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# Handout

## **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**



Level: Master 1  
Specialty: Language Sciences

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## 1. Introduction

The language and culture course is a semester-based course. It serves to promote understanding of fundamental concepts that tend to be confusing or to be used interchangeably with other terms, though having different meanings and uses. In this course, culture-related issues in the society, communication, and education are discussed. Indeed, the course seeks to prepare students to develop certain attitudes towards perceiving one's and others' cultures to equip them with the necessary profile required in the marketplace in a world unfolded by globalisation.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- discuss issues related to the uniqueness of languages and their relation to worldviews and cultural experiences;
- investigate the multifaceted nature of culture and learn how it shapes one's own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as those of others;
- comprehend the relationship between language, culture, and education;
- gain first-hand experience with bridging cultural borders;
- embrace other cultures and develop a sense of acceptance and tolerance towards other cultures;
- get acquainted with the essence of interculturality; and
- become familiar with teaching resources and methods pertaining to culture and diversity.

This course not only presents and explains language-related and culture-related matters, but it also engages students in hands-on practice and in warm-up activities that activate their critical thinking, curiosity, and sense of reasoning.

## 2. Definitions of Language and Culture

This module focuses on culture as an entity in relation to language. The latter has been the subject of a three-year license program where you tackled the different language systems (linguistic, grammatical, morphological, syntactic, phonological, written, spoken ...). Therefore, this section is devoted to definitions and foundational conceptions of culture and its characteristics, and to its intersection with language and communication. This section aims at:

- defining culture and explain its interconnectedness to language;
- understanding culture by identifying its characteristics; and
- eliciting some misconceptions about culture.

### Introduction

Language and culture are intertwined, but they share a complex relationship. A language points out to a group of people; for example, Algerian Arabic points out to the Algerian people. Even when we refer to the different varieties of Algerian Arabic, each language variety indicates the uniqueness of its speech community. For instance, the word “yes” in different language varieties in Algeria is different from a region to another, and once one utters it, it becomes easy to identify the origin.

Thus, speaking a language implies interaction with its culture, and understanding the underpinnings of a culture depends on speaking its language. In language classes, learning languages is not simply related to alphabets, grammar rules, and structures. Learning languages should also refer to their cultures, involving the society’s behaviours and several cultural aspects.

The use of languages takes place in communicative settings, which are complex by nature. Indeed, using a language for communication is particular to culture. When I visited the UK for the first time, I went to Scotland. I knew that British people engage in small talks by invoking topics about the weather, but I was ignorant of the exact specific expressions. At the train station, one of the salespersons advertising for certain services approached me and said: “It’s blowing a hooley” with a Scottish accent! I was puzzled, and I felt embarrassed because I did not know what the expression meant, and I could not respond, causing communication breakdown. The salesperson elaborated on the meaning of the expression, which means “There is a storm with strong winds coming.” She said that it is a common expression among the British,

which is part of their culture, and a foreigner cannot decipher it unless s/he spends some time in that culture or at least explicitly learn about it.

It is evident that, growing up in a particular society, individuals learn every detail related to that culture and its communication patterns. Language and language-related behaviours are adjusted according to different communicative contexts, but they are governed by specific nuances related to the given culture. For example, babies –being tabula rasa- learn such communication patterns (language and paralinguistic) that are culture-bound by imitating their parents, relatives, and neighbours, friends, and school acquaintances at later stages.

Language and culture are described as “homologous,” referring to the similar, equal positions they have. Indeed, we often hear expressions like “language is culture” and “culture is language.” Language and culture are inseparable entities, and they influence each other as they evolve. They are likened to a sheet of paper whose sides are language and culture; damaging one side engenders destruction in the other side as well. Kroeber, a cultural anthropologist, advocates this connection that stipulates culture as an existing entity due to the availability of speech, and that implies the reciprocal evolution of both language and culture.

Culture is the result of human interactions because their communicative acts represent cultural manifestations. Reflecting upon the principles of linguistic relativity, we invoke the fact that language influences the way we view the world around us. Indeed, language builds the real world and marks the uniqueness of a society. If we consider two languages, they cannot be totally identical; they are not similar in representing one society. Different languages imply different worlds for each society. One can say there are languages whose alphabetical systems and syntactic structures are similar, but their cultures are different, which makes the languages different as well in representing the cultural manifestations and practices. Therefore, there is a two-way relationship: Knowing a language assumes knowing its culture, and knowing a culture denotes knowing its language. This confirms the fact that interpretations (language) and manifestations (culture) are unique and particular to the world within which they are produced.

### **What is Culture?**

Look at the following pictures and describe them.

Picture 1. Algerian Dish "Chakhchoukha"



Picture 2. British Breakfast



Picture 1 represents Chakhchoukha, a famous traditional dish in east Algerian regions. It is cooked on special occasions, especially religious ones. It comprises red-sauced torn pieces of semolina-made dough, topped with meat, boiled eggs, and chickpeas. Picture 2 is a British breakfast, comprising toast, fried eggs, sausages, bacon, mushroom, grilled tomato, hash browns, and beans.

Now, compare the pictures; which one is familiar? Which one is foreign? Why?

Picture 1 seems familiar to an Algerian while Picture 2 is strange. Discussions with students from previous Master 1 classes reveal the reasons of perceiving Picture 1 as familiar culture and Picture 2 as foreign culture, reflecting their cognitive framing in communication.

Algerian students engage with familiar culture when seeing Chakhchoukha because it is part of their culinary traditions. They are *familiar* with occasions of serving it, recognise the ingredients and different preparation methods, aware of its different types and forms, and appreciative of its culinary significance in regional customs and traditions. Thus, Algerian students relate Picture 1 to their lived experiences. Their sensory memories are also activated because they felt hungry and craved for eating this dish. This familiar culture or the familiarity sensed by students is the outcome of repeated exposure through different forms of socialisations, creating intuitive understanding and a sense of belonging.

British breakfast is foreign culture for Algerian students because, at the first glance, the ingredients are unfamiliar, and they trigger strange feelings toward having such a rich dish at breakfast, which can be lunch or dinner in Algeria, especially baked beans and hash browns. This unfamiliarity also provokes questioning why the Brits have all these ingredients in such a presentation and what their symbolic role is in British food habits. Besides, unfamiliar cultures may engender experiences of cultural distance since Algerians have not been previously exposed to such cultural elements, which leads to curiosity and surprise, and even discomfort like the case of students from previous classes who felt disgusted of eating baked beans

at breakfast. However, this is not always the case; unfamiliarity can boost a sense of exploration of culturally-diverse practices.

The visual aspects in these pictures is indeed a source of comparison, but broader cultural themes related to societal norms and traditions about hospitality, for example, can be discussed.

**Discussion prompts:**

- How do you think different cultures’ culinary traditions determine hospitality traditions?
- What other societal norms can you think about when talking about different cultures’ foods?

Now look at the following list of some cultural elements/components/aspects, and say how they underpin and define culture: Cuisine, Ceremony, Gestures, Holidays, Courtship (and marriage), Grooming (and presence), Arts, Esthetics, Ownership, Folklore, Ethics, Precedence, History, Family ties, Rewards (and privilege), Personalities, Health (and medicine), Rights (and duties), Sex roles, Folk myths, Religion, Space (and proxemics), Subsistence, Taboos, Concepts of time, and Values.

Table 1 displays what these cultural aspects are, and how they are integrative to culture.

Table 1. Some cultural aspects

Cuisine	Ceremony	Gestures (and kinesthetics)
Culinary contributions of a group of people.	What a person is to do or say on particular occasions.	Forms of non-verbal communication of reinforced speech, such as the use of the eyes, the face, the hands, and the body.
Holidays	Courtship (and marriage)	Grooming (and presence)
Patriotic days, religious observances, and personal rites and celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)	Attitudes toward dating, marriage and raising a family.	The cultural differences in personal behavior and appearance, such as laughter, smile, voice quality, gait, poise, hair style, cosmetics, dress, etc.
Arts	Esthetics	Ownership
Traditional and contemporary music, visual and performing arts, and drama.	The beautiful things of a culture, such as literature, music, dance, art, architecture, and how they are enjoyed.	Attitudes toward property, individual rights, loyalties, beliefs, etc.
Folklore	Ethics	Precedence
Tales, legends, and oral history.	How a person learns and practices honesry, fair play, principles, moral thought, etc.	The accepted manners toward older persons, peers, younger persons.

History	Family ties	Rewards (and privilege)
Humanitarian contributions and social and political movements.	How a person feels towards relatives and friends.	Attitudes toward motivation, merit, achievement, service, social positions, etc.
Personalities	Health (and medicine)	Rights (and duties)
Historical, contemporary and local figures.	How a person reacts to sickness, death, soundness of mind and body, etc.	Attitudes toward personal obligations, voting, taxes, military service, legal issues, personal demands, etc.
Sex roles	Folk myths	Religion
How a person views, understands, and relates to members of the opposite sex and what deviations are allowed and expected.	Attitudes toward heroes, traditional stories, legendary characters, superstitions, etc.	Attitudes toward the divine and the supernatural and how they affect a person's thoughts and actions.
Space (and proxemics)	Subsistence	Taboos
Attitudes toward self and land; the accepted distances between individuals with a culture.	Attitudes about providing for oneself, the young, and the old, and who protect whom.	Attitudes and beliefs about doing things against culturally accepted patterns.
Concepts of time	Values	
Attitudes toward being early, on time, or late.	Attitudes toward freedom, education, cleanliness, cruelty, crime, etc.	

Let's begin our discussions about culture by Apte's (1994) quote, who said: "Despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature" (p. 2001).

Culture is a multifaceted, multidimensional concept that has no exact definition. Indeed, there may be consensus on the components and aspects of culture, but scholars do not see eye to eye on the conceptualisation of culture. For example, in 1952, a compilation of 164 definitions of culture has been established by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952 as cited in Adler, 1997). The disparity in definitions stems from different perspectives culture is approached from. For instance, an anthropologist considers culture as an ever-evolving complex system shaping a society; an ethnographer understands culture only through immersive interactions within a specific community; and a sociologist ponders culture to be a dynamic framework delineating humans' social behaviours. Therefore, culture has different interpretations according to the lens through which it is approached and to its usage.

Watch a video by clicking this link: <https://youtu.be/SidKFCZ65ik> or by scanning the QR code (Picture 3), and answer the following prompts:

Picture 3: QR code (definitions of culture)



- Which definitions or phrases stand out as particularly important or useful?
- How much did these reflect your own definition?

Culture can be defined by the place where its people are from. The place can be a nation exhibiting certain cultural aspects that are different from another nation; e.g., the flag of Algeria is different from that of England. Even within a nation, different regions have different cultures; e.g., food tends to be spicy in east Algerian regions, which is different from food in north Algerian regions that cannot eat hot food. Indeed, the origin or where people come from identify them and determine who they are. What a country/region is famous for can also identify a culture in terms of its traditions; e.g., Chakhchoukha is famous in the East of Algeria, but Rechta is the famous dish in the North of Algeria.

Culture can also be defined by its people in terms of what they do, how they speak, how they dress, what and how they eat and drink, how they behave, what body language they use, etc.

Culture can be defined by groupings that share commonalities. Bennett (1998) advocates that:

Other categories of subjective cultural diversity usually include gender, regionality, socioeconomic class, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, organization, and vocation. The concept can embrace other long-term groupings such as single parents or avid sports fans, as long as the groups maintain the clear patterns of behavior and thinking of an 'identity group'. By definition, individuals do not have different cultures; the term for patterns of individual behavior is 'personality'. (p. 3)

Subjective cultural diversity refers to the fact that culture is not bound to nations or ethnicities or other larger conceptualisations. Cultural differences can be attributed to different groupings as noted by Bennett (1998). Indeed, sub-categories within each grouping is unique in its cultural practices:

- Female culture is different from male culture.
- High-class culture with access to social and economic opportunities is different from low-class culture that tend to be marginalised or deprived of the same opportunities.
- Culture of ordinary individuals is different from autistic ones, or dyslexic ones, or handicapped ones.
- The culture of a heterosexual is different from that of a homosexual or that of the LGBTQ community.
- A Muslim culture is different from a Jewish culture or a Christian culture.
- Organisational culture differs from one institution, organisation, or administration to the other. For example, in the administration I ruled, online and digital work is much relied upon. However, the current administration does a lot of paperwork.
- Vocation is perceived differently as to the occupations dominated by males and females, for example.

In essence, these groupings can be viewed as group identities because they display shared values, beliefs, and behaviours. However, any individual behaviour is rather considered personality, and it does not reflect a cultural identity. A personality reflects an individual's unique characteristics, but his/her group identity is formed by means of belonging to a larger group sharing common cultural aspects.

Culture can be defined by means of distinguishing between Big-C culture and small-c culture. Look at the following quotes:

- "Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1920 [1871], p. 1).
- Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn proposed that culture was not simply behaviors, but a product of psychological, social, biological, and material factors (Beldo, 2010). Thus began a focus on the meaning of behavior, not just a description of the behavior itself.

Tylor defines culture as a "complex whole" encompassing the formal aspects of Big-C Culture that individuals acquire through time. Indeed, culture is viewed as a broad, structured system of institutionalised, widely recognised cultural aspects, such as art, music, philosophy, literature, history, etc.

However, Kroeber and Kluckhohn's perspectives dovetail with small-c culture because they transcend mere behaviours to consider what underlies them and the meaning behind them. Indeed, small-c culture stands for the everyday, lived culture including habits, interactions, daily practices, ways of thinking,

humour, food traditions, clothing, etc. Therefore, Kroeber and Kluckhohn accentuate the deeper forces underpinning cultural practices.

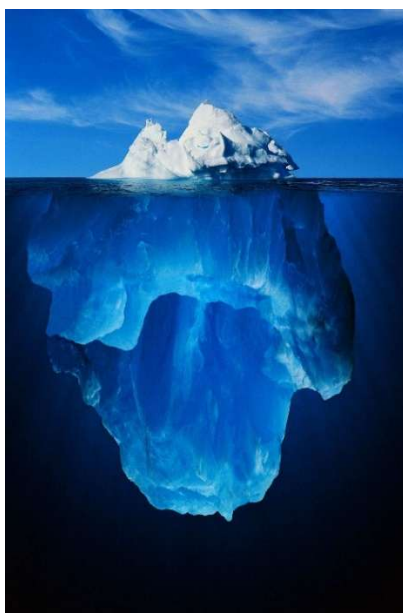
Drill 1: Categorise the following cultural aspects into Big-C culture and small-c culture.

Art, music, literature, sacred texts, ballet, opera, history, architecture, theatre, classical music, popular music, folk music, haute cuisine, film, greeting habits, food, the types of food people eat daily, cooking methods, meal times, table manners, clothing, fashion choices, gestures and body language, how people use nonverbal communication, social etiquette, politeness norms, transportation, common modes of transport, and leisure activities.

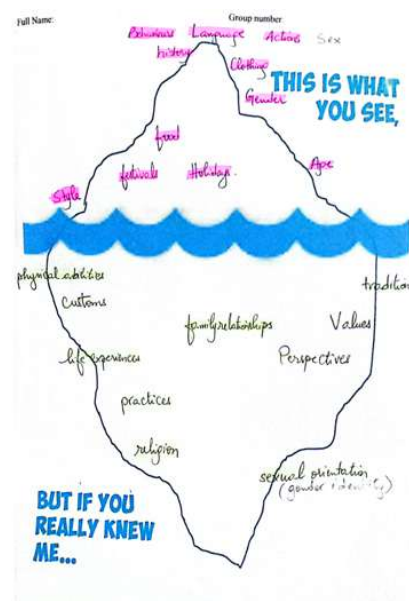
Big-C culture	Small-c culture

Culture can be defined according to the metaphor of the cultural iceberg. As you can see in Picture 4, only a small portion of the iceberg is seen above the water level, but most of it is hidden under water. This can be used as a metaphor to understanding culture. Indeed, as Edward T. Hall says, “culture hides much more than it reveals.” Culture can be defined with reference to what is tangible, what can be seen, like clothes, language, gender, etc. and what is intangible, what needs co-existence with a particular culture to know it, like beliefs, values, sexual orientations, etc.

Picture 4. Iceberg



Picture 5: Example of a Cultural Iceberg

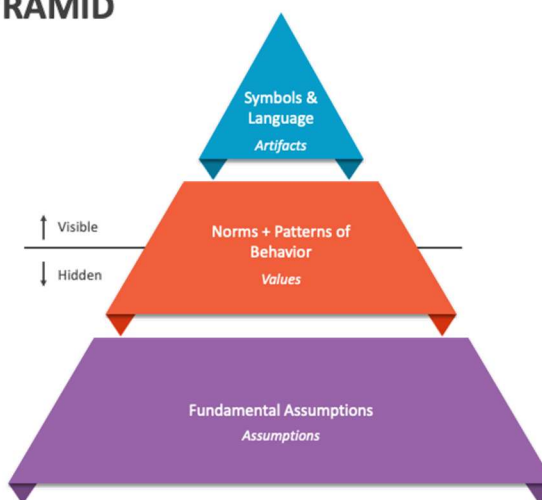


The list of cultural aspects in Picture 5 is not exclusive of other aspects, and it is not the only categorisation. In other words, each and every individual is going to think of different cultural components and position them on the iceberg according to his/her perception of culture.

