooks, i.e., Communication Skills which is geared towards empowering English majoring sophomore and junior students with the skills needed for making effective communication. It further sought to identify the activities and tasks embracing ICC competences and the frequency of each. For this end the study adopted a content analysis approach through which the different activities were investigated and the ICC competences were coded. The analysis unit employed in the present study is the sentence unit that much suits the nature of the work, i.e. analyzing the activities that are almost given in forms of instructions formulated in sentence structure.

The results indicated that the activities including ICC overweighed those which do not with a ratio 2:1. That is to say, nearly 67 % of the total number of the textbook activities embraced ICC competences. In addition, the competences of discovery and interaction followed by knowledge got the highest percentages compared to that of interpreting & relating skills. Worth mentioning, these ICC competences were not equally distributed over the textbook units.

In light of these results, it is recommended that ICC competences and skills be equally distributed to the whole textbook units or chapters. Teachers are also recommended to supplement EFL course books with activities that enable learners to decrease cultural sensitivity, misunderstanding and stereotyping and cultivate understanding, tolerance and acceptance of others' cultures. In addition, it is necessary that teachers create situations and activities which require that students be considerate and respectful with foreigners when communicating with them.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), QOU, textbooks, content Analysis

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### **I. Introduction:**

Language is basically for communication. It is the means through which language users express, transfer and exchange their thoughts, beliefs, ideas, feelings and even imaginary things. Language is widely used for linguistic, paralinguistic and metalinguistic purposes. There is a strong correlation between language and a wide range of various topics and themes amongst which is culture.

Language serves the culture in spreading it among a vast number of people. Hence, language is thought to be the tool which preserves and transmits culture and its components. On the other hand, culture and cultural themes are covered via language. Thus, the culture of any society constitutes an original source of information and input data for language. Accordingly, culture and language are integral, inseparable and intertwined (Brown 2000; Deardorff 2006; Liddicoat 2001; Xia 2013). Language and culture address almost all aspects of life and help establish peoples' cultural and personal identity when people start communication to negotiate various interactions and transactions. (Lonner 1994).

Since 1930s, language pedagogy has mainly concerned with learning and teaching language skills in general. Linguistic competence used to be the basic goal of language pedagogy. The functional and communicative principals have been also emphasized after the second half of the same century. Culture has also received a range of importance since then. Culture and cultural aspects have been introduced in language pedagogy since they constitute an essential part of language. Ho (2009) claims that learning language became meaningful in teaching foreign or second language via the integration of both culture and language. He stated that anyone who learns a language separately from culture will lack a very important component of communication. Learning new languages widens the learners' knowledge and understanding of the culture of the target language, and enhances his mastery of the language he learns when he simultaneously obtains a level of mastery in the cultural components of language (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

In teaching English as a foreign language EFL or as a second language ESL, cultural aspects of English language and other languages have been introduced in the textbooks and other learning materials. Since communication is mutual and since culture a pivotal part of the language of any society, knowing about the cultures of others is important in maintaining communication. This appeals for arousing EFL learners' curiosity and concern towards culture and culture pedagogy.

Intercultural communication IC and intercultural communicative competence that successfully developed recently, i.e., in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century concerned with many different related issues in the FL learning/ teaching process. Linguistic, cognitive, communicative, cultural, cross-cultural and social competences have been emphasized in this subfield of applied linguistics.

Due to the fact that EFL pedagogy witnesses never ending processes of innovation and updates as a bad need and as a response for coping with advancements in the twenty first century, communication and culture are always revisited. The researcher thought that investigating ICC in a textbook taught at one of the Palestinian national universities reflects the importance of assessing these courses in light of the twenty first century skills. So, the implementation of such a study constitutes a focal demand in the field of EFL pedagogy.

