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# PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING CONFERENCE 2019

التفاعل مع التغيير: اتجاهات جديدة في التعليم والتعلم  
Engaging in Change: New Perspectives of Teaching and Learning

Edited by:  
Wafa Zoghbor  
Ali Shehadeh &  
Suhair Al Alami

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***"Engaging in Change: New Perspectives  
of Teaching and Learning"***

Edited by:

Wafa Zoghbor, Ali Shehadeh & Suhair Al Alami

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching (ALLT) Conference and Exhibition

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## Chapter 9

# Designing Textbooks for Language Teaching in the Context of Intercultural Communication

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### Abstract

*Designing textbooks in the context of intercultural communication is a new tendency in language education in Kazakhstan due to ongoing integration processes of the Republic internationally. These processes facilitate some changes to the national academic standards which are intended to meet new challenges for education: namely, training specialists who will be able to work in a multicultural society and establish intercultural dialogue and interaction. This paper aims to analyze research on the structure of contemporary textbooks. The didactic approach to textbook design is considered in the context of intercultural communication for Kazakh classrooms. The paper analyzes how the didactic approach can help form students' multidimensional perception about themselves in the modern world and prepare them to live in a multicultural society in accordance with democratic values; teach students to think critically, to tolerate other points of view, respect the history and cultural heritage of their own and others; and train students to analyze controversial issues, which involve familiarity with various and often mutually exclusive points of view.*

### Introduction

The development of a country's integration process leads to changes in education, which are intended to meet the challenge in order to prepare learners to live in a multiethnic and multicultural environment, while promoting understanding and interaction of intercultural dialogue. One of the reasons for contemporary disagreements and clashes in various regions is an extremely low level of interethnic communication culture and personal identification in a multicultural society. The education system attempts to solve those challenges by considering the issue of training a language learner as a



multicultural individual – a person able to concentrate in other cultures through his culture, having a holistic worldview with well-developed social, cultural, aesthetic and lingo-cultural consciousness. Language education can enhance the acquisition of those abilities to a great extent by systematically integrating intercultural aspects into linguistic issues in teaching. Furthermore, textbooks still represent the core of language education; they impact to a great extent what is taught and how it is taught in the language classroom (Byram, 2008; Kunanbayeva, 2013). According to the authors of this paper, textbooks should reflect the intercultural context while focusing on the diversity and interaction of cultures and intercultural dialogue. Thus, contemporary textbooks as fundamental didactic tools in language education are expected to enable students to acquire intercultural communication competence (ICC) along with mastering skills of language development (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of a given language. Learners' ICC refers to their ability to successfully communicate with people from other cultures while showing respect (Kunanbayeva, 2013; Yelubayeva, Chaklikova, & Asmatullayeva, 2016).

This paper does not discuss the historical backgrounds and theoretical developments for the formation of a multicultural identity and intercultural communication. Nor does it provide a full bibliography of such work. The present study aims at reporting investigation results of research within this area, discussing a variety of approaches in developing intercultural communication competence, including didactic approaches to design English textbooks which focus on the optimal use of authentic cultural contexts in language classrooms involving undergraduate students. The paper analyzes how didactic approaches can help:

- form students' multidimensional perception about themselves in the modern world and prepare them to live in a multicultural society in accordance with democratic values;
- teach students to think critically, to tolerate others' points of view, and respect the history and cultural heritage of themselves and others; and,
- train students to analyze controversial issues which would involve familiarity with various and often mutually exclusive points of view.

## **Concept of Communicative Competence**

The idea to prepare young people to live in a multicultural world is named as a priority in United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe documents. A UNESCO report states that one of the major functions of any educational institution is to train learners to live together and to help them transform the existing interdependence of nations and ethnic groups to conscious solidarity (Delors, 1996).

At the national level, new trends are formed in education, which reflect the principles

of the international pedagogical process and the national peculiarities conditioned upon historical, demographic, economic, ethnic and cultural factors. In this regard, there is an increasing need to design an educational model that allows for creating a dialogue of cultures and harmony in the intercultural relations among young people. Thus, one of the main goals of the study program of a new pattern should be to promote an idea of intercultural dialogue in education in general, and foreign language education in particular. One means to achieve this goal is intercultural communication as an interaction of representatives of different cultures which involves developing ICC.

