



The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence to IAIN Parepare Students

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to know the intercultural communicative competence for millennial students because in class interaction, there are a lot of students derive from different place, tribe and local language. The students can share information, experience, knowledge each other to build togetherness in daily activities in the class and in the social interaction.

Keywords: intercultural, communicative competence, millennial student

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Introduction

In the last decades, Intercultural Competence was reintroduced as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as the result of its impact on foreign language teaching (López-Rocha & Arévalo-Guerrero, 2014). The distinction between the two needs to be understood when we make decisions on the cultural content in the curriculum. In the globalized context, the English language has been used as an international language for communication among people from different multilingual and multicultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is vital that learners master not only linguistics competence but also intercultural competence. English language learners, therefore, need to pay significant attention to grasp and enhance the intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Accordingly, Tran and Seepho (2015) assert that the ICC is one of the most vital skills for people in the 21st century

to survive in the multicultural communication context. In order to develop this skill and achieve the goal of becoming effective intercultural speakers and communicators, learners are required to deeply engage in the intercultural community. In fact, ICC is the core component of English language instruction in preparing learners for intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). In the Vietnamese context, ICC plays a very important role in the process of teaching and learning English, especially when Vietnamese citizens have more opportunities to be involved in international interactions (Trinh, 2014).

Hall (1961: 36-37) pioneered a new approach on culture studies with a dynamic concept, treating “culture in its entirety as a form of communication”. Hall’s communication approach had led to understanding culture in its contexts, underlying the communication processes it lives in. Yet still, daily use of the term has validity in terms of meaning. Conclusions made from cultural differences of human groups are most of the time not totally wrong, since people with similar identities seem to share a same cultural entity. But also this is due to shared environmental, historical or biological reasons. In this paper, culture will be used without totally rejecting cultural entities, but realizing that every time it is reproduced by itself under various circumstances. Throughout 20th century, with technological development of communication opportunities mobility of labour has been globally emerged. Not only need of information and competences of economical purposes, but also interaction of people from different backgrounds brought discussion of culture into prominence (Sarı, 2004: 2). Thusly scholars pursued the meanings of experiences in different cultural sets. From managerial perspective it was given into credit to overcome possible problems, and for scientists to understand human life. As Edward T. Hall (1961: 39) stated understanding culture is not easy since it “hides much more than it reveals”. Most of time culture can only be understood in contrast, many people realize their “own culture” when in contact with the other.

Although the importance of ICC has been confirmed by various researchers and numerous studies conducted (e.g., Tran & Seepho, 2014, 2015; Trinh, 2014), in the Vietnamese context, the role of culture and intercultural communication in English language has not always been well acknowledged and the concept of ICC is

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still unfamiliar to most researchers and educators (Tran & Seepho, 2016). Since ICC is a crucial skill in the 21st century for learners to achieve effective and appropriate communication in the globalized community, this paper will discuss ICC importance, its elements and evaluation methods. Finally, the implications of incorporating ICC in English language teaching will be examined with the aim of helping teachers develop their students' ICC competence.

With regards to ICC, one of the key questions for language tutors is whether or not we are preparing students for this challenge: are we providing general information hoping students will develop the skills they need to communicate more efficiently and understand cultural tendencies? Or, conversely, are we creating the conditions for students to develop skills preparing them for the intercultural challenge? This paper aims, first, to address key issues in the language classroom with regards to fostering the development of ICC among foreign language students, and second, to provide practical ideas for tutors to promote ICC in a more integral way. The key idea is that students need to be further challenged and guided in order to develop critical communicative skills.

A classroom is full with students who come to the class bringing their respective learning styles. Generations after generations of learners, the learning styles may undergo changes in accordance with the changes in the society and modern technology. The ways students from the 1950s learned may differ considerably from the ways students in the second millennium learn. Fueled by rapid advances of computer and communication technology, students in this current era come to classes with distinct predisposition and attitude toward learning. For example, while their parents and grandparents were used to learning new knowledge from their teachers and the prescribed textbooks, the current generation have many more other learning resources that they can easily access from their handheld gadgets. Their intense interaction with gadgets and Internet earn a the term “Net Generation”, “Millennial Generation”, or “Generation Y, which refers to cohort born between 1982 to 2001 (Williams, 2013).

In Angelica Galantel research provides a brief overview of communicative competence and draws on Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) to suggest pedagogical applications aimed at validating student identity in English language classes, particularly but not exclusively, in Brazil. This research has briefly introduced how the notion of communicative competence in ELT has evolved to recognize the importance of the inextricable integration of language and culture. Exploring cultural and intercultural dimensions in language learning is necessary, particularly, but not exclusively, among speakers of English as a lingua franca. Brazil is a culturally diverse country and encouraging students to reflect on their own cultural background in relation to others is paramount for intercultural awareness. Through a critical perspective, ICC offers Brazilian students unique opportunities to express their identities and worldviews. The integration of ICC in ELT is particularly beneficial for students as it prepares them to communicate with people from other cultures in English, understand, respect, and value others' cultural identities, as well as their own.

Saeideh Ahnagari Jafar Zamanian article presents an analysis of viewpoints in the development of intercultural competence in the English as foreign language teaching classroom in Iran. Intercultural competence, as acknowledged as the key component of foreign language studies, increases the need to adapt teaching methods and materials to raise learners' intercultural awareness. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of providing intercultural information in English as a foreign language context on learners' attitudes and the impact of the attitudes on their overall language proficiency achievement test. The results of this research indicated that learners in experimental group which received additional intercultural text and activities outperformed control group. Then, the findings of this study have some implications for second language teachers since they would be aware of the positive impact of intercultural communicative instruction in intermediate level. In addition, they will know different techniques for application of these instructions especially in classroom context. Moreover, the results of this research can have implications for material developers help them design tasks to provide opportunities for focus on the most effective approach.

