LLT Journal, e-ISSN 2579-9533, p-ISSN 1410-7201, Vol. 25, No. 2, October 2022, pp. 536-554

LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching
http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/LLT
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

MOBA GAMES IN EFL EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE TEACHING

Mohamed Toufik Ghaffour[1] and Hanane Sarnou[2]
[1,2]Abdelhamid ibn Badis University, Algeria
ghaffourmoh@gmail.com[1] and bh_sarnou@yahoo.fr[2]
correspondence: ghaffourmoh@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v25i2.4505
received 4 April 2022; accepted 5 October 2022

Abstract
This paper unveils the relative merits of multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) games in EFL educational settings for educational purposes, particularly rechecking the influence of League of Legends (LoL) on the EFL learners' ICC. We have used Byram's (1997) Model as a framework of assessment for thematic analysis, and both the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), modified by Gozzoli and Gazzaroli (2018) and the Assessment of Intercultural Competence of Chinese College Students (AIC-CCS) by Wu et al. (2013) to ensure a consistent questionnaire. Our participants were 75 Algerian EFL learners (Males=86,7%, Females= 13,3%) from different educational levels, aged 20.08 (SD= 2.99). The results indicate a need to design a more convenient MOBA game as a replace for LoL, as well as adopting a flexible assessment & continuous guidance to ensure appropriate ICC instruction.

Keywords: computer-assisted language learning, cultural intelligence scale, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural language teaching

Introduction
Foreign learners and Algerian EFL learners alike are now expected to function appropriately and effectively in the foreign language (Wulandari, 2019), and this can be done solely if EFL learners are trained to become intercultural speakers, not fluent fools. (Bennett, 1997) The task of becoming an intercultural speaker and possessing a set of attainable goals is by far more accessible and more attainable than aiming toward becoming a native speaker alike, which is an unattainable and unrealistic goal (Byram, 1997). In today's age, EFL learners are expected to "use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (Byram, 1997, p. 7) instead of "speaking well but not understanding the social or philosophical content of that language." (Bennett, 1993, p. 16). For this reason, scholars around the globe have shifted their attention towards incorporating the IC component in ESL and EFL classrooms (e.g.: Berardo, 2005; Deardorff, 2006; Bennett, 2011; Fantini, 2007; Byram, 2001; Liaw, 2006). In this respect, there has been an ongoing discussion about relying on learning technologies such as video games to enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence by creating a real-time communication environment in an immersive intercultural community.

Considering what has been said, the present article offers a feasible way to enrich EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) using online video games. First published in 2009 by Riot Games, League of Legends (LoL) is a team-based MOBA game where players compete as five against five to destroy the other's base; this entails winning is conditioned by effective communication, as teamwork is crucial to outperforming enemies. League of Legends developers facilitated interaction between players. They introduced multiple communication techniques and tools such as the microphone to speak, the keyboard to send messages, and the mouse to send visual alerts on the map that inform the entire team of tactical shot callings. Players then converse to avoid communication breakdowns and coordinate successfully to bring out the best of the team. It is fair to say the League of legends arena is a multicultural space where players must put aside differences and instead focus on utilizing the team' advantages, making plans, and motivating one another, which results in a harmonious atmosphere. This type of communication is ideal for convenient English language acquisition, learning by doing, and encountering foreign cultures in their natural states, which enhances the users' intercultural communicative competence and helps them avoid the determinist and essentialist conception of foreign cultures (Ghaffour, 2022).

Pioneered by Byram's (1997) Model of intercultural communicative competence, this article continues the authors' main endeavor in previous works to study the impact of League of Legends use on the EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. This article unveils how League of Legends develops its users' intercultural communicative competence vis-à-vis the 5 Savoirs Byram (1997) presented in his well-known "Teaching and Assessing intercultural communicative competence" book, arguably one of the most influential models of ICC in the FL field. Moreover, the researchers will discuss, using the computer-assisted language learning approach (CALL) the utilization of similar games to League of Legends as an instructional activity in the EFL context and, broadly, the FL field, how such games can enhance EFL Learners' Cultural Intelligence and ICC, and how it can be used to internalize educational settings. Nonetheless, the participants had opposing views regarding League of Legends; the authors will highlight the predicaments emanating from the Islamic and cultural standpoints of the Algerian EFL learners. Alongside these quandaries, the present article provides an account of no evidence on political education (cross-cultural awareness) development or savoir comprendre (skills of relating and interpreting) development which leaves a question mark for further research. We conclude this article by discussing the appropriate and most acceptable form of a MOBA game that should be used in an EFL Muslim or conservative context and why it is important to secure a proper education that promotes quality citizens for their nations and societies.

Literature Review

League of Legends

Developed and published by Riot Games Company in 2009, League of Legends (LoL) is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game. Like other MOBA games, LoL is considered a very strategic game where two teams are supposed to battle on a small map and win games. The need for strategic gameplay gave birth to several YouTube channels, coaches around the globe, and websites

functioning as educational businesses for League of Legends players to teach them how to get better at the game and climb the ranking ladder.