According to Hymes (1980), communicative competence is the ability to communicate in everyday situations and includes both structural and functional aspects of language. It includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and rules of interacting appropriately in different social contexts. In this sense, Hymes (1980) defines communicative competence as the ability to use language as a communication means in a given social context. Furthermore, it is a dynamic concept based on the negotiation of meanings among interlocutors, which can be applied either to written or spoken modes of communication.

Unlike Hymes, Canale (1983), Widdowson (1990) and Savignon (2002) emphasize the functional aspects of communicative competence. Canale introduces communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In his concept of communicative competence, knowledge refers to an individual's conscious or unconscious awareness about language and aspects of language use (Canale, 1983); he also claims that skill requires further distinction between underlying capacity and its manifestation in real communication. Savignon (2002) describes communicative competence as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors.

According to the Council of Europe (2018), communicative competence is conceived only in terms of knowledge. It analyses communicative competence at three related levels: sociolinguistic, linguistic and pragmatic. However, the intercultural competence comprises understanding of the representations of the experience it embodies, the establishment of personal relationships in contact with members of the target community, coping with situations where misunderstanding or conflict arises, and becoming aware of the cultural, regional and social diversity existing within and outside each of these worlds.

In terms of ICC, the desire to understand other cultures and their representatives has been urgent for as long as cultural and ethnic diversity have been in existence, which explains why the notion of ICC is still subject to discussion and argumentation among scholars. Byram (2008) relates ICC to an individual's skills to collaborate with people from another culture in a foreign language. He states that the knowledge

of cultures relates to the language competence through the ability to use authentic linguistic resources appropriately while being aware of the specific meanings, values, and connotations of that language (Byram, 2008, p. 42).

Kunanbayeva (2013) defines ICC as educational competence in the study of languages and cultures, claiming that the interaction process between representatives of different cultures becomes an object of reality while developing ICC. According to Kunanbayeva (2013), this approach contributes to creating the concept of the target language world. It means the qualitative transformation of the person as a result of integration of the two, three, or more cultures to the multicultural identity or “the mediator of intercultural communication,” who is able to participate effectively in the dialogue of cultures, demonstrates tolerance to representatives of other cultures and complete understanding.

Similarly, the authors of this paper believe that taking into account the cultural features and mentality of the target language in teaching assists in bringing students together and empowering them to be more open and tolerant in maintaining and conveying culture and cultural ties. Thus, the authors define the ICC as the permanent capacity to switch harmoniously in a culturally conscious way to the perceptions and culture of different linguistic society to communicate effectively and appropriately in various cultural contexts.

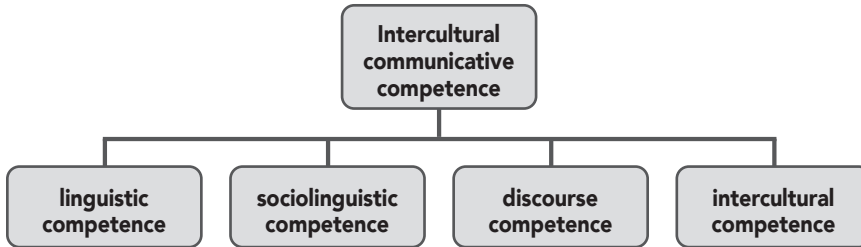
## Models of Intercultural Communicative Competence

All the above discussed perceptions of ICC emphasize the ability to use language appropriately in a particular social setting. The central idea of these definitions is also well-illustrated by Byram’s model of ICC (2008, p. 44). Byram highlights ICC in terms of skills and knowledge and defines it as the ability to understand and convey culture without ethnocentricity. According to Byram, intercultural communication competence consists of four competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural (Byram, 2008) (see Figure 1). To justify the appropriateness of those components, he considers the following factors as being influential in developing intercultural communicative competence: attitudes, knowledge, two kinds of skills, and critical cultural awareness. He relates *attitudes* to curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own. He describes the second factor as the *knowledge* of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own culture and in one’s interlocutor’s culture. *Skills of interpreting* are explicated as the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own. The other set of skills, *discovering and interacting*, are described as the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-

time communication and interaction (Byram, 2008). With respect to the last factor, he describes *critical cultural awareness* as the ability to evaluate critically in one's own and others' cultures (Byram, 2008, p. 71).