The current research basically aims at analyzing the textbook 'Communication Skills' for the purpose of identifying the reality of intercultural communicative competence ICC in its activities. It further seeks to identify the activities and tasks embracing ICC competences and the frequency of each. The aim beyond this is to see to what extent QOU textbooks cope with the twenty first century skills. Therefore, the current study seeks to find answers to the following two research questions which merged from the study problem:

1. What is the rare of activities including ICC competences in the textbook 'Communication Skills'?
2. What is the frequency of ICC competences addressed in the textbook 'Communication Skills'?

### **Textbooks**

Textbook is of paramount importance in the pedagogical process. It plays a pivotal role in the curricula since it serves as a guide to the syllabus, it transmits knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. In addition, it makes the learning and teaching systematic and provides a reliable point of reference. A textbook helps learning about different cultures since it presents various people, regions, religions, values, manners and the like.

English language textbooks at QOU are all self-study designed and the activities and tasks in them are geared towards fostering EL major skills in addition to communicative skills. They are almost published by Palestinian or Jordanian scholars who share most of the cultural components and who have a good command and a remarkable access to the host cultures, i.e., the British or the American cultures. Those in a way or another tend to reflect their personal, local or regional beliefs, thoughts and ideas in these textbooks. Cultural and intercultural communication aspects are thought to be covered to a particular degree in them.

The researcher meant and purposively has chosen the textbook 'Communication Skills' to be under focus. The textbook basically targets sophomore and junior English Language majoring students at Al-Quds Open University (QOU). It aims to build up and develop the targeted students' linguistic competence as well as their communicative competence in general. Cultural and intercultural communicative competence are thought to be intentionally not neglected as subskills. They are indirectly targeted in the different units of the textbook.

This textbook which consists of 218 pages of a medium size encompasses six different units covering different themes such as introduction to and basic communication skills, social communication skills, verbal presentation skills, academic written communication skills and business communication skills. Worth mentioning, each unit comprises subthemes and functions related to a common situation or issue.

The course book's main objectives are enabling students to get engaged in conversations, discussions and debates, using proper language functions, understanding the basics of figurative language, achieving adequate knowledge and usage of writing techniques, using research methods to write a research paper or a report and using higher order critical thinking skills in the learning activities (Alawi 2016). Each of the aforementioned objectives is tackled in a separate unit.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Intercultural communicative competence ICC is best defined as "The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006, 247). Therefore, understanding both the culture of L1 and that of FL is a must. It is the result of a marriage between two competences, i.e., the communicative competence CC and the intercultural one IC. "Intercultural communication model provided a basis for the outgrowth of ICC and both concern with certain aspects of intercultural sensitivity" (Wiberschild, 2015). In the literature review, sometimes the two terms ICC and IC are interchangeably used. Therefore, there is a need to start with IC since it provides the bases upon which ICC is built.

There is a broad agreement among scholars on the broad concept of intercultural competence'; however, there is no consensus on a single definition. For instance, the individuals' ability to communicate in their own language with people who belong to another culture is seen by Byrum (1997) as IC. Taylor (1994) reports that intercultural competence is a process through which the foreigner develops capacity which enables him/her to effectively understand and adapt to what the host culture demands. Hence, dealing with different cultures effectively requires many things, the most important amongst which are: cultural awareness, communicative competence, personal attitudes like empathy and flexibility, self-awareness and understanding others' values, norms and beliefs.

However, Deardorff (2006) sees it as "the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions." In addition, Chen & Starosta (1996) state that it is "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviours that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment." They added that it has the following three notions: affective or Intercultural sensitivity, cognitive or intercultural awareness and behavioural or intercultural adroitness.

IC is somewhere between cultural diversity and inclusion in others' cultures and this brings new methods of working and thinking, new ideas and developing multicultural awareness. It is also seen as the complex abilities needed to perform appropriately when interacting with other people having different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Fantini, 2009). And this requires at least three basic things, namely, intercultural awareness or knowledge, intercultural skills and attitudes. This triangulation constitutes the basics of understanding and being open-minded towards otherness.

