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A Course Handout for: Master One Students

**Semester Two** 

**Didactics of Foreign Languages** 

**Subject Field** 

# **Interculturality and Multiculturalism**

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#### Introduction

The present course handout is tended to be used as a teaching material in the course of 'interculturality and multiculturalism'. It is designed for EFL Master One students at the department of English language and literature at Abdelhafid Boussouf university Center/Mila. The material presented in the current document addresses the students' needs in the second semester and it is complementary to the content of the first semester's module 'Language and Culture'. It is developed by the teacher/ researcher after teaching the module for three years and researching in the field since 2014.

Nowadays, individuals do not need to travel abroad to get in touch with other different cultures, information and communication technologies brought cultures closer than ever; yet, the need for cultural and intercultural training is more than necessary especially for EFL learners. Henceforth, the aim of the present course is to increase students' awareness towards western cultures and their own, the similarities and differences between cultures and the ways in which these may affect communication in cases of intercultural interaction and result in conflicts and communication breakdowns. The course further aims to help students build some necessary knowledge and competences to successfully understand and manage intercultural situations and communication with critical minds. Since the formation is all about didactics of English as a foreign language, the course provides some teaching material to help students deal with the concept of intercultural communication and competence in their future teaching career.

The course consists of ten main lectures, each one is followed by tasks for practice most of which are food for thought rather than exercises with exact answers. The first lecture discusses the phenomenon of cultures interaction and the notion of equality and inequality of cultures in terms of interaction and imposed influence resulting in either cultural globalization or cultural imperialism, and the role of education. The second lecture introduces the notion of

intercultural communication contrasting it with close terminology for more clarification, and paving the way for discussing its emergence and the reasons behind the importance it has gained recently, which is the core of the third lecture. The fourth lecture focuses on barriers to intercultural communication to raise learners' awareness towards the hidden cultural aspects that result in conflicts and communication failure. The fifth and the sixth lectures address the concepts of intercultural identity and the intercultural pedagogy respectively to shift to the concept of the intercultural communicative competence in the following lecture. The three last lectures are devoted to the process of developing the intercultural communicative competence in terms of stages, teaching material, assessment and challenges that may be faced.

## **General Objectives of the Handout**

The main aim of the present document is to provide Master One students with necessary knowledge and competences that enable them understand that interaction and communication are culturally loaded, and to help them develop critical skills to be intercultural speakers. It further aims to equip them with some teaching material to help themselves and their future learners develop cultural awareness, and intercultural communication skills. Therefore, the present course aims to help Master One students achieve the following objectives:

- To understand and recognize the influence of some cultures on others and the reasons behind it.
- To be able to describe and discuss real life examples of cultural globalization and cultural imperialism.
- To be able to identify the cultural content imbedded in language use, and the ways in which it affects the success or failure of communication.

- To understand the aims, the focus and the central concepts of modern international education.
- To differentiate between intercultural communication and close concepts in the field.
- To recognize the importance of intercultural communication.
- To increase awareness towards intercultural communication barriers.
- To increase awareness of the cultural and the intercultural identity.
- To recognize the place and importance of culture in teaching/learning curriculum and syllabi.
- To evaluate the cultural component in teaching materials.
- To understand the concept of intercultural communicative competence, its development and assessment.
- To be able to assess and evaluate their own and others' intercultural communicative competence.

#### 1. The Interaction of Cultures

The huge technological advancement that have been recently noticed resulted in unavoidable interactions of people belonging to different cultures. Although such a kind of interaction seems interesting and positive, a deep analysis of the situation would reveal problematic issues that namely include debates about the equality/ non-equality between cultures, dominance/ minority, and cultural globalization/ imperialism.

#### 1.1. Cultures vs. Subcultures

Differences exist within any society; they can be noticed in various factors (e.g. religion, food, art, educational level...) that interact to shape the culture of a particular society. Based on these differences, cultures are viewed as either 'homogenous' or 'heterogeneous'. The former refers to a culture "in which the majority of members share the same beliefs, attitudes and values and have little difference in economic wealth and social level" (Merrouche, 2006 p. 49); while the latter refers to a culture "in which members of the society come from diverse cultural groups [...] there are differences of economic, educational, and social levels among the groups who live in the same society" (Merrouche, 2006 p. 49).

However, a close examination of cultures would reveal that every culture is heterogeneous; it is a continuum of patterns of behaviours, values, and beliefs, and it consists of a variety of subcultures. A subculture, like a culture, represents a relatively large number of individuals. However, different subcultures exist within dominant cultures; they can be distinguished based on economic or social class, ethnicity, race, or geographic region. Some scholars advocated the use of the term "co-culture" instead of "sub-culture" because the former implies mutuality while the latter implies inferiority and subordination.

Individuals belong to different cultures, they simultaneously belong to particular subcultures, but they may further belong to subgroups. The latter gather people on the basis of

some factors such as age (e.g. teenagers), sex (e.g. females), occupation (e.g. teachers, doctors, students...), religious affiliation.... Members of the group share common interests and characteristics; they share language (words) and ideas, as they share norms and values. Henceforth, communication problems that may occur between interlocutors belonging to different cultures, may occur also in case individuals belong to different subcultures and subgroups. Many conflicts between parents and children result from incompatibilities between the system of norms and values that operate at home (with parents) and the one operating outside (with friends) (Merrouche, 2006).

## 1.2.Dominant vs. Minority Cultures

The diversity of cultures and subcultures results in both difference and variety, however, the norms and the standards are established according to the beliefs and the norms of the majority. In other words, dominant cultural patterns are those that represent the majority. Thus, in any community, there is a dominant culture (and language) and a minority culture (and language). Kramsch (1998 p. 9) believed that the culture of a group is that of the powerful: "onlythe powerful decide whose values and beliefs will be deemed worth adopting by the group, which historical events are worth commemorating, which future is worth imagining. Cultures and especially national cultures resonate with the voices of the powerful, and are filled with the silences of the powerless".

Theoretically speaking, cultures are equal (as languages); there is no reason to believe that one race or culture is better than the other. However, this equality is not reflected in reality. Some cultures are 'dominant'and 'superior' while others are 'subordinate' and 'inferior'. Barrow (1990 pp.8-9) claimed that "some cultures are superior to others, at least in certain specific respects [which include] their literature, their morality, their industrial capacity, their agricultural efficiency, their scientific understanding and so

forth" .Still, belonging to a different culture does not mean being 'superior' or 'inferior'.

Rather, cultural differences should be respected and tolerated; they bring richness and quality to the human cultural heritage.

## 1.3. The English Language and Culture

Some professionals argued for the possibility of having a version of English which is 'Neutral' or 'culturally unmarked', in other words, a version of English that "would serve as a universal medium of communication" (Saleemi, 1985 cited in Merrouche, 2006 p. 72). They claimed that when a language becomes international, it no longer belongs exclusively to its native speakers or any other culture. Instead, English is regarded as a vehicle that is used globally, and it belongs to whoever uses it. Since the English language has been recognized to be an international language, it has been emptied of its political and cultural connotations and specificities; it rather belongs to no particular culture.

However, can a language ever become a culturally neutral medium of communication? Language and its associated culture are deeply interrelated and interlinked; the cultural norms and conventions of a society are deeply ingrained in its language that one can hardly imagine how they can be extracted from it. Furthermore, scholars (e.g. Widdowson) explained that a language that is emptied of its cultural connotations is deprived from its potential of creativity and change and cannot function as a natural language. Hence, any attempt to 'simplify' or to 'generalize' or to 'standardize' the English language remains a theoretical enterprise that would lead to an artificial product. Speaking English all over the world resulted in other spoken varieties of English or so-called world Englishes but not neutral English.

## **Practice**

- **1.** Observing the Algerian culture, identify composing co-cultures and describe the existing differences.
- 2. Observing the whole world these days, which cultures do you consider dominant? Which cultures do you perceive as minority ones? Explain on which basis you came to this conclusion.
- **3.** Find in the English language examples that show that it is still culturally loaded although it has become an international language of communication.