Culture can be defined by means of the cultural pyramid, which is a framework that has been proposed by Schein (1990) in an attempt to understand organisational culture (Picture 6)

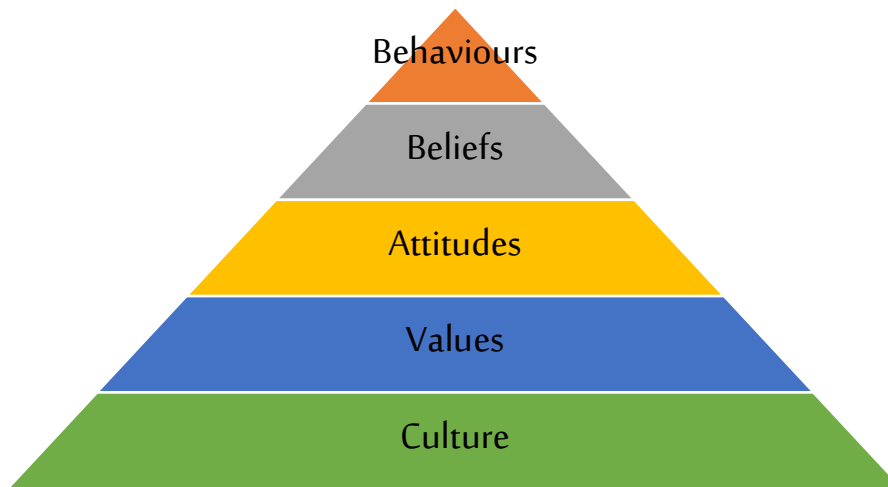
Picture 6: Understanding organisational culture

### CULTURE PYRAMID



According to Schein (1990), culture can be categorised into three levels: artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions. First, artifacts are the tangible cultural components, but alone cannot explain the deeper forces underlying them. Second, cultural values refer to stated beliefs and principles governing cultural practices. Third, assumptions stand for unconscious beliefs shaping individuals' way of thinking. This model evinces the interconnectedness between different aspects of behaviour and thought. It is expanded into culture, values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, to explain how abstract concepts that operate at deeper levels impact tangible actions (Picture 7).

Picture 7: Cultural Pyramid



In the cultural pyramid, culture is the largest, highest level that encompasses several components. The other layers of the pyramid are part of culture, shape it, and get influenced by it.

- Values: They stand for the guiding principles governing individuals' behaviours and decisions. What individuals consider right or wrong is guided by a set of personal, cultural and social principles that reflect their life experiences and communities of belonging.
- Attitudes: They refer to individual or collective perspectives, opinions, and perceptions that are shaped by values, and that determine individuals' reactions in different situations. Attitudes contribute to individuals' ways of evaluation and judgment toward ideas and actions.
- Beliefs: They are ideas influenced by several cultural aspects, like religion, education, and life experiences, and that individuals consider true and convinced of them to be real. Individuals understand their environments and make sense of them by means of mental representations of what is true (beliefs).
- Behaviours: They refer to tangible actions that can be observed in various environments. They reflect values, attitudes, and beliefs.

### Understanding Culture

The difficulty to define culture goes back to how it has been conceived differently throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, scholars have pondered culture either as a product, evolutionist, or unique. These conceptions influence much of today's discourse on what culture is and how it operates.

### **Culture as a Product**

In his book, *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold (1867) perceived culture as a product bound to intellectual and artistic endeavours. This conception denotes that culture is limited to a small portion of the society, and only that small group is entitled to have a culture. Indeed, its aesthetic connotation deprives it from the social context, and thus decontextualises it from any social attributes. Remaining individuals of the society who do not share such characteristics are considered anarchy by Arnold. This conception is similar to what we know today as Big-C Culture or high culture.

### **Culture as Evolution**

In his book, *Primitive Culture*, Tylor (1920 [1871]) advocates that all individuals who belong to social groups possess culture as a trait, and that their culture can evolve from being savage to barbaric to civilised (Beldo, 2010). Tylor defines culture as: “Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1920 [1871], p. 1). This definition forms the foundation in anthropological studies because subsequent scholars maintained the formulation of “complex whole” even when they had different views toward the evolutionist conception of culture. Tylor’s definition was also inspirational to Kroeber and Kluckhohn to produce new ideas related to culture. This evolutionist definition criticises Arnold’s conception by accentuating scientific reasoning instead of tackling culture as aesthetics. This definition also opposes the product view because all individuals –not only the elite- who belong to a social group have a culture.

### **Culture as Unique**

This conception is advocated by Boas –a German anthropologist- and his students in the twentieth century. They criticised the evolutionist conception of culture that made culture universal, being one culture that evolves from a status to another (savage to civilised). Boas and his students claim that different societal groups and communities have several and varied cultures, implying the uniqueness of each culture, and thus each social group. Boas and his students also emphasise that all cultures are equal; no culture is superior or inferior to the other, which downplays previous Arnoldian and Tylorian claims. Indeed, Boas and his students critically oppose the high-low culture dichotomy and the notions of savage-civilised cultures.

Boas got influenced by *kultur*, a German concept, which refers to behaviours and traditions underpinned and driven by local and personal aspects. Therefore, Boas claims that varied historical events shape culture from all directions, not only in a linear way (Tylor’s view). Boas’s definition is one of the most

influential definitions to this day; he says: “culture is an integrated system of symbols, ideas and values that should be studied as a working system, an organic whole” (Kuper, 1999, p. 56).

These meanings of culture underlie most of the difficulties in consensually operationalising culture. According to Avruch (1998), not only conceptual and semantic challenges hamper defining culture, but these three understandings of culture espoused ideological and political agendas as well, which even complicates culture conception further.

### Characteristics of Culture

Look at the following definitions of culture and draw its characteristics.

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952 as cited in Adler, 1997, p. 14)

“Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves.” (T. Schwartz, 1992 as cited in Avruch, 1998, p. 17)

“[Culture] is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5)

“... the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next.” (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 16)

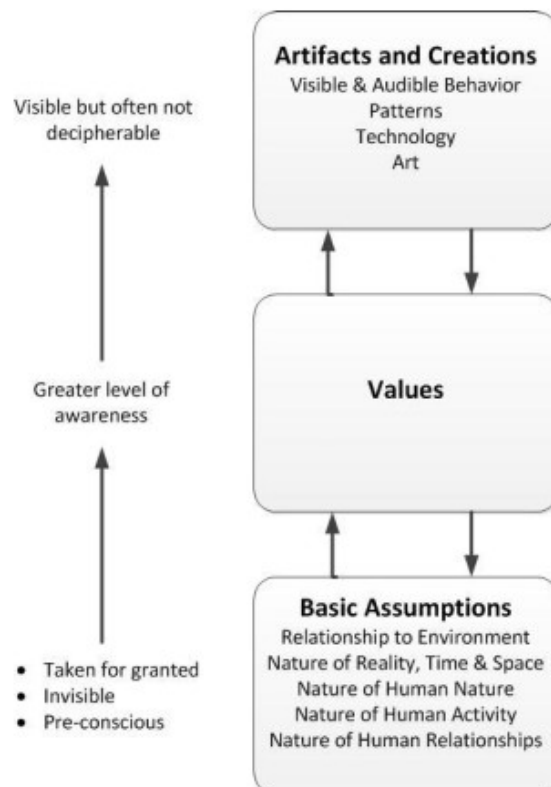
“Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour.” (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 3)

The following characteristics can be inferred from these definitions.

### Different Layers of Depth

As explained in 'definitions of culture' and in trying to understand organisational culture, there are three levels at which culture is manifested: artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions (Picture 8).

Picture 8: Different levels of manifestations



Source. Schein (1984, p. 4)

Look at this quote by Schein (1990):

When one enters an organization one observes and feels its artifacts. This category includes everything from the physical layout, the dress code, the manner in which people address each other, the smell and feel of the place, its emotional intensity, and other phenomena, to the more permanent archival manifestations such as company records, products, statements of philosophy, and annual reports. (p. 111)

In this quote, we can see that Schein addresses 'artifacts' as the tangible, observable aspect of culture. All these visible elements are easy to notice and obtain, but they are hard to decipher because they are not

informative of underlying values and assumptions that brought them into existence. Therefore, artifacts stop at the level of disclosing apparent cultural elements and how they are constructed in a societal group only.

The second level of manifestation in Picture 8 is 'values,' which has an integrative role in deciphering *why* artifacts are externalised in certain ways. However, given their intangible nature, they can only be drawn from actors of artifacts. In other words, values can be understood by conducting content analysis of documents as artifacts or by discussing with individuals their behaviours as artifacts. In both cases, only then can we understand the conscious logic behind manifesting culture as uncovered and reported from the individuals' perspectives, which denotes a greater level of awareness.

Finally, to get grips of the reasons underpinning artifacts and values, we need to delve into the deepest level of *assumptions*, which is the third layer in Picture 8. This level is hidden and unconscious, but it reflects individuals' thinking, feelings, and perceptions. Assumptions started out as values, but as individuals use them in solving world experiences, they became underlying assumptions over time, explaining how the world really works. Indeed, individuals are not aware of their existence because assumptions have become deeply embedded and rooted, and sometimes are taken-for-granted matters. For example, "hospitals are places that provide medical consultations" is an unquestionable, undebatable assumption that all individuals know, which makes it an accepted fact, and it is even stronger than a value. Anyone who would try to question assumptions is going to be considered crazy.

Accordingly, we can divide values into two types: Schein (1984) describes them as (a) "debatable, overt, espoused values," referring to *values*; and (b) "ultimate, non-debatable, taken for-granted values," referring to *assumptions* (p. 4). It is worth noting that assumptions are not suppressed, but they rather became unconscious as individuals undergo a pattern of repeated emotional and cognitive processes.

### **Impact of Culture on Behaviours and their Interpretations**

As explained earlier, some cultural elements are tangible, but their underlying meanings are not. Hofstede (1991) claims that such meanings are influenced by culture, and they "lie(s) precisely and only in the way these practices are interpreted by the insiders" (p. 8). For example, non-verbal communication patterns, including body language and facial expressions, can be interpreted differently according to the cultural backgrounds underpinning their interpretations. The ring gesture is interpreted as 'perfect' in the UK, but understood as an obscene gesture in Algeria. At the local level, language can be different as well; for example, east Algerian regions have terms that are considered shameful in other west Algerian regions.

Read the following extract from Kluckhohn, an anthropologist who conducted extensive ethnographic research studying the Navajo culture in Arizona and New Mexico, and explain how each individual's cultural background affects their behaviours in communication, and how they interpret other individuals' behaviours.

A Navajo man opened the door to the classroom and stood silently, looking at the floor. The Anglo-American teacher said 'Good morning' and waited expectantly, but the man did not respond. The teacher then said 'My name is Mrs Jones,' and again waited for a response. There was none. In the meantime, a child in the room put away his crayons and got his coat from the rack. The teacher, noting this, said to the man, 'Oh, are you taking Billy now?' He said, 'Yes.' The teacher continued to talk to the man while Billy got ready to leave, saying, 'Billy is such a good boy,' 'I'm so happy to have him in class,' etc. Billy walked towards the man (his father), stopping to turn around and wave at the teacher on his way out and saying, 'Bye-bye.' The teacher responded, 'Bye-bye.' The man remained silent as he left. (Saville-Troike, 1997, p. 138)

First of all, let's try to understand the two cultures colliding in this context. In the Navajo culture, silence is a sign of respect, and saying one's name is a religious taboo. However, in the Anglo-American culture, it is expected of individuals to identify themselves by introducing themselves by name, and to respond to others when they are addressed.

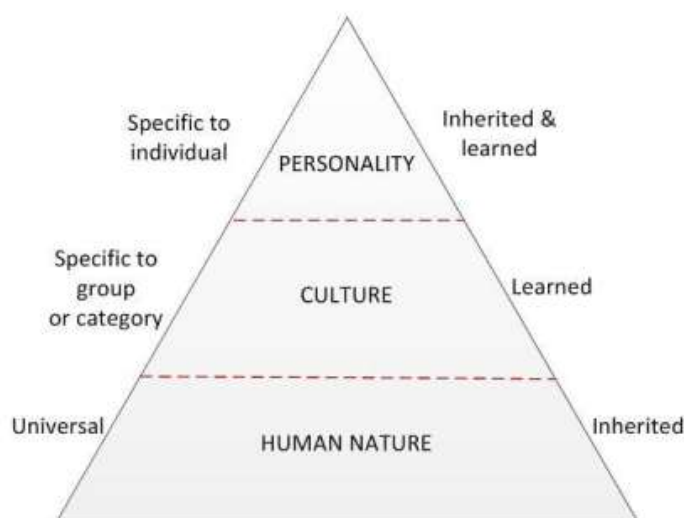
For the man, he maintained his own cultural values and behaved accordingly by maintaining silence all along the conversation and not introducing himself. For the teacher, she also maintained her cultural values and acted accordingly by greeting the man, expecting him to get along with her. For the kid, he showed acculturation signs because he deployed Anglo-American cultural ways with his teacher, while maintaining his Navajo cultural code with his father.

A reference to stereotypes can be made here. Anglo-Americans consider Navajo impolite and unresponsive, and Navajo consider Americans impolite and talkative, which this encounter confirms.

### Culture is Different from Human Nature and Individual Personality

Hofstede (1994) distinguishes between culture, human nature, and personality. In Picture 9, it is clear that culture is positioned as a separate layer because it has attributes that cannot be found in individuals' human nature and their personality. Besides, as shown in the same picture, the discontinuous lines separating culture from human nature on one side and from personality on the other side is still controversial among social scientists, which denotes overlaps that may occur between them and no absolute distinction can be drawn.

Picture 9: Culture is different from human nature and individual personality



Source. Hofstede (1994, p. 6)

First, culture is learned from a specific group or category. It is not innate or passed down from one generation to the other genetically. Therefore, its inheritance does not follow genetic transformations and transitions.

Second, human nature refers to the commonalities shared by all individuals, from the Algerian teacher, to the Indian basketballer, to the British queen, to the Russian president. Human nature can be likened to computers' operating systems determining their different functions. Indeed, individuals' mental software that is genetically inherited operates in a universal way. For example, all humans have the ability to feel anger, which is a level of mental programming that all humans possess. However, humans do not use those feelings or react to them similarly; the differences and modifications are attributed to the culture they belong to.

Finally, contrary to universal human nature, personality is unique and specific to each individual, reflecting his/her own unique mental programming that is distinct from one to another. Individuals' personalities have some characteristics that are inherited (human nature), and some others that are learned owing to personal experiences in life and cultural influences.

### **Culture Affects Biological Processes**

Talking about eating as a biological process, it is universal as all individuals need to eat to stay healthy and alive. However, what they eat, in what way, when, where, with whom are influenced by culture.

Consider this extract from Kluckohn and explain how culture triggers, and is related to, biological reactions.

I once knew a trader's wife in Arizona who took a somewhat devilish interest in producing a cultural reaction. Guests who came her way were often served delicious sandwiches filled with a meat that seemed to be neither chicken nor tuna fish yet was reminiscent of both. To queries she gave no reply until each had eaten his fill. She then explained that what they had eaten was not chicken, not tuna fish, but the rich, white flesh of freshly killed rattlesnakes. The response was instantaneous – vomiting, often violent vomiting. A biological process is caught into a cultural web.

(Kluckohn, 1968, pp. 25–26)

In the guests' culture, rattlesnake meat is not eatable and engenders repulsive reactions. Although there is nothing in rattlesnake meat that triggers vomits, but knowing about the source of the meat, underpinned by their culture, influenced their biological digestive processes, and even reversed them to vomiting. Therefore, culture has a strong influence on individuals' eating.

Let's take the example of Mouloukhia, which is a dish made of the leaves of the jute plant. It is popular in several countries (Egypt, Tunisia...), and in Algeria, it is famous in the east regions bordered by Tunisia. In Tebessa, most individuals love it and prepare it frequently, but other regions (like Algiers) cannot even consider it food because it looks like poop or Henna. I can also remember a student from Tebessa who, when talking about Mouloukhia in class, had a biological reaction accompanied by the expression "yak." Therefore, cultural upbringings and personality both affect biological processes.

### **Culture Associated with Social Groups**

Culture is shared by at least two individuals. Indeed, thoughts and behaviours are considered cultural if they are shared by social groups, and any individual thoughts and behaviours that are unique to that individual are not shaped/influenced by culture (Ferraro, 1998).

Culture is associated with different social groups, which makes it multifaceted, operating at different social levels at the same time. Individuals have mental programming that operates at different levels corresponding to different cultural levels. According to Hofstede (1991), these levels include:

- National level: People belonging to different nations/countries have distinct cultures.
- Regional/religious/ethnic/linguistic level: Within the same country, there are different regions who have idiosyncratic ethnicities, religions, and languages. Individuals belonging to them undoubtedly have different cultures.
- Gender Level: Male and female individuals have different cultures distinguishing them as distinct genders.
- Generation Level: Individuals belonging to different generations (great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, and children) have different cultures. We can even talk about digital generations (Gen X, Gen Y, Gen X, and Gen Alpha) who have different cultural styles in online communications.
- Role category: Individuals belonging to different social, familial, occupational roles have different cultures.
- Social class: Individuals who are from a high social class have a culture that is distinct from those in middle class and low class.

Following these levels, individuals can be members of several cultural groups.

### **Universal and Distinctive Elements of Culture**

Let's talk about an aspect that can be pondered over as a universal element as well as an element that distinguishes one culture from the other. This element is gaze.

Before starting, with someone in your surroundings (peer, friend, sibling, etc.), keep gazing at each other for one minute, and reflect upon the following questions:

- What did you think of your peer gazing at you?
- How long is the gaze maintained?

- Who stopped gazing? If you, why?
- If the other, what was your first impression?

Triandis (1994) explains that culture formation is similar from one cultural group to the other because they live in similar social structures with overlapping biologies. However, such similarities are penetrated by differences. Triandis refers to Pike (1967) who created two words “etics” and “emics” out of the last syllables from “phonetics” and “phonemics,” respectively. He not only derived the labels, but also got inspired by the meaning of these words: Phonetics is the science studying sounds in all languages, and phonemics is the science studying sounds in one language. Thus, this universality and particularity is applied to cultural elements: Etics refers to universal culture, and Emics stands for unique elements.

