

Understanding Culture and Intercultural Awareness in Intercultural Communication through ELF

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Lee, Kanghee. 2018. Understanding culture and intercultural awareness in intercultural communication through ELF. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 18–1, 30–49. It is commonly accepted that culture and language are closely intertwined each other. However, the cultural dimension to language has still stayed as a national concept, and the interrelation between the English language and a specific culture based on a particular native speaker variety has been criticized as a problem. This study will revisit the conceptualization of culture and the relationship between culture and language and examine some theoretical concepts such as third place, transcultural flows, critical cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness. This paper argues that the relationship between culture and language in ELF is in a constant tension between individual, local, regional and global contexts, and the concept of culture needs to be approached in a more complex and flexible manner between ‘fluidity’ and ‘fixity’. Therefore, the nature of culture in ELF, where communication takes place in multilingual and multicultural contexts, is more emergent, situated and dynamic. This would propose that ELF speakers need to develop intercultural awareness and negotiation and mediation skills to effectively manage the diversity and complexity in intercultural communication.

Keywords: ELF, intercultural communication, culture, intercultural awareness, complexity

1. Introduction

Globalization has led to the change of the role of English, which is more used for international communication for political, economic, business, cultural

and academic purposes. English is used most commonly as a contact language between speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and today the linguacultural environment of the world has become more multilingual and multicultural (Kramsch 2009). In addition, the extensive use of English in a various range of settings, domains and purposes calls into question our perception of the ownership and norms of the English language use. Therefore, a nation–state based approach to culture and language, which involves key tenets of monolingual speakers, homogeneous speech community and monolithic views of standard national languages, is no longer appropriate to demonstrate the current sociolinguistic situation of English use. The traditional approach to English language teaching (ELT), whose main goal is to master native–like syntactic, lexical and phonological features of language, is also irrelevant for many L2 speakers who learn and use English for intercultural communication or English as a lingua franca (ELF), because their top priority of learning a language is for effective communication and exchange of messages and information. Therefore, nowadays L2 speakers of English are required to develop the ability to use diverse communicative resources and adapt to a range of communicative situations in the course of interaction through the negotiation of meanings and mediation skills (Kang and Lee 2012, Kim and Chung 2016, D’Angelo 2017).

It is commonly accepted that culture and language are closely intertwined each other (Kramsch 1993, 1998, Risager 2006). However, the cultural dimension to language has still stayed as a national concept. For example, when we talk about English and culture, a particular linguistic and cultural code such as British English or US culture is often referred as a standard frame of reference. Even though the English language includes to some extent its own culture and conveys particular values and beliefs, today English has been more used as a means of intercultural communication in a global context rather than simply as one of foreign languages used in one specific country. Therefore, an interrelation between the English language and a specific culture based on a particular native speaker variety has been criticized as a problem (Holliday 2010, 2011, Joseph 2004).

This study will revisit the conceptualization of culture and the relationship between culture and language and some theoretical concepts as regards these issues such as third place, transcultural flows, critical cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness. This paper will also include the discussion on how the notion of culture and the relation between language and culture are perceived in ELF communication and intercultural communication and how culture and intercultural awareness can be presented and approached in ELT. Understanding a complex and multifaceted nature of culture in intercultural communication will provide useful pedagogic implications for classroom teaching and language teachers in ELT.

2. The Relationship between Culture & Language

Language is viewed as the key semiotic vehicle of characterizing and constructing culture (Greez 1973, Halliday 1979). Language allows people to create a range of types of culture, and socialization and learning in society take place through language. As language use and learning occur in socio-cultural contexts, the relationship between language and context is significantly intertwined. However, language does not govern people's beliefs, values and perspectives in a restricted way. As Baker (2011) puts it, "language certainly influences our perception of the world but it does not restrict it" (p. 198). In other words, speakers are able to view the world in various ways, and perceptions in culture are less likely to be confined with a specific language or variety of language. Therefore, it is problematic and extremely simplistic to explicate the relationship between language and culture in national terms, because the current sociolinguistic situation of language use has become more dynamic and complicated, and the concept of culture flows across local, national, and global contexts. When it comes to the intercultural communication through ELF in global contexts, where cultural diversity and fluidity are pervasive, this simple and linear view on culture and language is more problematic. ELF communication takes place in multilingual and

multicultural settings, and the diversity and variability are common in terms of speakers' lingua-cultural backgrounds, contexts of use, domains and modes of communication. Even different cultures exist according to genders, generations, occupations, races and religions. All these factors have their own cultures, and consequently elements that constitute a culture do not limit to the national based notion but are more likely to vary according to participants, contexts and modes of interaction.