As for the intercultural awareness or knowledge, it enables the learners to gain knowledge and explore others' cultural products and behaviours. Therefore, according to Byram (1997) learners of FL or SL need to know the processes of interaction of both the individual and the society in their own and others' cultures such as the level of formality in the language and their interpretation of gestures. This will lead to making interaction and use of a foreign language easier which requires knowledge of intercultural skills.

The concept of intercultural skills is seen as one's abilities to gain different language techniques and to use them in order to make appropriate communication with people from other cultures (Lussier, 2007). Here, FL or L2 learners need to develop different skills such as interpreting and relating, discovery and interaction which enable them to avoid the conflicting situations and to identify the significance of as well as similarities and differences in verbal and non-verbal interactions between their own and others' cultures so that they can establish effective communication (Deardorff, 2006).

The third pillar of IC is intercultural attitudes which refers to the FL/L2 learner's perception of one's own and others' cultures from different perspectives with curiosity, readiness and openness (Byram, 1997). This not only requires awareness, understanding, acceptance and respect towards other cultures, but also overcoming stereotypes in relationships and the integration of other values (Lussier, 2007).

However, ICC which focuses on the ability to communicate with people from another country or culture in a foreign language context is seen as including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects that are intertwined to produce intercultural individuals. It is "The knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self." (Byram, 1997, p.34). For Wiseman (2001) ICC comprises knowledge, skills, and motivation to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultures.

According to Byram (1997) the individual who gains skills in ICC is successful in building relationships while speaking FL, gaining knowledge on how to effectively communicate, mediating conversations between those of diverse cultural backgrounds and acquiring communication skills in FL not yet studied. Their linguistic competence is integrated with their knowledge of the culture of the other. This integration also implies that they are aware of the differences of the culture and the language on many levels, including semantics and values. And, since they have acquired these skills, they would have the ability to acquire additional languages and cultural skills. (Wilberschied, 2015)

There has been a variety of models, schema and standards proposed for illustrating the components and dimensions of ICC such as Byram 1997, Bennett 1986, Koester and Olebe 1989, Kupka 2008, Deardorff 2006, to mention but few. These models helped reshape and clarify ICC definition and components. However, the variability in identifying the content of ICC models has posed real challenges. For the sake of the current study, two models, namely Byram's model (1997) and ATESL (2011) standards which the researcher relied on are presented.

Byram (1997) proposed an ICC model which many scholars consider as a reference to assess intercultural communicative competence. It comprises the following five main elements: attitude, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. He stated that these five elements are intertwined and inseparable, but he contended that "attitudes" of the intercultural individual to his own and others' cultures is the most important component because the other four elements are dependent on it and cannot be truly developed without positive attitudes. Georgiou (2011) maintained that ICC

concept is intricate as it includes a number of components, but Byram's model which has been developed many times, has a consensus on ICC definition and components. Georgiou summarizes Byram's five components as follows:

**1: Attitudes:** Those include curiosity, self-reflecting, openness towards other cultures, tolerance of ambiguity, respect for others, empathy, and readiness to stop disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own cultural assumptions.

**2: Knowledge:** Two kinds of knowledge are required for ICC, i.e., self-knowledge and general culture knowledge. The former includes knowledge about social, political, ethnic, and religious context in one's own country and how he or she may be perceived by others while the latter includes being acquainted with the target culture's values, history, lifestyle, social norms, and religion.

**3: Skills of interpreting and relating:** This competence refers to interpreting a document or event from another culture, explaining it and relating it to documents from one's own culture.

**4: Skills of discovery and interaction:** Those refer to the ability to gain new knowledge of cultural practices under constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

**5: Critical cultural awareness:** It is the ability to critically evaluate perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures.