## 2. Dialogue or Clash of Cultures

Nowadays, the world is witnessing unceasing people's movements, namely movements of businessmen, sportsmen, refugees, immigrants, students, diplomats, members of international organizations, tourists and others. Moreover, modern means of communication have facilitated the interaction ofpeople, and hence of languages and cultures. Because cultures are in constant interaction, they overlap and borrow from each other. People are not restricted within the borders of their native culture; they go beyond or the other cultures come to them while they are staying home. This may be reflected in various aspects of everyday life such as clothes, food, music, and even in their ways of thinking and behaving.

Tomlinson (1997pp. 170 -171) defined globalization as:

the rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, in situations and individuals worldwide. It is a process which involves a compression of time and space(Harvey,1989), shrinking distances through a dramatic reduction in the time taken – either physically orrepresentationally – to cross them, so making the world seem smaller and in a certain sense bringing human beings 'closer' to one another.

Some believe that the globalization process goes back to the 15thcentury with the Europeancolonization of the world, accordingly, it is an already 'done deal'. However, others argued that itstarted with the second half of the twentieth century, and viewed it as'work in progress'.

The interaction of cultures may be viewed asboth a positive and a negative process. It is positive in the sense that it leads to enrichment and expansion; "Cultures enrich one another – this keeps them alive and protects them from museum – like

paralysis" (Naumann, 2000 cited in Merrouche, 2006 p.56). Thus, the term 'global' culture is used, these days, to refer to a culture that is not associated with a particular group of individuals who live in the same geographical region and sharethe same historical background; rather, it refers to a common culture that connects people who sharesocial, professional, artistic, economic, and technological interests. Examples of 'global' cultures include youth culture, internet users' culture, artists' culture ...

Yet, the interaction of world cultures may be viewed as a negative process when considering the embedded risk of intercultural and ethnic conflicts. People identify themselves strongly with their native culture within which theydefine their cultural identity, and without which they feel themselves nothing. Then, in order to preserve one's culture, one's language, one's religion, one's history, and one's ethnic belongingness, people get involved in conflict and this situation is worsened by exaggerations and misleading information transmitted via media. Hence, when world cultures interact, crucial issues such as cultural identity and nationalism are brought to the fore.

Moreover, the intensive interaction of world cultures may lead to the dominance of one or some cultures over the other, the latterwould melt in the same potimposed by cultures that have more powerful economy, industry, technology.... Nowadays, this dominant culture can be claimed to be the Western American culture and illustrations can be identified in instances of wearing 'Jeans' and eating 'Big Macs' almost all over the world. This widely exercised influence over less powerful cultures, those deemed to be 'backward' and 'incapable of modernity', is referred to as cultural imperialism. The latter is defined as

both an integral part and product of a more general process of imperialism , whereby certain economically dominant nations systematically develop and extend their economic , political and cultural

control over other countries [...] The local cultures of developing nations become dominated and in varying degrees invaded, displaced and challenged by foreign, often western, cultures

(O'Sullivan et al. 1994 cited in Merrouche, 2006 p. 58)

In a nut shell, there are two opposing views when considering the interaction of cultures: some professionals speak of "a dialogue of cultures"; they believe that cultures are "united by the opportunity and need for dialogue", all cultures getting into this dialogue are equal, and this dialogue helps them be tolerant, respectful towards others and result in 'cultural globalization'. Others claim for "a clash of civilizations"; they believe that "cultures are divided by fundamental differences", these differences increase tensions and hostilities, dominance of the powerful cultures over the weak ones and lead to 'cultural imperialism'.

Since language and culture are strongly interconnected and education cannot be separated from everyday life issues and realities, the debate over the interaction of cultures, mainly cultural globalization vs cultural imperialism, caused disagreement among foreign language educators. They divided into opponents and proponents for the integration of the foreign culture while teaching its associated language.

Educators who are against the integration of the foreign culture in the Foreign language curriculum argued that such integration would foster cultural imperialism, and threaten one's national cultural identity via the introduction of alien ideas and behaviours. They believed that 'cultural globalization' cannot be a positive process that leads to enrichment and expansion of cultures; it is rather an extension of the cultural imperialism of the West , an 'Americanization' or a 'Westernization' . They further explained that Wester American cultures are dominant and have been already ' imposed ' in terms of

clothes , food, music , television programmes, architecture , etc. Therefore, this dominance should not be further reinforced through foreign language teaching.

Opposing the previous view, other foreign language educators argued for the existence of a 'pluralization' rather than 'Americanization' or cultural imperialism in terms of cultural production and influence. For example, USA television exports are dominant in the third world countries, yet, there is a high competition in this domain on the part of other international and national companies. They explained that cultural imperialism is deeply rooted in the long history of western colonialism and imperialism in the third world. Furthermore, they focused on the fact that in the process of the interaction of cultures, there is a mutual influence and not "a unidirectional flow of power" (Tomlinson, 1997 p.181). In other words, the dynamic nature of culture and the changing needs of different generations necessitate interaction with other cultures. In this sense, cultures may lose some of their particularities in the globalization process, yet, diversity gained from other world cultures leads to culture survival and the enrichment of the human cultural heritage. However, individuals need to selective; they should learn how to pick up what is in conformity with their own native culture, one's religion and morality, and avoid what is not.

Education that follows a *realistic attitude* is one way to overcome existing prejudices and stereotypes; it is important not to idealise or undervalue other cultures, but instead to enable learners make comparisons to discover the other cultures and to understand their own at the same time. Education should aim at establishing intercultural societies which are societies that recognize the importance of common norms and languages but also recognize the specificities of minorities, and in which diversity is perceived as a mutual source of enrichment. An intercultural society is the one that is founded on the recognition of and openness to cultural differences, as well as flexibility and acceptance of change (Merrouche, 2006).

Although the expansion of communication technologies was predicted to turn the world into a "global village", they allow for a huge amount of cultural knowledge about the other without action to adapt oneself with it; i.e., we may interact with people from a different culture without getting access to their deep culture, and this creates misunderstanding. Consequently, globalization does not abolish culture differences as predicted, and such intercultural experiences cannot threaten or change the way people perceive their reality. This fact rather leads to an increase in intercultural conflicts.

In this regard, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced 2001 the year of dialogue between cultures. The aim was to promote dialogue between members of different communities through international seminars, conferences, scholarships and exchange programmes (ERASMUS is an example that can be used to illustrate such a kind of programmes). Although the construction of any global culture is more likely to be shaped in western terms, this does not mean that they are unchallengeable. People in dominated cultures have to critically analyze cultural concepts and behaviours, then decide whether to adapt (not adopt) or to avoid and defend their own.

## **Practice**

- 1. Find in real life situations examples that reflect cultural globalization.
- 2. Find in real life situations examples that reflect cultural imperialism.

## 3. Intercultural Communication and Related Terms

The fact that the interaction of cultures has become unavoidable necessitates communication between individuals belonging to different cultures. This lecture is to define the concept of intercultural communication and distinguish it from other close concepts in the field.

#### 3.1.Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication takes place when the culture of the speaker and that of the interlocutor vary. Difference between cultures vary from little to very large, such a difference may result in some situations in a complete failure in communication. Hall (1959) was the first to introduce the term 'intercultural communication'; he explained that intercultural misunderstanding is caused by the hidden deep aspects of culture. In this sense, Shaules (2007 p.34) argued that

when interacting with people from other cultural communities we are, in effect, interacting with other world views and that surface behavior is tied to deep and hidden networks of meaning, values and expectations that our hosts share with each other, yet which we do not yet fully understand.

The deep and hidden networks of meaning and values differ from one culture to the other, and they are expressed through the use of language, discourse and images. Therefore, cultures can be close or distant depending on the number of the shared cultural representations (large/small), and their centrality (high/low). The latter refers to the extent to which that cultural representation "is causally efficacious across many spheres of social life" (Žegarac, 2007 p.41) like religious beliefs.