Due to the competitive nature of LoL, players are faced with few options, such as becoming excellent at the game, understanding the performance of the characters, and cooperating with the other four members of the team to win the game. Teamwork and communication are crucial to winning games in LoL; in that regard, "designers of the game may consider directly communicating to players about the benefits to the game performance of playing cooperatively and working well together with teammates." (Kim et al., 2017, p. 2326).

League of Legends in Educational Contexts

Many scholars worked on the benefits of League of Legends in the educational context and the possibility of integrating them into the official curriculum. To illustrate, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education's Student Education Institute took this claim into practice. As a response to the COVID-19 Education Crisis, the Online LoL Game School program was conducted to serve the curriculum's needs to work on the affective domain of the Korean students. The study showed fruitful results as the participants were satisfied as well as the researchers.

League of Legends in Developing Learners' ICC

Based on the results demonstrated by Toufik and Hanane (2021), League of Legends is responsible for enhancing players' intercultural competence by developing their awareness of intercultural differences and knowledge about the values, beliefs, and practices of other cultures. However, there have been some limitations and ambiguities during the Covid-19 pandemic. We, the same authors, still want to expand our research and overcome the difficulty we encountered during the experiment to modify the idea of incorporating LOL into the educational settings of intercultural language teaching, using Byram's model framework to analyze how lol affects the ICC level of learners of English as a foreign language.

Byram's model of ICC

Throughout the literature, we are faced with various definitions and terminology use of the concept of intercultural communicative competence by researchers and practitioners from different fields. As Deardorff (2006) put it: "Scholars throughout the past 30 years have defined intercultural competence in its various iterations, but there has not been agreement on how intercultural competence should be defined" (p. 233).

One of the predominant definitions of intercultural communicative competence is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Byram, 1997, p. 247). Other scholars such as Bennett and Bennett (2004) define ICC as 'the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts' (p. 149). Yet, for this particular study, we will focus mainly on Byram's definition of the concept as we are using Byram's Model framework and Savoirs as objectives to be met after the exposure to League of Legends.

Byram (1997) has presented five Savoirs, which can be used as objectives when teaching, learning, and assessing intercultural communicative competence. Placed in the middle of the Model, critical cultural awareness (CCA), also referred to as Savoir s'engager by Byram, is the most crucial Savoir to be acquired. Another Savoir encompasses knowledge of social groups and their products, the process of societal and individual interaction, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of relating and interpreting, and intercultural attitudes. According to Corbett (2003), these five savoirs are "the most fully worked-out specification of intercultural competence, which involves the kinds of knowledge and skills needed to mediate between cultures" (p.31).

Method

Sampling

The authors relied on two nonprobability sampling techniques in the present study. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to choose a sample of subjects from the concerned population; this was done solely due to the limited resources, time, and workforce. Besides, randomization is impossible as the population is huge and unknown to us in terms of quantity.

Sample description

With the help of an Instagram and Facebook page labeled "League of Legends Algeria," 75 questionnaires were administered to different EFL learners of different ages, genders, and educational levels. All these participants are well-versed and proficient in League of Legends, and they were available and ready to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

One of the authors has contacted 311 participants, and only 75 accepted the invitation and answered the questionnaire. Most females refused the invitation, many apologized and explained they were not interested or did not have time, and few answered the questionnaires.

Of the 75 who accepted to participate in the study, 65 respondents are males (86,7%) and 10 are females (13,3%); 31 (41,3%) are aged between 17-19, 27 are aged between 20-23 (36%), 8 are aged between 23-30 (10,7%), 8 are aged between 17-18 (5,3%), and one is 30.

Data collection instruments

The researchers relied on Rattray & Jones (2007) framework to adopt a logical, systematic, and structured approach to questionnaire development. The questionnaire is divided into two main parts: the first part is dedicated to establishing the respondents' profiles, including any previous intercultural experiences. The second part deals with collecting the needed data and is composed of nine open-ended questions.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, we relied on the Assessment of Intercultural Competence of Chinese College Students (AIC-CSS) designed by Wu et al. (2013) and the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) as the CQS proved its generalizability across countries (Gozzoli & Gazzaroli, 2018).

We have opted for the AIC-CSS because it correlates with our pre-determined themes of analysis based on the multidimensional model of Byram (1997) and due to its high validity and reliability. (Wu et al., 2013) Indeed, AIC-CSS has four

dimensions, (a) knowledge dimension, (b) attitude dimension, (c) skills dimension, and (d) awareness dimension. Moreover, AIC-CSS six factors of Knowledge of Self (KN-A), Knowledge of Others (KN-B), Intercultural Communicative Skills (SK-A), Intercultural Cognitive Skills (SK-B), Attitude (AT), and Awareness (AW) are well-trimmed to correlate with Byram's five savoirs. Nonetheless, we have used the CQS four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral to ensure a valid questionnaire for a non-Chinese context.