Aligning with those of ACTFL, Alberta Teachers of Second Language ATESL (2011) outlined seven standards for ICC. These standards have been reproduced from the previous versions of standards. Those standards are:

- 1- Analyzing and describing diversity in the other culture
- 2- Identifying and describing significance of cultural symbols in one's own the other's culture
- 3- Analyzing everyday behaviors in the other culture and comparing and contrasting them to those in one's own culture
- 4- Identifying culturally determined behavior patterns
- 5- Examining own cultural changes and the necessary personal balance between preservation of their own cultures and acculturation
- 6- Recognizing positive and negative cultural stereotypes and describing how they affect their own and others' behavior
- 7- Comparing and contrasting values and beliefs in one's own and other's culture (ATESL, 2011).

### **Related studies**

Sarıcoban & Kırmızı's (2020) study analyzed the intercultural content in Moonlight 7 and Moonlight 8, two Turkish high school course books, on the basis of Yuen's (2011) framework. Based on the framework, they categorized intercultural elements into four. First, Products comprise religions, food, clothing, dwellings, entertainment, tools, laws, education, or travel. Second, the category of practices include customs and information about daily life, forms of address, use of personal space, and rituals, i.e. the behavioral patterns of a particular society. Third, perspectives; this category is related to the underlying beliefs and values, inspirations, myths, superstitions, and world views of a given society. Finally, the category of persons includes famous individuals and fictitious or unknown people from a

Fong, DeWitt & Leng (2018) investigated whether the cultural and intercultural elements are incorporated elements in Mandarin as a foreign language MFL textbooks from seven selected public HEI in Malaysia. Directed content analysis was used based on the cultural and intercultural framework for communication. The findings indicate that there were insufficient cultural and intercultural elements in most of the sampled textbooks.

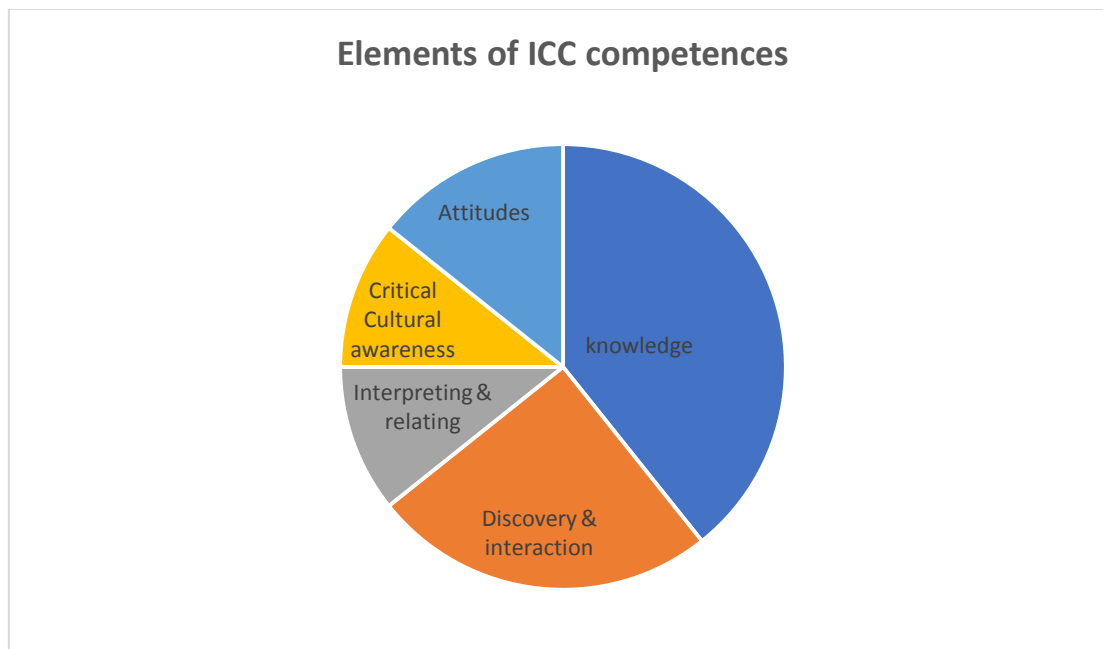
### **III. Methods:**

The current study adopted the qualitative content analysis of quantitative data for the end of investigating the activities in the textbook 'Communication Skills' and identifying those including ICC. In addition, the study sought to figure out and calculate the types of ICC components in these activities. According to Weber (1990), content analysis is a systematic analysis of a particular text to come up with inferences. It is a research technique which provides new insights and increases the researcher's understanding of a phenomenon under focus.