Thus, in situations of intercultural communication, the interactants share few cultural representations. Yet, the term 'intercultural' highlights the fact that individuals are still able to adapt themselves according to the situation (encountering different cultures) without abandoning their values.

Three types of intercultural communication can be distinguished:

- Non-mediated intercultural communication; the best example to illustrate this type is foreign language communication where interactions betweennative and non-native speakers using the foreign language take place.
- ➤ Mediated intercultural communication; interactions take place in the presence of an interpreter.
- Lingua France Communication; interactants use a third language which is not their mother tongue.

#### 3.2.Intracultural Communication

Intracultural communication takes place when interactants belong to the same culture and language. In situations of intracultural communication, participants share most and central cultural representations. They do not face difficulty to reach the communicative success. In contrast, in situations of intercultural communication, the participants need some type of accommodation to reach the communicative success.

#### 3.3. Cross-Cultural Communication

The terms "intercultural" and "cross-cultural" are often used interchangeably; although a close analysis would reveal that they are different. Intercultural research refers to the kind of study by which the behaviour of members of two or more cultures is examined during their interaction with each other. Hence, intercultural communication research aims at studying the process of interaction which has a dynamic nature that allows for the

construction of different and complex identities. However, cross-cultural research deals with examining the behaviour of members when they interact with others within the same culture, and compare it with the behaviour of others who belong to other cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Kotthoff, 2007). However, Cross-Cultural competence refers to the individuals' ability to navigate from one culture to another, but they may have to adopt a different identity each time (LeBaron Earle, 2013).

## 3.4.Intercultural vs. Bicultural Speakers

Because being bicultural takes place in naturalistic settings, individuals are able to understand the meanings, practices, beliefs, expectations... of both cultures i.e. they are part of both cultures. This process underlies degrees or levels of transformation that range between normal second socialization, in one extreme, and 're-socialization' or 'alternation', in the other (Byram, 2008 p.59).

However, being intercultural does not imply an identity transformation; it rather involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful interaction and mediation between cultures. Such characteristic of acting as mediator is what distinguishes 'intercultural' from 'bicultural' individuals, i.e. bicultural individuals are not required to act as mediators (Byram, 2008). In sum, three points of difference can be listed;

- 1- The process of being bicultural takes place in naturalistic setting while being intercultural is gained through education.
- 2- Bicultural, unlike intercultural, embodies an identity transformation.
- 3- Intercultural speakers are mediators while bicultural ones are not.

## 3.5. Multiculturalism

Multicultural societies refer to societies that contain several cultural or ethnic groups; people live together without necessarily being engaged in interactions with each other. Hence, multiple cultural groups tolerate the existence of others and live with them within the same geographical confines. However, intercultural communication focuses on dialogue between cultures and on the mutual exchange of ideas and norms that allow for a deep understanding and respect for the other cultures. Consequently, and in contrast to multicultural situations, in an intercultural society, every one senses change and learns from the others.

## **Practice**

- 1. Give examples of cultural representations.
- Use these cultural representations to compare between the Algerian and the Tunisian cultures.
- Use the same cultural representations to compare between the Algerian and the British cultures.
- 2. Give examples of societies that are monolingual/cultural, and multicultural.
- 3. Give examples of research topics that have a cross-cultural nature and others with an intercultural nature.

## 4. The Emergence of the Field of Intercultural Communication

The emergence of the field of intercultural communication is traced back to the end of the Second World War, as explained in the following quote:

The field of intercultural communication grew out the practical, competitive needs of post-second world war American International Diplomacy and Business, and was only later applied to interethnic conflicts within the United States [...]. By contrast, the field of intercultural communication in Europe was a direct outcome of the social and political up-heals created by the large scale of immigrants into the industrialized countries

(Kramsch, 2001 p.202)

Although the reasons behind the emergence of the field of intercultural communication in Europe and America seem to be different, it can be said that the industrial development and the extension of the business exchange scale were behind its emergence, as well as, its gained importance. Gibson (2000 p.03) argued that the importance which intercultural communication has gained is due to the following reasons:

importance which intercultural communication has gained is due to the following reaso
☐ Technology makes it possible for people to travel further and faster than ever.
☐ The Internet links people across national boundaries.
☐ The international labour force is more mobile.
☐ More people are on the move than ever before: business people are active globally,
refugees are trying to escape from conflicts and natural disasters.
☐ In many places the workforce is becoming more diverse.

Nowadays with globalization, technology, masses movements, and the wide online communication, there is no existence of the old notion of borders i.e. even if individuals never travel abroad, international influences come home, then, skills of intercultural communication are needed to find out direction and identity (Kramsch, 2001).

## **Practice**

- 1. Explain the extent to which you agree with the following statements:
- Intercultural communication is important only for those who travel abroad.
- Intercultural communication breakdowns are possible within interactions of individuals in the same country.
- 2. Using different Social Media Sites (such as Facebook, Instagram...), have you ever experienced communication misunderstanding and breakdown?
- What did you do in such situations?

#### 5. Barriers to Intercultural Communication

Not all situations of intercultural communication result in mutual understanding; miscommunication and conflicts are common. Gibson (2000) listed five main barriers to intercultural communication: attitudes, perception, stereotypes, interpretation, and culture shock.

#### 4.1. Attitudes

For social psychologists, interactants' way of behaving in an intercultural situation, and the way they perceive it are directly driven by their attitudes and motivation," psychological work in intercultural communication has always been based on the assumption that the attitudes, interactional goals, and motives of interlocutors determine their choice of language and non-verbal behaviour[...] as well as their evaluation of it" (Brabant, Watson and Gallois, 2007 p.56).

Attitudes and motivation play a major role in hindering or facilitating intercultural communication, be they negative or positive respectively, thus, the intercultural communication effectiveness does not rely only on cognitive aspects, but needs also emotion regulation; in other words, the way individuals deal with their negative emotions and their way in resolving conflicts are major determinants of the success or failure of intercultural communication. In this sense, negative emotions may function as a driving force that motivates people to react and be engaged in culture conflicts. Individuals can regulate their emotions through holding them and avoiding direct reaction, which gives them space and time for critical thinking. The latter allows for the recognition of hidden and real causes of the situation besides openness and flexibility to similarities and differences that exist between cultures.

Henceforth, Matsomoto, Yoo and LeRoux (2007) posited four main components for successful intercultural interaction: emotion regulation (E.R), critical thinking (CT), openness (OP), and flexibility (FL), which together form the so-called « the psychological engine » of adaptation and adjustment. Thus, if intercultural communication success is aimed at, the consideration and inclusion of emotion regulation is of salient importance.

## 4.2. Perceptions

There are two types of intercultural interaction contexts: external and internal contexts. The external context includes both the location of the interaction, and the societal attached meanings. The internal context refers to the way interactants perceive the situation and the meanings depending on the culture to which they belong (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992 cited in Byram and Feng, 2005).

Intercultural misunderstanding occurs because of the difference in the ineractants' internal context; variation in the perception of the communicative situation causes misunderstanding. This idea can be more illustrated through the example of open versus closed doors. Most Germans keep the doors of the room or office closed as a sign of order and human respect. Reversely, Americans keep their doors open as a sign of friendliness. Hence, such variation in perception causes misunderstanding, for Americans tend to perceive the German act of closing doors as a sign of unfriendliness, while Germans perceive Americans' act of opening doors a sign of disorder and disrespect (Kramsch,1993).

## 4.3. Stereotype and Prejudice

A stereotype can be defined as "fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is not true in reality" (Gibson, 2000 p. 12). Shaules (2007 p.66), in his turn, claimed prejudice to function "primarily out of conscious

awareness and often result from judging behaviour based on criteria that the sojourner assumes is neutral and absolute, but which is actually based in hidden cultural assumptions".