Data Analysis

Relying on a qualitative data analysis method, thematic analysis, the researchers will discuss the findings and demonstrate the respondents' perceptions of League of Legends use and enhance the participants' ICC abilities. First, the respondents we questioned did not agree on similar answers. In fact, some participants rejected LoL use in higher education because this game contains inappropriate material. Other participants were skeptical and not confident that League of Legends is guaranteed to enhance their ICC abilities. The minority were supportive and liked the idea of using League of Legends to learn and have fun online. Second, the authors chose ten pre-determined themes relevant to the research question and measurable/assessable. These ten themes are the dimensions that Byram (1997) presented in his Model under five different Savoirs; this is due to Byram's (1997) Model, designed to help curriculum designers, ICC teachers, and ICC assessors teach and assess ICC. Therefore, the authors relied on the Savoirs & their objectives which Byram (1997) presented in his model as pre-determined themes to function as assessment criterions to demonstrate the participants' increased ICC.

Findings and Discussion

The respondents' answers were composed of three main categories, "LoL is not beneficial in any way for me", which we will label as the *Opposers*, "LoL is beneficial but…" are the *Skepticals*, and lastly ", LoL is beneficial at 100%" represent the *Supporters*, the table below demonstrates the Mean score and the description of each of these groups.

Table 1. Respondents Answers

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Opposers	32	42,66%
Skepticals	40	53,33%
Supporters	3	4%

The Opposers

The opposers' answers mainly were composed of negative answers to the open-ended questions. The reasons, according to the respondents, ranging from either:

1. LoL in itself did not help me enhance my ICC abilities.
2. LoL contains graphic images of women which are inappropriate.

3. LoL contains music, and my religion does not allow me that.
4. LoL wastes much time as the games can be long, and the game is addictive.

The answers we received from the opposers are definite and unchangeable. These individuals rejected using LoL as an educational tool, and their reasons emanate from their religious affiliation and their dedication to it. However, the opposers did not reject the idea of online gaming but rather suggested moderation and modifications; we shall come back to this point later in the discussion.

The Skepticals

The Skepticals believe that League of Legends is beneficial in cultivating EFL learners' intercultural abilities, but they also share some concerns; we will scrutinize the answers of this category in detail using the thematic analysis. The list of themes the author will cover in this section is demonstrated in the table below.

Table 2. Themes Covered

Savoirs	Dimensions found	Dimensions not found
Savoir Être (critical attitudes)	Savoir être a), Savoir être b) Savoir être d), Savoir être e)	Savoir être c)
Savoirs (Knowledge)	Knowledge c), Knowledge j) Knowledge k)	Knowledge a), b), d), e)f), g) h), i)
Savoir apprendre/faire	Savoir apprendre/faire a), c), g)	Savoir apprendre/faire b), d), e), f)
Savoir comprendre	N/A	Savoir comprendre a), b), c)
Savoir s'engager	N/A	Savoir s'engager a), b), c)

The overall instances found from the correspondents' answers are depicted in table 3, highlighting the number of instances and the mean and SD scores of each savoir.

Table 3. Findings

Savoirs	Number of dimensions	Number of instances	Mean	SD
Savoir être	5	14	2.8	3.18
Savoirs (Knowledge)	11	8	0.72	1.48
Savoir apprendre/faire	7	13	1.85	2.41
Savoir comprendre	3	0	0	0
Savoir s'engager	3	0	0	0

As the table above shows, three savoirs out of five savoirs were concerned in the thematic analysis we performed. Indeed, 35 instances were found, wherein only 10 out of 29 dimensions are reported. The *savoir être* scored the highest mean (2,8), with the most significant number of instances found (14) in the present study. *Savoir apprendre/faire* scored the second-highest mean (1,85) with 13instances found, and *savoirs knowledge* scored 0,72 in the mean, making it the third most developed savoir with 8 instances. Logically, savoir comprendre and *savoir s'engager* scored 0 mean as no instances were found in the thematic analysis.

The researchers have recognized a significant but varying number of instances within the three savoirs analyzed. As the table shows, *savoir être* scored 3,18 SD, *savoir apprendre/faire* scored 2.41 SD and savoir *Savoirs knowledge* scored 1,48 SD, making the lowest developed savoir but the most consistent with the present study; this is because the standard deviation (SD) measures the dispersion of the data in relation to the mean. Indeed, the lower the SD is, the more clustered the data is around the mean; in contrast, the higher the SD is, the more spread out the data is.

Savoir être (critical attitudes)

As stated in Byram's (1997) Teaching and Assessing ICC, critical attitudes (Savoir Être) refer to: "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own." (p. 91). This objective encompasses five abilities an individual must acquire to become a competent intercultural speaker.

The researchers have recognized the highest individual dimension instances within this savoir. The most addressed critical attitudes were attitude (a) and then attitude (b), (e), then attitude (d) with one instance and the participants reported no indications on attitude (c). It is deduced that such inconsistency within the dimensions is due to the nature of the questions asked; the researcher shall explain further below.

Attitude (a)

A total of nine instances were recognized in attitude (a), making it the most recognized attitude among the five dimensions in Savoir Être (critical attitudes).

Based on Byram's (1997) definition, attitude (a) is composed of two main parts; first, the intercultural speaker takes the initiative in learning about other cultures and inquire about the daily life experience of others, and second, the inter speaker is interested in minorities among societies as well. Therefore, the authors will present the data collected accordingly.

