Intercultural communicative language teaching: influence of teachers’ proficiency on their practices

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New Zealand Aotearoa

• Super-diversity

“New Zealand has more ethnicities than the world has countries”
(Statistics New Zealand, 2013)

• Curriculum for languages

• Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (iCLT) (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010)
Learning Languages

He taonga ngā reo katoa
All languages are to be treasured

Interacting
Making Meaning

Communicative
Competence
Knowledge
Awareness

In learning languages, students learn to communicate in an additional language, develop their capacity to learn further languages, and explore different world views in relation to their own.

Scarr, 2000
Learning languages is a school setting that develops learners’ abilities for successful language and learning language. Learners need to learn how to learn and how to learn a language. Even more important is that they develop higher-order thinking skills and that they perceive the importance relationship between thoughts, language and knowledge.

Krashen, 1993
As a dynamic view of culture, included competence is seen, therefore, as intercultural competence. It is the ability to negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries and to expand one’s own identity as a user of another language.

Byram, 1995
An intercultural competent individual is someone who can open their linguistic competence and their cultural awareness to awareness of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, in order to manage interactions across cultural boundaries, to participate in intercultural dialogue caused by differences in values, meanings and beliefs, and finally, to cope with the effective as well as cognitive demands and engagement with others.
New Zealand Aotearoa

- Super-diversity
  
  “New Zealand has more ethnicities than the world has countries”
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- Curriculum for languages

- Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (iCLT)
  (Newton, Yates, Shearn & Nowitzki, 2010)
Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (iCLT)

• A commissioned-report by NZ Ministry of Education in 2010

• An evidence-based framework of six principles for effective teaching

• “The person who learns a language without learning a culture risks becoming a fluent fool” (J. Bennett, M. Bennett, & Allen, 2003, p. 237)
Theories underpinning

- Communicative Language Teaching
- Model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997)
- Dynamic view of culture (Liddicoat, 2001)
  
  Culture as practice: exploring self, exploring culture and comparing cultures

- A pathway for developing intercultural competence (Liddicoat, 2003)
iCLT Principles

1. integration of language and culture
2. genuine social interaction
3. exploratory and reflective approach to culture and culture-in-language
4. explicit comparisons and connections
5. diverse learners and learning contexts
6. intercultural communicative competence

(Newton, Yates, Shearn, & Nowitzki, 2010)
Challenges

• Lack of preparation (Peiser & Jones, 2013)

• Absence of a commonly understood intercultural teaching methodology (Conway, Richards, Harvey & Roskvist, 2010)

• Lack of understanding and own development of interculturality (Deardorff, 2009a)

• No language policy

• No minimum level of proficiency (East, 2008)
My study

• **Research Question:**
  Do teachers with different levels of proficiency have different practices of intercultural communicative language teaching?

• **Participants:**
  8 teachers of languages
  - 2 Chinese
  - 2 Japanese
  - 2 Spanish
  - 2 French

• **Methodology and analysis:**
  Classroom observations, reflections and interviews
  Data was analysed using the iCLT framework (Newton et al., 2010)
Proficiency

- Selection of participants
  - National advisers
  - Proficiency test

- Classification

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iCLT Principles

1. integration of language and culture
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(Newton, Yates, Shearn, & Nowitzki, 2010)
Evidence from interviews
Principle 1: Integrate language and culture from the beginning

Through greetings, verbal and non-verbal language to greet, ask for and thank, to show gratitude and respect, etc.

B

I try to take as many opportunities as I can to use the target language with them and **greeting [students] at the beginning and saying good bye at the end** is one of the basic ones.

Principle 2: Engage learners in genuine social interaction

Through meaningful interaction by using activities in authentic language situations, e.g. interaction with native speakers.

C

You don’t only learn language through speaking with a Japanese student but you learn so much more about their culture and how they speak, what kind of words they use, how they act and yeah for me it is giving as many opportunities for students to do that.
Principle 3: Encourage and develop exploratory and reflective approach to culture and culture-in-language

Shifting focus from transmission of objective cultural knowledge (food, festivities, etc.) to exploration by learners of both visible and invisible culture (values, beliefs, etc.) to construct knowledge from experience and reflection.

I have a section in class about 20 to 30 minutes each week we have a picture of the week where I introduce a particular aspect of Japanese culture and we have some discussion about it and to encourage more like deeper thought by the students.

Principle 4: Foster explicit comparisons and connections between languages and cultures

Reflective and interpretative comparison which draws on the learners’ current knowledge as well as the new knowledge they are encountering.

Students tend to be more comfortable when they see a point [or an aspect of the target culture which] allows them to compare and contrast their own culture and how different a culture is.
Principle 5: Acknowledge and respond to diverse learners and learning contexts

Cultural and linguistic diversity among learners to explore all cultures in the classroom alongside the target one.

[Encouraging students with different cultural backgrounds explain to their peers how they do things] helps them to feel valued, listened to and it might make the other students take interest in their classmates' cultural background and to see they are not just one random person that they find out they might learn some more things from the student.

Principle 6: Emphasise intercultural communicative competence rather than native-speaker competence

The native speaker is dead! The model of native speaker is an impossible target and leads to adopt a new sociocultural identity while separating from one’s own. Having communication skills and abilities to interact with people from other cultures and with other languages is what really matters!

It is really good for [my students] to see me trying to speak Chinese to the native speakers because it shows them you don’t have to be perfect to speak. They can see that the Chinese people can understand what I’m saying and understand what they’re saying.
### Results from observations and reflections

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Preliminary findings

• Implicit knowledge about the importance of culture in learning languages

• A difference between:
  - Asian and European languages
  - Proficiency levels

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A more intercultural approach to teaching languages

Language and culture as two different components
Implications and next steps

- Language proficiency and understanding of the relation between language and culture
- Proficiency and interculturality
- Understanding of interculturality
- Ideas and tools to implement an intercultural approach in their classrooms
- Larger study: 16 participants
References

Questions? Comments?

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http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-f8sp5wUyU7Y/UtfsoT_ZWlI/AAAAAAABaQY/aUu8qLTHWJc/s1600/Gracias+18.jpg