Look at Picture 10, and explain the meaning of each gaze.

Picture 10: Different gaze positions



Now, suppose you are having a conversation with a person from a culture different from yours. While you talk to this person, you notice that s/he does not make eye contact with you when s/he speaks, and s/he does not look at you when you speak. On the few occasions when his/her eyes look your way, his/her gaze is quickly averted somewhere else when your eyes meet (Matsumoto, 1996, pp. 21-22).

Do you think gaze behaviours are emic or etic or both?

The gazes with different directions and head orientations (Picture 10) have different agreed-upon meanings, and individuals worldwide have consensus toward what they stand for, how they are used, and the contexts of their externalisation. Therefore, these meanings are etic (universal).

Maintaining eye contact, in the above scenario, can be used and interpreted differently according to each individual's cultural background. Indeed, some cultures consider it a sign of respect, but others ponder it disrespectful, representing rudeness and daring. Thus, the different cultural representations and interpretations are specific to unique cultures, which makes it emic as well.

Accordingly, the misconception of a culture's pure uniqueness should be revised because emic cultural elements can be adaptations of etic ones. Triandis (1994) posits that emic elements should be the study focus when dealing with one culture, but studying more than one culture requires attention to the etic level. Understanding how human behaviours are influenced by culture can be related to the etic-emic dichotomy, for the same behaviour can be both etic and emic. Just like the examples explained earlier: Gaze can be a cultural emic when considering the different rules governing how and the extent to which it is maintained in interactions. Thus, individuals belonging to a particular societal group use and interpret gaze according to their cultural background in accordance to the perception and meaning of gaze. These differences in behavioural manifestations are emic. However, the motives underlying them are the same because they have inner attributes identifying those behaviours in the same way, which makes gaze a cultural etic as well.

### **Culture is Learnt**

Culture is learnt by means of interaction and socialisation. Indeed, from the very early stage of infancy, babies learn culture from their parents and through time learn from observations of their parents' interaction patterns. For example, in Algeria, it is totally fine for strangers to approach kids with or without their guardians to tease and laugh with them, but it is totally forbidden in the UK. One time, on the bus in Paisely (Glasgow, Scotland), an old lady asked a kid under the watch of his mother to leave the seat for her. She got herself in trouble because the mother called the police, accusing the old lady of addressing her kid without her consent. Therefore, kids' learning culture is influenced by their cultural upbringing. They are accustomed with the cultural rules that dovetail with their culture's practices (Lustig and Koester, 1999).

This learning process may seem implicit, but sometimes merely knowing about cultural practices does not suffice. The learning process evolves gradually by explicitly teaching received explanations of cultural practices and the values and assumptions underlying them. For example, a mother can teach her kid about the serious matter of not trusting strangers by explaining the reasons and possible outcomes (Lustig and Koester, 1999). Although highlighting the same cultural element, different cultures have different ways for such explanations. However, the similarities among families in teaching cultural practices is a pillar in culture formation because they contribute to transmitting cultural attributes to other generations, and they equip them with filters that assist them in communications.

Remember this culture learning/teaching because it is pivotal in intercultural communication. Learning one's culture denotes that one can learn another culture and can function in culturally-distinct interactions (Ferraro, 1998).

### **Cultural Gradual Change**

Ferraro (1998) posits that the anthropological study of any culture is just a "snapshot view of one particular time" (p. 25). Indeed, if we ever considered culture some time before the status quo, we would never find the same situations because cultures are in constant, gradual change, and they never remain the same over time. Some cultures are conservative and change slowly, but some others are highly influenced by technology, industry, aspects of modernism, and the complex nature of society. Despite the differences in the amount of change among conservative and modernist cultures, change has been established as a constant feature of all cultures.

Ferraro (1998) claims that there are internal and external forces for cultural change underpinned by the mechanisms of discovery and invention. He also states that borrowings of cultural elements from other cultures also contribute to the innovations introduced into a culture. He calls this process "cultural diffusion." This process is underpinned by the principle of economy of effort wherein borrowing discoveries and inventions from other cultures is much easier and convenient than discovering and inventing all over again. However, such borrowings are not taken completely as they are; otherwise, all cultures would be similar! Accepting other cultures' discoveries and inventions is subject to some considerations outlined by Ferraro (1998) as follows:

- It is seen to be superior to what already exists;
- it is consistent with existing cultural patterns;
- it is easily understood;
- it is able to be tested on an experimental basis; and
- its benefits are clearly visible to a relatively large number of people. (p. 25)

Hence, borrowings are rarely taken as they are; they are rather modified in use or interpretations to fit the cultural society, like Italian pizza.

It is commonly misconceived that change is unidirectional in the sense that “primitive” cultures borrow from “civilised” cultures. Accordingly, this denotes superiority of some cultures to others, and that only the “civilised” can benefit others. However, according to Ferraro (1998), there are studies that proved the opposite; “primitive” or “less civilised” cultures can be the source of borrowings to “civilised” cultures. He gave the example of crops grown by Native American Indians as the source of half of the world’s food.

Cultural diffusion is an easy process according to what is being borrowed. For instance, technological borrowings are easily integrated in other cultures because of their potential usefulness and quick recognition among individuals of that culture. Nevertheless, borrowing norms and values is hard to achieve as they are ingrained in individuals’ perceptions of themselves and their cultures. For example, as a teacher, I can continue to use the chalk to write on the blackboard, but I would easily accept the use of markers on whiteboards or interactive boards because they ease my teaching profession, and they are health-friendly. On the other hand, it is hard for me as a Muslim –or for someone else from another religion- to convert to a different religion that is not founded on the same principles.

In conclusion, no culture is static, and change is evident over time. In other words, knowing a culture now and studying it after some time reveals inevitable change. Change can be in the form of additions, deletions, and modifications.

### **Culture is Descriptive and not Evaluative**

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines culture as follows: “i) a state of high development in art & thought existing in a society and represented at various levels in its members; ii) development and improvement of the mind or body by education or training.”

This definition highlights the polarity of “high culture” and “low culture.” Indeed, whenever culture is discussed/defined, connotations related to a society to be cultured/civilised/educated appear, denoting that a society/culture is defined by its achievements. These are *evaluations* that are based on certain criteria. Nonetheless, in cultural studies, all cultures should be pondered over as equal entities, for the concept of culture encompasses –and does not exclude- other cultural elements representative of other cultural individuals. Culture should be *described* in relation to the whole society and to all cultural practices as exercised by all its individuals.

Cultures should rather be described in terms of similarities and differences, but should never be labeled according to one’s own subjective, biased evaluations.

### **Inadequate Conceptions of Culture**

According to Avruch (1998), there are six mutual misconceptions of culture:

- Culture is homogeneous: Assuming that a culture is homogeneous denotes that there are no internal contradictions and no external influences. Indeed, this conception presumes that all individuals of the same culture have the same assumptions and beliefs and behave in exactly the same way, which implies the existence of preset instructions dictated on the whole society to be identical and homogeneous! Even for an outsider, if a culture is homogeneous, its learning can be easily grasped in a straightforward manner.
- Culture is a thing: Considering culture as a thing means it can be personified as “it.” Doing so implies its ability to act on its own, which further denotes that it is not exercised by human individuals. This exclusion of human agency denies the series of processes in culture formation.
- Uniformal distribution of culture among group members: Drawing on the “thing” misconception imputes uniformity of cognitive, affective and behavioural processes in cultural settings among all individuals of the society. Thus, according to this misconception, again, there is no intracultural variation, and there is no intercultural diversity.
- Individuals possess a single culture: The uniformity misconception implies that all individuals have the same, one, single culture. Such misconception stems from the categorisations and groupings of individuals who share the same cultural traits, such as national culture because individuals belong to the same nation. Assuming the individuals have a single culture resembles a group identity, instead

of a culture. However, individuals take part of several categories (ethnicity, race, nation, etc.), which denotes their belonging to cultures –not one culture.

- Culture is custom: Culture is likened, and in fact limited, to customs only. Culture is misconceived to be a whole with no distinct, complementary, related parts.
- Culture is timeless: This misconception contradicts one of culture characteristics: Culture is subject to gradual change. It denotes that culture remains the same throughout time, and that all cultural practices existing today are inheritances that date back to ancient ages.

### 3. Culture and other concepts (Race, Ethnicity, Nation, Identity)

Culture is often misused interchangeably with concepts like race, ethnicity, nation, and identity. Drawing on the aforementioned misconceptions and on definitions of these concepts, we are going to draw a clear cut distinction between them and culture.

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- define and explain at least three key differences between culture and race;
- compare culture and ethnicity by analyzing case studies, demonstrating how ethnicity can cross national and cultural boundaries;
- differentiate culture from nation by identifying examples of homogeneous nations and examples of multicultural nations, highlighting the political vs. social basis of each; and
- apply Hofstede's onion metaphor to explain how identity differs from culture, and illustrate this with personal or regional examples.

Lustig and Koester (1999) tried to gather a compilation of differences.

#### **Culture and Race**

Race is a term that groups people who have similar genetics and biological traits together. It makes a group of individuals distinguishable from one another based on what they share as physical features, such as black people, Asians, Caucasians, etc. Race transcends political and social categorisations, which makes it an all-inclusive broader term than culture and nation because its representatives can be part of several cultures and nations. For instance, Black people live in different parts of the world (Africa, America, etc.). African-Americans, for example, are agents of the origin culture they come from and the culture they are living in as well. Therefore, the use of race and culture interchangeably is inconvenient. Categorising individuals based on their race denotes discriminative acts, like discrimination of people of colour in the US, which engenders conflicts in intercultural communication.

#### **Culture and Ethnicity**

Ethnicity refers to a wide variety of groups of individuals who share the same language, language variety, religion, nation, region, history, etc. Ethnicity seems synonymous to culture because they both consist of cultural elements that unite a group of individuals, which makes it quite coincident with culture. However, ethnicity of a group is related to their culture. For example, many Berber people live in different nations (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, etc.) and have different cultures though they maintain allegiance to their

ethnic group. Therefore, ethnic groups can be affiliates of different cultures and nations. Another example is the different ethnicities that live in Algeria (Kabyle, Chaoui, M'zab, Touareg, etc.) due to historical reasons related to migration, conquests, and colonisation. A similar example is in Yugoslavia wherein Croatians, Serbians, and Slovenians live together due to World War II, bringing a rich mix of languages and cultures to the country they live in. A fourth example is the US where many individuals' ethnicities originate in other cultures and nations but co-exist in the US after their ancestors migrated there. These individuals, though living in the US and practice the American culture, are still faithful to their ethnicities.

### **Culture and Nation**

Another confusion is the interchangeable use of culture and nation. It is commonly perceived that a culture represents one nation and that a nation consists of one culture, which justifies this synonymy. An excellent example is Japan for which the word "Japanese" is used for both the nation and the culture because of its homogeneity. However, a culture can exist in different nations, like the Muslim culture, and a nation can consist of several cultures within its boundaries, like Algeria, but their agents are all citizens of Algeria. Moreover, the categorisation of nation is not based on the same factors of culture formation. We can talk here about political vs. social classification. Indeed, a nation is based on political groupings referring to a set of legal rules used by the nation's government to regulate and govern the political behaviours of its individuals. For example, a country's foreign policy is decided upon by the government, and not by culture. Culture does influence such decisions, but it does not regulate them.

### **Culture and Identity**

Look at the following quote by Hofstede (2001):

Culture is not the same as identity. Identities consist of people's answers to the question: Where do I belong? They are based on mutual images and stereotypes and on emotions linked to the outer layers of the onion, but not to values. Populations that fight each other on the basis of their different "felt" identities may very well share the same values. Examples are the linguistic regions in Belgium, the religions in Northern Ireland, and tribal groups in Africa. A shared identity needs a shared Other: At home, I feel Dutch and very different from other Europeans, such as Belgians and Germans; in Asia or the United States, we all feel like Europeans. (p. 1)

In this quote, Hofstede (2001) highlights the difference between culture and identity that are thought to be synonymous and are sometimes used interchangeably. One key difference on the basis of which distinction between culture and identity is drawn is that identity is shaped by perceptions –personal or social.

Identity is not based on values and underlying assumptions that define culture. It is shaped by how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others, with stereotypes and emotions as driving factors in building such an identity. Hofstede uses the onion metaphor to explain how individuals of a societal group share the same values that form their culture, but on the outside, they have different layers representing who they are (identity). Besides, Hofstede brings to light how identity may be the reason behind conflicts between societal groups who, in fact, may have shared underlying values (culture), like linguistic, religious, and ethnic divisions in North and South Sudan, yet they have the Sudanese culture in common. Finally, Hofstede indicates the relational nature of identity to otherness, for individuals tend to identify themselves by means of comparisons with perceived others and context. For example, a Tebessi individual may feel distinctly Tebessi in other Algerian regions, but when s/he goes abroad, s/he would strongly feel Algerian when surrounded by Europeans, or Asians, or Americans, etc.

### 4. Identity

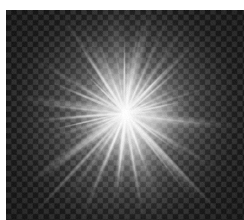
The dynamic conception of identity and its multifaceted nature are explored in this section, aiming at

- defining identity;
- highlighting identity formation from personal and social perspectives; and
- differentiating between identity formation and culture underpinnings.

#### Introduction

Imagine you are a starburst (Picture 11); you are the heart, and rays come out of you and into you.

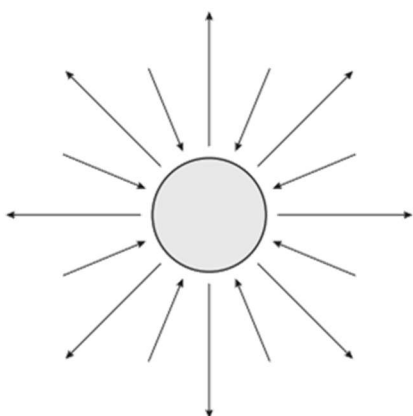
Picture 11: Starburst



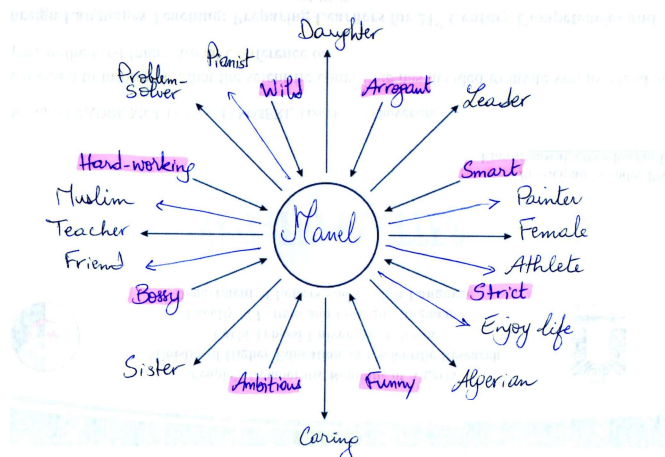
We are going to use the same analogy with the Starburst Identity Chart (Pictures 12 & 13), and try to understand who we are and how we are perceived by others. Write your first name in the middle, and think of the arrows as follows:

- Outward arrows represent how you perceive/see yourself.
- Inward arrows represent how others perceive/see you.

Picture 12: Starburst Identity Chart



Picture 13: Sample filled chart



The dynamic nature of identity lies in the interplay and interaction between self-perception and external perceptions. On the one hand, self-perception refers to how you identify yourself and to identity

aspects that you actively express and communicate to others. Self-perception may include your social roles, linguistic background, personal values, etc. On the other hand, external perceptions evince how others see and perceive you, which can or cannot match your self-perception. Others' perceptions may include interpretations of your behaviours as perceived from their own perspectives and cultural frameworks. Hence, identity is not merely about our perspectives in perceiving ourselves, but it is also defined by how others perceive us. The interplay between self-identity and social identity sometimes causes confusions and challenges in adapting to different environments, misidentifications, and misinterpretations.

Now, let's watch this video by clicking the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4otFjZxNoQ> or scanning the QR code in Picture 14. In this video from TED Talk, Winona and Priya are school mates who decided to go on a trip together. They are both Americans with different origins: Winona is Japanese, and Priya is Indian. In their talk, they explain how they used to know each other at school (ego stories), and how they discovered each other at a deeper level (soul stories) when travelling together.

Picture 14: QR code (ego and soul stories)



### Discussion prompts:

By sharing their soul stories with one another,

- What experiences did Priya and Winona learn that they shared?
- What assumptions did they realise they were making about each other?
- How did sharing soul stories, and not just ego stories, help to strengthen their friendship?
- Now, can you tell the difference between "ego stories" and "soul stories"?
- Think about your own experience as a student. What are some examples of ego stories that you tell or hear others tell about themselves?

### Ego vs. Soul Stories

Ego Stories are stories and information we tell and give about ourselves when we are asked the question "what do you do?" They are the stories we tell when socialising at parties, school, bus, etc. They are stories told in first encounters to promote and prove one's self and to compare to others, such as

achievements, job, social status, success, high spots, etc. These stories allow us to feel affirmed, in control, and in charge because of their consistent, well-crafted, and high-resolution nature. These stories tend to be surface, inconsiderate of the important things that make us who we really are. They can be false information that does not reflect the truth and that does not lift us up during moments of suffering.