Prejudice is the unfavourable attitude that one group of people direct towards another group, not individual, due to the negative picture they had about them, and which was formed out of incorrect information. The source of this information is the surrounding environment; the culture to which the person belongs, the parents, and/ or peers (Kaouache, 2008). It stems from "the cognitive beliefs that people hold towards the characteristics of other groups" (Kaouache, 2008 p. 95) or stereotypes. Stereotyping persons tend to describe all the members of a group similarly; the observed characteristics of an individual are used to describe the whole community. Thus, stereotypes are the result of over-generalization, as they could be passed down from one generation to another.

To overcome falling in prejudice and negative judgments, individuals should be aware of the differences between the two cultures especially the hidden aspects. Besides, in intercultural communication, individuals can avoid making stereotypes by distinguishing between what is cultural and what is personal to interpret the situation (Gibson, 2000).

## 4.4. Interpretation

In intercultural communication, interactants use their previously acquired knowledge to appropriately interpret a particular situation. Hence, besides the ability to deal with grammar and semantics, "interpretations [...] rely on perceptions of extra-linguistic context, knowledge of the world, as well as the cultural presuppositions that are brought to the interaction" (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2007 p.17).

Therefore, the interpretation of the communicative situation is influenced by previous knowledge which is developed through interactive experience in a cultural environment, and influence the interactants' future responses. However, when participants do

not share background knowledge, interpretations may differ and lead to misunderstandings. The addressee may fail to interpret the message / the informative evidence because of the absence of a shared knowledge, in this case, either the evidence is not recognized, or the interlocutors' belief /assumptions contradict with each other (Žegarac, 2007). This is better clarified through the following example:

A Japanese businessman is negotiating with a Norwegian partner. The Japanese says that the deal will be very difficult. The Norwegian asks how her company can help to solve the problems. The Japanese is puzzled by the question

(Adler 1997 cited in Gibson, 2000 p.14)

The situation above is an example of intercultural misinterpretation. The Japanese meant that there was no deal, indirectly to be polite, but the Norwegian could not recognize the informative evidence, rather she interpreted the situation depending on her native culture assumptions.

In addition to previously acquired knowledge, interactants can rely on conversational inference. The latter is a process of interpretation in which participants rely on an exchange with other interlocutors to assess the intended meaning, and on which they base their response.

#### 4.5. Culture Shock

Culture shock is a feeling of anxiety, astonishment, frustration and rejection. It is an emotional experience that is experienced by those detached from their native culture; they feel the pressure to go through a lot of adjustments at the same time, in addition to a sense of 'non belonging' and loss. When interacting with different others, one may witness what shocks him/her and perceive it as obscene or barbaric. Culture shock most of the time occurs when sojourners feel under pressure to make a lot of adjustments; however, it can also take place in

a foreign language classroom (Merrouche, 2008). There are five main areas where culture shock may take place:

- Shocks related to the difference in perceiving time and space;
- Shocks related to the difference in the structure of the family;
- Shocks related to the difference in sociability (hospitality, codes of well being...);
- Shocks related to the difference in help requests;
- Shocks related to the difference in religious beliefs.

Gibson (2000) described different phases of culture shock, a process that can be described using a W curve. In the first phase, 'honey moon', individuals enjoy their presence and contact with the new culture, as the name suggests; they view the aspects of the new culture positively. However, this satisfaction is followed by a period of frustration and anxiety when these individuals recognize that they have to make adjustments to cope with the new environment; they feel irritated and often seek refuge in people belonging to the same cultural background. The third phase is a stage of acceptance and recovery; individuals eventually learn to adapt themselves with the new culture, they are recommended to try to see things from the others' perspective. The following period is characterized by periods of culture shock and recovery until a sense of familiarity with the new culture is established.

## **Practice**

**Task 1.** Non-verbal communication is produced by some means other than words (eye contact, body language, or vocal cues, for example) (Knapp & Hall, 2002). Nonverbal communication is bound to culture.

- Look at the following images and interpret the gesture



- Give other examples of gestures used in your culture, and their meaning.
- Do people from other cultures perceive them the same way you do in your culture?
- Give other interpretations (in other cultures) for these gestures.

## Task 2.

Linda, an American teacher in an adult class in the U.S, was speaking to Usa, one of her Thai students. She said: 'Usa, I'm very happy with your work. Your English is really improving.'

Usa looked down and said: Oh, no, I'm not a good student. My English is not very good.'

Linda really thought that Usa was making progress, and she wanted her to know it. She said to

Usa: but you are a good student, and you are making excellent progress. You should be

proud of your work.'

Usa responded to this remark saying:' No, no. You are a very good teacher, but I am not a good student'.

Linda didn't know what to say, so she decided not to give Usa any more complement.

## • Questions:

- Why did Usa look down when the teacher complemented her?
- She was ashamed of her work.
- She was embarrassed by the teacher's complement.
- She was truing ti show respect to the teacher.
- She didn't like the teacher.

- Why did Linda decide not to give Usa any more complements?
- She decided that Usa is really not a good student.
- Usa's behaviour was disrespectful.
- Usa didn't seem to be pleased with the complement.
- She expected Usa to say something like 'Thank you'.
- What cultural values were involved?
- Who was at fault?
- What would you do in this situation?

## 6. The Intercultural Identity

The term 'intercultural identity' imbeds the mutual and the strong influence that exist between culture, language, and communication and interaction, especially in a modern world characterized by technology and globalization.

The concept of identity can be divided into two main components, based on the work of the social psychologist Mead (1934), a social component or social identity, and a personal component or personal identity (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2007). The social identity, called also cultural identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1982 cited in Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2007 p. 415).

Individuals become members of certain social groups through the process of 'socialization' (Byram,1997). They understand their relations with the surrounding world, and how these relations change over time and space (Norton, 2000); and they keep continuously negotiating their beliefs, behaviours and meanings for a better understanding of the future (Byram,1997). Hence, sociocultural approaches view social / cultural identity as dynamic and continuously changing since individuals are constantly getting involved in new experiences and relations which affect their view of the self and how they relate to others (Ricento, 2005). That is to say, by being part of communities, members engage in action verbally and/or nonverbally through which they negotiate their identities and transform them through a series of changes (Wenger,1998 cited in Ryan,2009).

Norton (1997) explained further the notion of cultural identity stating that it is

- complex, contradictory and multifaceted;
  - identity is seen as dynamic across time and place;

- identity constructs and is constructed by language;
- the construction of identity must be understood with respect to larger social processes, marked by coercive or collaborative relations of power.

(cited in Leung and Lee, 2006 p.29)

Norton (1997) did not only manifest the complex and the dynamic nature of cultural identity, but also emphasized the strong mutual influence of identity and language. Thus, "an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity" (Norton, 2000 p.11). In other words, the study of the target language should be linked to the speakers and their social relationships, because learner's identity both influence his motivation to learn the target language (TL) and is influenced by the TL cultural context. Consequently, interactants bring their identities to the communicative process, and negotiate them through interaction using language. Therefore, mutual interaction with other members of the community would help participants bring changes into their identities.

As opposed to the ancient generations whose identity construction is related to the direct context in which they were born, nowadays, individuals have increasing possibilities and choices that, if deeply considered, would make them highly insecure and cause identity crisis and inconsistency (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2007). Within this vein, Giddens (1991 cited in Spreckels and Kotthoff, 2007 p.417) stated that "modernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and [...] at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected". The reason behind this identity inconsistency is the so-called the "Dissolution of guarantees of coherency" (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2007 p.417) represented in the family, the nation, religion, etc. which have been losing throughout time stability and their functioning as reference.

Empirical research showed that youth are less and less identifying themselves with particular identities, a situation that is described differently by various researchers referring to it as 'market place of identities' (Eckert, 2000), 'surfing between various experiential worlds' (Baacke,1987), and 'patch work identities' (Elkind, 1990). The main characteristic of such identity is that it is formulated out of different identities which cannot be unified into an integrated unit, although individuals possessing such kind of identity are successful in everyday life (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2007).