To begin with, many participants demonstrated an eagerness to know more about the daily life experience of others. For instance, Moha (a respondent) claimed

that "*from time to time I ask people to tell me a fun fact about their culture and try to see how they live life there, it is amazing and makes me appreciate my culture even more*". Such inquiries provide Moha with insight into daily life experiences not usually presented in media. Instead, interlocutors would answer based on personal experiences and their own interpretations, which provide the intercultural speaker with insight into how it feels like to be in interlocutors' shoes.

Another participant further explains how they are interested in trying German food when they get the chance, "*schnitzel and spätzle, I learned about these German dishes when I met a German lady, we kept talking about different dishes, and these two came into our conversation, and I really want to try them when I visit Germany*" said the respondent.

The reflection above indicates that the participant has successfully maintained a conversation with a German lady. They also indicate that the participants are not entirely interested in English-speaking countries but rather in foreign cultures; this is reinforced in another participant's answer, "***I learned a lot about French culture*** *and how it is mixed there,* ***and I plan to visit soon***."

Attitude (b)

Byram's (1997) defined attitude (b) as "the interest in discovering other perspectives on the interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices" (p. 92).

Demonstrating interest is crucial for an intercultural speaker in discovering familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in one's own and other cultures. In this regard, a respondent argued that,

"*league shows that the world is so different we have so much to learn about others, but I noticed that in the league, they had focused a lot on the LGBTQ community recently, especially in arcane movies, and I donot recommend this to kids...I learned from others some mistakes we make in our culture but if it has to do with religion is a no-no red cross line for me."*

This answer was predominantly centered on the student's understanding of a need to learn more about other cultures and understand other people. The participant also demonstrated a willingness to question the values and presuppositions in their cultural practices and products; however, they completely denied any compromise or acceptance of what is deemed not permissible by their religion (Islam). The participant has emphasized the importance of their values as Muslims. This remark has been repeated several times; other participants focused on the fact that many "immoral" and "unacceptable" ideas and perspectives are included in the game, and they perceive this as a negative aspect.

Another answer mainly focused on how people perceive cultures other than their own, the participant has said,

LOL is good because it helps us tell people what is important for us, which does not sound important to them. I often explain to others why it is crucial for us to pray and to fast, and sometimes they explain why some things are important for them; this does not happen every time tho; this occasionally happens as sometimes we talk about other things.

The answer above suggests that the participant has taken an interest in "discovering other perspectives on the interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices" (Byram, 1997). This reflection also demonstrates how players in League of Legends discuss their assumptions about other cultures and explain their point of view to other people to have a mutual understanding of a common interpretation of phenomena from both perspectives. As the respondent claimed, this does not happen frequently but occasionally, mainly due to this kind of discussion being profound and critical.

Attitude (d)

Byram (1997) has defined attitude d) as the "readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation and interaction with another culture during a period of residence." (p. 93).

The first indication of achieving attitude (d) among the participants is acknowledging the existence of differences among different cultures and the need for adaptation during a period of residence. The following respondent explains the need to be ready to experience the different stages of adaptation during a period of residence,

"*Advantageous because you meet and learn about other people's culture, and they may be a help if you want to visit and be like a guide to you involve the interact into friendship because when you visit other country and other culture in it it is hard to learn everything and* ***you have to get used to it and the people and their culture*****."**

Although recognizing differences among cultures and a readiness to adapt is preliminary within this objective (Byram, 1997), it is understandable on the participant's behalf not to report anything beyond this, as the question was contextualized and limited to the League of Legends platform. Nevertheless, these reflections indicate potential towards positive adaptation experience to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence.

Attitude (e)

Byram (1997) has defined attitude e) as the "readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction." (p. 94).

According to the definition above, an intercultural speaker must be ready to engage with other people's conventions, demonstrate a positive attitude towards these practices, and be willing to participate; this is echoed in the participants' answers below,

"*One can learn from a foreigner some greeting that is good in their culture, when you learn about other people greetings it is good to be respected as long as it is not something bad for me. If I agree with something, yes, I do it, but something else, no, I would not*."

"*I knew from the League of Legends community that the majority of Germans are friendly but do not like to talk a lot in-game; they prefer pings, so I just use pings instead of talking with them to avoid annoying them*."

Both participants claimed that they have achieved or can achieve attitude (e) by playing League of Legends. The first participant recognized the importance of knowing about the conventions of different cultures in establishing a good interaction and maintaining relationships with interlocutors, as well as the importance in being respected and "developing appropriate behavior that is expected from a foreigner." The second participant has developed an idea about Germans, albeit the researcher disagrees with generalizations, whether positive or negative, they would like to emphasize the participant's willingness to adopt non-verbal conventions, that of addressing Germans using pings (signaling in-game using the keyboard) rather than typing in the chat to maintain respectful and convenient communication with their peers.

There are two distinctive remarks about these two answers above. To begin with, the first participant refused to adopt a particular behaviour at the expense of their cultural self-awareness and values, in case the expected behaviour from them contradicts what they believe. The second participant has demonstrated willingness to put aside their usual communication approach and instead adopt their peers' approach because that is how "Germans" act and expect others to act.