For the purpose of analyzing the intended textbook and identifying the ICC elements in it, a combination of Byram's (1997) ICC model/schema and Alberta Teachers of Second Language ATESL's (2011) standards of ICC was employed to facilitate the process of categorizing the different activities and identifying which ICC competences were addressed. The former divided ICC competences into five main categories and the latter categorized them into seven and referred to them as standards. A detailed demonstration of both is presented in the literature review above. In addition, the researcher analyzed the competences and standards into their constituting elements based on the literature review and the previous studies in general and on Arsalan's (2018) questions under each competence.

**Coding the categories:**

In agreement with the other person who helped in the process of analyzing the activities, the researcher outlined a coding scheme which helped in guiding both in the analysis of the activities. The coding scheme facilitates the process of categorizing each activity on the basis of the elements which constitute each competence. Here is an illustration:



**Figure (1): Elements constituting ICC competences**

The figure above shows that the ICC five competences are analyzed into their constituting elements. It is clear that they are unequal; they vary in number due to the components which constitute each. Worth noting, this is the first step to coding categories, which made it easier for the coders to distribute the elements with relation to the competency they refer to.

From the figure, it is apparent that knowledge (savoir) which comprised 11 elements got the lion share followed by discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/ faire) which included 7 components. The third competence which comprised 4 categories is attitudes (savoir etre). The competences interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre) and critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager) with three components each.

The content analysis process started with the decision on analyzing the whole six units which constitute the textbook 'Communication Skills'. The unit of analysis employed in the current research is the sentence and hence the evaluation unit is the sentence unit. All the activities in the textbook which counted 104 and which range between exercises, tasks, SAQs, evaluation tasks, projects, role-playing, problem- solving are included.

**IV. Findings:**

The data having been collected, they were both quantitatively and qualitatively treated. The data have been analyzed in light of the competences that constitute ICC. In this section, the researcher will first present the frequency of activities including ICC competences compared to those which do not. Secondly, the frequencies, means and percentages of each competence of ICC as demonstrated in the activities will be grouped. Worth mentioning, the results will be presented in light of the research questions which will be stated below for convenience.

**Research Question (1): What is the rate of activities including ICC competencies in the textbook 'Communication Skills'**

In order to answer this research question, the frequencies, means and percentages of activities encompassing ICC competences and those which do not are calculated. All the activities in the textbook including role-playing, problem –solving, evaluation tasks, reports, and Self-assessment questions SAQs were investigated.

Table (1) below presents the related results.

**Table (1): Distribution of activities including ICC and non-ICC competences**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>ICC activities</b>	70	67.31
<b>Non-ICC activities</b>	34	32.69
<b>Total</b>	104	100

As presented in the table above, the total number of activities in the textbook is 104 distributed into two categories, i.e. the ICC activities and the Non-ICC activities. The former counted 70 with a percentage 67.31 and the latter whose percentage is 32.69 counted 34 activities. It is obvious that about two thirds of the activities belong to ICC competences and the rest third is mainly concerned with linguistic and paralinguistic competences. Detailed information is attached in appendix (1).

**Research Question (2): What is the frequency of ICC competencies addressed in the textbook 'Communication Skills' activities?**

To have a clear view about the inclusion of ICC aspects and competence in the textbook activities, frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated.