Soul Stories transcend ego stories and delve into deepest stories. Sometimes, they are hard to put into words because they are deep, rooted in truth, and meaningful. Indeed, these stories add meaning to ego stories because they reveal their underpinnings. For instance, when I say that I hold a Doctorate degree, this is an ego story representing my educational achievement, but the stories of hurdles and sufferance—which I am glad to- behind such a success cannot be known unless they are uncovered in certain situations to certain individuals. Another example of a career milestone is my resignation from the position of head of department, which is an ego story, but the problems that I endured to leave this position are hidden and can only be revealed in particular circumstances. These life instances denote that soul stories are stories about gladness and suffering, light and darkness. They are the stories that unravel our insecurities, fears, failures, losses, shame, and even passions, and that can only be shared with individuals we love most. Notwithstanding their dark side, soul stories are the stories we hold on to when we are at our hardest, weakest times. The whole (ego stories) can only be understood by integrating the fragments of soul stories.

Homework. Choose a classmate that you barely know, and for two months, try to get to know each other by sharing both ego and soul stories.

## 5. Language, Culture and Thought

This section is centred on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to understand the relationship between language, culture, and thought. Understanding linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity allows for the evaluation of how languages either determine or influence thought processes, and how culture is integrative is such a process. This section aims at:

- highlighting the relationship between language, culture, and thought;
- understanding the role of culture in shaping language use; and
- analysing the impact of language/culture on thought.

### Introduction

Look at Pictures 15 and 16. What can you see?

Picture 15: Extended family



Picture 16: Nuclear family



Talking about family as a cultural element, we can find that certain societies prioritise extended families whose members live together, but some others emphasise nuclear families wherein only parents and kids live together. Besides, the roles within families differ from one culture to another: In some cultures, grandparents are the caregivers; in some others, mothers alone are responsible for looking after the children even though the fathers exist. Another cultural aspect is the way family structures are shaped by different linguistic choices; maternal grandparents may have different labels from paternal grandparents in some cultures. I used to call my maternal grandmother “yamma” because my mum did so, and I used to call my paternal grandmother “jedda” because I never heard my father addressing her, so I resorted to the Arabic label.

**Discussion prompts:**

- What is family for you?
- How does language impact our perception of family relationships?
- Think of words related to family from Arabic and/or Algerian Arabic that do not have equivalent translations in other languages.
- How are family structures shaped by cultural values (collectivism vs. individualism)?

Now watch the following video by scanning the QR code in Picture 17 or by clicking the link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cs5j94wlz00>

Picture 17: QR code (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis)

**The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**

Like you have seen in your linguistics course throughout the three previous years, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1956) claims that language influences thought because individuals' worldview and cognitions are shaped by language structures. This hypothesis has two versions: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Like the name implies, linguistic determinism is the stronger version of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis because language determines thought, which denotes that reality is perceived differently by people of different linguistic backgrounds. Linguistic relativity talks about the impact of language on thought without completely determining it. Whorf illustrated linguistic relativity by the Hopi language that has its own perception of understanding past, present, and future. Having no time markers does not imply its speakers do not understand them, but their language frames time differently.

Let's take some examples related to time, space, and colour, and see how language influences thought, and how culture shapes such processes.

- Time: Time perception is different from one language to another. In English, horizontal metaphors like "ahead" and "behind" are used for future time and past time, respectively. However, in Mandarin for

instance, time is expressed using vertical metaphors, like “up” and “down” for the past and future, respectively.

- **Space:** Directions differ from one culture to the other, and direction-related terms can be used differently. For example, there are languages (like Guugu Yimithirr in Australia) that use specific direction indicators like “north, south, east, and south.” Some other language (like Algerian Arabic) use the terms “left” and “right” to indicate directions but still require individuals to have awareness of space. Some languages use direction terms to express meaning not related to space. For example, Egyptian Arabic uses the term “north” in Arabic to say “بنت شمال,” referring to prostitutes.

- **Colour:** A language influences colour perceptions. Some languages distinguish between two shades of colours, like ‘*sinij*’ and ‘*goluboy*’ in Russian (standing for dark blue and light blue). However, in other languages, there is a distinction of several shades, like the endless list of blue shades in English.

Languages reflect societal values as well, like honorifics and gendered language.

- **Honorifics:** Various cultures and languages use titles to respectfully address others. Korean and Japanese have hierarchical social structures with whom expressions of respect are indispensable. As an Algerian, I cannot call my teachers by name only; I rather use Professor, Doctor, Sir, Madam, etc. However, some other cultures do not give any importance to titles, like in the UK, I kept calling a lecturer “Sir;” he said, “Stop sirring me, and call me by name!” Given my cultural background, I could not easily call an elderly, highly-positioned person by name because it felt like a sense of shame and odacity.
- **Gendered language:** Many languages do not use neutral language, and default to gendered word classes (e.g. nouns and pronouns). For instance, the French culture is masculine, and its language uses masculine forms if both genders are referred to at the same time. Such patterns are ubiquitous in English as a foreign language in Algeria, for I have noticed in some students’ writings that they default to the pronoun “he” when referring to both genders, which is attributed to the French colonial influence.

## 6. Language, Culture and Technology

This lesson explores how language and culture are influenced by technology and its advancements. It focuses on language change caused by technological influences, globalisation, and the widespread use of digital communication. This lesson aims at:

- assessing how language use and cultural interactions are impacted by technology;
- examining how language usage and cultural identities are shaped by digital communication; and
- raising ethical concerns related to using technology, social media, and AI influencing cultural representations in language.

### Introduction

As a start, let's talk about your preferred methods in digital communication. Your tech use helps us in exploring cultural differences. Scan the QR code (Picture 18) or go to <https://www.menti.com/alvcikzywcdi> and enter the code **3694 2175** to answer the following questions:

- What is the digital communication tool you use the most? (Choices in the poll)
- What tools do you use for formal communication? (Choices in the poll)
- What tools do you use for informal communication? (Choices in the poll)
- How do you choose your communication platforms?

Picture 18: QR code (poll)



Now to recognise the differences in digital communication in terms of structure, tone, and etiquette, listen to this clip in which a BBC Masterclass explains the difference between formal and informal language, by clicking on the link <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07h37yf> or by scanning the QR code (Picture 19).

Picture 19: QR code (formal vs. informal language)



**Discussion prompts:**

The example provided in the video clip is a business email written in an informal language. The instructor explained why such expressions cannot be used in this context and provided alternatives to make the email more formal.

- What are the differences between both styles in vocabulary, sentence structure, and tone?
- Does culture contribute to shaping formal vs. informal communication?

Before we start discussion, watch this documentary on AI evolution by Apple TV via the link <https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/ai-evolution/umc.cmc.3dv5b7ipyemmqns22mi6him7> or by scanning the QR code (Picture 20).

Picture 20: QR code (Apple TV's AI evolution)



This documentary discusses how AI shapes language and culture. Discuss the following:

- How is our communication influenced by AI?
- Do you think AI-supported translations have cultural implications?
- Do you think language will experience permanent change due to AI?

**Technology and Language Change**

Language evolution has witnessed profound changes due/owing to technology. Indeed, vocabulary, grammar, and communication styles have changed through different technological modes, including social media and AI.

On social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, plenty of abbreviations and acronyms are used to encourage brevity. This motive lead to the creation of shorthand expressions like BRB for “be right back” and LOL for “laugh out loud.” Communication styles have not been reshaped in language use only, but visuals occupy a great deal of texting and chatting. Emojis and GIFs are visual representations that entirely replace words to convey emotions and to add humour to interactions. Besides, the use of hashtags prevailed digital communication; their role lies in categorising discussions and contributing to global discourses, creating in the process influential trends. To further complicate the scene, these language styles and visuals

choices differ from one digital generation (Gen Y, Gen Z, etc.) to another, each perceiving them differently and using them according to their generational culture.

Nowadays, with the massive upsurge in AI tool development and use, machine learning contributes to language evolution. Indeed, predictive texts and autocorrect are powered by AI to suggest words and expressions while typing. Such functionality impacts word choice and sentence structures, even negatively because autocorrect, for example, may choose words that individuals did not intend to say. Besides, conversational norms have also witnessed new ways of technology-assisted interaction introduced by chatbots and virtual assistants. Furthermore, in academic culture, integrity, authorship, and originality are now under serious debates as AI tools help generate content with a click of a button, from short paragraphs to larger books.

Language, and thus culture, is in constant evolution and change due to the birth of new words or new meanings for words. Indeed, technology has its language, and the neologisms created in the tech world influence language use in a society and its cultural practices. Digital communication created words like hashtag, meme, selfie, etc., which are vocabularies inspired from technology. Besides, online platforms and digital communication encourage bilingual, trilingual, and even multilingual speakers to mix and switch languages, which creates hybrid linguistic expressions and forms; e.g., Franglais.

Speaking of multilingualism, it has witnessed major changes because of the impacts of digital communication and globalisation. The latter have transformed language use in human multilingual interactions.

English is predominantly spreading as the world's lingua franca. Technology supports and reinforces such language status, promoting one language of communication. English is used in, and has become the language of, science, education, international business, and even social interactions especially among digital natives. Indeed, English has its share in local languages as well in the form of borrowings or infusions of English words within the local languages structures. For example, Algerian youth use the word "money" in their Algerian Arabic discourse. Algerians also tend to Algerianise English words, using English words according to Algerian Arabic verb forms; e.g., "nprinti" meaning "I print."

Digital communication on multilingual online spaces has a considerable role in creating hybrid, unique blends of languages because online communicators are encouraged to switch languages. As a result, a

blend of linguistic identities, determined by language choice, is also generated. Indeed, users on digital platforms use the language(s) as required by the contexts and audience, which reflects their linguistic and cultural identities.

Linguistic diversity is, thus, promoted on digital platforms, and AI tools also provide translations and generate content in multiple languages. These tools are efficient in bridging the gap between languages, yet they fail to account for the cultural nuances underpinning linguistic choice. This raises concerns related to cultural sensitivity and ethical considerations related to bias and privacy.

AI platforms have limitations related to culture because they lose cultural aspects in the course of translating or generating content. Indeed, AI translation tools, for example, are weak at spotting nuanced meanings that are shaped by cultural norms. This leads to inaccurate translations and contextual misinterpretations. Besides, language is rich in cultural references and idiomatic expressions, but AI tools struggle with capturing them, generating decontextualised content and translations.

Using technology and AI platforms causes bias challenges and reinforces stereotypes. These tools may fail in recognising gender use in a language, and thus, engender gender bias. When translating or creating content, these tools may deal with gender according to certain assumptions in their training data that may not reflect the actual, accurate cultural nuances. Again, cultural biases are another problem in AI-supported translations because the latter may misinterpret sensitive cultural content by favouring dominant languages and their cultural underpinnings.

Using technology and AI tools to generate content or perform translations puts users and their privacy and security at stake. Indeed, these tools are not surely confidential because they store user data. Therefore, they can be exposed in cases of fraud and misconduct. Besides, these tools may not comply with regulations in businesses and academia, causing content and translations to be unverified, which may cause serious troubles to their users.

## 7. Culture Shock when Crossing Cultural Boundaries

This section focuses on culture shock as a psychological reaction to new cultural environments. It discusses strategies and techniques pertinent to overcoming culture shock and facilitating cultural integration. This section aims at:

- defining culture shock and its stages; and
- developing coping strategies.

### Introduction

Before explaining what culture shock is, let's practice some activities that allow us to explore it and its emotional impact.

Let's see how values are expressed differently from one culture to another through music. Listen to a song by scanning the QR code (Picture 21) or by clicking the link

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3wNuru4U0I&list=RDs3wNuru4U0I&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3wNuru4U0I&list=RDs3wNuru4U0I&start_radio=1)

Picture 21: QR code (We are the World by USA for Africa)



### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this song reflect cultural values?

Now, let's reflect on our experiences when we felt the need to adapt to a new culture or new cultural practices.

- Have you ever experienced culture shock?
- What were the most challenging cultural aspects?
- How did you manage to adapt to a new culture?

### What is Culture Shock?

Culture shock is a psychological state of disorientation experienced by individuals who confront a new, unfamiliar culture. Such a feeling forces the individuals to react by adjusting their practices according to the new cultural environment. Culture shock can range from this situation: "being at home with small babies

is an instant culture shock to the young woman of the world" (Online Oxford Dictionary) to a complete different level of traveling to other countries' new cultures.

### Stages of Culture Shock

Culture shock is a mixture of feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety, which start to fade away throughout the stages of culture shock. Lysgaard (1955) founded the U-Curve Theory to describe the journey that individuals experience in different cultural contexts. It shows the feelings they go through at different stages: honeymoon, crisis, recovery, and adjustment (Picture 22).

Picture 22: U-Curve Theory



Source. Lysgaard (1955)

- Honeymoon stage: Individuals find the new cultural environment interesting, and even fascinating, and they feel excited about experiencing a new culture. For example, my first visit to the UK started with London where my flight landed, so I took the opportunity to see London's landmarks. I was also fascinated by how transportation is advanced and available all the time, even late at night. The toilets in public places and the stations meet high standards of hygiene. However, this stage is just an initial feeling before individuals get shocked.
- The crisis stage: Individuals start to feel confused, and even frustrated, because differences start to crop up and come to the surface. Individuals may find language differences. I remember my first time in the UK; I went directly to Scotland. The English there is so different especially that I spent my whole educational career exposed to Received Pronunciation. Individuals may also experience differences in cultural customs and norms. For instance, I spent a Ramadan in Scotland, and fasting

for eighteen hours was a crisis at the beginning because I only had four hours between Iftar and Souhour time to eat!

- The recovery stage: As individuals learn to navigate the new culture, they get accustomed and develop adjustment strategies to cope with the new culture. They start to establish routines and to gradually adapt to the new environment. For my long fasting in Scotland, I organised my daily routine to wake up at 10:00 a.m., go to the library until 5:00 p.m. or visit some new places on the weekends, go back to the campus to have some rest, start preparing my dishes at 6:00 p.m. until Iftar time (10:30 p.m.). I have my Souhour at around 3:00 a.m. and sleep.
- The adaptation stage: At this stage, individuals get fully integrated into the new culture, starting to experience feelings of comfort. They can also adopt cultural aspects from the new culture in their identities. In my case, I started to integrate in the Scottish culture, chat with people, go shopping, learn conversational English in stores and in the street, attend special events, try new foods, use different monetary services, and most importantly decipher the Scottish accent!

When returning home, individuals may experience reverse culture shock. Indeed, after they had adapted to a new culture, they feel confused and frustrated again in their own culture because they find it challenging to readapt to their original cultural environment. In my case, the first frustration was in transportation at the airport in Algiers; I was anxious and a bit scared because there were no transportation means from the airport to downtown, especially that my flight landed at night.

### **Strategies for Coping with Culture Shock**

In order to effectively and appropriately communicate across cultures, individuals should develop coping strategies and techniques that allow them to adjust their cultural practices—and identities—to the new cultural environment, either during culture shock or reverse culture shock.

- Cultural awareness: It is important to learn about new cultures, and the cultures one intends to visit in particular. Indeed, knowing the target culture's norms, values, customs, communication styles, etc., allows individuals to be aware of them and to get prepared in case they experience them. It is also pivotal to avoid assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices, and to try to immerse in cultural experiences, instead. Doing so allows individuals to discover the culture firsthand, instead of dealing with it on the basis of previously-formed judgments.

- **Attentiveness:** Individuals visiting new cultures should be attentive by activating the skills of active listening and mindfulness of cultural difference in linguistic and paralinguistic features (tone, body language, facial expressions, etc.). Besides, they should also be open and ask appropriate questions whenever they feel curious and lack understanding about certain cultural aspects.
- **Flexibility:** Individuals should make adjustments to their communication styles according to the cultural context. Indeed, one can be a high-context person, but he needs to adjust his/her style when conversing with individuals from low-context culture, and vice versa. For example, s/he can have a direct style in expressing ideas, but the other (audience) may feel ordered. Besides, perspectives and opinions are expressed differently, so individuals visiting a new culture should be open to such differences. However, some individuals may encounter language barriers, and frustration becomes inevitable. Yet, patience is a crucial strategy to cope with this hurdle.
- **Building trust in relationships:** Notwithstanding the frustration and confusion experienced in a new culture, sojourners should respect the target culture's traditions and customs, avoid cultural insensitivities, and share experiences with mutual understanding.

**Homework: Think about examples of integration and cultural blending in Algeria.**

Examples:

- **Food:** The Banh Mi Sandwich is Vietnamese; it includes Vietnamese ingredients served in French baguette. There is cultural blend of Vietnamese food traditions with colonial influences.
- **Multilingualism:** Several cities in the world showcase cultural blends of multiple languages, like London, wherein several languages are spoken on a daily basis. This integration evinces diversity and inclusivity at the same time.

## 8. Language and Culture in Intercultural Communication

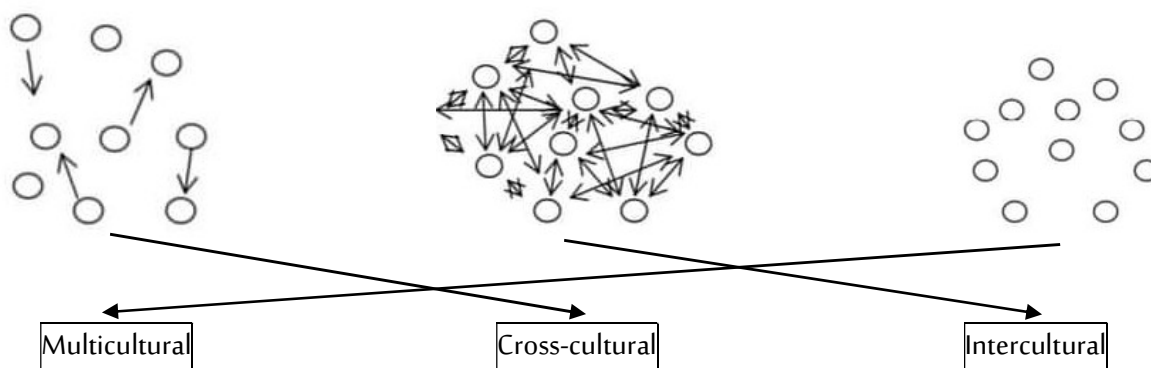
This lesson explores the role of language and culture in mediating intercultural communication by:

- exploring the development of communicative competence into intercultural communicative competence; and
- examining some models of ICC that can be applied in social interactions and education.