Figure 1:

Byram's Model of ICC

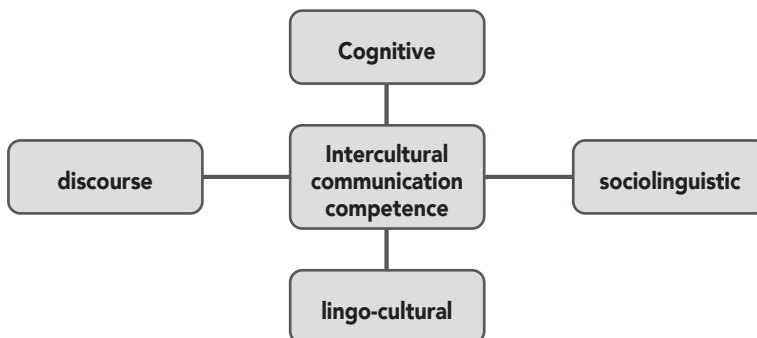


In terms of the perspective of this research, ICC consists of the following components:

- *cognitive competence*, the leading competence, which considers language development as an integral part of the learning and thinking processes, enabling a learner to perceive the world and interact almost like a native speaker;
- *sociolinguistic competence*, which affects the learner's secondary cognitive consciousness as a concept image of the world of other linguistic society;
- *lingo-cultural competence*, which forms a primary "concept image of the world" on the basis of a learner's own culture, acting as a linguistic and cultural reflection of the national linguistic consciousness and perception; and,
- *discourse competence*, which enables people to develop skills to produce cohesive and coherent unity of spoken or written texts, and to use professional thesaurus in the process of text decoding (See Figure 2).

Figure 2:

Components of ICC



This set of ICCs reflects the nature of the knowledge of source and target languages and cultures, skills for practical application of that knowledge, as well as personality traits that contribute to the realization of that knowledge and skills in the intercultural interaction. Since the process of interaction of cultures has become an object of reality, this approach contributes to the qualitative transformation of an individual to the multicultural identity or “intercultural mediator” who is able to participate effectively in the dialogue of cultures, demonstrating tolerance to representatives of other countries and cultures.

The conducted analysis on teaching integrative language and culture helps us find the final level of language learning outcomes to promote the effective interaction of cultural communities. The learners will be able to demonstrate language learning outcomes to promote the effective interaction of cultural communities. The ability outcomes of every component of ICC are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:

*Language Learning Outcomes*

ICC Components/Outcomes	
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to understand appropriately communicative intention of speakers from target community.</li> <li>• Ability to optimize information and translate it into various forms of presentation.</li> <li>• Ability to extract and process information in the synthesis of professional situation to construct the message.</li> </ul>
Sociolinguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to collaborate with audience, to support communication in the context of intercultural communication by arousing interest and ensuring the active involvement of speakers.</li> <li>• Ability to concentrate and attract recipients’ attention to the key ideas of communication, which has socio-cultural values.</li> <li>• Knowledge of rhetoric; techniques and methods of public speaking, culture of speech, skills of propaganda and journalism, taking into accounts the socio-cultural specifics of the target language.</li> </ul>
lingo-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to select appropriate linguistic forms and method of language expression, adequate to communication situation, its goal, intentions, as well as the speakers’ social roles.</li> <li>• Ability to choose speech strategies and tactics (persuasive, offensive, emotional-acting, and so on), taking into account the speech behavior of the target community</li> <li>• Ability to creatively analyze and use linguistic and cultural information in the context of intercultural communication</li> </ul>

Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to select information, inform the interlocutor, support a discussion</li> <li>• Ability to state communicative intentions as clearly and evidently as possible, providing real facts and with reference to authoritative opinion.</li> <li>• Ability to use advantageously meta-communicative means to create a positive background to support their point of view.</li> </ul>
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Taking into account the above theoretical developments, we realize that certain textbook activities are needed to promote ICC. Those activities should be aimed at enabling language learners to experience an immersion to the culture to establish intercultural dialogue and interaction, considering the thesaurus, cultural values, and norms of behavior of the target language.

The authors of this paper believe this will allow learners to practice the atmosphere of another culture and establish a link between cultures. In this regard, the textbook content might follow the following objectives:

- promoting the ideas of tolerance to multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue;
- developing the learner's ability to deal with issues of multiethnic and multicultural nature and to produce an optimal behavior strategy; and,
- training a learner to be open to intercultural dialogue and ethno-cultural interaction.

The focus on these objectives would encourage learners to learn from each other, comparing their own cultural context with the unfamiliar contexts to which language learning introduces them.