However, more importantly, language can never be culturally neutral, even when it is used as a lingua franca, where functional aspects of use are highlighted. Although some researchers view ELF as culturally neutral (House 2014, Kirkpatrick 2007, Meierkord 2002), communication is inevitably embedded in socio-cultural settings, and the language in intercultural communication like any other communications "always involves people, places, and purposes, none of which exist in a cultural vacuum" (Baker 2012a, p. 64). The concepts of ideology and identity also make language not culturally neutral. As culture is perceived as an ideological process, ideological dimensions to language have been highlighted in intercultural communication with regard to cultural identity and identification (Holliday 2011). Byram (2008) delineates an intercultural citizenship, in which speakers experience intercultural communications across less constrained cultural grouping, as a more idealized identity that speakers need to develop for successful intercultural communication. As intercultural speakers perceive themselves as members of communities of practice in multilingual and multicultural communication, they can make an effective negotiation and mediation of different cultures and languages in intercultural communication. The notion of intercultural citizenship can provide a more relevant and attainable learning model for L2 speakers. In other words, L2 learners and users of English are given "an identification which recognizes the importance of their L1 and C1 (first culture) and their resources as bilingual communicators" (Baker 2012b, p. 30). By emphasising multilingualism and multiculturalism, intercultural citizenship can help L2 speakers raise awareness on the fluid and emergent nature of correlation between culture, language and identity which are crucial

for intercultural communication in global contexts. In many contexts of use, English has provided L2 speakers with a means of formulating and shaping more fluid and dynamic new identities along with the relatively stable identities of L1/C1.

The relationship between culture and language has become more fluid and dynamic in ELF. In other words, ELF takes place in the sociocultural circumstances which are emergent, fluid and situated rather than in fixed, bounded and confined settings, because linguistic and cultural resources in ELF communication continue to move between and across local, national, and global contexts. In this respect, the notion of a “third place” in L2 communication provides a highly pertinent explanation on the cultural space of language use (Kramsch 1993, p. 233). The concept of third place stresses the L2 speakers’ capability to mediate and relativize cultures. According to the model, L2 communication operates in a third place, which is another space dominated by neither the L2 speaker’s first language (L1) and culture (C1) nor the target language (L2) and culture (C2). In other words, L2 communication is processed along a “cultural faultline” (p. 25) where communicative practices are governed by the norms of neither L1/C1 nor L2/C2 but new cultural practices and forms are created in intercultural settings. In the contexts of intercultural communication, specific languages and cultures are less likely to provide cultural assumptions and frames of reference, because the language used as a lingua franca is no longer the property of any specific culture or country, but the ownership of the language belongs to all the participants involved in the interaction. When L2 speakers are involved in the intercultural communication in which two or more languages and cultures operate, they continue to make an effort to achieve mediation and negotiation between their own language and culture and those of others.

Pennycook (2007) also supports the dynamic fluidity of language and culture, focusing on the case of English. He draws the notion of ‘transcultural flows’ and argues that English plays a major role in global flows of culture and knowledge in “multiple domains of globalization” (p. 19). Pennycook views that English has both fluid and fixed nature due to its translocal and transnational

movement, and therefore English involves both localities and correlations in wider social contexts. In other words, as English has spread internationally, linguistic forms and cultural practices of English continue to move and flow across national borders and different communities, and new localized forms of practices are created. The linguistic forms and cultural practices continue to be modified, negotiated and adapted according to the context of use, purposes of communication and interlocutors, and the speakers' identities are refashioned in different contexts through the process of borrowing, mixing, observing and revisiting. Pennycook highlights that when the relationship between language and culture is demonstrated with the notion of globalization, the dichotomic view in culture and language is no longer appropriate, that is, the simple distinction between global or local, imperialism or pluralism, and homogeneity or heterogeneity. In other words, the interaction between the global and the local is not a one-way process but both are mutually influenced, and English as a means of intercultural communication has both fluidity and fixity, where language and culture not only "move across space, borders, communities, nations" but also "become localized, indigenized, re-created in the local" (Pennycook 2007, p. 7).