Savoirs (knowledge)

Byram (1997) has defined the Savoirs as "Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction." (p. 51). This definition entails that an intercultural speaker should grasp relational and theoretical knowledge instead of content knowledge. That is to say, the intercultural speaker understands how the different perceptions of cultures from both cultures affect the interaction between individuals. Additionally, they understand the process of socialization and its products, such as understanding how socialization creates different perceptions and how these perceptions shape the interaction between individuals, and this also reinforces autonomous learning of new cultures using different skills. In short, the researcher appends that Savoirs is the knowledge of self and other, of interaction, individual and societal.

Byram (1997) has put forward eleven objectives in this particular savoir, ranging from (a) to (g).

Knowledge (c)

According to Byram (1997), knowledge (c) refers to knowing about and of "the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins." (p.97).

Achievement of knowledge (c) is demonstrated in one of the participant's answers,

"*I have learned from this game* ***that not people are the same****, we come from different origins and places, and in order to win the game* ***I must not piss off anyone,*** *so I try my best to communicate nicely with all ... <u>also you should avoid in-game asking people about their names and why they sound weird, they may not like it</u>. In general,the league teaches you* ***how to communicate nicely and avoid not communicating nicely*****."**

The reflection above demonstrates the participant's recognition of a misunderstanding and how to avoid it; this mainly emanates from their understanding and valuing successful communication on the overall team performance and the importance of conventions of communication in foreign cultures.

Knowledge (j)

Knowledge (j) is defined as the knowledge about and of "institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them" (Byram, 1997, p. 60).

Concerning the answers from the participants, it is evident that many of them have acquired knowledge (j). One of the participants has reported,

"*I learned alot of things about other cultures when interacting with different people. The other day Italked to someone from Madrid, Spain; he told me very valuable information, such as different events that occur on a* ***daily basis*** *in Madrid and the fact that* ***you are not really obliged to be a rich person to have fun there*****."**

The participant above learned about the public and private institutions that affect individuals' living conditions in the two countries. This reflection demonstrates a sense of comparison from the respondent, as for them not to be rich and still have lots of fun in a European country seemed to be unrealistic before.

Another participant has explained how they learned from playing League of Legends that Palestinians **have** access to the internet as well as another respondent reported that they learned that "*Iraq people speak Arabic* ***and not*** *Perse*."

Knowledge (k)

Knowledge (k) means the knowledge of/about "the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country" (Byram, 1997, p. 60).

Several participants identified an awareness about conventions of behaviours. For instance, one participant reported the following, and I learned that in the UK **you drive on the right and you pass on the left**", others made remarks about conventions of beliefs and taboos, "I meet with other people in this world sometimes we chat, and everything and they tell me **what they do** and **what matters to them** and **their traditions**, and what **they do not be ok with.**"

Some other reflections demonstrate an understanding of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country as a participant claimed French people prefer to have fun in groups with their friends, another participant has claimed Germans to be respectful but not friendly.

"*Germans are* ***not friendly*** *IMO****; they respect everyone,*** *but* ***they do not like to bond*** *after the game. So I do not add them at the end of the game, and I think Germans* ***in real-life are also this distant,*** *but IDK*".

The authors do not support these generalizations, and they do not entirely agree with the definition of being reserved as "unfriendly," as the definition of being friendly is an open debate discussion. Nonetheless, the researchers appreciate the

student's understanding that some Germans he found in the game are reserved and do not like to bond after the matches or his own conclusion that they may be reserved in real-life as well, as this entails an understanding of the process of social interaction. Besides, the student has ended their argument using "IDK," an internet abbreviation that stands for "I don't know," or "I do not know," which signals their acknowledgment that these are subjective assumptions.

Savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating)

Byram (1997) defined skills of interpreting and relating as "the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own." (p. 98)

Based on Byram's Model, within this savoir, an intercultural speaker must be able to:

a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins,

b) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present,

And c) mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena

After analysing the data, no evidence of the development of this Savoir was identified.

Savoir apprendre/faire (skills of discovery and interaction)

Skills of discovery and interaction are "the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction." (Byram, 1997, p. 98).

Savoir Apprendre/Faire (a)

Byram (1997) identified Savoir Faire/Apprendre a) as "the ability to elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena." (p. 61), demonstrating the ability to conduct an inquiry through the interlocutor in search of a general implication to similar circumstances; one of the respondents claimed that "I learned from playing that Shurima is actually ancient Egypt, I had no idea about that until I asked other players who are more interested in lores. (Champions backgrounds)" In here, Shurima, is one of the main cities in League of Legends Universe where several Champions (characters) originate from. He further explains, "*I understood then that Renekton is also from ancient Egypt; it explains Taliyah's appearance abilities and story, and why Nasus and Renek look like some pharaohs*."

This reflection shows an accurate and systematic acquisition of this Savoir dimension, as the participant could make a general value off an implication and successfully link it to the related logical relationships of hierarchy.

Savoir Faire/Apprendre (c)

According to Byram (1997), Savoir-Faire/Apprendre (c) is "the ability to identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and

negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances." (p.61). Thus, an intercultural speaker should be able to recognize and use the present conventions in the interaction to create a new system of interculturally accepted conventions for that specific circumstance. One participant demonstrated a good understanding of dimension c) in, "*If it is a man and he wants to shake hands, I will do so, and if it is a woman and you try to shake hands with her, I will say no and explain why I cannot do that*." Accepting male handshakes and refusing to shake hands with a female is due to religious, not cultural beliefs. As for shaking hands with Muslims, it is not permissible. However, the participant claimed that they would explain the reasons behind their refusal, which is a clear sign of cultural self-awareness and understanding of different interaction processes. Nonetheless, the participant claimed they would explain the reasons behind their refusal, which is an evident sign of cultural-self awareness and understanding of dissimilar interaction processes.