### Introduction

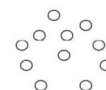
Before discussing intercultural communication, we need to draw a clear cut distinction between multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural.

Match each picture with a corresponding notion.



### Multicultural

According to the United Church of Canada (2011), multicultural contexts refer to individuals from different cultures who live and co-exist together. The leading principle in their co-existence is tolerance of cultural differences that lie, for instance, in celebrations of each other's cultural practices. In Algeria, schools celebrate Yennayer –Amazigh New Year- even if they are not Amazigh, and they do not belong to their culture. Besides, multicultural settings are based on polite social interactions, which are mainly intracultural but can also be considered intercultural at a local level. People living in a multicultural context belong to different cultural groups, but they have equal statuses. For example, Arabs and Amazigh in Algeria have distinct cultural practices, but no group is superior to the other; they are all citizens of Algeria. Therefore, neither of them seeks/exhibits power differentials; they both represent their own cultural group in a multicultural context.

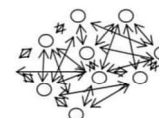


### Cross-cultural



According to the United Church of Canada (2011), cross-cultural contexts refer to crossing boundaries and reaching across borders. It can be the case of travelers, short-term visitors, sojourners, etc. These individuals from different cultures aim at building bridges across borders by bringing their cultural communities together, establishing relationships between them. Such relationships are governed by learning and mutual exchange between cultural groups by means of sharing one's culture, listening to other's cultures, and being open to cross-cultural encounters. In this process, individuals from different cultures do not seek/exhibit power differentials, but it is inevitable to prioritise one's own culture when inevitably engaging in discourses of comparison and contrast between cultures.

### Intercultural



According to the United Church of Canada (2011), intercultural contexts take place when two or more cultures collide. Indeed, they refer to interactions among and between culturally-distinct others constituting social structures of the intercultural encounter. These interactions are governed by mutual, reciprocal understanding, justice, acceptance, freedom, diversity, peace, and equality of all. Intercultural communicators form a deeper level of intercultural communities that learn from each other, grow together, and build relationships. They even mould and get moulded by each other's life experiences, which leaves no one out of change in the intercultural process.

### Intercultural Communicative Competence

In order to understand how Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is conceptualised, we need to make reference to linguistic and communicative theories underpinning it.

#### Communicative Competence

- Chomsky's (1965) cognitive theory.

Chomsky criticised structuralism and behaviourism in acquiring languages, and he advocated for the innateness theory. Chomsky posits that interlocutors possess a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is the cognitive ability to generate an infinite number of unique structures. Indeed, Chomsky claims that all children have knowledge of the basic grammatical structures that they can use in acquiring/learning all languages (Universal Grammar, UG). This raises the importance of the cognitive perspective in linguistic competence.



- Austin's (1962) *How to do things with Words*.

Austin claims that language is not used to merely say things, but also to do things. His theory of speech acts is one of the pillars in communicative competence as it highlights the correlation between using language and performing speech acts. For example, for Austin, saying "I apologise" goes beyond describing apology and performs it, instead, if it is externalised in the right conditions. Austin distinguishes between locutionary acts (the act of saying something), illocutionary acts (intention), and perlocutionary acts (effect on listener).



• Searle (1969) was the proponent of Austin's speech act theory. He built on it to further refine illocutionary acts. He advocates that there are rules, conventional among interlocutors, governing speech acts to have certain meanings and functions. Searle categorised illocutionary acts into assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.



- Hymes's (1972) sociolinguistic perspective.

Hymes criticised Chomsky's theory and considered it narrow in contributing to language description as a whole. It is with Hymes that language started to be viewed as communication. His famous quote "when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about, with whom, when, where and in what manner" (Hymes, 1972, p. 277) is a turning point in defining communicative competence because it portrays it as an aspect enabling interlocutors to convey and interpret messages and meanings in particular contexts.



Hymes contends that previous views to linguistic competence picture individuals as robots who produce limited structures without appropriateness. Thus, he introduced the sociolinguistic perspective advocating that linguistic competence is influenced by social life and communicative contexts, and that social factors dictate the importance of use over grammar.

- Canale's and Swain's (1980) discourse principle

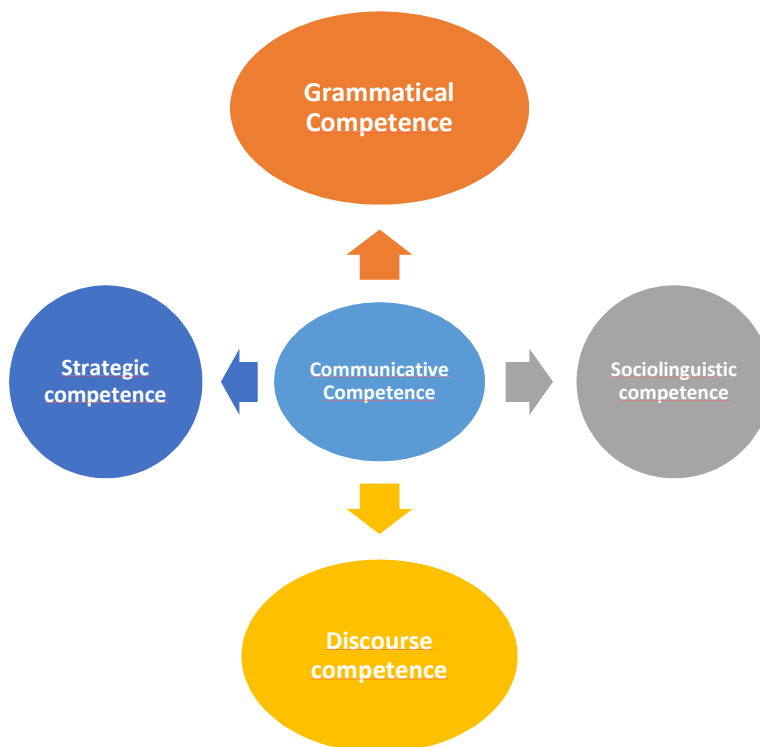
Canale and Swain (1980) define communicative competence as:

a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative

functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse. (p. 9)

Canale and Swain conceptualised the components of communicative competence (Picture 23), which are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Picture 23: Canale's and Swain's Communicative Competence



- Grammatical competence: The system of language rules that allow interlocutors to use grammatically correct sentences.
- Sociolinguistic competence: The ability to use appropriate language functions in varied social contexts.
- Discourse competence: Maintaining coherence and cohesion when producing discourse.
- Strategic competence: Strategies of communication.

### Toward ICC

Corbett (2003) criticised communicative competence to be “culture-free” (p. 20). He claims that interlocutors encode and decode meanings not only by arranging discourse in a particular way and performing transactional language. Corbett believes that there is a bi-directional relationship between

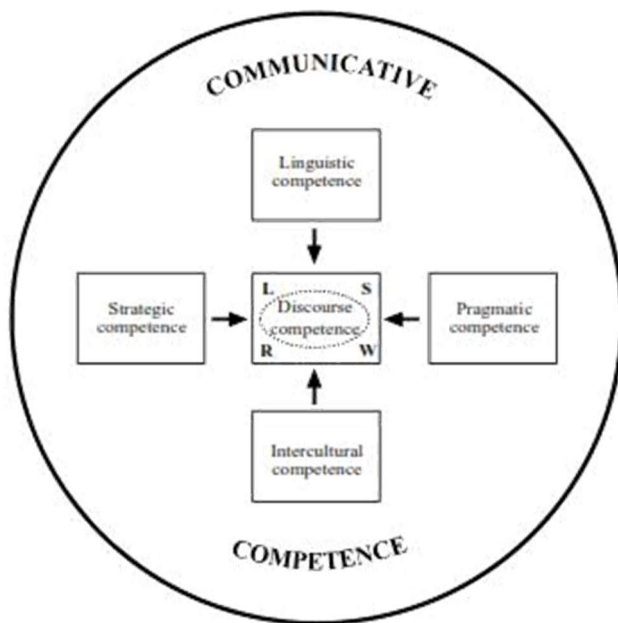
communicative competence and sociocultural aspects: The latter orients communicative competence, and the former is generated for social purposes.

Corbett (2003) quoted Loveday (1981): “The marginality of culture is a neglect for “anticipate[ing] and make[ing] sense of differences in how even simple transactions operate in different countries” (p. 23). Indeed, the previous views to communicative competence aligned all cultures together in terms of languages expressing the same meaning in different contexts in different cultures.

Stern (1992) highlighted teachers’ role in improvising to incorporate cultural aspects and culture instances in teaching despite neglecting it as a cornerstone in communicative competence and overlooking its importance in shaping communications. According to Canale and Swain, language-related and culture-related competences are not the only components of communicative competence. They acknowledge their importance not only in relation to the language being learnt/taught, but learners’ cultures should be accounted for as well in order to create intercultural contexts where familiarity with similarities and differences is triggered and decentering from one’s cultural stance is provoked.

In 2006, Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor proposed a framework of interculturally-based communicative competence (Picture 24).

Picture 24: Framework of the components of communicative competence



Source. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006a, p. 16)

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)**

According to Wiseman (2002), ICC involves “the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures” (p. 208). This conceptualisation includes four implications, according to Mizab (2020):

- **Knowledge, motivation, and skills:** According to Wiseman (2002), ICC “is not something innate within us, nor does it occur accidentally” (p. 211). Several scholars who tried to conceptualise ICC agree that the three dimensions of (a) cognition, (b) affect and (c) behaviour are the basis (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 1989; Gudykunst & Kim 1992; Bennett, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009; Knight, 1993; Chen G. M & Starosta, 1996, 1998; Leask, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014; Byram, et al., 2002; Corbett, 2003; Deardorff, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011). The cognitive aspect is Knowledge, which refers to “awareness and understanding” of rules regulating one’s culture and the other culture (Wiseman, 2002, p. 211). The affective aspect is motivation, determined by the feelings interlocutors have during interactions, and that either facilitate or hamper communication (Wiseman, 2002). The third aspect is skills by which behaviours are actualised on the basis of thoughts and feelings in particular contexts.

- **Interact:** The active part in this conceptualisation of ICC is “to interact.” Wiseman (2002) says that “when communicators interact, they are co-orienting and coordinating their behaviors (verbal and nonverbal) to accomplish social functions, obtain personal goals, and conform to the normative expectations of the situation” (p. 210). Thus, to be competent, interlocutors have to deploy their knowledge, motivation, and skills appropriately and effectively to perform communicative behaviours.

- **Effectively and Appropriately:** These are two crucial criteria in intercultural communication. Effectiveness refers to achieving desired objectives, and appropriateness stands for acceptable ways of communicating with others in terms of conventional message delivery and understanding. In other words, interlocutors should optimise their communication.

- **Different cultures:** Intercultural communication occurs when two distinct cultures collide and come into contact. Therefore, for ICC to be developed, interlocutors should belong to different cultures.

According to Byram (1997), ICC is a pivotal competence for diplomats’ and professional travelers’ profile. They undergo intensive intercultural training to be able to live in countries rather than theirs, to deal with intercultural contexts, and to communicate with culturally-distinct others. In fact, ICC is important for all

people, regardless of their place of residence. Indeed, there are contexts where intercultural communication occurs between individuals of the same nation but from different local cultures. In this case, local intercultural settings (Jones, 2014) take place, allowing individuals from different societies of the same nation to interculturally interact.

ICC development can go beyond social interactions to reach the educational sphere. Indeed, ICC can be the subject of enhancement in any major for any level. Incorporating the intercultural dimension can be established in all curriculum processes, and certain reforms can support its promotion. This is one way of bringing the intercultural inside the country.

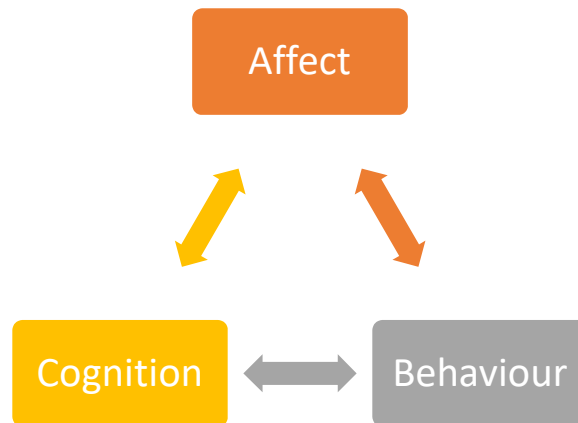
The intercultural was believed to be limited to nations' cultures only, and it was thought that its development can be achieved through mobility. After World War II, Anglo-saxon countries started a series of reforms in higher education by harmonising studies to facilitate mobility after globalisation. The teaching systems were influenced by Bologna Process (1999) wherein France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy made the decision to harmonise higher education. This Bologna Process is called the LMD system by France. All European countries adopted this system except areas in France and Kosovo. After that, the system expanded to all the world, and it became accredited. Many scholarships are granted; many training and short/long-term visits are carried out; and many post-doc programmes are pursued.

However, not each and every person can benefit from such mobility modes, which necessitates bringing the intercultural at home; i.e., in the country per se, by incorporating it in education, especially in foreign language teaching. This context is the optimum setting of developing ICC because there are high chances of triggering comparisons and contrasts between cultures of target languages and students' cultures. Therefore, otherness is not limited to people from different countries, but local settings are convenient contexts where local ICC can be the first step toward developing global ICC.

### **Conceptualisation of ICC**

As mentioned earlier, several scholars created different ICC models based on the three-dimension ABC Model. "A" stands for "Affect;" "B" refers to "Behaviour;" and "C" represents "Cognition" (Picture 25).

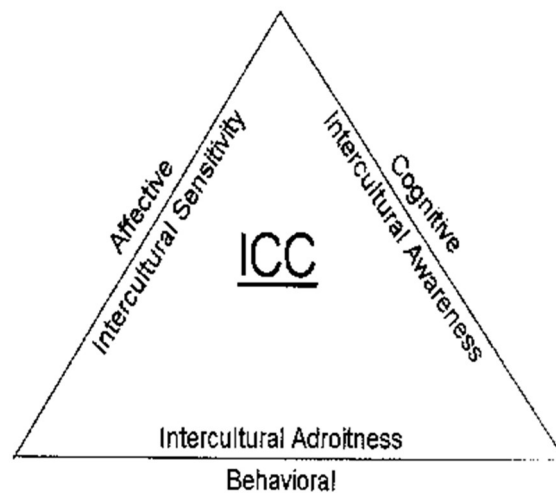
Picture 25: ABC model of competence



### The Triangle Model

One of the most influential ABC-based models is Chen and Starosta's (1996) ICC model (Picture 26).

Picture 26: ICC model



Source. Chen and Starosta (1996)

Chen's and Starosta's ICC model consists of three components corresponding to the ABC model:

- Intercultural sensitivity (Affect) refers to the person's emotional desire to recognise, tolerate and accept cultural differences. It consists of self-esteem, self-monitoring, empathy, open-mindedness, and non-judgmental and social relaxation.
- Intercultural awareness (Cognition) is the ability of a person to understand convergences and divergences between the native culture and others' cultures. It includes self-awareness and cultural awareness. First, self-awareness is the ability to recognise one's own thoughts, emotions, values, and biases. In intercultural contexts, it means noticing how one's cultural background shapes their

perceptions and behaviours. For example, one should realise that they tend to interpret silence as discomfort, while in another culture silence may signal respect. Second, cultural awareness refers to understanding and appreciating the values, practices, and communication styles of other cultures. In intercultural contexts, it involves recognizing differences without judgment, and seeing diversity as enriching rather than threatening. For instance, a teacher acknowledging that students from collectivist cultures may prioritise group harmony over individual expression.

Stereotypes and prejudices often act as barriers to intercultural understanding. First, stereotypes refer to the oversimplified and generalised beliefs about a group of people, often applied to all members regardless of individual differences. It can be explicit (consciously acknowledged) or implicit (unconscious). It may be positive (e.g., Asians are good at math) or negative (e.g., immigrants are lazy), but both reduce individuality. Stereotypes often appear as stock characters or predictable traits used to quickly signal identity or role. They function as cognitive shortcuts in social categorisation, but they sacrifice nuance and reinforce rigid group boundaries. Second, prejudices are preconceived opinions or attitudes toward individuals or groups, usually negative, formed without sufficient knowledge or rational basis. They are rooted in emotion and bias, not evidence. They are often linked to stereotypes but goes further by attaching value judgments (e.g., dislike, fear, hostility). They can manifest in subtle ways (implicit prejudice) or overt hostility (explicit prejudice). Prejudice is considered an affective component of bias (feelings), whereas stereotypes are cognitive (beliefs). Together, they often lead to discrimination (behaviour).

When individuals critically reflect on stereotypes and prejudices, they can become entry points for awareness: (a) One is self-aware when they recognise "I hold this stereotype;" they confront their own biases and learn to question automatic judgments. (b) One is culturally-aware when they understand how stereotypes misrepresent groups; individuals become more open to learning authentic cultural practices and perspectives.

