

The Development of Intercultural Competence in Moroccan EFL High School Classrooms

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the importance of intercultural competence in enhancing Moroccan EFL high school learners' language skills and cultural awareness. It investigates learners' motivation, engagement, and perceptions towards the use of intercultural activities, and it addresses the challenges that high school teachers face when they incorporate these activities into their EFL classrooms. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic, the researcher used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The findings of this study revealed that while intercultural competence activities positively influence learners' language proficiency, cultural awareness, and engagement, high school teachers still encounter many challenges, mainly limited materials, lack of teacher training, and time constraints. The study is based on a representative sample to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research. It targets students' ages, streams, levels, regions, and different high schools across Morocco. These variables are analyzed to address the underlying factors that typically shape students' perceptions towards intercultural competence. This study contributes to current research by examining the pedagogical potential and contextual limitations of intercultural competence in Moroccan EFL high school education. It provides empirical insights for both theory and practice.

Keywords: challenges, EFL learners, high school students, intercultural competence, learner engagement, motivation

Bio Data

Asmae El Azhari is a first-year doctoral student at the Language and Linguistic Studies Lab in the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Ain Chock. She completed her bachelor's degree at the Higher School of Education and Training, and then she got her master's degree in the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences, Ain Chock, Casablanca. She is doing her PhD at Ain Chock's university. She has participated in the book *Old and New Voices: Identities, Discourses, and Experiences in Morocco*. Her contribution focuses on Arabic-French code-switching and identity negotiation among Moroccan youth in digital spaces.