



“ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS”

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Abstract:

With the increasing impact of globalization, fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in secondary school students has become a key goal in foreign language instruction. This study explores how the use of authentic materials like movies, news articles, podcasts, real-life conversations, social media content, and literary texts can effectively support the development of ICC in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms at the secondary education level.

Keywords:

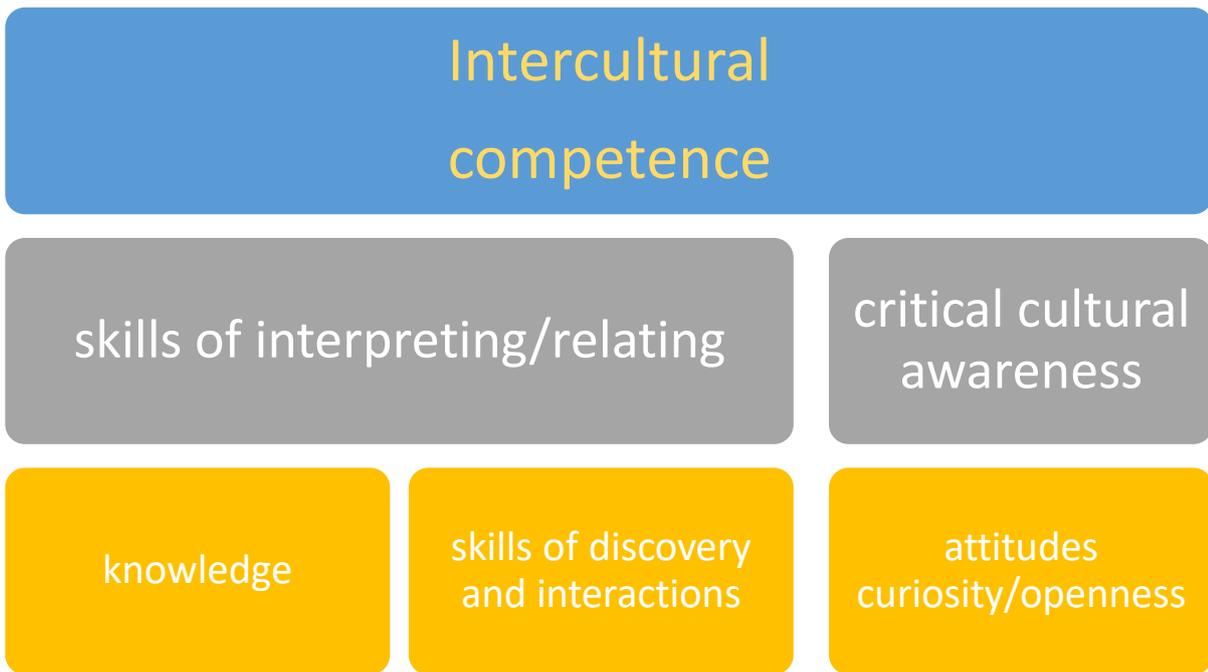
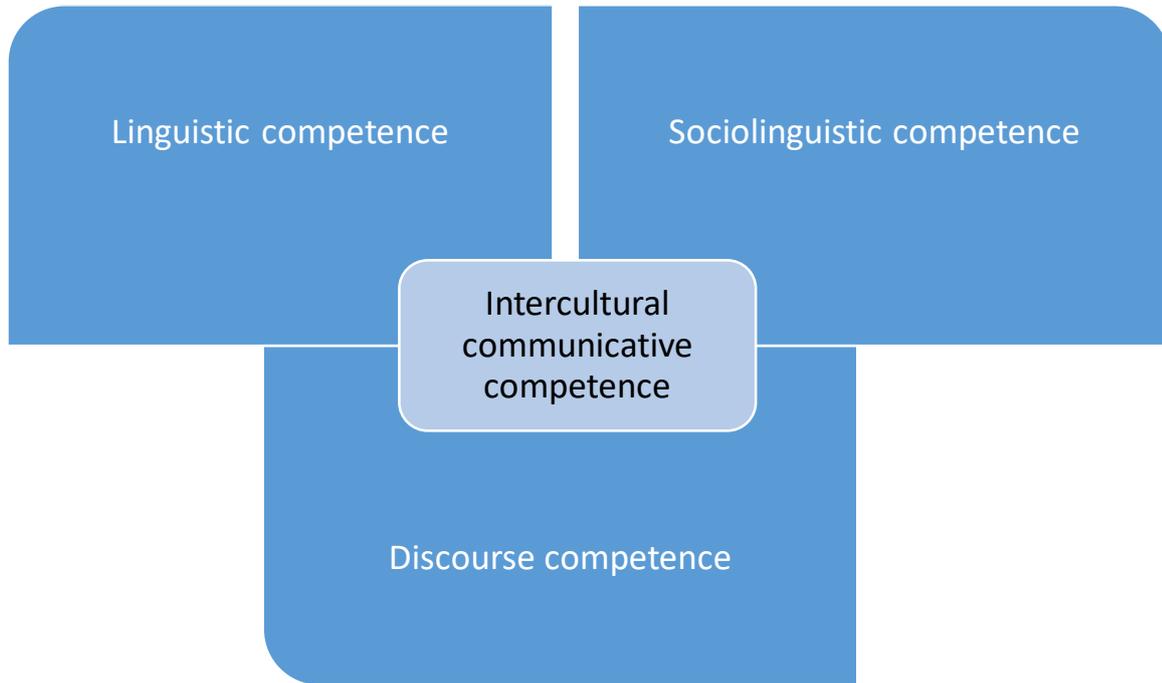
Intercultural Communicative Competence, Authentic Materials, Authentic tasks, EFL, Language Teaching, Cultural Awareness, Methods

