

# Going beyond intercultural communicative competence to become global citizens

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**Abstract:** The hot trend of global and intercultural citizen education has aroused heated discussion among the second language learners and teachers especially during the post epidemic era, which has been a new challenge for the government-funded international institutes in China. According to three guidance documents, China Education Modernization 2035, China Medium- and Long-term National Education Reform Modernization (2010-2020), and College English Curriculum Requirements of China (CECR, 2020), the new policy of internationalization of the curriculum and the cultivation of the students' intercultural communicative competence has been put on agenda by College Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee of China. In response to the CECR, the implementation of the new curriculum and syllabus should emphasize the integration of the intercultural education into the language education. The ultimate goal is to enhance learners' understanding of multiple local and global communities, to foster their skills of successful interaction in intercultural circumstances, and to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Thus, the language learners will have the global competence (GC) and become the global citizens.

**Keywords:** intercultural communicative competence; global competence; global citizen

## 1. Introduction

According to three guidance documents of education, China Education Modernization 2035 emphasized from the macro-level, the education in the new era should promote the construction of high-level cultural exchange mechanism between China and foreign countries, to expand the field of cultural exchange, and to promote people-to-people exchanges and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries; The Outline of National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Program (2010-2020) proposed to cultivate a large number of international talents with an international view, who are well acquainted with international rules and can participate in international affairs and international competition, to strengthen international understanding education, promote cross-cultural exchanges, and enhance students' knowledge and understanding of different countries and cultures; College English Curriculum Requirements of China (CECR, 2020) pointed out intercultural communication courses should aim to carry out intercultural education, to help students understand the differences between Chinese and foreign world views, values and ways of thinking, to cultivate students' intercultural awareness, and to improve students' socio-linguistic competence and intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, it proposes the construction of intercultural communication courses of foundation level, improvement level and development level. There is a consensus that the internationalization of the curriculum and the cultivation of the students' intercultural communicative competence have been put on agenda by College Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee of China. In response to this new policy, the global and intercultural citizen education has aroused heated discussion among the second language learners and teachers especially a, which has been a new challenge for the government-funded international institutes in China.

It is crucial for the language teachers to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and global competence (GC) at tertiary level as English Language Teaching (ELT) programs are possibly the most valuable opportunity for the Chinese college students to contact with the foreign teachers and foreign cultures before they enter the reality society which is becoming a global village full of international affairs and competitions. The newly emerged international institutes in China are to train the intercultural talents who are globally competent of international rules and different cultures as well as linguistically competent. This paradigm shift has posed a challenge for the policy-makers, curriculum designer and language teachers.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 The development of communicative competence

The concept of language ability or competence has developed incrementally and evolutionarily. It was first proposed by Chomsky (1956, 1965), consisting of purely only the linguistic competence, which was considered as a prerequisite to language performance. That was in response to the overemphasis on language performance in the Audiolingual Method pertaining to Bloomfield's concept of language. The linguistic competence is subscribed to the deep structure, whereas the language performance with the surface structure, both being limited to linguistic context at the grammatical level. With the advent of sociolinguistics, the language competence was redefined by Hymes (1967, 1972) by adding another component, i.e. sociolinguistic competence since the meaning of language expression is assumed to be constrained with its social context too.

With the stronger influence of functional linguistics, the concept was added another component “strategic competence”, which is related to the need for communication strategy which can keep the speaker and listeners’ interaction going, thus the term linguistic competence was changed into “grammatical competence” by Canale and Swain (1980) . It was further explored by Canale (1983) himself to include “discourse competence”. Another component “actional competence” was expanded by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Farrel (1995) . Bachman (1990) and Palmer (1996) divided communicative competence into three components: language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. Language competence is subdivided into organizational competence that involves grammatical and textual competence, and pragmatic competences which is comprised of illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence; strategic competence refers to the ability to implement language competence in a specific context, which requires tasks such as goal setting, assessment, and planning; psycho-physiological mechanisms is served as the actual neurological and psychological process involved in language production. Celce-Murcia (2007) proposed a revised model by expanding the 1995 model to include the formulaic competence and the actional competence to become the interactional competence, which has three sub-components: actional competence, conversational competence, and non-verbal paralinguistic competence. Littlewood (2011) revised his 1981 model of communicative competence by including socio-cultural competence. It is important to note that Littlewood’s framework has an element of the ability to prevent communication breakdown in intercultural communication, implying the importance of intercultural communicative competence.

Early in 1997, Byram argued that CC ignored “the significance of social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any intercultural interaction” (p. 8). It seems that “intercultural communication” might be more preferable especially when it is related to intercultural language learning, in which the foreign language learners become more aware of their own home culture in comparison with the target culture.