3. Cultural Awareness & Intercultural Awareness

For successful intercultural communication, speakers need to recognize the significance of the cultural aspect of communicative competence, that is, cultural awareness (CA), which refers to "a conscious understanding of the role of culture in language learning and use" (Baker 2012a, p. 65). The notion of CA emphasizes the need for language learners and users to have awareness on "the culturally based norms, beliefs, and behaviors of their own culture and other cultures" (Baker 2012a, p. 65). Speakers need to understand culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs, and values as well as the role that culture and communicative context play in interpretation and negotiation of meaning. In

addition, language users need to be aware of the relative nature of cultural norms in interaction and the fact that cultural understanding is temporary and open to revision. As individual speakers are members of many different social groups, multiple voices and perspectives are possible within any cultural groupings and boundaries.

Byram (1997) provided the notion of ‘critical CA’ which is involved in “an understanding of the relative nature of cultural norms” which leads to “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (1997, p. 53). The concept of critical CA stresses the understanding of “the multi-voiced nature of culture which contains conflicting and contradictory views” (Baker 2011, p. 200). From the CA perspectives, the norm of monolingual native speakers is not necessarily the most idealized model in ELT in all contexts of learning, and alternatively the notion of intercultural speaker (Byram 1997, p. 31) is proposed as a more relevant model for L2 speakers. According to critical CA, identity and group membership (affiliation) are important elements in understanding the process of mediation and negotiation of meanings in intercultural communication, where one particular participant cannot provide the norms or target model with which the other interlocutors should comply. More importantly, speakers can expand and develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of CA as they experience diverse intercultural communication and understand both specific and various cultures and languages.

While CA has provided an account of the value and importance of culture in communication, the notion is also constrained to describing cultural groups and practices at the national level from the comparative cross-cultural perspectives. In other words, CA is commonly concerned with comparing one culture and another or influences of a specific culture on another or other cultures. However, this approach is problematic and inappropriate in the current multilingual and multicultural environment, where diversity and heterogeneity are pervasive in language use, because “a user or learner of English could not be expected to have a knowledge of all the different cultural contexts of communication they may encounter and even less so the languacultures of the

participants in this communication” (Baker 2012a, p. 65). Consequently, whereas a great part of accounts in CA might be helpful in understanding cultural difference and relativization, they need to move beyond the nation-based understanding of culture in intercultural communication, where there is no one specific norm of culture but culture can move, adapt and combine in a more dynamic and fluid way. In other words, cultural influences in intercultural communication and ELF tend to be varied, fragmented and emergent as hybridity is pervasive in interaction in this context and it is constantly involved in dynamic progress with no limited end point. Therefore, the notion of intercultural awareness is suggested as a more relevant supplement for intercultural communication.

Intercultural awareness (ICA) is defined as “a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication” (Baker 2011, p. 202). Under the intercultural awareness, language users are aware that culturally attributed frames of reference, forms and communicative practices are concerned with both specific cultures and hybrid and emergent elements in cultural contact in intercultural communication. Baker (2011, 2012a) presented a comprehensive model of ICA which describes diverse elements of ICA and correlations among them. The model makes a distinction between conceptual ICA and practice-oriented ICA. Conceptual ICA is associated with the types of attitudes to and knowledge of culture that speakers need to participate in intercultural communication and the ability to express these attitudes and knowledge. Practice-oriented ICA is related to how cultural perspective, knowledge and conscious understanding are applied in real-time communication and therefore emphasizes communicative skills of negotiation and mediation of meanings. Whereas practice-oriented ICA is concerned with abilities and skills, they rely on knowledge, ideas, and attitudes developed in conceptual ICA.

According to the model, in the initial stage of interaction in intercultural communication, speakers tend to have a general awareness of the role of

cultures on their own and others and can compare cultural differences and articulate their own cultural perspective. As speakers start to have more advanced cultural awareness on the complexity of cultures, they understand the relative nature of cultural norms and perceive individuals as members of cultural groups. They can develop multiple voices or perspectives within cultural grouping and discover common ground between specific cultures and possibilities for misunderstanding and miscommunication between different cultures. On the final level of intercultural awareness, speakers are able to have awareness of culturally based frames of reference, forms and communicative practices as emergent and dynamic in intercultural communication. Speakers may draw cultural stereotypes or use nation-based cultural generalization at the initial level of intercultural awareness but they can develop an ability to go beyond these biased perspectives through the process of negotiation and mediation in interaction and finally view cultures as complex and fluid rather than bounded and fixed entities (Baker 2011, p. 203).