In spite the fact that modern identities are proved to be patchwork constructions due to globalization and the highly developed communication means, these identities need stability, coherence with their respective cultures to gain assertion and security (Sparckels & Kotthoff, 2007). Thus, the development of intercultural identity may challenge the concept of national identity but cannot replace it (Byram, 2008). This idea echoed Kramsch's concept of 'the third place' or 'the third space'. The latter refers to "an intermediate zone where mediated ways of behaving and modes of thinking are identified and individual identities are negotiated and transformed, usually partially" (Feng, 2009 p.88). In other words, it is a space where intercultural interaction takes place, and by means of which change emerges.

Schools are institutions that play a major role in individuals' acquisition of the language, as well as the transmission of culture and the construction of identities. They are "politically mandated to transmit the basic elements of citizenship and national identity, in order to ensure the continuity and endurance of the political community" (Scherr, 2007 p.303). This takes place through providing historical and political information of themselves as citizens, and making them aware of their duties towards their nation. Hence, schools represent spaces where learners acquire much of their cultural background, and practice it while interacting with others (learners and / or teachers).

## **Practice**

Working in pairs or small groups, write a short essay in which you discuss one of the following questions or statements:

- Why should cross-cultural understanding or intercultural awareness be a school curriculum subject?
- Making global connections through digital platforms like Facebook teaches us how to adapt to different situations and to appreciate our own cultural identity.
- In what ways can technology help us discover our own culture? Why is this paramount for our intercultural awareness and cultural identity?
- Does social media addiction really exist? If so, is it safe to learn about language and culture? Does it affect its users' cultural identity?

## 7. The Intercultural Pedagogy

By the 1990s, modern language education has shifted focus to intercultural pedagogy to prepare learners for a multicultural world. Such paramount importance that culture has gained in the field of language teaching/learning can be traced back to:

- 1) Pragmatic motive; placing culture in education as a tool for international communication,
- 2) Educational motive; movements towards acquiring non-native cultures to widen learners' world-view, and
- 3) intercultural studies; mediating between language and culture to reach beneficial communication and interaction (Buttjes, 1991).

Intercultural language learning encompasses: culture, language and learning, and is defined as:

The process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively.

(Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein & Colby 2003 cited in Ho, 2009 p.65)

Intercultural pedagogy put focus on the dynamic nature of culture, so that learners are encouraged to engage themselves in the interpretation of cultural facts that vary from one situation to the other depending on time, space, generation, class or region. Furthermore, it views culture as a set of individual practices, hence, language-culture learning involves acquiring knowledge about culture, comparing cultures, exploring cultures; and finding one's own 'third place' between cultures.

The intercultural pedagogy does not aim at imitating native speaker peers, but at developing the intercultural communicative competence together with international understanding (Byram,1991; Cakir, 2006). Success in this domain is measured within the individual learner, not in external settings where adaptation is required. I.P attempts to help learners understand "(1) the nature of culture, (2) how cultural difference affects communication and human relations, and (3) the influence of culture and cultural difference in specific domains such as business or language learning" (Shaules, 2007 p. 85) to prepare them for a world citizenship.

In other words, I.P. aims go beyond culture and language teaching. However, fostering positive attitudes towards other cultures is accompanied with understanding the linguistic and behavioural patterns of both the target and the native culture i.e. learners' native cultures should not be marginalized in class; otherwise, learners would feel suspicious about their contributions to their communities. I.P helps learners adapt a wider perspective in the perception of reality through raising interest in foreign cultures and viewing one's own culture in a broader context (Byram et. al. 1991). Finally, I.P aims at making teaching/learning more enjoyable inside and outside class allowing learners to interact with foreigners with confidence and interest (Byram et.al, 1991).

Educators can help the learners understand new different concepts which could help them develop social identities that are not constrained by a particular language. However, this cannot take place only through providing cultural knowledge, but "it comes from considering [one's] own mindset, comparing with [one's] counterpart's mindset [....] and then deciding how to proceed on the basis of what [has been] learned" (Tomalin,2009 p.116).

#### **Practice**

Working in pairs or small groups:

- Select a book for teaching English in that Algerian context.
- Describe the level and the target students.
- Evaluate the cultural component considering the following guidelines giving examples:
  - ➤ Which culture does the book focus on: the British or the Algarian?
  - ➤ Are there any tasks that require learners compare between their native culture and the target culture?
  - Are there any tasks that require learners describe their own native culture?
  - Are there any texts that encourage students perceive one culture as better than the other?
  - ➤ Are there explicit explanations about the equality of cultures?
  - > Do you think that the book in hand would help students appreciate their native culture or the target culture?
  - ➤ Do you think the book in hand would help students formulate a strong cultural identity or face an identity crisis?

## 8. The Intercultural Communicative Competence

The present lecture spots light on the concept of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) attempting to provide a comprehensible definition, then contrasting it with close competences for more clarification.

## 8.1.Definition of the Intercultural Communicative Competence

Within the confines of foreign language education, ICC refers to the learners' ability to share their culture with others, to look at it from an external perspective (Ho.2009), and to acquire "information or mediation skills, allowing for an insider's view of the foreign culture and encouraging the negotiation of meaning across cultures" (Buttjes, 1991 p. 09). These abilities imply that intercultural learners should gain insights into both the native and the target cultures (Ho, 2009). Consequently, they will be able to act appropriately when confronted with differing others, gain self-confidence and security, and help others through skills of mediation (Meyer, 1991).

Byram (1997) proposed that ICC consists of the linguistic, the sociolinguistic, the strategic and the discourse competence. The linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of rules that allow for the production and interpretation of both spoken and written language. The sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to grasp the meaning from the interlocutors' utterances taking into account different social constraints. The strategic competence helps speakers of the language to overcome communication breakdowns, while discourse competence refers to the ability to produce and interpret spoken and written language. These competences represent the subcomponents of the communicative competence; they are essential but not enough. Hence, Byram (1997) added five subsequent abilities via proposing five savoirs if successful intercultural interaction is aimed at, as shown in the following figure.

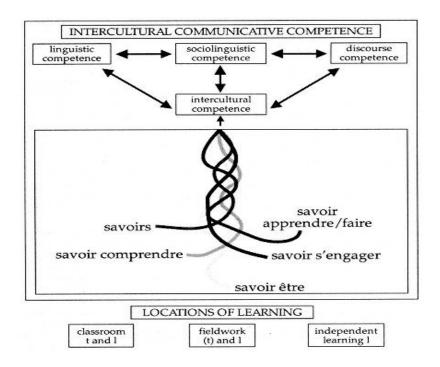


Figure 02. Byram's Model of ICC (Byram, 1997 p. 73)

**1.** Savoirs or Knowledge; it is divided into two main categories:

a/ knowledge about the social groups to which the individual belong, besides knowledge about the interlocutor's group.

**b**/ Knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels. Knowledge of oneself and the differing other is not enough for successful interaction; it should be twined with the knowledge of how to act appropriately in different situations.

- 2. Savoir comprendre or skills of interpreting and relating; these skills are based on knowledge i.e. already acquired knowledge of both the native and the other contexts.
  They help in the establishment of relationships, understanding and discovering meanings, and resolving dysfunctions and contradictions.
- **3.** Savoir s'engager or skills of critical cultural awareness; they refer to learners' 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.53). Critical cultural awareness is a central element within ICC, and its development helps learners to take action, and be active citizens (Byram, 2008).

- **4.** Savoir apprendre/faire or skills of discovery and interaction; they are useful when the existing knowledge is not enough to deal with a particular situation. Individuals need to discover new phenomena and elicit their meanings then relate them to others. Although the skill of discovery can operate in different ways, social interaction is the most prominent mode.
- 5. Savoir être or attitudes; these are considered a pre-condition for successful interaction, be they negative as prejudice or stereotypes or positive. In other words, learners need to 'decentre' themselves from their own culture, to 'reconstruct' their social identity according to the new norms in a process of "tertiary socialization" (p 34).