**Table (2): Distribution of ICC competences over the textbook activities**

ICC competences	frequency	percentage	mean	rank
<b>Knowledge</b>	25	26.95	5.00	2
<b>Discovery and interaction</b>	28	29.78	5.60	1
<b>Skills of interpreting &amp; relating</b>	6	6.38	1.20	5
<b>Critical cultural awareness &amp; political education</b>	17	18.08	3.40	4
<b>Attitudes</b>	18	19.14	3.60	3
<b>Total</b>	94	100	18.80	

As the table shows, the total number of activities embracing ICC competences is 94, meanwhile in Table (1) the total number of activities having ICC aspects was only 70. There is no contradiction here. The variance simply merged since some of the activities can be labeled under more than one competence. So, you will find one activity or task is categorized under the competence 'knowledge' and can be labeled under discovery and interaction or under attitudes at the same time. In addition, one activity might include more than one task which are related to different ICC aspects.

With reference to Table (2) above, there is clear variance in the occurrence of ICC competences in the activities. The number of activities and tasks embracing the competence 'discovery and interaction' was the highest and ranked first. It frequented 28 times with a mean (5.60) and a percentage (29.78). The number of activities holding the competence 'knowledge', i.e. 25 came next and ranked second with a percentage (26.95). The third ICC competence, i.e. 'attitudes' counted 18 with a percentage (19.14) and a mean of (3.60). The number of activities including the ICC competence of 'Critical cultural awareness & political education' which was 17 came in the fourth rank; its mean is (3.40) and with a percentage (18.08). The least competence addressed in the textbook activities and ranked fifth is 'Skills of interpreting & relating'. It occurred only 6 times with a percentage (6.38).

**Discussion and Interpretation:**

The content analysis indicated that the textbook 'Communication Skills' provided the students with sufficient and authentic ICC aspects. The results showed that the majority of activities included ICC competences with different frequencies. The result obtained is unexpected since the author of the intended textbook is non-native speaker of English and the nature of most textbooks and the orientation of the English language department at QOU is pure linguistic and paralinguistic and pragmatic.

**Discussion of the first research question findings:**

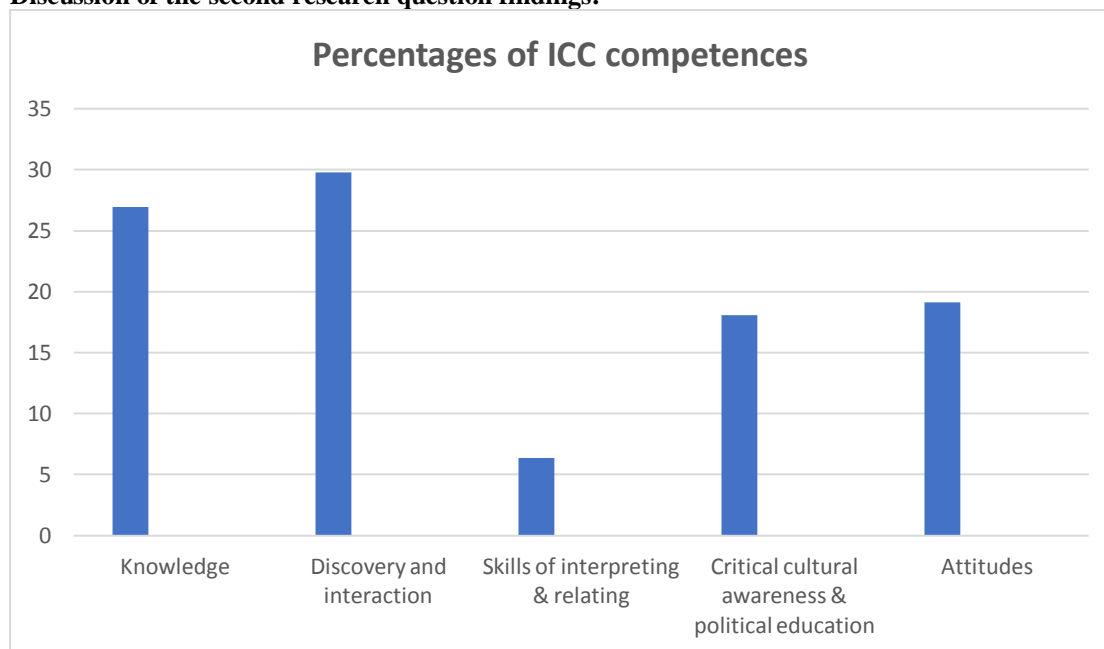
The analysis revealed that the activities embracing ICC competences counted 70; that is the double of the frequency of the activities including non-ICC competences. The result obtained here is surprising due to the fact that the main objectives of the textbook are geared towards communication skills. The textbook activities basically aim at enabling students to get engaged in conversations, discussions and debates, using proper language functions, understanding the basics of figurative language, achieving adequate knowledge and usage of

