

CULTURE IN SLA: TOWARDS DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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In this paper, the importance of “culture” is focused on regarding its relation to second/foreign language acquisition/learning. By reinterpreting the Iceberg Model of Culture, the author thinks that second/foreign language learners are exposed to the dominant culture with its social and linguistic norms and therefore they experience deculturalization, which also brings about the issue of the *Self* and the *Other*. It is suggested in the paper that a shift from communicative competence (CC) to intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in multicultural second/foreign language classes per se could enhance language learning by involving these learners’ native culture elements in the language learning/teaching process. While the paper illustrates some pedagogical implications that such a shift could entail, it concludes that introducing these practices in multicultural second/foreign language classes have the potential to enable both practitioners and learners to deal with power relations and the deculturalizing forces, which might be prevalent in such classes.

Keywords: culture, identity, SLA, intercultural communicative competence, second/foreign language curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rising tide of worldwide integration, cultures of many societies have been going through a crucial transformation, intentionally or inadvertently, in today’s world. Some people are lucky enough to construct their identities through their native culture, whereas others have to go through deculturalization under the name of globalization. As Spring states (2013, p. 9), “deculturalization is the educational process of destroying a people’s culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture.” In this war of cultures, the winner is always the dominant culture both within the national borders and in a global sense. However, what we need is to embrace all cultures without letting one/some dominate while degrading the others.

In this paper, I will focus on this culture issue in relation to language acquisition/learning. First of all, I will review the concept of culture, the relation between culture and language, and the place of culture in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) context in a three-faceted way: use of the target culture, international culture, and native culture in language classrooms. After the review of culture and its place in SLA, I will focus on the effect of culture on communicative competence of language learners, and continue with the need for a shift from focus on communicative competence to

intercultural communicative competence in second/foreign language classes and how to do so, particularly in multicultural classrooms.

1. WHAT IS CULTURE?

It is quite difficult to come up with a specific definition of culture that can please everybody. Every discipline tries to define culture according to their framework of study. However, the most commonly known definition of culture has been set forth by Goodenough (1957). He believes that the culture of a society is what its members should know and believe so as to be understood and accepted in the society. On the other hand, Brown (2007) defines culture as a life style; as “glue” through which people exist, think, feel and integrate with each other. He also adds that culture is customs, skills, and art, or in short, all the features of people who have lived in a certain period and in a certain place. In other words, culture is what brings people having the same languages, lifestyles, beliefs, and values together.

Edward Said has a more cultural-historical approach to defining culture and he believes that culture is more than simply a lifestyle of a group of people sharing commonalities. According to Said, a community’s culture cannot be separated from its economic, social and political practices, which make up the way the members of the society perceive the world and construct their identities; by “culture” he means:

all those practices, like the arts of description, communication and representation, which have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms, and which often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principle aims is pleasure...a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold put it in the 1860s. (as cited in Aschcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 90)

The modern understanding of culture overlaps with Said’s definitions of culture, and it is represented in Figure 1 as the visible and invisible parts of an iceberg that can be referred as the “capital C” and “small c” (also referred as *big C culture* and *small c culture* in Kramsch, 2013).

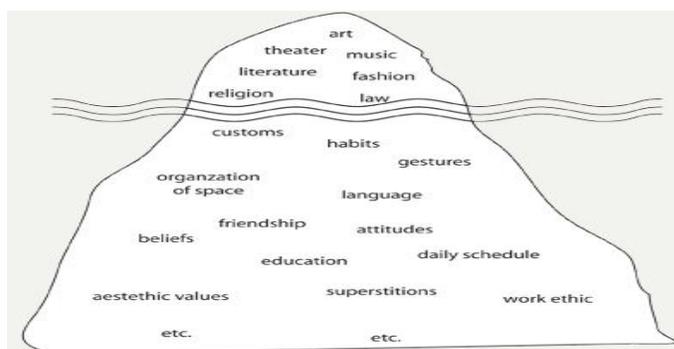


Figure 1: The Iceberg Model of Culture

The metaphor of the iceberg as illustrated in Figure 1 (from Schadewitz, 2009, p. 38; as cited in Lange, 2011, p.7) represents the refined commonalities mostly in aesthetic forms of culture influenced by social, political, and economic realms in the visible part – *capital C*; whereas it still includes the reservoir of the society in many forms in the invisible part – *small c*. This bilateral representation of culture can be reinterpreted as the sieved