Another respondent said, "*I learned from LoL community that bowing in some countries is a sign of greeting and respect, I cannot do that. I am Muslim*," which may speak to the notion of one cultural self-awareness and denial of accepting the other at the expense of one's values. It may lead to an individual's ostracization within a particular foreign culture and reinforce the idea that many ICC scholars have been upholding the necessity to maintain cultural self-awareness and a sense of self-valuing.

Savoir Faire/Apprendre (g)

The last dimension in Savoir Faire/Apprendre is the ability to "Use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture." (p. 63). To act as a mediator between interlocutors of one's own and foreign cultures is an attribute of a successful intercultural speaker. In this respect, a participant said, "sometimes, I tell my friends how they should act around some players to help them better communicate, my friends sometimes do not understand that typing a lot in a chat with some people can be a problem, so I tell them to stop typing a lot in chat and use ping instead." This participant has explained how his knowledge about particular cultures has helped him mediate between interlocutors of different cultures, including his own and foreigners. They claimed they could identify the misunderstandings and dysfunctions in particular situations, and therefore, they rely on an appropriate intervention to meet the mutual satisfaction of the interlocutors.

This reflection also shows the acquisition of another dimension in another savoir. Byram (1997) has identified the c) dimension of skills of interpreting and relating (Savoir comprendre) as "the ability to mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena." (p. 61)

It can be noticed that savoir faire/apprendre (g) & savoir comprendre (c) have some common points, and are quite similar from the first glance. However, these two are different as the skill faire/apprendre (g) requires real-time communication whereas the skill of interpreting and relating (c) is not necessarily meant to be in real-time. To explicate, Byram (1997) put forward the skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire) as the "ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills **under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction**". In

contrast, the skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre) were introduced as the "ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own". The distinction between these two *Savoirs* explains why the sub-skills differed in nature and end; each savoir serves a particular purpose.

Savoir S'engager (Critical Cultural Awareness/Political Education)

Critical cultural awareness/political education is defined as the "ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries." (Byram, 1997, p.101)

According to the designer of the Model, there are three objectives to be achieved within this Savoir,

a) identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures,

b) make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria,

and c) interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

After analyzing the data, no evidence of the development of this Savoir was identified.

Discussion

In this section, the main goal is to discuss, a) how similar games to League of Legends can be beneficial in cultivating EFL learners ICC, b) how to meet the opposers' concerns, c) how such a result can contribute to the TEFL field.

League of Legends in CALL

The integration of games in language learning has been widely investigated in the FL field (Hung et al., 2018). The literature advocates using computer devices to aid learners become autonomous learners of new languages (Lai, Li, & Wang, 2016; Lai et al., 2017; Yeh & Lan, 2018). Additionally, research indicates that the use of online video games in language classes promotes classroom engagement (Lin, 2014; Cahyani, 2016; Zou, 2020), develops learning skills & boosts EFL learners' confidence (Zou, 2020), & meets the different learning styles of the FL learners.

Drawing on the results arrived at in this paper and responding to the forces of globalization, the authors advise TEFL practitioners to consider the integration of similar games to League of Legends as an aspect of internalization to aid EFL learners in developing their ICC. Moreover, Algeria lacks internalized home campuses, internalization at homes, or the possession of foreign staff members or students (except students from neighboring African countries) diversity for natural intercultural learning. The integration of MOBA games as a reliable online video game, in the form of an extracurricular activity, is perhaps a starting point towards the internalization of Algerian higher education for EFL students to develop their intercultural competence and compensate for the lack of cultural diversity within the higher education context of interest.

Byram (1997) recommended using public and private institutions that facilitate contact with other countries and cultures. TEFL policymakers should provide EFL learners with opportunities to participate in different programs that promote cultural exchange between countries. These intuitions can use similar games to League of Legends to create pre-determined teams for intercultural learning. Such exposure would allow EFL learners to learn from interlocutors and vice-versa, learn how to communicate effectively and appropriately with strangers, and train towards becoming mediators between people of different cultures.

Additionally, the use of similar games to League of Legends in CALL, with the help of the educational institutions, enhances EFL learners' ICC and promotes friendships between the players, resulting in a more comfortable atmosphere that allows for better language learning and intercultural competence development. Mason & Clauset (2013) commented that "friendships lead to improved individual and team performance, increased pro-social behaviour, and likely increased the long-term appeal of and engagement in the game." (p. 384). All in all, we speculate that increased contact among the EFL students and international students decreases the negative biases between the two and promotes openness and tolerance to one another, which increases the chances of acquiring more cultural knowledge and develops the ICC skills of the learners at a more profound level. Yet, some of the opposers reported that they do not like to talk with foreigners as much as they do not wish to be influenced by other cultures. In fact, the opposers are trying to say that they do not wish to befriend people from other religious affiliations. Indeed, despite cultural differences, the opposers claimed that they are at ease taking part in online gaming with other Muslims rather than non-Muslims. Many of the Skepticals also shared the same ideas and claimed it is best to take part in the online gaming experience with other Muslims around the globe. Hence, common religious affiliation mitigates cultural differences between people and raises the critical attitudes of the learners to become more eager and willing to learn about other cultures; this is an overlooked discussion, that of the clash between religious affiliations and intercultural communications.