writing techniques, using research methods to write a research paper or a report and using higher order critical thinking skills in the learning activities (Alawi 2016).

It is apparent that the ICC skills and competences are not a major goal of the course but not neglected in it. The activities which do not include ICC competences basically sought to achieve communicative skills through the different language skills, namely writing, reading listening and speaking. Sometimes other skills of knowledge of language items such as grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary are addressed.

The result obtained here disagree with those of Arslan (2018) who found that only 12% of the total activities included ICC competences in the textbook 'Touchstone' Edition 2. Similarly, the result does not match with that of Fong, Dewitt and Leng (2018) who stated the sampled textbooks of Mandarin as a foreign language MFL did not provide sufficient cultural and intercultural communicative elements for the learners.

**Discussion of the second research question findings:**



**Figure(2): Frequency of ICC competences in the textbook activities**

As for the second research question, it aims at finding out what ICC competencies addressed in the activities and their frequencies. It is obvious that the most frequented ICC aspect in the activities is 'discovery and interaction' and the least frequented one is 'Skills of interpreting & relating'. The competence knowledge, attitudes and critical cultural awareness & political education came in between. The skills of discovery and interaction 'savoir apprendre/ faire ' occurred in 28 activities. This competence most frequented in unit 3 dealing with social communication skills followed by unit 4, Verbal presentation Skills' in which it existed 6 times; however, it occurred only twice or three times in each of the remaining units.

It is worth mentioning that this competence tackled the following elements: eliciting from the interlocutor the concepts or values of events and applying it to other phenomena, identifying significant references within and across cultures, identifying similar and dissimilar processes of interaction and negotiating using them in specific circumstances. In addition, this ICC competence invites language users to use an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from other cultures, identifying relationships one's own and the other culture, identifying public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other cultures, using knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture.

The ICC competence which ranked second and counted 25 times with a percentage (26.95) is knowledge 'savoirs' which was the most frequented for 10 times in unit 3. Knowledge as an ICC competence investigates if the activity can achieve any of the following elements: knowledge about historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries, the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country, types of cause of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins, how the events of the national memory of one's own country or of one's interlocutor's country are perceived in the other country and one's own country respectively. It also seeks to know how the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country or in one's interlocutor's country are perceived from the perspective of other countries and from one's own respectively. The same competence attempts to identify if the

activities include knowledge about the processes and institutions of socialization and social distinctions and their essential markers in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, as well as about the process of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country.

The ICC competence which came next and occurred in 18 activities, at least, is attitude 'Savoir etre'. It was most frequented in Units 3 and 2 respectively which generally tackle social communication skills and personal issues. Here the activities may create willingness to seek or take opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality or distinct, to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment. In addition, the activities embracing this ICC competence attempt to get the student discover other perspectives of interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in one's own and in other cultures. They also seek to create the student's willingness to engage with conversations of verbal or non-verbal communication and interaction.

From a different angle, the activities including critical thinking awareness 'savoir s'engager' invite students to identify and interpret values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures and to make an evaluative analysis about them. They also ask students to interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges on the basis of explicit criteria and to negotiate the degree of acceptance of these exchanges by drawing upon their knowledge, skills and attitudes. This ICC competence ranked fourth with a percentage (18.08). Critical Thinking awareness most existed 8 times in unit 2, personal issues.