dominant-influenced elite culture of a nation/country (or “world” in the global sense in terms of SLA) in the visible part; and the multimodal and multivocal aspects in the invisible part. That is, the surface level of the iceberg can represent the dominant culture such as “White” English with its social and linguistic norms, whereas the deeper level is the representation of varieties of English and the sub-cultures they are associated with, as well as the learners’ native culture elements that can be activated in the language learning/teaching process.

In this paper, I will focus on the term “culture” as a combination of both visible and invisible aspects that allow for integration of both dominant and non-dominant cultural elements in language teaching (e.g., English language based on Anglo-Saxon standards + varieties of English + other cultural knowledge brought in personal reservoirs); in other words, I will discuss how invisible culture should also be made visible in order to help second language learners move from the “self” to the “other” with sensitivity through developing intercultural perspective and having intercultural exchange without just focusing on the tip of the iceberg but creating a culture of balance. In this way, learners will not only learn the target language with its various aspects, but also utilize their target/native/international cultural knowledge as valuable resources in their language learning process.

Culture has always existed in language teaching curriculum, yet its existence has been observed mostly as a target in the form of the target language culture (which can be thought as the *capital C/high culture*), rather than as a tool to mediate the learning of that language. Native cultures of the learners, which can be referred to as their “reservoirs” (*small c*) starting from Said’s point of view, have been neglected. According to Kramsch (2013, p. 71-72), this negligence is a reflection of the globalized world which causes the teaching of culture to experience a tension between “the need to identify, explain, classify and categorize people and events according to modern objective criteria and...the desire to take into account the post-modern subjectivities and historicities of living speakers,” both of which are reflected in language and make language teachers’ job more complex; therefore, the connection between culture and language should be considered more in depth.

2. CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

It is also not easy to define “language,” especially in connection with culture. As Jiang (2000) states in general terms, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it includes that people’s history, cultural experiences, stance in life, their lifestyles, and the way they think. Goodenough (1957) states that language is a tool to analyze culture. Language gives clues about the culture it belongs to, so it can be said that culture and language are inevitably connected. According to Brown (2007), language is a part of culture and culture is a part of language; therefore, it is very difficult to separate these two terms from each other.

As the definitions of culture suggest, language is a part of culture or its sub-system. It is acquired in society as a continuum of traditions to connect the members of the same society and provide communication among them. According to Nababan (1974), language is actually not a part of culture, but in its heart, and it exists in all the cultural elements. Therefore, the relationship between language and culture is similar to the one between the whole and its part (Liang, 2008). Parallel to this idea of “whole and

part,” Liston and Zeichner (1996) believe that the basis of all cultures is language. As a result of this whole and part relationship, culture and language cultivate and sustain each other.

Many anthropologists and linguists have studied the connection between language and culture, and many theses have been brought forward. Among the various common opinions, the most widely accepted one is that language and culture concepts are interwoven. Gladstone (1972) states that language is a prominent component of culture, which shapes it and reflects our cultural phenomena and values. Scovel (1994) overshoots the mark by claiming that language and culture are very similar, so they can be used interchangeably.

One of the most common views about the connection between language and culture is that language reflects the culture of its speakers. In other words, culture shapes language. Kramsch (1998), as one of the prominent researchers interested in the language-culture relation, states that words express our common worldview that we share with others and give us the opportunity to transfer the facts related to our experiences, beliefs and values to the people we communicate sharing a certain language. Having the same perspective of the relation between culture and language, Liddicoat (2009, p. 116) says that communication, which is ‘getting the message across,’ is just one element among others involved in language use. She also adds, “[S]peakers are constantly invoking, interpreting and confirming social relationships through talk. Language therefore is fundamental in creating the social context in which language itself is used and constructs the ways in which participants understand the social activity in which they are engaged” (Liddicoat, 2009, p. 116).

