Intercultural communicative competence
– past and future

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Overview

- Defining the concept of ICC and 'the field'
  - Past - some concepts and terms

    (Risager, 2007 and 2011)
  - Present – some concepts and debates

- Research and development – future needs

Past – concepts and terms

UK and wider relevance …

'Modern Studies' (Leathes Report 1918)

We shall use the term "Modern Studies" to signify all those studies (historical, economic, literary, critical, philological, and other) which are directly approached through modern foreign languages. "Modern Studies" are thus the study of modern peoples in any and every aspect of their national life, of which the languages are an instrument as necessary as hands, and feet, and heart, and head. The term may sometimes be used in this Report for the study of one or more languages without consideration of ulterior aims, but it is well to remember that the study of languages is, except for the philologist, always a means and never an end in itself. (Leathes 1918: 2)

Past – concepts and terms

UK

- HE: 'Area studies' (Kramer 2012a) - cf. Leathes: 'historical, economic, literary, critical, philological, and other' e.g. *French Studies* (Bryant 2009)

- School: 'Background studies' - reading the Encyclopedia Britannica

Past – concepts and terms

Germany – **Landeskunde/Kulturkunde**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a number of politically rather than educationally motivated debates (influenced by Germany's hostility towards France and its rivalry with Britain), foregrounded the relevance of the study of culture and led to a kind of Kulturkunde (with an emphasis on the national character[s] of the foreign people[s]) which was not so much interested in understanding the foreign culture(s) as aimed at reinforcing the German identity of the learners. This development paved the way for the subordination of all Landeskunde/Kulturkunde to national-socialist educational policy from 1935 to 1945

(Kramer 2012b)

Past – concepts and terms

France – civilisation

The purposes of language teaching developed as part of French foreign policy in the colonial era have persisted to the present day. The presentation of French *civilisation, in a broadly positive, uncritical* light was the mission given to the *Alliance française*, set up in 1884 to spread the use of the French language in the colonies and elsewhere overseas.

(…) For many years and in many places one of the main vehicles for the promotion of French, explicitly linked to the *Alliance française*, was the *Cours de langue et de civilisation françaises* (Mauger, 1953) which combines the teaching of French grammar with a story line based on a foreign family visiting France and discovering its everyday life and institutions. The France presented by Mauger is a single social entity, with a single, neutral or standard form of expression.

(Hassan and Starkey 2012)

Past in the present – national identity

By learning languages, pupils have opportunity to become familiar with other cultures. Such insight provides the basis for respect and increased tolerance, and contributes to other ways of thinking and broadens pupils' understanding of their own cultural belonging. In this way pupils' own identity is strengthened.

- (http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/dav/78FB8D6918.PDF - Jan 2005 - my emphasis)

Past in the present – national identity

Language competence and intercultural understanding are an essential part of being a citizen. Children develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others. They learn to look at things from another perspective.

(Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages 2005 (England) – my emphasis)

Present debates

Terminology

E.g. : cross-cultural v. intercultural communication;

intercultural competence v. capacity;

I C v. I Communicative C;

transcultural v. intercultural competence

Focus

Education and/or training

(Hofstede = training (www.geert-hofstede.com)

Present debates

Focus

Education and/or training (Hofstede and national character v. Holliday and 'small cultures' or Risager 'transnational paradigm')

Academic 'study' and/or applied intercultural teacher training

[cf. linguistics and/or applied linguistics]

Present debates

With **(only) language competence** or not:

'symbolic competence' (Kramsch) 'only' language competence :

Social actors in multilingual settings, even if they are non-native speakers of the languages they use, seem to activate more than a communicative competence that would enable them to communicate accurately, effectively and appropriately with one another. They seem to display a particularly acute ability to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes.

Present debates

Intercultural competence v. intercultural *communicative* competence

[cf. Sage Handbook of Intercult Comp v. Routledge Encyc of Language and Intercult Communication]

depends on **who teaches** …

cross-cultural trainers focus = Non-verbal communication

OR language teachers focus = verbal communication

'where language is a perceived difference' = ICC

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Linguistic comp.   Sociolinguistic comp.   Discourse comp.