## 2.2 Frameworks of ICC

Intercultural communicative competence is a complex concept that has been introduced in the literature with various models. For example, Compositional model just lists various component of intercultural competence but not necessarily reveals the relationship between these components. Co-orientational models does not stress the behaviours of people to achieve common understanding in an intercultural environment. Developmental model outlines the attributes that help individuals to gradually move from “ethnocentrism” to “ethnorelativism” within the context of intercultural interactions. The emphasis pertains to psychological attributes such as mindfulness, anxiety management, empathy, perspective-taking, tolerance, and non-judgmental attitudes towards foreign cultures. Just like the adaptation model only focuses on the changes of attitudes so that these models of intercultural competence failed to acknowledge the relationship between language and culture that happens to be a priority concern for the field of intercultural communication □

There are also in-depth and extensive discussions of the notion intercultural competence and its application in the classrooms. Among them, Byram’s (1997) description of intercultural communicative competence is still one of the most well-known and influential models for language teaching and learning. Byram referred to attitudes, knowledge, and skills as essential components required to manage a successful interaction and to cope with effective engagement with otherness in intercultural situations. Drawing upon Byram’s concept of ICC, the model of intercultural competence proposed by Deardorff (2006) focused on the ongoing nature of intercultural competence. The emphasis of her Process Model of Intercultural Competence was on the transformative process resulting from the learners’ continued evolution, change, and learning. Deardorff’s process orientation model included attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, internal outcomes, and external outcomes related to intercultural interactions.

Global citizenship education (GCE) is aimed at preparing students for the challenges of the globalized world who can think beyond national borders and recognize the global scale of social relations, respect value of diversity, and participate in and take responsibility to communities ranging from the local to the global level. GCE can be aligned with Bodis’ framework of learning outcome in three aspects, namely the cognitive aspect as knowledge, through the intercultural learning experiences in class students should be able to cooperate and work collectively with others, to understand and deliver a message effectively, using first and other languages; psychomotor aspects as skills, students should have the creative skills such as the ability to think and express oneself in an original way; affective aspect as attitudes and action, students should be able to possess the questioning skills, such as the ability to deploy critical thinking skills, questioning oneself and the world at large.

Internationalization of higher education has been a hot topic while many issues of internationalization come into being especially in the international institutes. Students’ intercultural sensitivity, awareness and sense of global citizenship will be increased whenever or wherever they come across different cultures as the popularity of internationalization in higher education. However, the research results only show the experience of international students who are going abroad are related to the ICC and GC without any reference to the students who are pursuing the higher education in the international institutes and whether they need in-house syllabus and curriculum or not. Therefore, it is beneficial for the policy makers and curriculum designers to investigate students’ learning experiences in international institutes and its relationship to their ICC and GC development as well as revealing the relationship between development of ICC, GC.

### 3. Integrating ICC and GC into foreign language teaching

In field of intercultural approaches to language education, the research has been expanded from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence by Byram and other pioneers. Besides the notion of intercultural competence and awareness, intercultural/global citizenship has also raised the interests of the teachers and researchers in the second language education and English language teaching programs.

ICC and GC can be cultivated in the classroom from the three aspects and in alignment with the learning outcomes, graduate attributes, tasks and activities, and assessment. However, the current EFL textbooks and teaching materials only contained superficial cultural elements such as food, holidays, tourist sites, traffic and transportation, so students have no opportunity to experience the authentic intercultural interaction which may occur in different cultural backgrounds, especially for the Chinese undergraduates because the English classroom is the only place for them to learn foreign language and culture formally and systematically. For the Chinese college students, most of them only have one-year English learning experience which involving one compulsory English course. It is crucial to design the syllabus and curriculum with clear learning outcomes and assessments integrating ICC and GC skills which could provide students with more valuable opportunities in the programs to develop the expected competence to become global citizens.

### 4. The proposed integration model

The proposed model synthesized the various factors concerning the relationship and evolution of ICC in foreign language teaching context, and ICC, GC implemented at the tertiary level, significance and necessity of integrating ICC, GC and GCE into the ELT programs and the leaning outcomes and assessment of ICC.

**Table 1 The proposed integration model**

Awareness	Do the input texts have an element of cultural diversity/facilitate talking about various points of view?
	Do the texts in language-focused tasks (e.g. grammar activities, sample texts) reflect social/cultural diversity?
Attitude	Do reflection-focused tasks facilitate accepting cultural, linguistic, social diversity thorough analysis and evaluation?
	Do reflection and discussion questions homogenize groups rather than acknowledged intra-cultural diversity?
	Do the tasks facilitate the development of “tolerating ambiguity”?
Behavior	Is language for cross-cultural communication addressed?
	Is it non-culture specific? E. g. ways and functions of indirectness
	Are there practice activities? Are there tasks that require students to demonstrate intercultural competence?
	Is any of the above part of any assessment task?

### 5. Conclusion

Due to the complex nature and its urgency, the integration and investigation of ICC-based English programe is not only worth but also crucial in exploring teachers’ and students’ perceptions of ICC, teaching and learning experience and their development of ICC skills. In reviewing the literature, majority of studies on ICC have taken the theoretical perspective and have mostly employed surveys and interviews as primary data collection instruments. There is therefore a need for more complex research design that include the instrument above, but which include longitudinal empirical studies in order to carry out in-depth explorations of the impact of ICC-based programs on developing Chinese students ICC skills, which gives rise to strong assumptions concerning the designing and implementation of ICC-based foreign language teaching. The synthesis of the proposed model will pave way to the significance of ICC and GC education in Chinese universities.

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