Rather than focusing exclusively on one specific culture such as US culture or British culture, cultural contents in ELT should foreground how participants engage in culture-related issues or topics in intercultural communication and how ELF speakers cope with these encounters and achieve successful negotiation of meaning. ELF speakers need to recognize fluid boundaries of language and culture and expand insights into diversity and potential change in communicative practices and cultural references. Intercultural awareness can encourage speakers to understand and negotiate the complexity of culture in intercultural communication, which is less likely to involve a priori identified cultural groups and affiliation but seeks to co-construct shared meaning and mutual understanding.

4. Culture in ELF

Although language is closely related to culture, and a specific language can

reflect and represent a distinctive culture, it is overly simplistic to approach and understand the relationships between language and culture in national boundaries, as mentioned earlier. In particular, when a language is used as a lingua franca such as English today, there is no point to name and categorize a native speaker culture. As there is a growing level of multitude and diversity of English in terms of users, domains and contexts of use, there can be no one culture of English (Baker 2009, Jenkins 2007, Seidlhofer 2011). When English is used as a means of intercultural communication, the relations between culture and language have become emergent and fluid, and the boundaries of one language and culture and another are less likely to be strictly distinguished.

Such fluid and complex nature of culture in intercultural communication through ELF is supported by a number of studies. For example, Risager (2007) argues that the national paradigm of language and culture needs to move towards a “transnational paradigm” (2007, p. 222) where language users participate in intercultural communication as a member of a wider global community of practice, and Kramsch (2009) also highlights an approach to language and culture from multilingual and multicultural perspectives where “dynamic, flexible and locally contingent” communicative competence and practices are important in intercultural communication (p. 200). Rampton’s (1995) notion of liminality also delineates that the nature of culture in ELF cannot be represented by one specific cultural practice or forms. Rather, linguistic and cultural practices can have new forms and meanings according to different situations and contexts of use, particularly in intercultural communication such as ELF which is not affiliated in any specific culture or community. Therefore, culture can be perceived as “dynamic and fluid resources in intercultural communication that emerge in-situ as more or less relevant to creating understanding” (Baker 2011, p. 200), and it might be better to approach and understand culture as a ‘verb’ rather than a noun which overtly contains static connotations (Roberts et al. 2001).

Risager (2006) makes a distinction between the relationship of language and culture in the generic sense and in the differential sense to account for the

complex nature of cultures. In the generic sense, language and culture are interwoven, since languages always express, embody and represent cultural reality. However, in the differential sense, where specific languages and cultures are discussed, language and culture can be separated. All languages can have new cultural meanings, which is referred to as languacultures (Agar 1994), according to speakers, contexts and purposes of communication. Consequently, a language can have as diverse languacultures as the number of speakers, and cultures cannot be clearly identified and distinguished.

Consequently, to demonstrate the interrelation between language and culture in ELF, we need to approach the notion of culture from a more complex perspective than culturally neutral or deterministic approach (Baker 2015a). In other words, culture operates under a constant tension between ‘fluidity’ and ‘fixity’ (Pennycook 2007) where more traditional normative conceptualization of culture coexists with more emergent and situated cultural practices. Therefore, cultural frames of reference in ELF are more likely to be hybrid, diverse, and multiple, and the relationship between language and culture in ELF cannot be defined and identified in a priori approach without viewing each specific case of interaction. In this respect, Baker (2015a) proposes conceptualizing ELF as “transcultural communication” rather than intercultural because it is difficult to identify and distinguish what cultures engage in ELF (Baker 2015a, p. 14). The notion of transcultural communication entails less static perspectives of culture where communication takes place through and across different cultures rather than between cultures as in intercultural communication.