## **Intercultural Context of Textbooks**

Strengthening multicultural orientation in the education content necessitates identifying mechanisms to coordinate its national components. The most effective mechanism for coordination is the organization of foreign language education content based on dialogue between cultures. The cultures dialogue approach considers ethnically oriented education as a basis for the introduction first, to native culture and later, to the foreign language culture.

The procedural aspect of the textbook content is provided by the gradual formation of communication skills. They are required for the context-based communication stage, modeling communication situations stage, and intercultural communication stage (Table 2). The context-based communication stage is the stage that involves textbook

activities targeted to communication based on the specific context through activating learners' receptive and productive skills. At the modeling communication situations stage, learners are engaged with models of typical communication and creating their own communication based on the model. At the intercultural communication stage, learners demonstrate their abilities to think critically and make independent decisions based on argumentation. All these stages are aimed at developing ICC competencies: lingo-cultural, sociolinguistic, cognitive, and discourse.

According to the Council of Europe (2018), textbook activities are grouped into reception, production, interaction, and mediation stages, each of which is accomplishable both in spoken and written forms. Receptive activities assume information receiving and understanding skills and cognitive skills by activating the students' prior knowledge of the topic which would play an important part in preparing to produce communication (e.g., understanding the content of lessons, reading instructions, reference works, and documents). Productive activities focus on accumulating, producing, and conveying information (e.g., presentations, reports) and interpretation and explanations of the communication context. In interaction, production and reception alternate, although textbook activities at this stage aim at enabling learners to predict the message and formulate a response to it. Therefore, learning to interact involves more than learning to receive and produce utterances. Mediation involves both reception and production and consists of analyzing and assessing (e.g., argumentation, polemics, or (re)formulation of statements). Textbook activities employ mediation through explaining an existing text from different perspectives. They enable learners to display their immersion in the cultures by effectively establishing dialogue of cultures and demonstrating tolerance to other cultures. Mediation forms new social spaces of collaboration through reciprocal communication and understanding. In this context, intercultural mediators assist parties from different cultural contexts to understand one another by considering cultural values, beliefs, and principles of the target language and to engage in effective interaction.

The suggested model to develop intercultural communication ability reflects the integrative nature of "language-culture-personality" (Kunanbayeva, 2013) that allows for demonstrating practical application of knowledge of native and target languages and cultures. The range of activities at every stage of the textbook should aim to develop competencies identified within the structure of the intercultural communicative competence with the leading *cognitive* principle.

Table 2:

*Textbook Structural Organization*

Process of creating a textbook	Textbook activities stages	Level of mastering communication	Activities	Form of communication	Developing competences
1 Context based communication	Reception	Conceptual & cognitive	Comparison and interpreting	Written and spoken	Cognitive Sociolinguistic Lingo-cultural Discourse Job oriented
	Interaction	Information accumulation & interpretation			
2 Modeling typical communication situations	Production	Context-based communication	Search, discovery and interaction		
3 Intercultural communication	Mediation	Polemic & argumentative intercultural communication	Critical analysis, estimation and production of communication		
INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR					

The foundation of ICC based on the suggested model seeks to develop learners as intercultural mediators who are able to promote effective interaction of members of different cultural communities in the context of global integration processes, demonstrating tolerance to complexity and multiple identities, stereotyping, and prejudices. Training efficient intercultural mediators requires certain activities to master communication skills and attitudes. Conceptual, cognitive, information accumulation, interpretation, context-based communication, argumentative and intercultural communication, both spoken and written, are skills to drill in ELT classes for efficient mediation. In this regard, teachers should arrange activities for students to have a solid knowledge of interaction between parties of different cultures, tackle cultural and language barriers, and use their communication and mediation skills to interact in a transparent, reciprocal, tolerant, and self-reflexive way. In addition, some sets of instructions should be considered at any stage of the textbook. For instance, the tasks set need to be carefully established and adopted for discussion and debate in class. Whether the classroom activity is pair work, group work, or whole class discussions, the following instructions should be applied:

- Learners should demonstrate respect towards opponents to provide a favorable environment for talks.
- In case a discussion is chaired, the authority of the chair is respected.
- Even hard talks should be conducted in respectful manner and tone.



- Prejudiced expressions and comments are totally intolerable at any time.
- All involved in discussions are responsible to challenge stereotypes and prejudices.

Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) suggest that by putting ideas, events, and/or documents from several cultures side by side and comparing how those might be considered from the other perspective, mediators can figure out how people might misinterpret what is said or written or done by someone with a different social identity. Thus, a set of tasks for comparison and interpreting are fundamental for the formation of ICC.