Kramsch (1998) also argues that language embodies and symbolizes cultural facts as a sign system. Hong (2008), on the other hand, believes that cultural elements are interwoven with language, and therefore, culture is reflected in the structural forms of the language. Liddicoat (2009, p. 130-131) summarizes this view of relation between language and culture:

[C]ommunication is not simply the creation of messages using the available lexical and grammatical items of a language. Rather each lexical item and their grammatical arrangements invoke cultural knowledge which is always present and which is intrinsic to rather than additional to the meanings communicated. Meanings therefore reside both within and outside language, but the boundaries between what is in and out are extremely fuzzy.

Although it is not very clear how culture and language interact with each other, what is obvious is that they inseparably shape individuals’ identities, and all the views abovementioned reveal the fact that language is at the basis of cultural continuation. That being the case, culture plays a crucial role in language teaching and learning.

3. CULTURE IN SLA

While exploring the relation between language and culture, two concepts should be clarified: “second language” and “foreign language.” The former is referred to as the language that the learners are exposed to in their daily lives as a result of living in a country where that language is spoken; it is the language that the learners need in order to be a part of the society in which they live, whereas foreign language is required for academic purposes, vacation, business, or any other reason that is not related to daily life

necessities (Thornbury, 2006). In the SLA literature, the relation between culture and language teaching is approached in terms of second or foreign language teaching. Considering the new role of English language as “lingua franca,” the literature is dominated by the use of cultural elements in English language classes, and these cultural elements can be categorized in three main groups: *target culture*, *native culture*, and *international culture*. Target culture refers to the culture in which the target language is used, whereas native culture refers to the culture of the learners different from the culture of the target language. As for international culture, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) refer to the speakers who belong to various cultures including the native and target cultures, and a lot more. These concepts should be viewed more in detail regarding teaching English as a second/foreign language as stated in the literature. This way, they can help us, as researchers and educators, to propose and apply the most appropriate use of culture in second/foreign language curricula considering the contemporary facts about globalization and the need of assisting learners in their development of intercultural competence, with which they can be a part of the society by developing personal and cultural identity in egalitarian conditions. This in return could enable societies, particularly multicultural ones, to shift towards a more culturally sensitive mode.

3.1. Target Culture and Language Teaching

Kuang (2007) states that no matter what the reason to learn a language is, its culture should be taught as well. This idea aligns with Brown’s (1986), who claims that learning a language other than native language means constructing a second identity. Similarly, Damen (1987) states that language and culture are so closely united that culture teaching cannot be separated from language teaching. Parallel to these ideas, Atkinson (1999) states that integration of culture in the language teaching and learning process occurs in a natural way. The most outstanding and widespread view on this matter is that teaching the target culture along with the language provides a holistic approach in terms of how and when to use the language (Byram & Fleming, 1998; as cited in Bayyurt, 2006), which provides sociocultural competence. Yet, the integration of the target culture into curriculum is a means of assimilation and deculturalization, especially when we talk about a lingua franca that dominates along with its culture (Önalın, 2005). Therefore, language teachers should limit the use of the target culture elements in language classrooms so as to minimize linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), which is the transference of a dominant language and culture to other people as a sign of power. The spread of English as a lingua franca through the foreign policies of the UK and the United States exemplifies this linguistic imperialism (Kachru and Nelson, 1996).

Kramsch (2013), on the other hand, states that deculturalization through the use of the target language is more obvious among students learning English as a second language rather than as a foreign one because the latter learn the target language to communicate in the country where that language belongs, so the culture is seen as “exotic” and they can maintain their own culture. On the other hand, the former (mostly immigrants) go through schooling in the nurturing country and they are exposed to the dominant culture. They need the target language as a way of socialization, which leads to deculturalization while also creating a feeling of pride of belonging to the target culture.