For example, an Algerian teenager influenced by K-pop exhibits self-awareness when s/he realise they admire Korean fashion and language because of media exposure. S/He is culturally-aware when they begin to see how Korean cultural values differ from Algerian ones, and how both enrich their identity. Therefore, intercultural awareness is externalised by reflecting on stereotypes (e.g., "All

K-pop idols are perfect”); they learn to appreciate diversity within Korean culture and avoid prejudiced assumptions.

- Intercultural adroitness (Behaviour) is the ability of a person to establish communications and to achieve desired communicative goals in intercultural communications. It encompasses message skills, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioural flexibility, and interaction management.

First, message skills refers to the ability to clearly and effectively convey ideas in ways that are understandable across cultural boundaries. Strong message skills reduce misinterpretation and foster mutual understanding. They involve adapting language, tone, and style to suit diverse audiences, ensuring clarity without oversimplification. Second, appropriate self-disclosure stands for sharing personal information at a level that is culturally sensitive and situationally appropriate. It builds trust and relational closeness across cultures. By calibrating how much to reveal (and when), individuals avoid violating cultural norms of privacy or intimacy. It demonstrates respect for cultural expectations while still fostering connection. Third, behavioural flexibility is the capacity to adapt one’s verbal and non-verbal behaviours to fit different cultural contexts. It enables communicators to shift styles—such as adjusting eye contact, gestures, or conversational pacing—depending on cultural norms. Flexibility prevents misunderstandings and shows openness, which is crucial for effective intercultural interaction. Last, interaction management represents the ability to regulate the flow of communication—initiating, maintaining, and closing conversations smoothly. It ensures balanced participation, turn-taking, and topic management across cultures. Good interaction management prevents dominance or silence from being misinterpreted and helps sustain respectful dialogue.

Chen and Starosta argue that when individuals master these, they can navigate cultural differences skillfully, making communication not only possible but enriching.

Drill 1: *“Imagine an Algerian teenager who is deeply influenced by K-pop culture in their fashion, language use, and social interactions. Using Chen and Starosta’s three dimensions of intercultural communication competence—affective (empathy and openness), cognitive (cultural awareness and knowledge), and behavioural (intercultural adroitness)—analyze how this teenager might develop intercultural awareness. In your answer, explain how each dimension helps them navigate their identity, communication patterns, and relationships across Algerian and Korean cultural contexts.”*

- **Affective Dimension (Empathy & Openness)**

This dimension is the emotional foundation of ICC. It emphasises empathy, curiosity, and openness toward cultural difference. The teenager's enthusiasm for K-pop fashion, language, and social practices shows emotional openness to Korean culture. Empathy allows them to imagine how Korean peers interpret behaviours differently, such as silence in class as respect rather than disengagement. This openness reduces defensiveness and helps them embrace hybridity instead of feeling threatened by difference. As far as identity impact, they begin to see themselves as Algerian and globally connected, developing a hybrid identity that values both local and foreign influences.

- **Cognitive Dimension (Cultural Awareness & Knowledge)**

This dimension stresses knowledge of cultural systems —understanding norms, values, and communication styles. Through K-pop lyrics, dramas, and online fan communities, the teenager gains awareness of Korean politeness strategies, honorifics, and social hierarchies. They compare these with Algerian norms, noticing differences in directness, family roles, or gender expectations. This reflection builds cultural relativism, realising that behaviours make sense within their cultural context rather than judging them by Algerian standards. This influences communication; teenagers learn when to be explicit (low-context communication) and when to rely on shared assumptions (high-context communication), which helps them avoid misunderstandings.

- **Behavioural Dimension (Intercultural Adroitness)**

The behavioural dimension highlights skills in adapting communication —being flexible, appropriate, and effective in intercultural exchanges. The teenager may adopt K-pop-inspired clothing styles but adjust them to Algerian social expectations (e.g., balancing modesty with trendiness). In online interactions with Korean fans, they use culturally appropriate greetings or expressions, showing respect for Korean norms. With Algerian peers, they negotiate between local slang and Korean phrases, creating a blended communication style. This impacts relationship as behavioural flexibility allows them to maintain friendships across cultural boundaries, signaling respect and competence in both contexts.

Chen and Starosta's model shows that intercultural competence is multi-dimensional: Affective (empathy/openness) implies emotional readiness to engage with difference; cognitive (awareness/knowledge) denotes intellectual understanding of cultural systems; behavioural (adroitness/adaptation) refers to the practical ability to act appropriately across contexts. For the Algerian teenager, these dimensions work together: openness motivates learning, knowledge informs reflection, and behavioural skills make intercultural engagement effective. The result is a young person who can navigate

identity, communication, and relationships across Algerian and Korean cultural worlds with growing intercultural awareness.

### Byram's Model

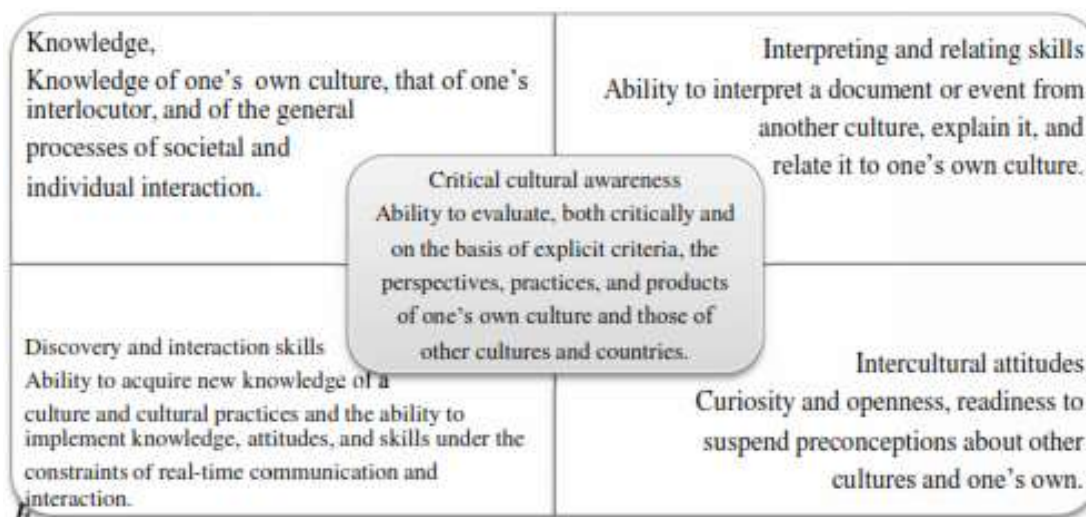
Byram et al. (2002) posit that ICC is crucial in students' learning experiences *"to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives"* (p. 6). This quote is a pedagogical mission statement that emphasises the dual goal of language education:

- **Linguistic competence:** Learners must master the mechanics of a language—grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation—so they can communicate effectively.
- **Intercultural competence:** Beyond language, learners need the ability to navigate cultural differences, empathise with diverse perspectives, and adapt communication styles.
- **Preparation for interaction:** The aim is not just theoretical knowledge but practical readiness for real encounters with people from other cultures.
- **Acceptance of individuality:** The quote stresses that intercultural competence is not about tolerating abstract cultures but about recognising *individuals* as carriers of unique perspectives shaped by their cultural backgrounds.

This statement reflects a shift in language teaching from purely linguistic training to a holistic model that integrates cultural awareness. It suggests that true communicative competence requires knowledge (understanding cultural norms), skills (adapting communication), and attitudes (openness, empathy, respect). This resonates perfectly with Chen and Starosta's model: Developing openness and empathy toward cultural others (affective dimension); gaining knowledge of cultural perspectives and practices (cognitive dimension); and skillfully interacting with people across cultures (behavioural dimension).

Byram's (1997) model bridges the gap between ICC development and FLT. It is one of the most influential frameworks in language education. It expands the idea of communicative competence (knowing how to use a language) into a broader, intercultural dimension. It consists of five major components—often referred to as the *savoirs*-related to knowledge, skills and attitudes, in addition to critical cultural awareness (Picture 27).

Picture 27. ICC Model



Source. Byram (1997)

- **Cultural knowledge:** Learners need to understand how different communities live, communicate, and organise themselves. This is not just about memorizing facts—it is about recognising how culture shapes meaning and interaction.
- **Interpretation and comparison skills:** Students should be able to look at cultural expressions (texts, traditions, behaviours) and make sense of them, while also connecting them to their own experiences. It is about building bridges between perspectives rather than treating them as isolated.
- **Discovery and engagement skills:** Learners must be able to explore unfamiliar cultural contexts and interact respectfully in real time. This means developing strategies to learn on the spot and adapt during intercultural encounters.
- **Openness and curiosity:** A mindset of empathy and willingness to suspend judgment is essential. Learners should approach difference with genuine interest, not with stereotypes or defensiveness.
- **Critical reflection:** Finally, learners should be able to evaluate cultural practices—including their own—through ethical and political lenses. This means asking: *Whose values are being represented? What power dynamics are at play?* Byram (2012) describes critical cultural awareness as the linking heart of linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. For him, critical cultural awareness is the component that embodies the educational dimension the most.

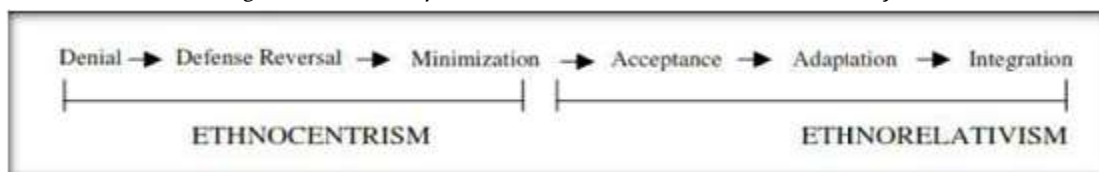
Byram's model positions language learners as intercultural citizens. They do not just acquire a new language; they gain the ability to navigate cultural differences, mediate between perspectives, and reflect critically on values and identities in communication. This model has shaped curricula worldwide by

embedding cultural reflection into language teaching. It moves learners from being “tourists” (surface-level encounters) to “sojourners” (deep engagement with otherness).

### Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Another ICC model is Bennett’s (1998) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as shown in Figure 28.

Figure 28. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Source: Bennett (1998)

- Denial:** The initial stage reflects an inability to recognise cultural difference in anything beyond the most basic terms. As Bennett (2004) explains, individuals at this point are “unable to experience differences in other than extremely simple ways.” They may struggle even to describe their own cultural background, since they have not considered how culture shapes human life. Their questions about other societies can be naïve, such as “do they have television in Japan?,” and their tolerance superficial, expressed in phrases like “live and let live.” In some cases, difference is dehumanised, interpreted as a flaw in intelligence or personality. Bennett notes that denial can manifest either as disinterest in noticing difference or as avoidance of contexts that might challenge one’s worldview. She attributes this to “the failure to differentiate ‘culture’ as a category, thus an inability to perceive or construe data from differing cultural contexts.”
- Defense and Reversal:** The second stage is characterised by a polarised view of self and other. Bennett (2004) describes people here as feeling “under siege” by those they stereotype negatively, defending themselves with rigid boundaries. Their own culture is exalted while others are disparaged, sometimes in a quasi-hierarchical social Darwinism that places their culture at the pinnacle of civilization. Defense can take three forms: denigration (negative evaluation of others’ values and behaviours), superiority (seeing one’s own culture as inherently better), and reversal (idealizing other cultures while devaluing one’s own). Bennett captures reversal as “‘going native’ among long-term sojourners or the ‘false ally’ among some dominant-culture seekers of minority approval.”
- Minimisation:** At this stage, individuals believe they have achieved intercultural sensitivity. Bennett (2004) notes that minimisation involves “having ‘arrived’ at intercultural sensitivity.” It is marked by recognition of human commonality, often framed in ethnocentric terms: “since everyone is

essentially like us, it is sufficient in cross-cultural situations to ‘just be yourself.’” Minimisation has two dimensions: human similarity, which acknowledges shared basic needs across cultures, and universal values, which recognises differences in worldview (e.g., religion) but assumes they can be subsumed under common human principles.

- **Acceptance:** Acceptance represents genuine recognition of cultural difference. Bennett (2004) writes that individuals at this stage “see cultures as offering alternative viable solutions to the organization of human existence, and [... as] curious about what the alternatives to their own culture are.” Acceptance does not imply agreement, but rather acknowledgment of distinct cultural practices and beliefs. It includes behavioural relativism –the understanding that all behaviour is culturally situated- and value relativism, which recognises that systems of belief and moral evaluation are embedded in cultural contexts.
- **Adaptation:** Adaptation involves actively shifting one’s perspective and behaviour to engage effectively with another culture. Bennett (2004) defines it as “the application of Acceptance, and it is likely to become the predominant experience when there is a need to actually interact effectively with people of another culture.” This stage requires reorganising one’s worldview to align with another’s, a process Bennett calls “intercultural empathy.” Adaptation takes two forms: cognitive frame-shifting, or consciously adopting another cultural perspective (cognitive empathy), and behavioural code-shifting, or acting in culturally appropriate ways based on intuitive understanding (intuitive empathy).
- **Integration:** The final stage is reached when individuals are no longer defined by a single cultural identity. Bennett (2004) describes integration as “a person who is not defined in terms of any one culture—typically a person who is bicultural or multicultural,” achieved when individuals make sustained efforts to become competent in new cultural contexts. Integration includes constructive marginality, maintaining an identity not tied to one culture while facilitating intercultural contact and ethical commitment.

#### Drill 2

How can we move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, and what strategies can interlocutors use or adapt to decenter from his vision?

This goes right to the heart of Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which describes the movement from ethnocentrism (seeing one’s own culture as central and normal) to ethnorelativism (recognizing that all cultures are relative and valid in their own contexts).

- **Moving from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism:**

In ethnocentrism, individuals interpret other cultures through the lens of their own because they consider their own culture as the center or standard, often judging differences as wrong or strange. In ethnorelativism: recognizing that cultures are relative, each with its own internal logic, values, and practices. Instead of judging, one seeks to understand and adapt. Individuals understand that cultural differences are not deficiencies but variations in human experience. They can shift perspectives and appreciate diversity without losing their own identity. This movement is not automatic; it requires conscious effort, reflection, and practice.

- **Strategies for Decentering (shifting away from one's own vision)**

- **Active listening:** Pay attention not only to words but also to tone, body language, and cultural context. It helps interlocutors suspend immediate judgment by labeling something as “strange” or “wrong,” pause and consider that it may make sense within another cultural framework. This helps hear meaning as intended by the other person.
- **Perspective-taking:** This includes consciously asking: “How might this look from their cultural standpoint?” It is to actively imagine how the situation looks from the other person’s cultural standpoint. This mental exercise allows individuals to step outside their own assumptions, helps reduce bias, and fosters empathy.
- **Cultural humility:** Acknowledge that one’s own worldview is partial, not universal. It allows replacing certainty with curiosity –be willing to learn from others.
- **Reflective questioning:** Instead of assuming, ask clarifying questions: “Could you explain how this works in your community?” This shows respect and opens space for authentic dialogue.
- **Adaptation in communication:** This involves adjusting language, examples, interaction styles, and non-verbal cues to meet the other person halfway. For instance, being more explicit with low-context communicators, or more sensitive to implied meaning with high-context communicators.
- **Reflect on one’s own assumptions:** Notice how your own cultural background shapes your expectations. Self-awareness is the first step toward intercultural awareness.

- **Classroom Application**

In a multicultural classroom, moving toward ethnorelativism means encouraging students to compare and contrast cultural practices without ranking them, using critical reflection activities (journals, discussions) to help learners notice their own assumptions, and practicing role-play scenarios where students must adopt another cultural perspective in communication. In short, moving from ethnocentrism to

ethnorelativism means decentering yourself –recognising that your way of seeing the world is one among many- and adopting strategies that allow you to listen, adapt, and empathise.

### Drill 3

Read the "2 vision for 1 reality" then explain how this experience can be useful in your personal experience in your culture and abroad if you ever think of visiting another country.

This is the story of Xavier and Tabarlis: the first one lives on Planet Earth and went to visit another planet called Glorbuld, where he was hosted by Tabarlis. When Xavier is back home, he writes a letter to his friend Vincent to share his experience. On the other hand, Tabarlis writes a letter to his friend Verlias and explains what happened with the group of students from Planet Earth that they welcomed in Glorbuld.

#### LETTER FROM XAVIER TO HIS FRIEND VINCENT

Hi Vincent, how are you? How was the summer, reviewing lessons to prepare for exams? Ok, it's not funny... As you may know, I'm just back from the planet Glorbuld where I spent a month ("Earth month") with Karen, Sophie and Mehdi. So many weird stuff happened, I have to tell you.

As soon as we landed at the spaceport, the confusion began. Several people wanted to help us carry our bags... well, so they said... Good thing we were told to be careful with pickpockets and thieves. At first we refused politely and as they insisted, we were a little firmer. So they left and you could see they were frustrated that they missed their opportunity. We were lucky! Then we went to meet with our contacts who were waiting for us outside the spaceport.

We wanted to start the project the very next day because we had a schedule to follow. So we started the construction of the school and I can tell you that we worked very hard! The problem is that we quickly realized that the Glorbuldians who worked with us did not have the same enthusiasm, and there were even moments when we really felt that they were putting a spoke in our wheels! Unbelievable, as we do this project for them!

Anyway, everything is slow there, like public transportation for example (small and rotten buses that they call Zamourion). If they give you a starting time, you're sure you can add at least 2 hours. And when you ask when we are going to leave, they always answer you "Soon!". It's so annoying, I swear to you.

Not to mention the hygiene. They throw everything on the ground without any concern for the environment. At first we wanted to act well, we picked up our cans. Since we did not know what to do with it, we began to bury them so that it was less dirty, and then we finally gave up.