The mediators' ability to interact with multiple identities requires the skill of eliciting new information and integrating it with what they already know about their beliefs, values and behaviours. Thus, it requires activities in the textbook that enable learners to search, discover and interact in real-time communication.

Lastly, curiosity about new experience and the need to tolerate new beliefs, values, and behaviours can create reaction and rejection. In order to avoid those unfavorable reactions, intercultural mediators need a critical awareness of their own values and how this awareness influences their mindset about others' values. Therefore, activities that enable learners to analyze critically, estimate, and produce effective interaction with members of different cultural communities in the context of global integration processes are needed (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

The suggested approach gives teachers and learners a new perspective to language learning in terms of acquiring ICC along with mastering the skills of language development (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing) as well as the grammar and vocabulary of a given language. It helps develop new research skills and critical thinking. It also helps achieve one of the key objectives of education today, which is to develop critical cultural awareness to understand differences from an interpersonal and an intercultural perspective and collaborate towards common goals in the context of intercultural communication.

It is believed that the suggested model in designing textbooks helps the younger generations become active citizens. It generates students' critical thinking, mutual respect, and recognition of cultural diversity.

The proposed didactic approach to designing textbook in the context of intercultural communication:

- forms students' multidimensional perception about themselves in the modern world and prepares them to live in a multicultural society in accordance with democratic values;
- teaches students to think critically, to tolerate other points of view, to respect

the history and cultural heritage of their own and other cultures; and,

- trains students to analyze controversial issues, which would involve familiarity with various and often mutually exclusive points of view.

The learners are able to demonstrate language learning outcomes to promote the effective interaction of cultural communities, such as the ability to:

- understand communicative intention of speakers from target community;
- choose speech strategies and tactics (persuasive, offensive, emotional-acting, etc.), taking into account the speech behavior of the target community;
- reduce the negative consequences of language barriers, socio-cultural differences, and tensions between ethnic groups; and,
- demonstrate tolerance to multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue.

Overall, teaching foreign languages in the context of intercultural communication is an important factor in creating a person's worldview. Learning language through the prism of an interdisciplinary analysis of "language-culture-personality" will allow students to be acquainted with the past, present, and future. Besides the introduction to new languages and cultural traditions, it is important to reveal the causes of ethnic conflict, hostility, and confrontation. Teaching foreign languages through optimal use of authentic cultural contexts allows us to understand each other, which ultimately will help form the critical cultural awareness.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In modern societies, national-cultural tolerance, inter-ethnic cooperation, and overcoming nationalist tendencies are acute problems. In order to address those problems, the formation of a multicultural identity is necessitated in the national education system.

Culture at the moment is the most effective tool for the spiritual union of people. Currently, culture is characterized by the expansion of cultural ties, and the preservation of one cultural identity shapes the other one. This greatly increases the possibility to broaden contacts and interactions between people, religions, national, and local cultures for real intercultural dialogue and mutual enrichment.

This measure will assist in promoting inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan, based on mutual respect, recognition of cultural diversity, tolerance for cultural differences, and the strengthening of intercultural dialogue. The modern approach to the formation of a dialogue is based on the realization that culture is inseparable from the identity of an individual and nation, and often includes specific national, regional, or ethnic lines.

Involving students in positive international communication and relations based on the principles of humanism and freedom enhances the intercultural dialogue zone. The successful development of a culture of international dialogue depends on the harmonious development of relations between different ethnic groups, based on the principles of mutual understanding, cooperation and friendship. The path to understanding goes not only through knowledge representation, but also through the senses, the ability to be seen in every person – the carrier of universal values: tolerance, transparency, and trust in communication and understanding. This understanding is the result of international dialogue culture.

In order to harmonize the inter-ethnic atmosphere in the modern school, the enrichment of the educational program content of a new pattern is needed. The content of a new pattern reflects the cultural heritage, traditions, and the way of life of every nation, and provides teachers with required teaching materials that help impart intercultural skills at school.

In conclusion, the analyses revealed that textbooks are boundless in their account of intercultural elements, and reflection of the intercultural context can help prepare learners to live in multiethnic and multicultural environment. The focus of language education on the integrative learning of the language and culture allows language learners to act as intercultural mediators, which in its turn, promotes the effective interaction of members of different cultural communities in the context of global integration processes.

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