3.2. Native Culture and Language Teaching

The first instances that the English language was refused to be taught along with its culture trace back to some colonies ruled by Great Britain (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1985; Kachru & Nelson 1996). The struggle of these teachers who refused to teach English culture while teaching English language laid the foundations of using the native culture to teach a second/foreign language. McKay (2003) states that more and more importance has been given to the use of native culture elements of learners in the classes where English is being taught as second/foreign language all around the world. According to Schneider (2007), this integration will help to develop sociocultural competence as the learners will not be bound to the norms and standards put forward by the target culture. This can also pave the way for cultural exchange as it will help the learners with different backgrounds to share their cultural values with people having different cultural experiences. In a way, intercultural competence is headed, yet it is a much more complicated process which will be referred to in the following parts of the paper.

Obviously, English, as a lingua franca, belongs to all the countries using it as a means of communication either at a local or international level. Therefore, the effect of the target culture influence on this language should be minimized. Prodromou (1992) also indicates that the materials that are used in teaching English as a second/foreign language are exceedingly under the influence of American and British culture elements, and this situation affects the learners negatively in the process of learning the language because they become alienated from their own cultures and languages. Hence, he suggests that teachers who have to teach through such target-culture-focused materials should use some extra materials reflecting the native culture of the learners as well.

3.3. International Culture and Language Teaching

English has gained a powerful stance as a global language and has a dominating power over other local and international languages. Edge (1996) explains the reason for the domination of English in the world today by referring to the fact that “the military and commercial power of British empire was followed by the military and commercial power of the U.S.” (p. 16). Supported by this political and economic power, the English language keeps spreading around the world.

Based on how this language of power is acquired and used, Kachru (1988) suggests a three-concentric circles model with *the inner circle* (e.g., the United States and the UK); *the outer circle* (e.g., Singapore, India, Malawi); and *the expanding circle* (e.g., Japan, Turkey, Poland). As this model supports, both through colonization or internationalization, the spread of English has been perpetuated and English has gained a global status as lingua franca with the dominance of inner circle standards. Although English acts as a medium of communication not only among its native speakers, but also among non-native speakers as well as between native and non-native speakers (Alptekin, 2002), teaching and learning this language barely go beyond the inner circle standards. Therefore, Alptekin (2002) argues that teaching the target culture is a myth:

It is utopian not only because native speakership is a linguistic myth, but also because it portrays a monolithic perception of the native speaker’s language and culture, by referring chiefly to mainstream ways of thinking and behaving. It is unrealistic because it fails to reflect the lingua franca status of English. It is

constraining in that it circumscribes both teacher and learner autonomy by associating the concept of authenticity with the social milieu of the native speaker.

Therefore, students should be taught how to communicate effectively along with the linguistic and cultural behaviors through which the communication can be held. In this regard, Fisherman and Andrew's ideas (1996) are enlightening. They maintain that English should be changed into a multinational tool to provide communication, rather than as a medium of imperialist power. They suggest a shift from purist approach to pluralist approach in English language teaching as an international language.

The rising number of people who want to learn English can be explained by the need to reach out for worldwide information (Rubdy & Sacareni, 2006). So as to be more understanding and less ethnocentric, and raise such generations, English should be taught with international culture (Steele, 1989) rather than inner circle social and linguistic norms and standards. Toward this point, Smith (1976) emphasizes three things that should be taken into consideration: 1) English learners do not have to internalize the culture of the target language, 2) English, as lingua franca, should not be under the influence of any nation/dominant power, 3) the purpose of teaching English should not be the teaching of culture, but helping learners express their thoughts and cultures in English. Parallel to this, Kramsch (1993) supports the idea that the target language culture should not be taught as a necessity, but a difference; therefore, she states that the teaching of culture is not a must. Yet, it can be more beneficial to use the native or international culture related context that the learners are more familiar with, rather than the contexts students are not familiar with. Similarly, Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) suggest that the learners of English as a second/foreign language should gain a more intercultural perspective.