#### LETTER FROM TABARLIS TO HIS FRIEND VERLIAS

Hi Verlias, I hope you are well, that you are in good health, as well as all your family and all your friends. Remember that I told you about a group of young people coming from Planet Earth, from a little corner called France? We have just spent 24 cycles together and I have lots of things to tell you.

When they arrived, there was obviously a misunderstanding. Since we could not get inside the spaceport, we asked people who worked there to help them carry their luggage and meet with us outside, but they were turned down quite badly. They were really surprised at this reaction and didn't want to see the Earthlings ever again. I admit that I didn't dare to mention this episode with them.

They wanted to start building the school right away and I soon realized that there was tension with the village workers. Of course the workers were not in a hurry to finish the job as they were paid per day. The longer the project lasted, the more money they would have! And it was often their only source of income... Moreover, after a few sunstrokes, the Earthlings realized that it was not very effective to work when the 2 suns are at the highest in the sky.

There were other times when we felt they were very impatient. When we needed to go to the city, they were always impatient while waiting for the Zamourion to be full. Apparently, on Earth, transportation leaves at fixed times, even if they are not full! I really wonder how drivers make a living...

Also, they did something weird one day: they started burying cans in the ground! I almost said it was a shame because the people who picked them up on the street to sell the aluminum would not find them, but I didn't dare.

<p>And do you want to know how Glorbuldians blow their noses? You lean on one nostril and you blow a big blow. Very chic!</p> <p>Anyway, that's for sure, they're still at least 50 years behind us. It shows so much regarding human rights! Well especially women's and children's rights. You know Karen, a bit feminist, isn't she? One day she had a very blunt discussion with a village leader about it. I don't know if he really understood, in fact he didn't react much. Another example on how "behind" they are. One day we go through a swampy region and one of the young people who accompanied us tells us in the most simple way: "Here, there is a man who turns into a crocodile". We looked at each other for a moment, but we quickly turned our heads to avoid bursting into laughter. We controlled ourselves but we were close.</p> <p>The same young man really annoyed us another time. It was the end of the stay, we had organized a great evening with all the people we had met. Everybody had to bring something, and he had to bring Dimbzi, which is a delicious chicken from there. And... he never came. The next day, when we saw him, we told him how mad we were! It was a total lack of respect for us. Guess what he said! He had to stay at home because a friend came to watch TV! Couldn't find a more phony excuse... In any case, they need to become more serious and more trustworthy, otherwise they will never be a developed planet.</p> <p>Oh, one last crazy thing, I've never seen so many homosexuals in my life! There are plenty of guys holding hands in the street. One day, one of our co-worker wanted to hold my hand, well I can tell you that he did not try twice! See it was not easy every day and we were even close to fight sometimes. But don't worry, we realized that we also had a lot in common and everything ended well. I realize that I was a little negative but we really experienced some extraordinary moments that I will tell you in a new letter. Now I don't have time, I'm already late for my aircraft's driving lesson.</p>	<p>It may be a ritual practice of them... Oh yes, they said they found it disgusting. On my side, something they did has repelled me – the way they blow their nose. Instead of rejecting the waste from their body in nature, they keep it carefully in a paper. Yeks! Disgusting!</p> <p>One day I felt so uncomfortable. One of the girls in the group went and talked directly to the head of the village, asking why women were eating away from men, why children had no right to speak at the table, and so on. Honestly, I feel like the Earthlings do not respect the elders. They told me that at home they put them all together in special houses!</p> <p>Besides, they not only neglect their ancestors, but they do not respect the gods either! One day, one of them said to us most simply: "I am an atheist." We looked at each other without being able to say anything. We all knew what it meant, but we had never met anyone who questioned the existence of the Gods!</p> <p>Another day, they became angry at Limbatan but we didn't really understand why. Limbatan had to bring Dimbzi for the farewell party but he had to stay at home because as he is the only one to have TV in his area, a neighbor had come to watch TV. It did not matter, there were plenty of other things to eat. Yet this detail has really annoyed the Earthlings. But you understand that Limbatan could not do otherwise! If he had gone, the whole neighborhood would have concluded that he had no respect for the people who came to visit him!</p> <p>When I think about it, maybe the Earthlings were not happy because there were disputes within the group. I watched them carefully and I never saw the two boys holding hands or having any physical contact. I think they were not really good friends. See it was not easy every day and we were even close to fight sometimes. But don't worry, we realized that we also had a lot in common and everything ended well. I realize that I was a little negative but we really experienced some extraordinary moments that I will tell you in a new letter. I have to go back with my family, I've been alone, writing to you for an hour now, and as you know, they start to find it odd...</p>
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This idea of "two visions for one reality" is a powerful way to think about intercultural encounters. It means that the same situation can be perceived differently depending on the cultural lens through which it is viewed.

- **Usefulness in Personal Experience (within your own culture)**

In your home culture, it helps you recognise that even people who share the same background may interpret events differently based on region, generation, or personal values. For example, a family celebration might be seen as primarily religious by one person, but as social and communal by another. Recognising both visions prevents conflict and misunderstandings, deepens empathy, and fosters respect.

- **Usefulness Abroad (visiting another country)**

When abroad, this mindset prepares you to expect multiple interpretations of the same reality. For example, in a classroom abroad, silence might mean respect in one culture but disengagement in another. By acknowledging both possible visions, you avoid misjudging students or colleagues. It encourages you to decenter by stepping outside your own assumptions and ask: “How might this look from their perspective?”

This approach builds intercultural resilience. Instead of being frustrated by differences, you learn to see them as enriching. It helps you move from ethnocentrism (my way is the way) to ethnorelativism (there are many valid ways), making you more effective both at home and abroad. By practicing this, you become more flexible, empathetic, and effective in intercultural interactions.

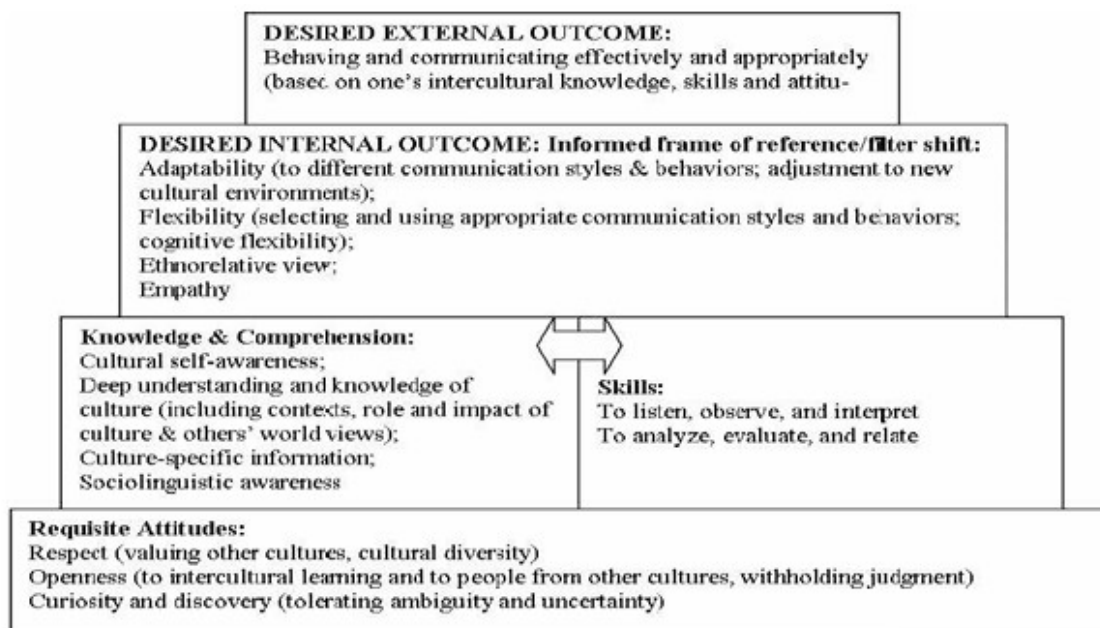
### **Deardorff's Process Model**

A significant response to earlier models of intercultural communicative competence is found in Deardorff's (2004) work, where she emphasises a process-oriented approach. Before presenting her framework, it is important to highlight her empirical study, which gathered expert consensus from intercultural scholars and administrators of internationalisation. This study identified the most widely accepted (80–100%) definitions and components of ICC. Interestingly, these experts tended to conceptualise ICC in broad terms, without specifying its constituent elements such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2006).

Deardorff's (2006) findings reveal that experts overwhelmingly prefer to define ICC in general terms, in order to establish a workable definition that facilitates assessment. As Klemp (1979, cited in Deardorff, 2006) reminds us, “competence can be measured. But its measurement depends first on its definition” (p. 242). Once ICC is clearly articulated in relation to desired outcomes, institutional priorities, and the targeted development of learners' attitudes, skills, and knowledge, it becomes possible to measure it effectively (Deardorff, personal communication, October 4th, 2016).

Deardorff's framework, presented in Figure 29, thus represents a process model of ICC that integrates these insights into a dynamic, outcome-oriented structure.

Figure 29. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence



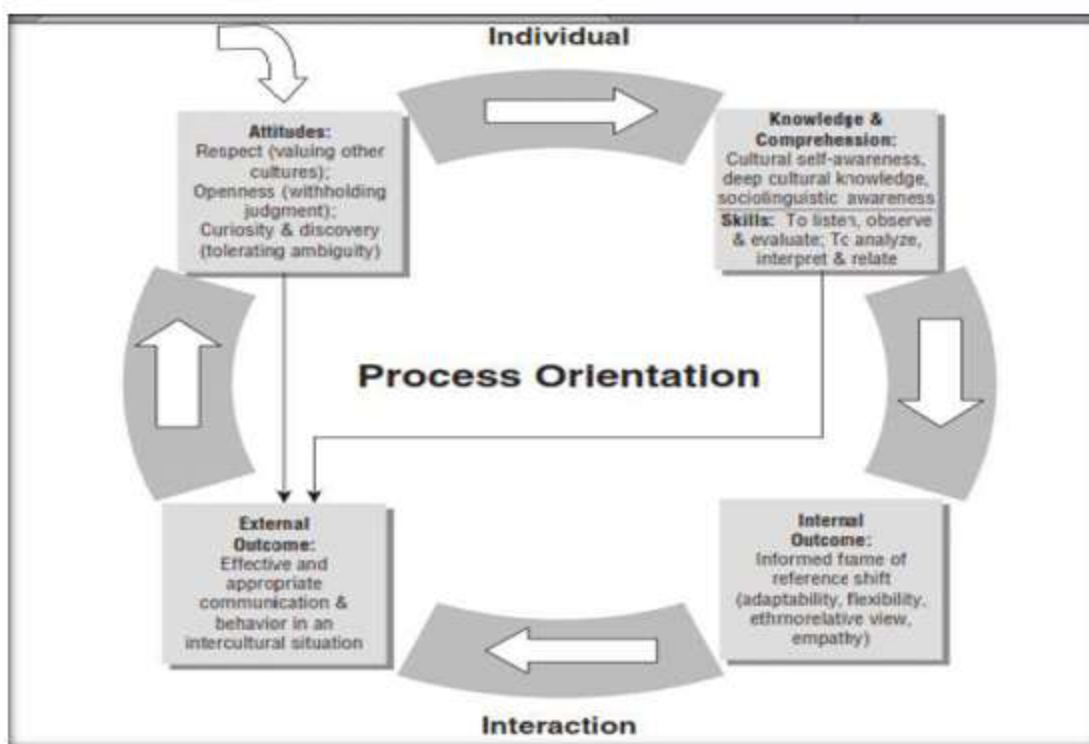
Source. Deardorff (2006)

Note. Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)

Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements

Although intercultural scholars have proposed varied definitions of ICC and identified different sets of components, Deardorff (personal communication, October 4th, 2016, as cited in Mizab, 2020) emphasises that there is broad consensus around a limited number of core elements. Most experts highlight between three and five recurring dimensions, typically framed in terms of respect, openness, curiosity, reflection, and awareness of both one's own and other cultures. Building on this consensus, Deardorff developed her process model of ICC, which situates competence within the dynamic interplay of individual attitudes and the contextualised interactions in which they are enacted (Figure 30).

Figure 7. Process Model of Intercultural Competence



Source. Deardorff (2004).

Note. Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills achieved.

Deardorff (2006) frames her inquiry around a central question: *“what does it mean to interact successfully with those from different cultures?”* This guiding concern led to the development of both an intercultural framework and a process model of ICC, represented in Figures 29 and 30.

The framework is structured around several interrelated components:

- **Attitudes:** Deardorff’s research highlights openness and curiosity as essential dispositions that enable individuals to move beyond their comfort zones in order to engage with cultural otherness. Crucially, these attitudes must be accompanied by respect, which signals the valuing of others. She emphasises that such attitudes are foundational, forming the basis upon which intercultural knowledge and skills are built (Deardorff, 2006).
- **Knowledge:** Scholars concur on “the importance of understanding the world from others’ perspectives” (Deardorff, 2011, p. 76). This knowledge encompasses “cultural self-awareness [...],

culture specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge including understanding other world views, and sociolinguistic awareness” (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 249–250).

- **Skills:** Across her publications (2004, 2006, 2009, 2011), Deardorff identifies key skills for ICC: observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating. Instruction that deliberately cultivates these skills supports the acquisition and processing of intercultural knowledge.
- **Internal Outcomes:** The integration of attitudes, knowledge, and skills produces internal outcomes such as empathy and ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1998). Deardorff (2011) notes that individuals who embody these qualities are able to accept alternative perspectives and respond to them appropriately.
- **External Outcomes:** These outcomes represent the visible enactment of ICC through behaviour. Deardorff (2006) reports scholarly consensus that ICC is “the effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations” (p. 255). Effectiveness is judged by the individual in context, while appropriateness is determined by the cultural sensitivity of others.

Building on these components, Deardorff’s process model (Figure 30) illustrates the developmental trajectory of ICC. As she explains, “it is possible for an individual to have the requisite attitudes and be minimally effective and appropriate in behavior and/or communication, even without further knowledge or skills. Adding the necessary knowledge and skills may ensure that an individual can be more effective and appropriate in one’s intercultural interactions. With the added flexibility, adaptability, and empathy, one can be even more effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Deardorff, personal communication, October 4th, 2016).

This model underscores that ICC is not a static achievement but a lifelong process, one that begins intentionally in higher education. By exposing students to diverse languages and cultures, institutions prepare them to become global citizens capable of critically examining their own beliefs and behaviours and deploying them effectively in intercultural contexts.

### **The Butterfly Model**

The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) was launched in 2013 under the initiative of Andorra during its Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. Conceived as a comprehensive educational resource, the RFCDC provides schools and education systems with structured guidance to cultivate in young people the competences required to safeguard and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Its purpose is to prepare learners to become active citizens, capable of meaningful participation in democratic life and of living harmoniously within culturally diverse

societies. The framework establishes a systematic approach to teaching, learning, and assessing competences associated with democratic culture.

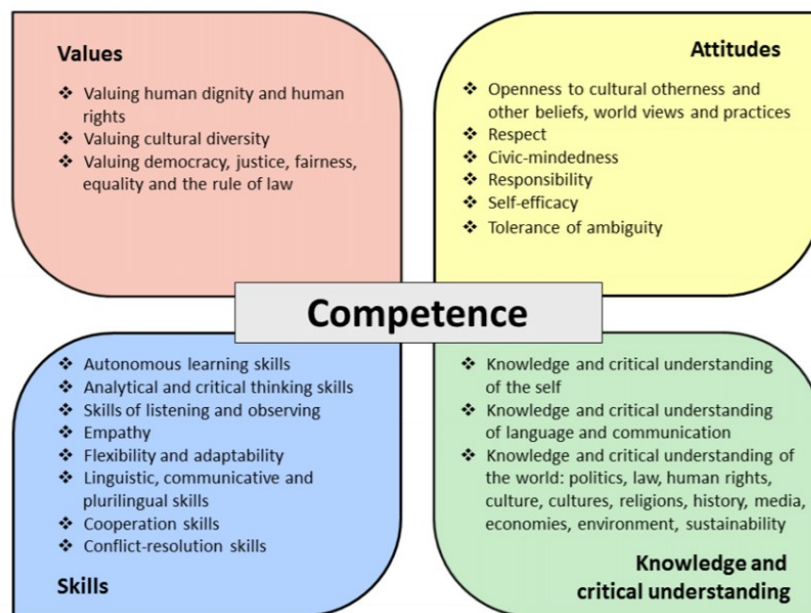
In 2023, the Council of Europe undertook an evaluation of the RFCDC's implementation across member states since 2016. This review assessed its influence on educational policies and practices and, based on the findings, offered recommendations to inform the framework's future development.

ICC is one strand within this larger framework, but RFCDC goes beyond interculturality to cover the full range of democratic competences. Positioning ICC within the RFCDC underscores that intercultural learning is inseparable from democratic citizenship and civic values. It highlights that competence in intercultural communication is not an isolated skill but part of a broader agenda of preparing learners for responsible, participatory, and inclusive engagement in society.

Discussion Prompt: Why do democratic competences matter in culturally diverse classrooms?

The Butterfly Model was developed within the Council of Europe's work on the CEFR's language learning goals and Education for Democratic Citizenship. Its visual metaphor includes the body of the butterfly representing the learner's identity and intercultural awareness, and the four wings representing the essential components of ICC (Figure 31).

Figure 31: The Butterfly Model



Source. Council of Europe (2016)

The model emphasises balance: For a butterfly to fly, all its wings must be healthy. Equally, all components (represented by the wings in the model) must be developed for ICC to "fly;" i.e., to operate.