Byram (1997) argued that these skills are not separate but interdependent and operate in relation to each other. They could be acquired through personal experience and interaction, but also through education, be it in class or pedagogically structured outside the classroom. His provided ICC definition can be selected as an operational definition in a first step towards effective and appropriate ICC assessment. This definition is selected in this course, from a wide literature in the field, because it helps teachers determine the aspects to be assessed. Setting the ICC definition allows for anidentification of goals and measurable objectives, which in turn affects the selection of assessment methods and tools (Deardorff, 2011).

## **8.2.**The Communicative Competence

The notion of 'communicative competence' is traced back to the work of Hymes (1972) who coined the term to assert that the acquisition of Chomsky's 'linguistic

competence' is not enough if communicating effectively is to be aimed at. Hymes (1972) argued that in addition to the linguistic competence, which he referred to as what is 'formally possible'; learners should acquire the ability to produce utterances that are appropriate in regard to the context they are used in, feasible, and probable or commonly/ actually used.

The concept of communicative competence found a further theoretical support in Halliday's linguistic theory of communication (1970). He posited that the field of linguistics is concerned "with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore, all components of meaning brought into focus" (p.145). Moreover, Canale and swain (1980) expanded this notion to include:

- ✓ The grammatical competence or linguistic competence; the ability to use language grammatical and lexical rules accurately.
- ✓ Sociolinguistic competence; the ability to understand and produce language appropriately regarding the social context in which communication takes place.
- ✓ Discourse competence; the ability to produce utterances which are related / coherent to the entire discourse.
- ✓ Strategic competence; the ability to select and use strategies that would help in initiating and maintaining communication.

However, these theoretical frameworks and claims are not reflected in language teaching / learning practices. In other words, these practices are guided by the principles of the communicative approach, summarized by Richards and Rodgers (2001) as follows:

- ✓ Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
- ✓ Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
- ✓ Fluency is an important dimension of communication.

- ✓ Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- ✓ Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

A close examination of these principles reveals that more importance is given to communication through developing fluency and accuracy, while culture is marginalized. Albeit the communicative approach is supposed to help learners develop the sociolinguistic competence, teaching culture does not reflect real life, it is rather information-oriented (Byram et.al.,1991). And although the use of 'Authentic Materials' in class is stressed to introduce learners to the social role of language, focus was directed to learners' fluency and accuracy with limited concern in language use in regard to the foreign culture and society (Byram, 1991). In other words, culture was not considered a dynamic skill or competency for handling successfully interaction.

Within the same stream of thought, Garcia and Crapotta (2007, p.63) held that the communicative approach was criticized for focusing on the sociolinguistic rather than the sociocultural dimension. The ignorance of the sociocultural dimension implies universality in using and interpreting speech functions which is not the case because what is applied in one culture is not necessarily applied in others, albeit some aspects are transferrable (O'Dowd, 2013; Neddar, 2011). This approach resulted in preparing learners to be tourists in the foreign country instead of successful FL users. Besides, it neglected finding out about others' points of view, since learners are directed to think that all interlocutors understand and interpret language the same way (O'Dowd, 2013).

Hence, in the 1990s, the notion of communicative competence has been expanded to assert the interconnectedness between language and culture, and interest in the communicative competence diminished for the ICC. The latter was defined to be "the ability to interact in complex cultural contexts among people who embody more than one cultural

identity and language" (Clouet, 2006 p.55). The intercultural speaker as a mediator has become the emphasis and the aim of education.

# **8.3.**The Intercultural Competence

Although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, Byram (1997) distinguished between the intercultural competence and the intercultural communicative competence. The intercultural competence refers to the individuals' ability to interact with others overcoming cultural differences, but using their own language. In other words, Knowledge of otherness and skills of interpreting and relating in such situation can be gained from different experiences—be they personal or through instruction- but the mastery of a foreign language is not required. However, intercultural communicative competence refers to the individuals' ability to interact appropriately with people from different origins using a foreign language. Hence, in contrast with I.C, ICC allows for dealing with a wider range of situations as a result of using a foreign language (Byram, 1997).

## **8.4.**The Pragmatic Competence

The field of pragmatics deals with "the study of how more gets communicated than is said" (Yule,1996 p.03), and how individuals act – do things- and interact with each other using language (Kasper & Roever,2005). Accordingly, the pragmatic competence is broadly defined as "the ability to use language appropriately in a social context" (Taguchi,2009 p.01).

For Thompson (1997), the pragmatic competence entails speaking and behaving appropriately besides understanding others' language, and interpreting their behaviour. Hymes (1972) claimed that pragmatic knowledge is a component of the communicative competence. Similarly, comparing the pragmatic competence to ICC, taking into consideration the previous definitions -mainly that of Byram (1997-2006), it can be said that

the pragmatic competence is a component or a subpart of ICC in addition to the five savoirs or the different affective, behavioural and cognitive capacities.

# **Practice**

- Do you seek to understand why people behave in particular ways in your culture?
- Can you explain to a foreigner why you behave in particular ways, for example, why you slaughter sheep in feats? Why men do not cook or do laundry?
- How do you gain knowledge about the target culture?
- Do you seek only for knowledge about everyday behavior, or do you look for a deeper understanding (norms, values...)?

# 9. Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence

# 9.1.General Guidelines

The development of ICC does not imply an abandonment of one's culture, but rather an understanding of the other to avoid judgment (Byram,1991). However, the process of being intercultural is "unique for each individual and takes place in the interaction between individuals and in self-reflection of the individual" (Lundgren, 2009 p.137). Mayer (1991) suggested three levels of intercultural performance:

- 1- Monocultural level; it is a starting point where learners cannot realize or solve intercultural problems. Learners at this level are ethnocentric; they use their mother culture when they encounter interaction problems.
- 2- Intercultural level; the learner can realize and explain differences between his own culture and the target culture based on previously acquired knowledge. However, they are not able to mediate, negotiate or solve interaction problems. This level implies a number of intermediate stages.
- 3- Transcultural level; learners are able to realize, explain, negotiate differences, and solve intercultural problems. They show a cross-cultural understanding without neglecting their own culture and identity.

Similarly, Afrin (2013) suggested that learning about other cultures should follow given stages:

- ✓ The elementary stage: in which teachers discuss with learners everyday practices of the target language peers; their families, living conditions, festivals, relations with others, marriage customs...
- ✓ Intermediate and advanced stages: they discuss subjects like geography, history, business, music and arts (Afrin, 2013 p.73).

These stages are referred to as: basic, intermediate and full levels and have been agreed upon by researchers (Prechtl & Davidson Lund, 2007).

The development of ICC is neither related to language competence nor to reflective and professional competences (Kordes,1991). In other words, having a good linguistic competence does not ensure having developing ICC, and the same for other professional competences. And although the integration of culture within the foreign language class is inevitably agreed upon by a wide range of researchers, the problem lies in the methods that teachers follow to present the target culture in class. In other words, the sustain of the old habit of putting emphasis on grammatical correctness, inherited from structural approaches, is noticed (Dai, 2011). Therefore, it was claimed that the development of ICC can be reached through the use of some teaching techniques like role play, authentic materials, proverbs, films, ethnographic studies, poems and literature, cultural capsules, etc. (Purba, 2011).