As abovementioned, the literature is mostly based on teaching English as a second/foreign language; however, the ideas are applicable to any language not acquired as a native language. As Newton (2009) states, "interculturally informed pedagogy focuses not only on the visible tip of the cultural iceberg but also on the less easily observable, dynamic aspects of culture represented by the large invisible part of the iceberg" (Newton, 2009, p. 6). Therefore, integrating any of the three type of cultures (target, native, international) into the curriculum will not be sufficient as they still leave out some minority cultures within these cultures, which can only be observable within the invisible part of the iceberg, i.e., the small c culture; therefore, instead of integrating target, native, or international cultures, or all together into the curriculum, the language curriculum should be implemented by multicultural elements involving national, international and within-nation cultures and sub-cultures.

4. MULTICULTURAL APPROACH IN USE OF CULTURE IN SLA

I have learned English as a foreign language and have more than seven years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. Neither as a learner nor as a teacher did I have the chance to deal with language materials reflecting a multicultural perspective of cultural elements. Based on my experiences, the commercial textbooks lack a multicultural approach in the choice of texts. These texts represent the target culture as the ideal, whereas native cultures are subtly viewed as the degraded other. This might sound like an overgeneralized presumption since I do not have command of all the

textbooks in the market, yet what Lang (2011, p. 22) underlines about the textbooks from the 1990s to the millennium coincides with my reflection:

Generally, most of the studies came to the conclusion that textbooks “were plagued with racial, gender and regional stereotyping” (O’Dowd 2006, 46-47). Choices of topics and material were criticized because they favored a one-sided presentation of majority groups and cultures, and very often did not consider the multicultural reality in the target countries. Stereotyping, even if used to present a positive image of the country, was found in several textbook analyses. Additionally, controversial topics have often been avoided to facilitate the positive image of the target culture, and to avoid any offence of possible buyers. (Ibid)

Another detail that was revealed with the analysis of several textbooks was that the target culture was always represented with a positive image; on the other hand, the native culture “came out looking badly from the comparison” (O’Dowd 2006, as cited in Lang, 2011, p. 23), which does not have anything to do with egalitarian cross-cultural perspectives. Such results do not mean that there are no attempts to implement the existing language curricula to make it appeal to various cultures equally, rather than elevating a single, target/dominant culture (some of which are Acar, 2013; Alpay, 2009; Georgiou, 2010; Gimatdinova, 2009; Gülcü, 2010; Ho, 2009; Taylor, 2010). However, being only small-scaled studies, they are not likely to have any impact on larger-scaled multicultural curriculum implementations.

It seems that the lack of a multicultural perspective in second/foreign language teaching materials is no more than a reflection of a shallow understanding of culture, which ignores the invisible part of the iceberg. Therefore, there is a need for a new pedagogical approach to help non-native English learners to learn English without being oppressed by Anglo-Saxon culture. Such an approach is also likely to preclude communication hindrances that occur at the international level due to this oppression by Anglo-Saxon culture since meaning in communication might be hidden in the native cultures and cultural way of saying things. According to Kramsch (2013, p. 66), today’s second/foreign language learners are still tested by a modernist perspective to teaching culture:

To study the way native speakers use their language for communicative purposes, the convention ‘one language = one culture’ is maintained and teachers are enjoined to teach rules of sociolinguistic use the same way they teach rules of grammatical usage (i.e., through modeling and role-playing). Even though everyday cultural practices are as varied as a native speaker’s use of language in everyday life, the focus is on the typical, sometimes stereotypical, behaviors, foods, celebrations and customs of the dominant group or of that group of native speakers that is the most salient to foreign eyes. Striking in this concept of culture is the maintenance of the focus on national characteristics and the lack of historical depth.