One of the fundamental principles of understanding culture as a complex system is that social practices are always understood in a partial and situated manner. However, at the same time the social system cannot be understood by dividing it into each individual component, but the interrelations between each component is crucial for understanding the whole system. As the complexity approach emphasizes the interplay “between the emergence of structure on one hand and process or change on the other” (Larsen–Freeman 2011, p. 52), pre-existing rules and norms, which are currently regular and stable, can be changed and modified as a result of observation and discovery of new rules

and patterns. Sealey and Carter (2004), and Taylor (2001) also support the intersubjectivity of culture and the relationship as an integral part of the system. They argue that cultural elements exist in interrelation to each other and through constant interactions between individual components. From the perspective of complexity theory, Baker (2015a) provides a conceptualization of cultures as follows:

Equally importantly given the high degree of individual variation, cultures are constantly in change, with new beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices becoming socially sedimented while other ones fall out of use. At the same time, this social sedimentation provides a degree of stability. However, the constant changes that are part of the “system” mean a full account is never possible and the system is in a constantly emergent state with no fixed end point. (p. 16)

The complexity approach provides not only a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding culture in ELF as a contingent and emergent system but also an opportunity to recognize unpredictability and uncertainty as natural and common phenomena in ELF. From the complexity perspective, we can eschew a dichotomic approach between our culture and other cultures by foregrounding interrelations and dynamic flows of cultural systems. In other words, cultures as a complex system correlate and affect each other and consequently there are no clear boundaries between one system and another. Given that cultures in ELF are enacted “in a hybrid, mixed, and liminal manner, drawing on and moving between global, national, local, and individual orientations”, cultural forms, practices, and frames of reference in ELF need to be seen as “adaptive and emergent resources which are negotiated and context dependent” rather than as a priori defined products (Baker 2009, p. 567).

5. Culture and ELT

The lack of integration of culture into ELT pedagogy is criticized by many applied linguists and ELT practitioners (Cortazzi and Jin 1999, Leung 2005, Vettorel 2010, Young and Sachdev 2011). Despite the importance of culture and intercultural awareness in language learning and use, the cultural approach to ELT has been still relegated in teacher training, teaching materials, curriculum development and language assessments. For this reason, culture or intercultural communicative competence has been treated as the additional “fifth skill” compared to other language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking (Tomalin 2008). However, cultural awareness and intercultural competence are an integral part of intercultural communication, and therefore the emphasis has been placed on the significance of cultural dimensions to language teaching (Kramsch 1993, 1998) and a more extensive understanding of the diverse cultural contexts of English use (Porto 2010, Suzuki 2010).

The emphasis on the concept of ‘*languaculture*’ (Agar 1994), which views language as a cultural practice and therefore the cultural dimensions of language is stressed on language teaching, might be the starting point. One of the crucial tasks of ELT is to help students aware of languacultural diversity and fluidity, including the fact that any speaker develop languacultures throughout the contact and experience of language use and communication. To help students develop languacultural variability in practice, students need to work with a range of activities in classroom learning. For example, teachers can inform students of the current changing sociolinguistic situations in English language use, and can provide texts on relevant topics such as multilingualism, multiculturalism and intercultural communication. The actual intercultural communications can be shown to students for the further group discussion, and the activity can be supplemented with the culture-related vocabulary and sentence-completion tasks to develop semantic and pragmatic languaculture. To make students understand various cultural contexts of English use, teachers can illustrate Kachru’s three circle model by demonstrating the notion of the

inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle and show where and how English is used today. The fact that English is no longer a foreign language used in the native speaker context but acts as a global language for intercultural communication can encourage students to expand and develop their intercultural awareness.

There have been some attempts to apply the cultural approach to classroom teaching. For example, Galloway (2013) incorporated CA and ICA in her teaching program in a Japanese university, drawing on issues such as global Englishes, ELF, and various socio-cultural contexts of the English use. After the program, students expressed the awareness of multilingual and multicultural dimensions of the English communication and presented positive attitudes to diversity and flexibility in ELF and intercultural communication. The similar result was observed in Baker's (2011) study. Baker incorporated the topics of global Englishes and ICA into his teaching course in a Thai university including the relationship between language and culture, the role of English as a global language for intercultural communication and the diversity and fluidity of culture in communication. Both teachers and students demonstrated the awareness on the fluid and dynamic nature of culture in intercultural communication and the significance of the mediation and negotiation of cultural practices for successful intercultural communication.