Moreover, as we demonstrated in the data analysis, the SD scores are high, which means we did not have consistent results within the savoirs impacted, and two savoirs were completely dismissed by the participants. This entails that EFL teachers should take an active part in helping their learners become more aware of their intercultural skills development. We also speculate that many of the participants would have developed many intercultural skills; however, they were not comfortable playing this game or inherently believed it may affect them negatively. Moreover, these respondents may have completely shut down the communication opportunities and focused on gaming solely. This, logically, will provide minimum to no development in the levels of ICC. Perhaps this issue could be solved by providing a more suitable MOBA game, wherein the opposers feel at ease and tolerate communication with the foreigners they play with; we will tackle this solution shortly.

The Need for Classroom ICC Assessment

The goal of the FL intercultural speaker is to adapt to different cultures and not adopt every aspect of other cultures for mutual understanding at the expense of their Self. EFL teachers should then ensure their learners retain their separate and

unique identities in the foreign language classroom. (Suryani et al, 2020; Kusumaningsih, 2021; Yektiningtyas, & Modouw, 2017)

Additionally, the EFL teachers should be cautious to abide by the curriculum set by the higher bodies (e.g., higher education ministries) and not set apart from their primary task of providing what is expected, and this is voiced out in one of the questionnaire's participants' answers. A participant has claimed that "Champion biographies are nice to learn about other cultures, but there are many Champs that their bio may influence kids negatively like LGBTQ oriented biographies or new skins (LGBTQ is the grouping of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people). Another participant agreed, saying, "Yes and no since they started sharing LGBTQ and editing their original lores for money. Riot games are doing these representations, so people buy these skins and profit from them."

This article does not deem anything moral and acceptable or immoral and unacceptable. Instead, we look to draw the EFL teachers' attention to the religious affiliation of their learners. It allows the learners to avoid unnecessary clashes between the Self and the other.

Preconditioned Behaviour

Developing intercultural communicative competence using similar games to League of Legends is not a guaranteed success. The EFL learners should acquire a set of preconditioned behaviors before taking part in the ex-curricular activity. The EFL teachers should focus on developing their learners' attitudes of tolerance, openness, and respect towards other cultures and the importance of understanding different people.

Similar games to League of Legends?

The rationale behind using "similar games" to League of Legends in the discussion section is, in fact, an argument that League of Legends is not a suitable game for the Algerian EFL context and perhaps other EFL contexts as well, depending on the cultural identity of the learners and the broader aims and goals of the educational institution. Indeed, the opposers raised factual issues that we should not ignore, as our task is to train EFL learners and help them shape their cultural identity in a proper way that allows them to immerse themselves in their societies.

In the table below we have demonstrated the current features in League of Legends, and we have also listed the proposed features and measures which we have chosen based on the answers and needs of both the opposers and skepticals to recommend a more convenient MOBA game. The proposed MOBA game design and features are also put in the table for comparative reasons.

Table 4. Proposed MOBA Game

League of Legends Features	Proposed Features& Measures	Proposed MOBA Game
Graphic images (e.g., female characters)	Use of gender-free characters only	Meets different learners' needs
Music	No music	Educative and fun learning

Contact with foreigners of all cultures	Contact with Muslims of different cultures and/or nations	Meets higher education expectations
Addictive	Gaming with moderation	Is based on real-time interactions
Long Games (Waste of time)	Shorter games	Develops ICC levels and interpersonal relationships
	Continuous assessment	
	Guidance by the teacher	
	Part of the curriculum	

The demonstrative table above helps game designers in their task of making a suitable MOBA game for educational purposes, and TEFL policy makers in choosing what game to promote for their learners. As it is shown, participants prefer to play MOBA games with gender-free characters, which prevent them from looking at graphic images, which are not only restricted to female characters but also includes male characters with inappropriate clothing style. Moreover, there has been an emphasis, as discussed above, on making MOBA games culturally based, as most participants prefer to play with either Muslims or Arab Muslims, which in both cases, seem to be a logical choice based on participants' religious affiliation & ethnicity. Nonetheless, based on the findings of our study, we also proposed several points to be included in MOBA games, such as games being of educative nature & inherently based on real-time interaction between players, which allow the development of ICC levels. Last, there are other suggestions addressed mainly to TEFL policy makers & teachers, which includes a continuous assessment of the learners' development in MOBA games, as well as moderating the time spent in-game so as not to build gamers, but to build learners' that used games in their favour.

