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NUMEROUS TOOLS FOR INCREASING
THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF LEARNERS

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Abstract. *So far there have countless studies on encouraging and developing the intercultural competence of students`. Most of them have proved their productivity in enhancing the mentioned skill of learners`. In this thesis we will provide some relevant sample ideas, which in turn contributed to the education. For several reasons, fictional texts are suitable for developing intercultural communicative competence in learners of all ages. Not only do they invite their readers to view subjectively a nation or an ethnic group, but they also offer their audience the chance to exchange their culturally restricted points of view together with the hero or heroine of the narrative or with the narrator telling the story.*

Keywords: *actions, characters, interaction, creative tasks, intercultural objectives, cultural point of view.*

Introduction. Scientists have considered several types of methods and approaches that are helpful in boosting the intercultural competence, such as authentic materials like

literary works, audio and video materials of the target language, tandem learning which demands some interaction with native speakers or citizens, including face-to-face or online classes, modern techniques like incorporating new technologies with the help internet resources. All of them require some available facilities for implementing each type of material or resource in language classes.

Fictional texts guide their readers through the reading process focusing their attention not only on actions and characters [9, 2]. The "efferent reading" of fictional texts, a special way of reading fictional texts "aesthetically" [9, 2], enables and strengthens the readers' interaction with the text, their predicting abilities, their emotional responses, as well as their forming and re-forming of hypotheses during the reading process, all of which are necessary to fill the text with meaning.

Materials and methods. These ideas, based on concepts of literary receptionist theory, imply that teachers work with a story or poem in class not only on a cognitive but also on an affective level, offering analytical and creative tasks to arrive at a deeper understanding of the text. Often creative tasks lend themselves to a blend of literary and intercultural objectives, leaving enough space and an "anxiety-free" zone for the learners in which they can experiment with different perspectives and culturally different points of view as well as compare their own culture to the culture in the text. Attempts to assess intercultural learning aim at the description of special methods of teaching intercultural communication, like, for example, ethnographic projects [6, 1], lessons based on informative texts or other authentic material [13, 75] and lessons based on the teaching of literature [3, 10, 11]. In most cases, however, the formulation of objectives remains somewhat vague [4, 26; 8, 31; 12, 47], leaving teachers at a loss as to what to expect from their learners, how to structure their lessons and how to assess their pupils' achievements.

Another successful method is tandem learning which demands different language speakers to collaborate during the study. Tandem learning – collaborative learning between speakers of different languages – is particularly relevant to higher education contexts, as it is practically very easy to organize. Large numbers of students come from

many countries in international institutions. In particular, students from French, German, Italian and Spanish-speaking countries are highly sought after, these being the most commonly studied languages in UK universities. The concept of tandem learning is complex but its overarching principles are as follows:

Autonomy: You are responsible for your own learning;

Reciprocity: You are responsible for ensuring mutual benefit.

Students are therefore active participants in their own learning and clearly have the opportunity of setting their own agenda. Students can take part in tandem learning either face-to-face or through e-mail and either as an informal activity or as an assessed part of their degree course. This is available to students with language proficiency equivalent to Advanced level or higher, i.e. a level usually reached after six to eight years of language learning in secondary school.

Results and discussion. The tandem module has proved hugely successful in particular because students have a high degree of control over what they choose to learn and how they go about it, and they have far more opportunity to practice their speaking than in a language class. By way of illustration, here are some advantages of tandem learning: the ability to manage your own learning and learn from a native. Manage own learning and at one`s own pace and in an own way and choose what you wanted to talk about. You can talk about things which aren't in books. You choose what you learn – no restrictions. Autonomy and access to native speakers. Improve my language learning skills in a relaxed atmosphere.

In order to enable learners to take the necessary steps with regard to analysis and evaluation, one may well wish to consider some of the following possible modifications: At the start of their tandem learning venture, students can be sensitized to the possibilities of development of their intercultural communicative competence.

This could be done by the inclusion on the list of priorities of aspects such as: identification of differences and similarities between my country and that of my partner; identification of the main stereotypes which exist of each of our countries as seen from the other; understanding of possible reasons for the existence of these. Similar questions

to cover other aspects of ICC could well be devised, to make it easier for students to analyze and evaluate. Tandem learners could be encouraged to analyze more through the simple inclusion of further questions in the diary sheets; for example the inclusion of a heading of "Cultural aspects: your analysis and/or conclusions" might draw out a slightly deeper reflection on the topics discussed.

Some tandem sessions could be extended to involve two or more tandem pairs in group discussion. This could provide students with situations which take them further than their tandem relationship normally allows. Beyond the Classroom if cultural aspects of tandem learning are more directly assessed, students may well be more inclined to focus more closely on intercultural aspects. This would of course have the effect of lessening the degree of student autonomy over the tandem process.

However, regardless of whether students have chosen the development of cultural knowledge as their goal, they are in fact developing their intercultural communicative competence through tandem learning. The fact that most of them do not tend to choose cultural knowledge as one of their main priorities means that one can assume that the evidence which they provide of developing their ICC is not driven by a desire to succeed in the module, but is a genuine product of the tandem relationship.

By its very nature, tandem learning is an intercultural activity, in order to achieve their learning goals, learners must exchange ideas, opinions and negotiate ways of working with their partners. In undertaking all of this, they are communicating directly with speakers of another language/ culture. One area which provides evidence for the development of ICC is that of the choice of topics discussed by students.

Conclusion. What is certainly clear is that the acquisition of intercultural competence is a process. Learning is not necessarily a linear process, but students may well wish to revisit these issues at a later date, possibly outside the tandem relationship. The definition of culture itself as a process is supported by many. Tandem learners, whether consciously or unconsciously, are engaging in this process actively

By reading the fictional text written in a foreign language, by forming hypotheses about it, by searching for an ending that corresponds with the Teaching Intercultural

Competence through Literature characters and the plot and finally, by re-writing scenes for the text or adding scenes to it, pupils in EFL classrooms internationalize the text – it becomes part of them. Fragments of values and opinions they hold from their own cultural experience seep into their discussions and written contributions, thereby creating a "Zwischenwelt" (a kind of "in-between world"), a kind of third or inter- culture or simply an anxiety-free zone where foreign cultures can be freely discussed and explored.

The unit has shown how the encounter with foreign fictional texts may be valuable even for less experienced learners who are reluctant to read but are eager to share their own experiences and opinions, which are often taken from their own bi- or multicultural background. The learning objectives suggest how to assess the learners' achievements, as the examples have shown, which is a challenge that can be met by many teachers in many countries with differing curricular backgrounds.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DIFFERENTIATION APPROACH

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Abstract. This paper investigates strategies for pedagogical adjustment to accommodate the diverse needs of students, enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of learning environments. It particularly focuses on methodologies applicable to the teaching of writing and the supportive role of psychological principles. By integrating insights from disparate disciplines such as architecture and psychology, educators can