- **Theoretical Underpinning**

- Attitudes include respect, openness, curiosity, and tolerance of ambiguity according to the Council of Europe (2016). This component is grounded in Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model that places attitudes at the foundation, arguing they are the entry point into ICC. Attitudes are also grounded in Bennett's DMIS (1998) that highlights openness as the shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. In the CEFR, descriptors emphasise openness to other perspectives and willingness to engage in intercultural dialogue.
- Knowledge & Critical Cultural Awareness encompass cultural self-awareness, knowledge of other worldviews, sociolinguistic awareness, and the ability to critically evaluate cultural practices—including one's own. This element is grounded in Byram's (1997) defines "savoirs" (knowledge of self, others, and interaction) and "savoir s'engager" (critical cultural awareness), which are central to ICC. Besides, Chen & Starosta (1996) stress cognitive awareness as a dimension of ICC. In the CEFR, learners are expected to demonstrate awareness of cultural conventions and critically reflect on them.
- Skills refer to listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating. Deardorff (2009) identifies skills as the bridge between knowledge and outcomes. In the CEFR, skills are reflected in descriptors like "can mediate between speakers of different languages" or "can interpret cultural references in texts."
- Values: The Council of Europe anchors ICC in universal values—human dignity, justice, equality, and democratic citizenship. Bennett (2004) speaks of "ethical commitment in relativism," stressing that intercultural engagement must be principled. Furthermore, Deardorff (2009) insists ICC must be tied to values of respect and empathy. In the CEFR, values are implicit in descriptors that stress cooperation, mutual understanding, and democratic participation.

ICC is the interplay between internal outcomes (adaptability, empathy, ethnorelativism) and external outcomes (effective and appropriate communication across cultures). The Butterfly model implies that ICC requires balance: attitudes without skills are ineffective, and knowledge without values is hollow.

The Butterfly Model is ideal for classroom use because it is visual, holistic, and grounded in multiple theories (Deardorff, Byram, Bennett, Chen & Starosta). It also aligns with CEFR descriptors, making it directly relevant to language education and intercultural pedagogy. In short, the Council of Europe's Butterfly Model of ICC shows that intercultural competence is sustained by the balance of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and values. Grounded in the literature, it integrates Deardorff's process orientation, Byram's critical cultural

awareness, Bennett's ethnorelativism, and Chen & Starosta's three dimensions, while linking directly to CEFR's language learning goals.

**Discussion Prompt:** How do internal dispositions (empathy, adaptability) shape external behaviours (dialogue, cooperation)?

Drawing on the major models of ICC (Deardorff, Byram, Bennett, Council of Europe's Butterfly, Chen & Starosta), internal dispositions (like empathy and adaptability) actually shape external behaviours (like dialogue and cooperation), weaving together the major ICC models.

- **Internal dispositions as the engine**

Empathy and adaptability are internal orientations; they live inside the person as attitudes, values, and awareness. They don't show directly, but they drive how someone interprets and responds in intercultural encounters. Think of them as the "engine" of a car: invisible from the outside, but powering every movement.

- **How empathy shapes dialogue**

According to Deardorff's Process model, empathy is an internal outcome that filters perception. When you empathise, you listen actively, suspend judgment, and adjust your language. This produces external dialogue that is respectful and effective. Byram's ICC model also positions empathy as part of *savoirs-être* (attitudes). It allows you to enter dialogue with curiosity and openness, rather than defensiveness. Dialogue becomes a space of mutual exchange, not confrontation. Besides, Bennett's DMIS emphasises empathy as the mark of the ethnorelative stage. Dialogue shifts from explaining your culture to co-constructing meaning with others. In the Butterfly model, empathy is a wing (attitudes/values). Without it, dialogue collapses into monologue. With it, dialogue flies because both sides feel heard. Last, Chen and Starosta consider empathy an affective competence. It directly shapes behavioural competence—dialogue becomes more nuanced, sensitive, and inclusive. As an example, think of a student who empathises with a peer struggling to express themselves in a second language. Instead of interrupting, they slow down, paraphrase, and encourage. The internal empathy shapes the external behaviour of supportive dialogue.

- **How adaptability shapes cooperation**

In Deardorff's model, adaptability is an internal outcome that enables external appropriateness. Cooperation requires adjusting strategies to fit cultural expectations. Byram's adaptability links to *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness). It allows you to cooperate by negotiating differences rather than imposing your norms. Adaptability in Bennett's model is the hallmark of ethnorelativism. Cooperation becomes possible because you can shift frames of reference and find common ground. In the Butterfly model, adaptability sits in the skills wing. Without it, cooperation is rigid and fragile; with it, cooperation is

flexible and sustainable. Chen and Starosta identify adaptability as behavioural competence. It transforms internal awareness into external cooperative action—changing tone, style, or approach to maintain harmony. For instance, in a multicultural group project, adaptability allows one student to adjust meeting styles, accepting that some members prefer informal brainstorming while others prefer structured agendas. This internal flexibility produces external cooperation.

- **The dynamic cycle**

Internal dispositions transform into external behaviours that, in turn, provide feedback loops informing disposition, and the cycle goes round again and again. For example, when empathy and adaptability shape dialogue and cooperation, the positive outcomes reinforce the dispositions. This is Deardorff's cyclical process: External success feeds back into internal growth.

In short, empathy makes dialogue authentic: You do not just talk, you connect. Adaptability makes cooperation possible: You do not just work together, you adjust together. Across all models, the message is clear: Internal dispositions are the invisible roots; external behaviours are the visible branches. Without empathy and adaptability, dialogue and cooperation remain shallow. With them, they become transformative.

### **CEFR Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The Integrated Intercultural Communicative and Storytelling Competence Framework synthesises insights from several established approaches to provide a comprehensive model for the development of ICC. At its core, the framework emphasises four essential dimensions—attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness—as the foundation for effective communication across cultural boundaries. To support learner progression, it incorporates CEFR-aligned Can-Do statements, which enable individuals to track their growth and establish clear objectives.

Beyond descriptive benchmarks, the framework also embeds reflection prompts, critical knowledge questions, and skill-based tasks designed to foster deeper engagement. These elements encourage learners to critically examine their assumptions and apply intercultural competence in authentic contexts.

The framework is informed by a range of foundational scholarship: Byram's model of ICC (1997), Deardorff's process and pyramid models (2006, 2009), the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2016), and Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993). By weaving together these perspectives, the integrated design provides educators with a robust tool for creating meaningful intercultural learning experiences and guiding learners toward the acquisition of durable, practice-oriented competencies.

The following are the CEFR statements for ICC (Table 2).

Table 2. CEFR Can-do statements

Attitudes	Knowledge	Skills	Awareness
<p><b>CEFR Level A1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can show respect by greeting people from different cultures politely.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate curiosity about other cultures by asking simple questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level A2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can show openness by being willing to listen to others' perspectives.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate empathy by understanding and acknowledging different cultural practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can demonstrate tolerance by accepting and appreciating cultural diversity.</li> <li>• I can show respect by adapting my behavior to cultural norms in different situations.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can exhibit curiosity by seeking opportunities to learn about unfamiliar cultures.</li> <li>• I can show openness by considering different viewpoints in intercultural discussions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can demonstrate empathy by understanding the experiences and challenges faced by individuals from different cultures.</li> <li>• I can exhibit tolerance by embracing cultural differences and promoting inclusivity.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can show openness by actively seeking diverse perspectives and engaging in cultural exchange.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate respect by valuing and promoting cultural diversity in various contexts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CEFR Level A1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can identify basic cultural practices and traditions of my own culture.</li> <li>• I can recognize some cultural differences between my culture and others.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level A2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can describe common cultural practices and traditions of different cultures.</li> <li>• I can explain basic similarities and differences between cultures.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can demonstrate awareness of global issues and their cultural implications.</li> <li>• I can discuss the impact of cultural values on communication in different cultures.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze cultural identity and its relation to social structures and power dynamics.</li> <li>• I can compare and contrast cultural practices and traditions across different societies.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can explain intercultural theories and their relevance to communication and identity.</li> <li>• I can critically analyze cultural phenomena and their implications for intercultural interactions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can engage in advanced cultural analysis, examining complex cultural issues.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate in-depth knowledge of intercultural theories and their practical application.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CEFR Level A1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can use basic greetings and simple phrases to interact with people from different cultures.</li> <li>• I can recognize and interpret some non-verbal cues in intercultural interactions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level A2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can engage in simple conversations on familiar topics with speakers of different cultures.</li> <li>• I can adapt my communication style to different cultural contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can engage in discussions on a range of topics with speakers of different cultures.</li> <li>• I can use effective communication strategies to handle conflicts arising from cultural differences.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can participate in complex discussions and negotiations with speakers of different cultures.</li> <li>• I can adapt my communication style and strategies to effectively navigate intercultural conflicts.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can engage in advanced intercultural conversations, demonstrating flexibility and diplomacy.</li> <li>• I can use advanced communication skills to resolve complex conflicts in intercultural contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can engage in sophisticated intercultural discussions and debates on abstract topics.</li> <li>• I can effectively use verbal and non-verbal communication to navigate complex intercultural interactions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CEFR Level A1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can reflect on my own cultural assumptions and biases.</li> <li>• I can recognize some stereotypes and challenge them in simple contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level A2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can demonstrate awareness of cultural differences and avoid generalizations.</li> <li>• I can reflect on my own cultural identity and its influence on my interactions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can identify stereotypes and prejudices in different cultural contexts and challenge them through respectful dialogue.</li> <li>• I can actively seek opportunities to engage in intercultural learning and broaden my cultural knowledge.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level B2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can critically reflect on my own cultural assumptions and biases, and actively work to overcome them.</li> <li>• I can demonstrate a deep understanding of cultural relativity and appreciate the complexity of cultural perspectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze the influence of power dynamics on intercultural interactions and challenge inequalities.</li> <li>• I can engage in continuous intercultural learning and actively seek out diverse perspectives and experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEFR Level C2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can critically reflect on the ethical implications of intercultural communication and advocate for social justice.</li> <li>• I can effectively navigate and mediate intercultural conflicts by promoting understanding and empathy.</li> </ul>

Source. Council of Europe (2016)

## 9. Language and Culture in Second/Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

This lesson explores language and culture in second/foreign language learning and teaching by highlighting the role of cultural competence and accounting for some teaching methods and classroom practices that promote cultural competence. This lesson aims at:

- understanding the role of cultural competence in second/foreign language learning; and
- exploring methods of developing cultural competence in second/foreign language learning in the classroom.

### Introduction

Let's explore the interaction of language and culture in second/foreign language learning. The target language (English) is used in this short video to showcase its authentic use in real-world settings. Click on this link <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0Jx8ymnOvxQ> or scan the QR code (Picture 32) to watch a video of a second language learner of English ordering coffee at the café.

Picture 32: QR code (English in real world)



### Discussion prompts:

- What challenges does the second language speaker of English face?
- How is her communication influenced by the cultural context?
- What strategy(ies) does she use to express herself?

Now, reflecting upon your cultural identity, choose an object (symbol, clothes, food, etc.) from your culture and describe it.

- How are your descriptions of cultural objects shaped by language?
- Would it be more convenient if you described the object in your native language or in the foreign language?
- Do these objects have equivalent names in other languages?
- How do objects carry meaning across languages?

Talking about another cultural aspect in language, which is idiomatic expressions, let's discuss how idioms reflect culture and diversity. Look at the following idioms and guess their meanings:

- "It is raining cats and dogs"
- "يد واحدة لا تصفق"
- "Avoir le cafard"

The English idiom means "it is raining heavily;" the Arabic one has an equivalent in English which is "one hand does not clap," referring to the importance of teamwork; and the French idiom means "to feel down."

#### Discussion prompts:

- What do idioms reveal about culture?
- Are there idioms in Arabic or Algerian Arabic that do not have direct equivalents in English or French?
- How does teaching/learning idiomatic expressions elicit cultural nuances?

#### Cultural Competence in Second/ Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

As seen previously, language and culture are intertwined, and they cannot be separated. Indeed, learning a language without its culture and the contexts of operation inevitably causes misinterpretations, conflicts, and ineffective communication. Therefore, language and culture should be taught in parallel, developing in the process cultural competence.

Cultural competence matters because it promotes pragmatic understanding. Learners will be able to decipher meanings and understand how they are conveyed beyond the literal words. For example, some cultures value shyness with strangers and promote accepting everything on one's self even if s/he does not agree. However, these cultures cannot express that with honesty, so they use language that covers up for their intentions. Someone with cultural competence would know if meanings are meant or not.

Cultural competence also helps in abiding by social norms and etiquette. Indeed, different cultures have multiple ways of greeting, using gestures, etc., and knowing about them eases communication in second/foreign language contexts. For example, in Algeria, elderly teachers are addressed with their titles (Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr. Pr.), but in the UK, they are addressed by first name only.

Idiomatic expressions are also culture-bound and can only be understood within their cultural contexts. Attempting to translate idioms may cause confusion and meaningless chunks. Thus,

second/foreign language learners should develop cultural competence through which they get acquainted with, and easily recognise, such expressions.

### Developing Cultural Competence

There are some strategies that help develop cultural competence, such as:

- Immersive learning: Cultural nuances can be better understood via exposure to authentic materials.
- Intercultural training: Cultural awareness can be raised through encouraging learners to interact with natives.
- Comparative analyses: Cultural understanding can be enhanced by engaging learners in comparisons between their native language and culture and the target ones.

Kramersch's (1998) framework is a cornerstone that elucidates the interconnected relationship between language and culture. As argued before, culture should not be an add-on or postponed until learners have an advanced linguistic level. It should rather be incorporated and fused within every communicative act, grammatical or lexical. Indeed, teaching/learning a language goes beyond grammatical structures and lexical chunks; it should also accentuate the teaching/learning of how the target language speakers think, behave, and interact in their corresponding culture.

Kramersch's framework includes:

- Language as a cultural practice: Language and culture are interrelated, and they reflect and shape each other. Indeed, the differences in expressing requests through language vary from one culture to another.
- The Third Place: The place where learners' native culture and the target language culture intersect is called by Kramersch the "Third Place." According to her, the "Third Place" is the place where learners undergo experiences that raise their intercultural awareness and flexibility. In the classroom, learners can be encouraged to engage in comparisons between their cultures and the target language culture and to navigate cultural misunderstandings.
- Discourse and identity: Kramersch advocates that identity influences language use; for example, second/foreign language learners may be unconsciously nativising English and using it according to their accents. Therefore, learners' awareness of such a fact draws their attention to the importance of communicative competence. In the classroom, students can examine how their identities shape language use. They can examine different uses of greetings in different contexts. They can also discuss the role of gender and social status in shaping language.
- Critical cultural awareness: According to Kramersch, questioning is key in cultural competence as learners should develop a filtering mind when dealing with cultures. They should question cultural

assumptions to activate their critical thinking and empathy skills. In the classroom, learners can be engaged in questioning assumptions related to their culture and to the target culture. Learners can analyse films, news, etc. from native and target cultures to discover underlying values. Therefore, involving learners in respectful debates creates dialogue that values multiple perspectives, even if the topics are sensitive.

### **Cultural Teaching Methods**

Language teaching transcends grammar and vocabulary teaching. Effective language teaching focuses on comprehension and engagement by integrating the cultural dimension in parallel with language. Some methods that can support incorporating the cultural dimension in language teaching can depend on technology and culturally-responsive methods.

The role of technology in promoting cultural competence is pivotal. Indeed, following the principles of experiential learning, learners can develop their cultural competence when they experience authentic situations. Teachers can organise virtual meetings with natives and use simulations of other cultures to enhance cultural immersion. Besides, using documentaries and podcasts is a source of varied cultural perspectives.

However, culture teaching should go beyond the target culture only; it should include instances where learners' cultural practices are also accentuated. This creates contextualised learning where learners perceive culture instruction to be meaningful. Besides, storytelling and addressing folklore are cultural interactive methods that help learners connect the language they learn with cultural identities. To have hands-on practice, learners can perform role plays, simulations, and project-based learning to develop their cultural awareness and be deeply engaged in the learning process.

## 10. Conclusion

This handout has examined the deep interconnection between language and culture, showing how they mutually shape and sustain one another. Culture, as revealed through multiple definitions and models, is a dynamic and multifaceted system that encompasses values, beliefs, behaviours, and symbolic practices. Language is not only a tool for communication but also a mirror of cultural identity, transmitting traditions, worldviews, and social norms across generations.

By tracing conceptions of culture as product, evolution, and uniqueness, we have seen how scholarly thought shifted from elitist and linear perspectives to pluralistic and relativist understandings. The characteristics of culture –its learned nature, association with social groups, gradual change, and descriptive rather than evaluative function- highlight its complexity and adaptability. Distinctions between Big-C and small-c culture, alongside metaphors such as the iceberg and pyramid, illustrate how visible practices are underpinned by deeper, often hidden values and assumptions.

Ultimately, the study of language and culture equips learners with the ability to navigate intercultural encounters, fostering tolerance, curiosity, and critical awareness. In a globalised world, where communication transcends borders, understanding this interplay is essential not only for academic inquiry but also for professional success and personal growth. This course prepares students to embrace diversity, bridge cultural boundaries, and develop intercultural communicative competence –skills indispensable for meaningful participation in today's interconnected societies.

As you move forward, remember that every word you speak carries traces of your culture, and every cultural practice you encounter is an invitation to learn. Language and culture are not abstract concepts confined to theory; they are lived realities shaping how we see ourselves and others. To study them is to cultivate empathy, curiosity, and resilience –the very qualities that allow us to thrive in diverse communities. Let this handout be more than an academic resource; let it be a reminder that intercultural understanding begins with openness, and that every encounter across cultural boundaries is an opportunity to grow.

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