Conclusion

The present paper suggests using MOBA games in CALL to assist the development of EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence in educational settings. TEFL policymakers, and Algerian policymakers, should draw their attention to the utilization of such games as a third-place to promote a natural and friendly multicultural atmosphere for better foreign language learning and ICC development. However, despite the merits of such games, there can be heavy consequences on the EFL learners' cultural identity and overall training for better citizens. Based on our analysis using Byram's (1997) Model, several students raised concerns about the ideas and promotions in MOBA games such as League of Legends; therefore, EFL teachers should adopt a flexible assessment and continuous guidance to ensure appropriate learning and promote attitudes of curiosity and tolerance before initiating computer-based intercultural contact.

All in all, we recommend designing proper MOBA games that suit the needs of the EFL learners as a replacement for LoL; this can be achieved by including features such as gender-free characters, avoiding music, and creating separate servers in these games for educative purposes. Moreover, we suggest introducing convenient MOBA games as an educational ex-curricular activity for EFL learners

on the weekends and holidays; this can be facilitated by setting up links and partnerships between the Algerian or the concerned EFL academic institution with foreign institutions.

References

Bennett, J. M. (2011). Developing intercultural competence for international education faculty and staff. In *2011 Association of international education administrators conference workshop, San Francisco, CA*.

Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2004). *Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to global and domestic diversity* (pp. 147-165).

Bennett, M. J. (1997). How not to be a fluent fool: Understanding the cultural dimension of language. *New ways in teaching culture*, 16-21.

Berardo, K. (2005). *Intercultural competence: A synthesis and discussion of current research and theories*. University of Luton Business School.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Nichols, A., & Stevens, D. (Eds.). (2001). *Developing intercultural competence in practice* (Vol. 1). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cahyani, A. D. (2016). Gamification approach to enhance students engagement in studying language course. In *MATEC Web of Conferences*, *58*, p. 03006. EDP Sciences. https://doi.org/10.1051/matecconf/20165803006

Corbett, J. (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *10*(3), 241–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

Fantini, A. E. (2007). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence (CSD Research Paper No. 07-01). St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Center for Social Development. https://doi.org/10.7936/K7TB16CX

Ghaffour, M. T. (2022). Anti-essentialist culture conception for better intercultural language teaching in EFL contexts. *Arab World English Journal, 13* (1). 273–284. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no1.17

Gozzoli, C., & Gazzaroli, D. (2018). The cultural intelligence scale (CQS): A contribution to the Italian validation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1183.

Hung, H. T., Yang, J. C., Hwang, G. J., Chu, H. C., & Wang, C. C. (2018). A scoping review of research on digital game-based language learning. *Computers & Education*, 126, 89-104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-019-09702-2

Kim, Y. J., Engel, D., Woolley, A. W., Lin, J. Y. T., McArthur, N., & Malone, T. W. (2017, February). What makes a strong team? Using collective intelligence to predict team performance in League of Legends. In *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM conference on computer supported cooperative work and social computing* (pp. 2316-2329).

Kusumaningsih, S. N. (2021). Incorporating inclusive assessment principles and universal design for learning in assessing multicultural classroom: An autoethnography. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 24*(2), 337-348. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v24i2.3656

Lai, C., Li, X. & Wang, Q. (2017). Students' perceptions of teacher impact on their self-directed language learning with technology beyond the classroom: cases of Hong Kong and U.S.. *Education Tech Research Dev*, 65, 1105–1133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-017-9523-4

Lai, C., Yeung, Y., & Hu, J. (2016). University student and teacher perceptions of teacher roles in promoting autonomous language learning with technology outside the classroom. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 29*(4), 703-723. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2015.1016441

Liaw, M. L. (2006). E-learning and the development of intercultural competence. *Language Learning & Technology, 10*(3), 49-64.

Lin, N. (2014, March). Assessing classroom participation and performance through gamification systems in foreign language classrooms. In *Society for information technology & teacher education international conference* (pp. 1772-1777). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).

Mason, W., & Clauset, A. (2013, February). Friends FTW! Friendship and competition in halo: Reach. In *Proceedings of the 2013 conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 375-386).

Rattray, J. and Jones, M.C. (2007) Essential elements of questionnaire design and development. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 16, 234-243. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2006.01573.x

Suryani, A., Soedarso, S., Diani, K. T., & Rosmawati, R. (2020). English teaching in social and cultural contexts: Language teachers as cultural managers. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 23*(2), 273-292. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v23i2.2470

Toufik, G.M., & Hanane, S. (2021). Investigating the potential of online video games in enhancing EFL learners' communication skills. *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 9*(2), pp. 292 - 298. https://www.hrpub.org/ journals/ jour_ archive. php?id= 95&iid =1843

Wulandari, M. (2019). Improving EFL learners' speaking proficiency through instagram vlog. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 22*(1), 111-125. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v22i1.1796

Yeh, YL., Lan, YJ. Fostering student autonomy in English learning through creations in a 3D virtual world. *Education Tech Research Dev*, 66, 693–708 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-017-9566-6

Yektiningtyas, W., & Modouw, J. (2017). Infusing culture in English learning: An attempt to preserve cultural heritages in Jayapura municipality, Papua. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 20*(1), 40-48. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v20i1.506

Zou, D. (2020). Gamified flipped EFL classroom for primary education: Student and teacher perceptions. *Journal of Computers in Education, 7*(2), 213-228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-020-00153-w