Clearly, from the modernist perspective, use of culture in language classrooms refers to the use of target language culture. This culture is only the visible part of the iceberg neglecting the reservoir of the native speakers, which might possibly differ from each other, and actually disregarding the fact that it is impossible to have a single way of sociolinguistic use of the language. Although “the globalized geopolitical landscape and

the spread of computer-mediated technology have changed the nature and the role of culture in language teaching (Risager, 2006), they have not necessarily changed the modernist way culture is studied and taught” (Kramsch, 2013, p. 67). Hence, a transition from a modernist to a post-modernist perspective regarding teaching culture is required in order to nurture a multicultural understanding in SLA classes by developing intercultural sensitivity of the learners. Kramsch defines this post-modernist understanding of culture as its not being bound to a nation-state and its history from one perspective, but including multi-perspectives (i.e., culture = the whole iceberg). This transition has already started, but has a long way to go, and it is not only a shift from one way of cultural understanding to another, but also a shift from valuing communicative competence in language teaching to valuing intercultural communicative competence.

5. FROM COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (CC) TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC)

As language is at the basis of culture, culture is in the heart of communication and one of the most prominent factors to be taken into consideration while teaching communicative skills in second/foreign language classrooms. According to Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981, p.24),

[c]ulture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted.

This close relation between culture and communication brings about the importance of communicative competence, which came about in reaction to the ideas of the generative-grammarians, Noam Chomsky. According to Chomsky (1965), “language form (competence) and language use (performance)” are separate from each other and linguists should focus on the form which reflects the internal grammar of the speaker and the listener. However, Hymes (1972, p. 277) described a sociolinguistic perspective to the communicative competence by claiming that a person in communication should know “when to speak, when not, ... what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” in addition to the grammatical rules of the language. Canale and Swain (1980) propose a model of communicative competence entailing grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences, yet sociolinguistic competence is further viewed under two sub-components: sociolinguistic and discourse competence by Canale (1983; as cited in Alptekin, 2002). In line with Hymes, Canale, and Swain, Saville-Troike (1996) considers communicative competence to have three components in second/foreign language learning context: linguistic, interactional, and cultural knowledge. Different from Chomsky’s linguistic knowledge, Saville-Troike argues that linguistic knowledge includes both referential meanings and social messages. Communicative competence, on the other hand, includes the knowledge and expectation related to social norms and conventions. And lastly, the cultural knowledge stands for the social structure, values, and attitudes of the community regarding their language use. However, it is my belief that that all these models presented for communicative competence suffer from some shortcomings because they are based on a communicative approach, which evaluates the learners’ development in terms of communicative competence. And such competence,

whereby native speakers of the target language are taken as models, is completely target language- and target culture-based. Therefore, as Alptekin (2002, p. 58) states, “learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers”; that is, these communicative competence models disregard the fact that individuals exist with their own reservoir that can be influential in how they communicate, but focus solely on the dynamics of the target language based on the target culture.

Considering the lingua franca status of English in today’s world, “[h]ow relevant...are the conventions of British politeness or American informality to Japanese and Turks, say, when doing business in English? How relevant are culturally-laden discourse samples as British railway timetables or American newspaper advertisements to industrial engineers from Romania and Egypt conducting technical research in English?” (Alptekin, 2002, p. 61). It is possible to multiply the examples, but the point is that more radical steps should be taken in order to renew the notion of communicative competence by redefining and giving it a new mission, i.e., fostering communication not only among natives, but also among foreigners using a common language such as the lingua franca-English. Therefore, it is important to teach and encourage learners to use their own sociolinguistic and strategic competences that they are accustomed to in their native culture and language, in order to help them develop more efficient communication while speaking to a person from a different background. This means that communicative competence should be revisited and attached to a more intercultural aspect. However, this review does not mean a simple addition to communicative competence with an identifiable dimension, i.e., cultural difference, “but rather communication that is continually mindful of the multiple possibilities of interpretation resulting from the possible presence of multiple cultural constructs, value systems and conceptual associations which inform the creation and interpretation of messages” (Liddicoat, 2009, p. 131). In a way, communicators, i.e., learners, can encode and decode their messages in multiple ways influenced by their cultural reservoir related to communicative competence, and this situation requires an intercultural communicative competence (ICC) rather than simple communicative competence.