# 9.2. Techniques to Develop ICC

Throughout time, researchers agreed that the comparative approach is more appropriate in developing learners' ICC (Byram, 2008). Within the comparative approach, a myriad of activities and materials can be used for both teaching and assessing ICC, these include:

- Concept Training; the use of this activity helps learners realise that ordinary events and situations are culturally constructed. In this activity, learners are given particular everyday situations or events and asked to observe them. For example, discussing the concept of 'house', the teacher may post pictures of houses in both the native and the target culture followed by a number of questions such as:
  - ➤ Is the size of the house important? (family size)
  - ➤ Do houses have the same shape? (architecture)

- ➤ Are there outdoor areas considered as part of the house? (garden)
- Are there areas within the house set apart for guests? (privacy)
- > Do members of the family share bedrooms or bathrooms? (independence or cooperation) (Atamna, 2008 p. 292).
- Cultural Associations; this activity is based on the comparison between various subjects and the way they are perceived in both the native and the target culture, this enables learners enrich their way of thinking and increase their cultural awareness towards culturally loaded phenomena and subjects such as: the use of leisure time, food, perception of time...(Atamna, 2008 p293).
- Cultural Capsules; A culture capsule consists of a short description, oral or visual, of a particular aspect in the target culture, within the description the teacher integrates some information from the native culture. Learners' role here is to decide which information is applied to the target culture and which is applied to their own culture. For example, learners may be exposed to a narrative about a British family Sunday lunch (Atamna, 2008 p. 293)
- Cultural Clusters; A culture cluster consists of about three culture capsules that
  develop related topics, plus one 30-minute classroom simulation that integrates the
  information contained in the capsules.
- **Role Plays;** an activity used to train learners in interactional strategies and skills such as opening and closing a conversation, making small-talk, turn-taking, interrupting... For example, to show sympathy with the speaker (in case of story telling) through asking for repetition, additional information, confirmation... (Atamna, 2008).
- Negative Etiquette; consists of a list of rules that depict 'how not to behave' in particular situations to raise learners' cultural awareness. For example, eating in Britain:

- > Don't start eating before everyone has been served.
- Never lick or put your knife in your mouth.
- ➤ While eating, never chew with your mouth open.
- > Don't put your elbows on the table while you are eating.
- Ask for items to be passed; never reach over someone's platefor something.
- > Putting too much food in your mouth is impolite.
- Use your knife to push food onto your spoon or fork; never useyour fingers.
- ➤ It is impolite to slurp your food or eat noisily.
- Ask for things to be passed on, never take food from yourneighbours' plate.
- Never use your fingernails to pick food out of your teeth. (Atamna, 2008, 301)

The etiquette may be followed by class discussions and learners may be asked to accomplish related tasks such as writing their list for etiquettes in other situations be they in the native or the target culture.

- Critical Incidents; A critical incident is a situation where there is a communication problem between people of different cultures. In other words, situations "in which there is a misunderstanding, problem, or conflict arising from cultural differences between interacting parties or where there is a problem of cross-cultural adaptation" (Wight, 1995: 128). A solution for such situation is not necessary apparent.
  - Students usually read the incident independently and make individual decisions then a group discussion follows to see the reasons behind the students' decisions. At the end, students' decisions are compared to ones taken by the natives.
- Cultural Assimilators; cultural assimilators are episodes of target cultural behavior
  which describe a cross-cultural interaction that could be found 'puzzling' or
  'conflictful' but that can be interpreted in a fairly unequivocal manner, given sufficient

- knowledge about the other's culture. Once the episode is presented, multiple choice testing is applied with four options that include only one correct answer.
- Cultural Quiz; Teachers use this technique to ask learners decide whether some behaviors are accepted or not in the target culture.
- **Drama**; The use of drama is a very good technique for clarifying possible cross-cultural differences and when taught properly is "an ideal context for exploration of cultural values, both one's own and other people's." (Byram and Fleming 1998)
- **Technology empowered techniques**; New trends in teaching culture rely on technology. These include:
- > virtual learning environments which use audio and video conferencing like the Collaborative Cyber Community which allow audio, video and text chat.
- culture can be conveyed through *receptive and productive means*. Simply accessing an L2 web site can expose learners to numerous aspects of the target culture, and much knowledge may be acquired through reading, listening, and observing. Here, authentic materials play an especially important role because they are designed by native speakers for native speakers and, therefore, provide real data for any exploration of the L2 culture.
- > Tele-collaboration, which features email, chat, discussion forums, wikis, video conferencing and web-based projects of various kinds. As well as enabling contact and interaction with native speakers, these learning environments for culture provide students with the opportunities to reflect on both their own culture and the target culture.
- > web quests and cultural quests which enable learners to know about the target culture through doing guided tasks using internet resources suggested in the web quest.

#### **Practice**

# **Task 1.** The situation of eating in class:

Junji Edo has just arrived from Japan to begin working on his degree at an American university. On Mondays Junji was always very busy. He had classes all day and hardly had any time for lunch. One day he showed up at his history class a couple minutes before it started and told one of his classmates, Julianne, that he was really busy all morning and didn't have time for lunch. The bell rang and the teacher came into the class. Julianne opened her backpack and took out a small bag of potato chips and a can of soda and gave them to Junji. Junji was very surprised and embarrassed. He whispered thank you to his friend and refused the food. Junji was even more bewildered when Julianne took another bag of potato chips and started eating them in class. To Junji's amazement, the teacher did not make any comments on Julianne's behavior and proceeded with the class as usual.

- Why did both classmates behave that way?
- What is the source of misunderstanding?
- What would you do in the same situation?

**Task 2.** (Cultural Quiz). Read the following statements and decide whether they are acceptable/unacceptable in the British culture.

- On meeting someone for the first time, you can kiss her/him on both cheeks. Acceptable/Unacceptable
- If someone gives you a gift, avoid opening it in her/ his presence. Acceptable/Unacceptable
- The use of the left hand to shake hands or pass something to someone else ishighly appreciated. Acceptable/Unacceptable.

- If there are many people trying to get on the subway, you should push through the line so that you can get a seat. Acceptable/Unacceptable.
- Men should always open doors for women. Acceptable/Unacceptable.
- Putting your hand around your friend's shoulder while walking is a sign of friendship. Acceptable/Unacceptable.
- It's considered natural for women to drink liquor in public.

  Acceptable/Unacceptable.
- When invited over for dinner, you should bring an odd-number of flowers over for a gift. Acceptable/Unacceptable.
- Talking to your friend when you are watching a play is considered polite behaviour. Acceptable/Unacceptable (Atamna, 2008 p303).

## 10. Challenges of Developing the Intercultural Communicative Competence

Major challenges and difficulties that both ICC teachers and researchers face can be summarized in three main points: finding out the learners' ICC level, stereotypes and mediators.

## 10.1. Finding out ICC Level

One major challenge that arises in regard to the development of ICC is the difficulty to determine the level of the learners' competence. Such a difficulty is caused by two main reasons; the first is the changing nature of culture, i.e. culture is dynamic and constantly changing, while the second relates to the intercultural communicative competence nature; is a lengthy process that is characterized by periods of enhancement and others of decline. Henceforth, "nobody, least of all the teacher, can tell [students] where that very personal place is; for each learner it will be differently located, and will make different sense at different times" (Kramsch, 1993 p. 257).

# 10.2. Stereotypes

Acknowledging difference between cultures is a major factor if the learners' successful acquisition of interculturality is to be attained. However, although linguists have recently focused on 'interculturality' to avoid stereotyping, the stereotypes that learners have about a particular culture or social group may be damaging to ICC development, be they positive or negative. Accordingly, language exchange programs (e.g. Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig) have been applied to help learners develop their ICC through total immersion. However, the results of these language exchange programs divided linguists onto two groups. While some of them reported positive results, others focused on the fact that students may retain and reinforce their stereotypes and may develop more negative attitudes towards the target culture and its members (LeBaron Earle, 2013).

#### 10.3. Mediators

Base on the discussion above, it can be concluded that being in contact with the target culture does not automatically preclude learners' ethnocentrism and bestow their ICC; they may need the aid of mediators to develop ICC. In naturalistic settings, the native speakers are not necessarily cultural mediators; they are not trained to present and teach about their culture, rather, they may confront their interlocutors causing misunderstanding, conflicts, and stereotyping. Similarly, in intercultural foreign language classroom, teachers are required to act as mediators to avoid clashes between students with different cultural backgrounds.