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Tran Quoc Thao and Pham Tan Tai explained in his paper about the roles of ICC in English language education with the aim of raising EFL teachers' and learners' awareness to the importance of intercultural communication, thus helping EFL learners to become competent in multicultural contexts. He found that incorporating intercultural knowledge is vital to assist learners efficiently gain proficiency in ICC for effective and appropriate intercultural communication. The role of teachers in this process is also vital and more extensive training in incorporating ICC in their teaching practices needs to be encouraged. This paper, aims to add to the body of knowledge regarding the importance of integrating intercultural elements and ICC in English language teaching and learning in Vietnam.

The difference of this study with the others research is this study of The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence to IAIN Parepare Students.

METHODOLOGY

Research method used in this study was descriptive qualitative with the design was a document analysis. This research was conducted in IAIN Parepare. The subjects of this study were the 30 students that were chosen by randomly and an English Lecturere who teaches in this class. The data collected by interview and observation in the classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An emerging idea about communicative language teaching has been that, even if contextualized and linguistically adjusted, communication may not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by multidimensional cultural awareness supposed to lead to a relationship of acceptance where Self and Other are trying to negotiate a cultural platform satisfactory to all parties involved (Guilherme, 2000). Such ideas engendered the notion of intercultural communicative competence, i.e. the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208). Following the emergence of the notion, studies about this have been produced with different scopes and focal

points. Emphasizing that the objective of language teaching/learning should now be defined in terms of intercultural competence.

Globalization and migratory movements have highlighted the need to integrate interculturality in the language curriculum. This is reflected in the Council of Europe's (2001) document addressing plurilingual education in Europe in order to promote teaching and learning of signatory states' languages. This document included sections on the importance of promoting intercultural communication and the understanding of cultural differences. Other arguments supporting a more engaging role of culture in the curriculum highlight the need to explore authentic representations of culture as opposed to superficial elements; the current demand to understand identity and appreciate similarities and differences (cf. López-Rocha & Arévalo-Guerrero, 2014), our responsibility to prepare global citizens (cf. Sinicropo, Norris & Watanabe, 2007), and the result of studying other defining models, such as the US Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL, 2006) that define language goals in terms of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities, aimed at preparing students to develop linguistic and intercultural competence.

Curriculum design should take into consideration Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, which emphasises the development of self-awareness, openness, and transformation (see also Furstenberg, 2010), and serves as a common denominator for various models and approaches to the development of ICC. In addition, what we should be expected to teach can be summarised in Byram's (1997; 2008) model of ICC involving five *savoirs*: knowledge, attitudes, education, skills to understand and learn.

In order to help our students become more competent in terms of culture knowledge and interactions, we should explore ready-made activities or design new ones that support objectives consistent with the development of ICC skills. With regards to their integration, we can start by observing how the CEFR incorporates culture as a component in language teaching, particularly as the classroom context is described as learner-centred, and welcomes interactivity, active participation, and cooperation among peers. Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) point out that based

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on the CEFR, foreign language teachers are required to promote curiosity and independent exploration and inquiry in order for students to be active participants while developing intercultural competence.

It is necessary to evaluate the materials or resources available prior to their use in our classes, as oftentimes the materials included in books may indeed be constraining or perpetuating stereotypes, instead of helping students understand diverging cultural practices. It is important for students to be further challenged and guided in order to develop critical communicative skills. Furthermore, as we strive to create the right conditions, Byram (1997) suggests that the focus should not be solely on preparing students to communicate without mistakes, but to communicate openly, forging relationships that will allow them to thrive in the foreign cultural context. We need to help students develop intercultural awareness and provide activities where the “other’s” culture, values, and behaviours are considered (Byram, 1997). In order to allow students to learn about themselves and others we can use stereotypes, but only in order to deconstruct them and address misperceptions. Students will also need to first understand, and then explain, the sources of intercultural conflict and how to deal with them, while avoiding misunderstandings. Ultimately, we want to help students become interculturally competent speakers.

CONCLUSION

Life in this century has provided people with diversity and possibility in communication with the corresponding increase in intercultural communication. Therefore, foreign language teaching and learning in universities should not only be instrumental, but it should set a new goal to train students with intercultural communicative competence to meet the needs of our globalized world. Intercultural communicative competence should be integrated into quality education of universities as an important part. Assessing intercultural communicative competence allows learners to familiarize with the features of other countries and to increase their awareness of the cultural diversity of the country, while at the same time it improves the awareness of their own culture.

The improvement of intercultural communicative competence helps learners in the awareness of their selves and others based on an understanding of how members of a community live in their own world. In other words, language learners must become systematic, critical observers and describers of cultural behaviors, attitudes and beliefs that motivate these behaviors. They must explore and understand their own culture and be prepared to explain it to those whose experience of life and formations of belief are often very different from their own as well as understand the other cultures where they become cultural mediators.

The tasks presented in this article are designed in a flexible way, suitable for different contexts and regarding students' needs and interests in order to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence. They can be regarded as a useful gate to the attainment of such mentioned goals, which bring learning, motivation, enjoyment and growing professional perspectives altogether.

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