Nonetheless, the least frequented ICC competence in the activities with a percentage (6.38) is the skills of interpreting & relating 'savoir comprendre'. The activities including this competence invite students to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event explaining their origins, know areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction explaining them in terms of each of the cultural systems. Moreover, it seeks to get students mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena. The results obtained in this area mismatch with those of Arslan (2018). Her findings showed that the most frequently occurring ICC competence in Touchstone Edition 2 textbook is knowledge 'savoir' with a percentage 10.97 followed by the competence of skills of discovery and interaction 'savoir apprendre/ faire' whereas attitudes 'savoir etre' never occurred in the activities. Similarly, the results of the current study do not go in line with that of Guzman Arias (2015) who pointed out that the activities in the course book which he analyzed included only the competences of knowledge and the skills of interpreting and relating. Moreover, Aijala (2009) found out that the activities in the three textbooks she analyzed almost aimed at increasing knowledge of the learners.

The discrepancy in the results between those obtained in the present study and that of Aijala (2009), Guzman Arias (2015) and those of Arslan (2018) can be attributed to different factors. The textbook analyzed in the current study 'Communication Skills' is targeting sophomore and junior students majoring in English whose awareness needs to be raised regarding cultural and intercultural communicative issues as they are a focal part to achieve sound communication with native speakers of English. The textbooks targeted in the other studies are selected or even designed for the purpose of the use of English language by EFL learners who are almost non-English majoring students. The main purpose of these books such as Touchstone is linguistic competence, hence ICC competences are not a focus in them. No doubt, these course books include pure cultural elements such as values, habits, customs, behaviours, religion, thoughts and so on.

## V. Conclusion

The content analysis of Al-Quds Open University course book 'Communication Skills' which basically targets sophomore and junior English majoring students and aims at developing their communicative competence and skills revealed that the majority, i.e. two thirds of the activities and tasks include ICC competences. It is apparent that the nature of course book necessitates the inclusion of communicative aspects which in turn require a considerable command of cultural and intercultural aspects. The textbook, in addition, tackled some linguistic and paralinguistic aspects which all approach the goal of the textbook.

The investigation of ICC competences was basically based on Byrum's (1997) ICC model and the standards suggested by Alberta Teachers of Second Language ATESL (2011). It showed that all ICC competences existed with different percentages in the textbook activities. The highest ICC competences which were frequented are skills of discovery and interaction 'savoir apprendre/ faire' followed by knowledge (savoirs) and the lowest in occurrence is the skills interpreting and relating 'savoir comprendre'. The critical cultural awareness 'savoir s'engager' and attitudes 'savoir etre' came in between.

Worth noting, the ICC competences were not distributed in a balanced manner among the different units of the textbook. It was obvious that most of the ICC competences highly frequented in the activities and tasks of units two and three compared to the other four units.

Finally, though the objectives of the textbook did not show keen interest in ICC due to the fact that it is basically geared towards developing students' communicative skills, ICC competences received the lion's share. These competences are almost implicitly addressed in the activities.



## VI. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following suggestions are recommended:

1. The inclusion of ICC competences in the different EFL textbooks is of paramount importance for creating and maintaining effective communication.
2. ICC competences and skills need to be approximately equally distributed to the whole textbook units or chapters due to their complexity.
3. EFL teachers and instructors are required to have their awareness raised and increased towards cultural issues in EFL teaching /learning process in general and ICC in particular.
4. It is recommended applying ICC to contexts other than foreign language learning and teaching since some of its principles can be applied to other fields of knowledge.
5. Teachers are recommended to supplement EFL course books they teach with activities that enable learners to decrease cultural sensitivity, misunderstanding and stereotyping and cultivate understanding, tolerance and acceptance of others' cultures.
6. It is also necessary that teachers create situations and activities which require that students empathize with foreigners and avoid ethnocentrism when communicating with them.

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