When language is understood as a cultural practice, awareness on complexity, fluidity, and flexibility is key in intercultural communication. To overcome complexity and achieve flexibility, students need to develop intercultural communicative competence beyond linguistic competence. The key to promoting cultural dimensions of the knowledge, skills and attitudes for successful intercultural communication is more exposure to the intercultural communication situations (Baker 2009, Byram, Nichols and Stevens 2001, Roberts et al. 2001). Intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence can be integrated and developed into the classroom teaching practice by providing opportunities for cultural issues and experiences of intercultural contacts. Firstly, learners need to be provided with a range of opportunities to understand the relations between culture, language and communication. For

instance, learners can examine their own culture and the complexity of local cultures as a starting point ahead of understanding other cultures. Learners can discuss the views on their own and other cultures and languages, which may lead to understanding how the knowledge, skills and attitudes can be influenced by cultural contexts, and introducing the notion of cultural diversity and fluidity in intercultural communication can help learners raise awareness on the complex and emergent nature of culture and language. In addition to intercultural awareness, students can develop communicative competence by observing how speakers interact in the actual intercultural communication or ELF and practicing a variety of pragmatic strategies and interactional skills to enhance mutual understanding and effectiveness for intercultural communication.

Furthermore, through the analysis of how cultural images are described and presented in a variety of language learning materials and media, learners can develop critical and reflexive perspectives on stereotypical and fragmented cultural images. Learners need to recognize and understand that cultural information and sources can be subjective and partial, and cultural diversities and complexities can be negotiated and mediated between different cultures. By engaging in intercultural communication both face-to-face and online and having more discussions on diverse cultural issues, learners can develop critical awareness on and understanding of cultures in intercultural communication and build adaptive skills and flexible attitudes for successful intercultural communication. Most importantly, L2 learners and teachers of English need to move beyond the understanding of culture as a national concept and recognize “wider plurilingual and transcultural ideas of competence, performance, and awareness” (Baker 2015a, p. 23). From the ICA perspective, L2 learners need to recognize flexible and context-specific nature of the knowledge, skills and attitudes.

6. Conclusion

Given that English language is no longer viewed as the property of native speakers of the language, the traditional approach to the relationship between language and culture is not appropriate and applicable to the context of intercultural communication through ELF. In other words, the interrelation between language and culture in ELF, which occurs in multilingual and multicultural contexts of communication, is less likely to be static, linear, and homogeneous but more complex and difficult to clearly identify and define. Cultures in ELF need to be perceived as hybrid, emergent, and dynamic entities which are “in a constant state of fluidity and flux” between local, national and global resources (Baker 2009, p. 568), and new cultural forms, practices, and frames of reference can be created and employed in each situation of intercultural communication.

A number of crucial concepts in relation to culture in intercultural communication such as intercultural awareness, intercultural speaker, and intercultural citizenship overtly reject the “national paradigm” of language and culture and instead accept a “transnational paradigm” (Risager 2007, p. 222) where speakers participate in intercultural communication as a member of global communities of practice. Accordingly, the concept of culture needs to be approached from multilingual and multicultural perspectives where fluidity, flexibility, and contingency are prevalent, and what is key to understand culture in intercultural communication through ELF is “the process of communication rather than the end product” (Baker 2011, p. 201).

The relationship between language and culture has become emergent and dynamic in the context of intercultural communication through ELF, and boundaries of one language and culture and another have been less strictly demarcated in the current multilingual and multicultural world. Therefore, the view of a specific language and national approach to culture has lost its legitimacy. Instead, language and culture are more likely to modify, adapt and shift according to the need of the speakers and contexts of use. Consequently,

when English is used as a lingua franca in intercultural communication, it is “in constant tension between individual, local, regional and global contexts, all of which need to be approached as dynamic and changeable” (Baker 2011, p. 199).

Therefore, intercultural communication needs to be perceived as a constantly changing and negotiated social process where the cultural dimension is crucial. Accordingly, the role of culture and socio-cultural contexts of use is significantly essential to understand language processes and practices in intercultural communication through English, and cultural and intercultural awareness is as important as acquiring a knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology in language. In addition, the emergent, dynamic and complex nature of culture in ELF would propose that there is no explicit target culture which speakers aim to acquire and comply with. ELF speakers need develop an ability to apply intercultural awareness to communicative practices and negotiation and mediation skills to effectively manage the diversity and complexity in intercultural communication.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Secondary and Tertiary

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