Introduction:

According to Deardorff, Yershova, DeJaeghere and Mestenhauser Intercultural competence is a lifelong process; there is no pinnacle at which someone becomes “interculturally competent.” Given the lifelong learning inherent in intercultural competence development, therefore, it is imperative that learners regularly engage in reflective practice in regard to their own development in this area [1]

In the context of secondary level foreign language instruction, particularly English language teaching, the development of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) implies that learners not only acquire linguistic competencies but also actively explore the cultures associated with the target language, as well as potentially other cultures. This process encourages learners to compare cultural similarities and differences, participate in intercultural communicative activities, and cultivate essential skills such as empathy, adaptability, and effective intercultural communication.

What is Intercultural Communicative Competence itself?. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) broadly encompasses an individual’s ability to communicate both effectively and appropriately with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This competence entails a combination of cultural knowledge, attitudinal openness, and communicative skills, including the capacity to recognize and interpret cultural signals, adjust communicative behavior according to varying cultural contexts, and critically reflect upon one’s own cultural perspectives and assumptions.



The definition by Byram Intercultural Competence “Individuals have the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness, and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering, i.e., of overcoming and enjoying intercultural contact”. [2]

Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram’s, 1997 Definition) “[Intercultural communicative competence is the ability] to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. [Individuals who have this competence] are able to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins. Their knowledge



of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately-sociolinguistic and discourse competence-and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations of the language". (Byram, 1997, p. 71.) [3].