Intercultural Competence

skills of interpreting/relating

Knowledge   Critical cultural awareness   Openness/curiosity,

Skills of discovery/interaction

13

Research and development
1. Conceptual

- Developing new ideas/theories/models – for testing empirically (Theory of Relativity)
  - Example Risager 2006 Language and culture. Global flows and local complexity.
  - Byram 1997 Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence
- Testing conceptually other people's ideas/theories/models
  - Example Spitzberg, B.H. and Changnon, G. (2009) Conceptualising intercultural competence. In D. Deardorff (ed) *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Research and development
2. Empirical

1. Research which seeks to establish *explanations* in terms of cause and effect,

2. Research which seeks *understanding* of the experience of people involved in education,

3. Advocacy (research) which seeks to create *change* in a specific direction.

→ 'now' (1,2,3) and 'in the past' (1 and 2)

Research and development
2a – Empirical - explanation

To establish causal relations – for example:

-- between teaching methods and intercultural competence

-- between attitudes to foreign people and language or culture learning

-- between linguistic competence and intercultural competence

-- between understanding of other cultures and understanding of one's own.

Research and development
2b - Empirical - understanding

to understand learners' and teachers' own ideas/theories/models - for example:

- about methods of teaching 'culture',

- about culture,

- about intercultural competence,

- about the impact of learning another language and culture on their understanding of their own country and culture,

Research and development
2c - Empirical - advocacy

To argue for and demonstrate the feasibility/practicality of a specific (teaching/assessing/learning) approach, for example to show that:

- It is desirable and possible to teach citizenship education in EFL

- It is desirable and possible to introduce self-assessment of intercultural competence

- It is desirable and possible to teach learners to be/think 'critical' / 'criticality'

- 'desirable' = conceptual research; 'possible' = empirical research

Methodology 2a - EXPLANATION

- Methods – experimental; survey (etc)
- Techniques – pre and post-tests and control groups (experiment); data on 'independent' ("cause") and 'dependent' factors ("effect"); observation of process and testing of outcomes
- Analysis:
  - experiment – control for other factors – argue for cause/effect
  - Survey – control for other factors, look for 'associations' (especially correlations) but 'correlation' is not cause'

Methodology 2b - UNDERSTANDING

- Methods – individuals, cases, surveys
- Techniques – questionnaires, interviews (semi-structured, ethnographic, narrative)
- Analysis:
  - Counting of e.g. 'agree/disagree
  - Textual analysis of 'words' to reveal 'thoughts'

Methodology 2c - ADVOCACY

- Methods – conceptual; experimental (without control group) – cf. explanation

- Techniques – pre and post tests, (self) observation, cf. explanation

ALSO understanding - how do participants understand/experience – techniques of 'understanding'

EXAMPLE

Jessie Hsieh

Reconceptualising English teaching in Taiwan: action research with technical college students

[available : British Library – EThOS]

CONCEPTUAL

- English is now the primary language used amongst speakers from around the world for international communication. In response to this fact, there are calls for a paradigm shift in English language teaching (ELT) in respect of the increasing English users who speak English as an international language (EIL). (…)

- With Taiwan's cultural politics background, English has long been portrayed and perceived as a prestigious foreign language which represents a passport to better economic gains, education, and social status.

- This perception of English has not only brought about a phenomenon of English fever, but also endorsed an economic pragmatic view in learning English as an international language. Consequently, it has reinforced ELT practices to aim at preparing learners of English for 'being competitive' instead of 'understanding of others'.

EMPIRICAL

- Based on an educational philosophy that today's English language teaching should prepare learners as world citizens instead of global human capital, the purpose of this action research project is to provide an intercultural communicative way of teaching English.

- A total of 42 part-time technical college students and a teacher researcher in Taipei were involved in investigating the desirability and feasibility of such ELT pedagogy. Under a theme of 'A Visit from our Sister College', nine lessons were taught with cultural topics like name, hometown, food, and entertainment.

  [data of different kinds collected: teacher diary, teacher plans/notes, student feedback, interviews,...]

Jessie's methodology - advocacy

- Methods
  - Conceptual – developing a vision/theory of EFL for Taiwan
  - explanation – looking for correspondence/cause and effect between teaching focused on IC and learners' learning IC
  - Understanding - analysing learners' (and teacher's) ideas/theories/models of the learning experience

- Techniques
  - Student lesson notes, interviews (single and group); student work; teacher's notes, reflections
- Analysis
  - Of data to find evidence of 'desired learning' (in interviews and in learning activities)
  - Of data to find their interpretations/understanding of their experience

- The findings suggest that, with some minor technical modifications needed in the future, the proposed pedagogy can help learners not only find their confidence in learning and utilising English language in their daily life but also deep-learn cultures of self and others. Thus, it might result the learners in becoming world citizens in a gradual/progressive manner.

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