#### **Practice**

- Do you have any stereotypes towards particular groups?
- What is the source of these stereotypes?
- Can Social Media be a source of stereotypes? Explain how?
- Do teachers act as cultural mediators?
- Do they take into account the development of a new identity?
- Do they use strategies to negotiate and provide solutions in cases of tensions and misunderstandings?

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#### 11. The Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence

#### 11.1. Issues in ICC assessment

Difficulty in assessing ICC stems in a couple of problematic questions including whether ICC should be assessed holistically or separately i.e. should it be approached as one entity or each component should be measured individually; and whether it should be assessed quantitatively or qualitatively (Deardorff, 2006;Helm &Davies, 2010; Prechtl & Lund, 2007). In this vein, Helm & Davies (2010) argued that ICC should be assessed holistically because the individual components are interdependent.

The quantitative assessment, using pen and pencil tests and questionnaires, was criticized for being suitable only for assessing knowledge, but not other components of ICC such as behaviours and non-observable ones like attitudes (Byram, 1997; Làzàr et.al. 2007; Prechtl & Davidson Lund, 2007). In addition, the use of one tool in ICC assessment is not sufficient. Then, the best way to assess ICC is "through a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 241). The use of two or more assessment methods which are different in nature, or *Triangulation*, and relying on both 'formative' and 'summative' assessment would enable teachers cover the behavioural, cognitive, and affective domains of ICC (Dervin, 2010).

However, issues of validity, reliability and feasibility of the measurement tools should be considered and tested. In other words, the tools should assess what should be assessed, they should be stable throughout contexts, and they should be practical within time constraints (Làzàr et.al., 2007). Moreover, the selection of the tools of assessment relies heavily on the teaching approach/ method followed by the teacher.

## 11.2. Methods of ICC Assessment

The complexity of the ICC concept necessitates the use of both direct and indirect methods (Deardorff, 2011; Làzàr et.al., 2007). The direct tools include performance assessments, observation and portfolios, while indirect tools include surveys, interviews and focus groups (Deardorff, 2011). **Performance** assessment; they test the observed behaviour through using, for example, pen and paper tests and multiple choice questions. Byram (1997) asserted that performance assessment is not suitable for all **ICC** components. Observation; observing the learners' performance and assessing it against a grid, it is mainly criticized for its validity, reliability and subjectivity of the observer (Dervin, 2010). Portfolios; they include essays, reports, journals, personal reflections, photos, test results, certificates, tasks' accomplishment that mirror learners' experience and progression in ICC (Brown, 2003; Byram, 1997). It allows for portraying both the outcomes and the processes of **ICC** development (Wang, 2010). Surveys; Griffith et.al. (2016, pp. 08-11) summarized the surveys developed to assess ICC. They reviewed about 32 surveys excluding those assessing language proficiency.

#### **Practice**

- How do you evaluate your ICC level?
- Students are given a survey developed to assess ICC (appendix A) and asked to answer it.
- Compare and discuss your answers with those of your friends.

# **Evaluation**

The following is a sample of exams that were used for summative assessment at the end of the instruction.

On the light of what you have studied, develop an essay to discuss one of the following statements:

- Cultural knowledge is necessary but not enough if intercultural communication success is aimed at.
- The dialogue of cultures is a thoroughly difficult goal that is difficult to be reached.
- Third world countries are facing a new type of imperialism.

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# **Appendix . ICC Assessment Survey**

(Adapted from the ICC Assessment Survey developed by Fantini and Tirmizi, 2006)

Circle the number that best describesyour situation:

0 = Not at all

1= a little bit

2= somehow

3= average

4= well

5 = Extremely well

# Cultural knowledge

Cultural kilowieuge	
1. I could cite a definition of culture and describe its	
components and complexities	012345
2. I knew the essential norms and taboos of the other	
culture(s) (e.g., greetings, dress, behaviours, etc.)	012345
3. I could contrast important aspects of the target language	
and culture with my own	0 1 2 3 4 5
4. I recognized signs of culture stress and some strategies	
for overcoming it	012345
5. I knew some techniques to aid my learning of the target	
language and culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
6. I could contrast my own behaviours with those of my	
partners in important areas (e.g., social interactions, basic	
routines, time orientation, etc.)	0 1 2 3 4 5
7. I could cite important historical and socio-political	
factors that shape my culture and the target culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
8. I could describe a model of cross-cultural adjustment	
stages	012345
9. I could cite various learning processes and strategies	
for learning about and adjusting to other cultures	0 1 2 3 4 5
10. I could describe interactional behaviours common	
among the British in social and professional areas	
(e.g., family roles, team work, problem solving, etc.)	0 1 2 3 4 5
11. I could discuss and contrast various behavioural	
patterns in my culture with those in Britain	0 1 2 3 4 5
Attitude	
I demonstrate willingness to	
12. interact with other culture members	0 1 2 3 4 5
13. learn from my interactants their culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
14. try to communicate in English and behave in	
"appropriate" ways, as judged by my partners	0 1 2 3 4 5
15. deal with my emotions and frustrations with the other	
culture (in addition to the pleasures it offered)	0 1 2 3 4 5
16. take on various roles appropriate to different	
situations (e.g., in the family, as a volunteer, etc.)	0 1 2 3 4 5

17 show interest in new cultural espects (e.g. to	
17. show interest in new cultural aspects (e.g., to understand the values, history, traditions, etc.)	012345
18. try to understand differences in the behaviours,	012343
values, attitudes, and styles of others	012345
19. adapt my behaviour to communicate appropriately	012313
as needed for different situations	012345
20. reflect on the impact and consequences of my	
decisions and choices on my partners	012345
21. deal with different ways of perceiving, expressing,	
interacting, and behaving	012345
22. interact in alternative ways, even when quite different	
from those to which I was accustomed and preferred	012345
23. deal with the ethical implications of my choices (in	
terms of decisions, consequences, results, etc.)	012345
24. suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities	
of communicating and interacting interculturally	0 1 2 3 4 5
Skills	
25. I demonstrated flexibility when interacting with	
persons from other cultures	0 1 2 3 4 5
26. I adjusted my behaviour as appropriate,	
to avoid offending others	0 1 2 3 4 5
27. I am able to contrast the terget culture with my own	0 1 2 3 4 5
28. I use strategies for learning the English and	
about the other culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
29. I demonstrate a capacity to interact appropriately in a	0.4.0.4.7
variety of different social situations in the target culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
30. I use appropriate strategies for adapting to the other	0.1.2.2.1.5
culture and reducing stress	0 1 2 3 4 5
31. I use models, strategies, and techniques that aided	0.1.0.0.4.5
my learning of the host language and culture	0 1 2 3 4 5
32. I monitor my behaviour and its impact on my	0.1.0.2.4.5
learning, my growth, and especially on partners	0 1 2 3 4 5
33. I use culture-specific information to improve my	012245
style and professional interaction with others	0 1 2 3 4 5
34. I help to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and	010245
misunderstandings when they arose	0 1 2 3 4 5
35. I employ appropriate strategies for adapting when	012345
interacting with people from my culture  Awareness	012343
I realize the importance of	
36. differences and similarities across my own and	
the other culture	012345
37. my negative reactions to these differences (e.g.,	012343
fear, ridicule, disgust, superiority, etc.)	012345
38. how varied situations in the host culture required	012343
modifying my interactions with others	012345
39. how other culture members viewed me and why	012345
40. myself as a "culturally conditioned" person with	012313
personal habits and preferences	012345
41. responses by other culture members to my own	3120.0
1 7	

social identity(e.g., race, class, gender, age, etc.)	012345
42. diversity in the other culture(s)(such as differences in	
race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.)	012345
43. dangers of generalizing individual behaviours as	
representative of the whole culture	012345
44. my choices and their consequences (which made	
me either more, or less, acceptable by others)	012345
45. my personal values that affected my approach to	
ethical dilemmas and their resolution	012345
46. Others' reactions to me that reflected their	
cultural values	012345
47. how my values and ethics were reflected in specific	
situations	012345