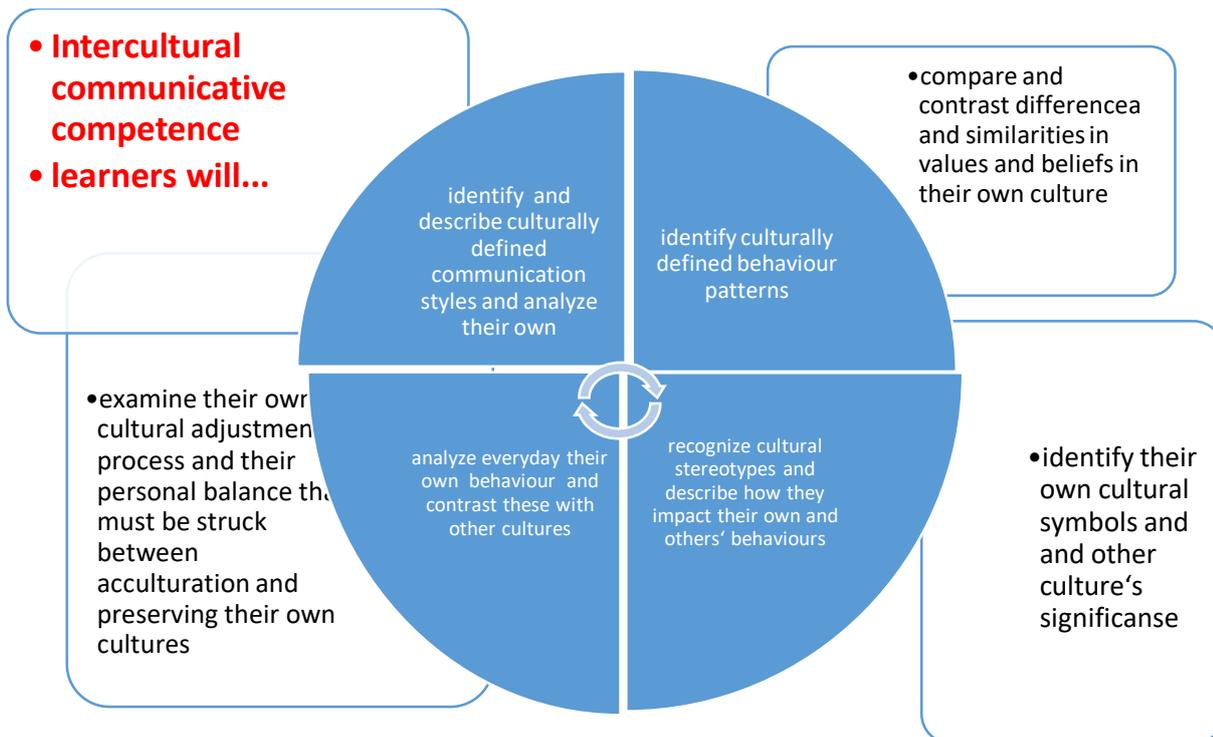
Authentic materials are considered the most effective resources for enhancing the intercultural communicative abilities of foreign language learners. Authentic materials serve as a connection between the classroom and the actual world, bringing a sense of authenticity to the learning environment. Authentic materials refer to items that have not been specifically designed or modified for language learners. Exposure to authentic materials enables language learners to engage with the genuine language, traditions, and lifestyle of the target culture. Utilising genuine materials in cultural instruction serves as a significant source of motivation and enables learners to acknowledge the existence of a community of individuals who actively engage with the target language in their daily lives. Audio, visual, and printed resources are examples of authentic materials. The use of real resources to promote intercultural communication competence is discussed in this article along with some examples of activities.[4] "Authentic materials" in the language ICC context are resources that were originally created for native speakers or real-life communicative purposes not simplified or artificially constructed for learners. Examples include: newspaper articles, podcasts, videos, YouTube clips, social media posts, interviews, real-life dialogues, maps, recipes, cultural documentaries, tourism websites, authentic tasks (e.g., writing an email to a person in another culture), etc. By engaging with authentic materials, students can see how the target language is used in real cultural contexts, how culture and communication intertwine, and how to adapt their communication accordingly.

People's "intercultural adaptation" their ability to fit in with two or more cultures is one sign that they are becoming interculturally competent. Respect and tolerance for the cultural identity of people from other countries and one's own people, willingness and ability to change stereotypical ideas, the ability to get over prejudices when learning new things, and the awareness and expression of oneself as an equal and full-fledged participant subject in the dialogue of cultures, capable of carrying out appropriate intercultural interaction. These traits and skills are all part of intercultural adaptation.[4]

The term "**cultural awareness**" is considered a concept that is directly included within **intercultural communicative competence**.

Cultural awareness is the understanding and recognition of the differences and similarities between cultures. It involves being aware of your own cultural background, values, and beliefs, as well as those of others. Cultural awareness helps people communicate and interact more effectively in a multicultural environment by promoting respect, tolerance, and open-mindedness. It is especially important in today's globalized world where people from different cultural backgrounds often live, work, and study together.

There are some **methods** and standarts to develop ESL learners' ICC and ESL Curriculum Framework includes seven strands as standards for ICC. The Framework specifies that these seven strands are crucial, interconnected elements needed to develop learners' ICC (Figure 1). The strands can be applied at any ESL proficiency level.



In today's globalized and culturally diverse world, developing **Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)** is a fundamental objective of modern foreign language education, particularly in English language teaching at the secondary level. As highlighted by scholars like Deardorff and Byram, ICC is not a fixed achievement but a continuous, lifelong process of learning, reflection, and personal growth.

This thesis has shown that fostering ICC requires more than linguistic knowledge -it demands the cultivation of cultural awareness, openness, empathy, and the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. One of the most effective ways to support this development is through the integration of authentic materials into language instruction.

In conclusion, the development of ICC must be at the heart of language education. The thoughtful use of **authentic materials**, especially for speaking practice, plays a critical role in preparing learners to become competent, culturally aware communicators who can interact confidently and respectfully in diverse global contexts.

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