The more frequently people communicate with those from different cultures, the more they can appreciate the cultural differences. Yet, this realization is not enough to bring along the sensitivity towards the different cultures. Bennett’s model of “intercultural sensitivity” clearly reveals that it is not easy to develop intercultural sensitivity or competence. One mostly goes through several stages (denial, defense, minimalization, acceptance, adaptation, integration) in order to go from an ethnocentric stance to an ethnorelative one (Bennett, 2004). By ethnocentric stages, Bennett means “one’s own philosophy of life and culture” that is in the center of the understanding of reality, whereas ethnorelative stages refer to developing an understanding of culture in relation to others (1986, as cited in Lange, 2011, p.12). This journey of the self is essential for developing ICC, as it can erase the invisible borders among cultures with the help of language developed in a culturally sensitive way. Although this model is criticized for failing to involve the role of language, considering the abovementioned relation between culture and language, it is easy to recognize that language is the main medium to carry the cultural dimension of communication into the middle ground and

help the journey of the “self” towards the “equal other.”

Kramsch’s ideas (2013, p. 69) support the importance of self-reflection during the journey of the self. She argues that “learning about a foreign culture without being aware of one’s own discursive practices can lead to an a-historical or anachronistic understanding of others and to an essentialized and, hence, limited understanding of the Self”; therefore, she coined the concept of the “third space” as an intercultural approach. This third space refers to an identity where communicators can reach the language and knowledge of the cultures they deal with while communicating. These communicators are able “to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use” (Lang, 2011, p.14). Yet, the concept of third space cannot fully explain how intercultural competence develops. Kramsch (1993, as cited in Lange, 2011) tries to explain intercultural competence in relation to foreign language teaching and learning, and she refers to a third space identity as a middle ground where different cultures meet, but which develops separately from the self. Kramsch makes a very important point by stating that native-speaker competence should not be the one second/foreign language learners are tested through since they bring their cultural and linguistic experiences to the arena of communication. However, this space of commonalities should not be viewed as a separate entity from the self because once the self is involved in the process, meeting other cultures becomes an issue of awareness. This awareness affects the intercultural skills and attitudes; that is, intercultural competence develops in a much more complicated manner. Byram’s ICC model can clearly present this complicated process with the constant change of the self in the face of developing intercultural sensitivity.

To put Byram’s ICC model in simple terms, it considers the language learning process as a communicative, interactive, and meaningful one. Successful intercultural communication can occur when a set of **knowledge** (knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal – *Savoir*), **skills** (1. skills of interpreting and relating – *Savoir comprendre*; and 2) skills of discovering and/or interacting – *Savoir apprendre/faire*), **attitudes** (relativizing self, valuing other – *Savoir être*) and **dispositions** (political education, critical cultural awareness – *Savoir s’engager*) are active (Hoff, 2014). “According to this model, successful communication can not only be achieved through an understanding of how different cultural contexts affect the interpretation and perception of what one says or writes. The ideal ‘intercultural speaker’ is also genuinely concerned with ‘establishing and maintaining relationships’ across cultural boundaries” (Byram, 1997, as cited in Hoff, 2014, p. 511). With this model, Byram deals with communicative competence adopting an intercultural perspective. The keystone of Byram’s ICC model seems to be the understanding of knowledge. It is divided into two: knowledge of “the other” within the culture, and outside the culture, which brings along the understanding of culture at both national and international levels, respectively. Therefore, ICC does not only refer to the competence that should be developed in the face of communicating people from other countries, but also people within the same multicultural society.

In the following part of the paper, this two-tiered knowledge level along with other stages will be suggested to be fostered in language classrooms in order to develop a better ICC of language learners. The aim in doing so is to guide and make the practitioners think of ways to go beyond the third space and let learners be engaged in

culture at a deeper level with an ethnorelative sensitivity.

5.1. Pedagogical Implications for ICC

Based on the reinterpretation of the iceberg model of culture and Byram's ICC model and his understanding of knowledge, some pedagogical implications for foreign language classrooms, specifically for English as an international language classrooms will be suggested so as to foster intercultural communicative competence of the language learners. Practices that will be proposed can be applied to other World Languages classrooms as well. The following three phases of a foreign/second language lesson, which can also intersect, are proposed to enable practitioners to help learners acquire and improve their ICC. It should be kept in mind that these practices can better serve ICC in multicultural and multilingual classrooms rather than monolingual classrooms as the group reservoir of the monolingual learners might be much more limited than in multicultural ones, and the cultural integration process might lose authenticity. Therefore, teachers should perform agency in designing their courses to increase ICC according to their learner profile. The following activities can be considered for a multilingual and multicultural EFL classroom, and the theme is "food."

5.1.1 Activate Cultural Reservoir

In the first phase, students are provided with some cultural knowledge (of their own, the target language culture/s and the international culture) via some pictures, music, short texts or videos, or some other tangible materials. As the theme is food for this sample, the teacher can show some pictures of food from various cultures (taking the cultures/subcultures of the learners into consideration if possible to engage them more into the process and let them check their knowledge of the other cultures and their food).

5.1.2. Challenge Learners' Knowledge of the *Self* and the *Other*

Through receptive skills, i.e., reading and listening, some input can be provided regarding food and related customs in different cultures. This can be an opportunity for the learners to contribute to the information provided and/or challenge their knowledge. For instance, how soup is served and drunk can change from one culture to another, and even this can show variety in subcultures of the same society. Cooking, serving, and eating processes might have hidden codes that should be decoded to provide a smoother interaction and communication. These encoded meanings can be decoded by the help of the learners, or through the provided input.

5.1.3. Produce Language with Deeper Level *Cultural Knowledge*

As for the theme of food along with related customs and manners, learners can be asked to report what they have learned as well as what they had already known either orally or in written form in different interaction patterns designed by the teacher. For instance, learners can be asked to write a magazine article in groups to reveal their reshaped knowledge in as much detail as possible. This might even be followed by role-plays based on interactions between students from different cultural backgrounds. To illustrate, students can role play a restaurant setting where a group of tourists from different countries are being served by the waitress/waitresses who belong to a certain culture.

It is important to bear in mind that a single lesson might not suffice to ensure a deeper level ICC as the new information will take some time to accept, value, neutralize, and internalize towards a more ethnorelative stance. Yet, repetitive practices that require utilizing productive skills, i.e., speaking and writing, might help to deal with various

cultural knowledge so as to communicate, and learners themselves might start encoding and decoding inter/intracultural knowledge in the process of producing the target language.

CONCLUSION

The present paper has examined how the concept of culture is interpreted and approached in various ways within the SLA context. Despite the awareness of various cultures in the literature, i.e., target, native, and international culture, the SLA world is mostly dominated by the idea that the target language is closely affiliated with the target culture, and this is closely related to power relations and the deculturalizing forces in the name of globalization. However, it is also inspiring to see some intercultural approaches valuing native and international cultures as much as the target culture and carrying the place of culture in language teaching to a more egalitarian position with a multicultural perspective.

In light of the literature, it can be said that we are in a period of transition from a modern understanding of culture to a post-modern one, in which the concept of culture has been revisited in terms of developing communicative competence in second/foreign language teaching, and a shift from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence might be a cure to the struggle of the Self with the Other in multicultural societies. Due to the fast-paced globalization, even the entire world can be considered as one big multicultural society with certain power dynamics within the borders and inter-borders. However, this post-modern, multicultural understanding of culture remains mostly theoretical when it comes to language teaching. The literature presents what is ideal, but it fails to answer the question of “how.” Therefore, there is a need to put this theory into practice through second/foreign language curricula. Considering teachers and students as resourceful individuals, the proposed classroom practices could be modified according to the students’ immediate needs and profile through the same or similar stages, and even particular pedagogies with specific practice cycles might be developed to foster ICC in second/foreign language classrooms.

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