

# DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: SURVEYING EFL LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE, STRATEGIES, and ATTITUDES

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## Abstract

Understanding others has long been a goal of language teaching yet remaining in the background of educational practices (Liddoat, 2012). The existing challenge in the language-teaching domain is the integration of culture and language. The incentive to conduct this study was the gap of teaching culture in language classrooms. The researcher investigated learners' opinions on the presentation of English-speaking countries' (ESC) culture and he tried to explore the cultural knowledge scope of Iranian EFL learners and to examine the strategies they used to acquire intercultural communicative competence. 26 male and female EFL learners, intermediate and upper-intermediate level, were interviewed to probe the knowledge, strategies, and attitudes of Iranian EFL learners. The result showed the total inclination of Iranian EFL learners toward cultural understanding. However, their knowledge scope was not proportionate with their language proficiency. Analyzing the strategies, the researcher found some strategies were common to Iranian EFL learners. The participants of this study corroborated the importance of culture teaching and considered culture as important as English language itself. It can be concluded that culture teaching is a requirement for language classrooms, which facilitates language learning, makes learners tolerant of the target culture, and results in the realization of the learners' own culture. Much more effort is required in order to apply and perform culture teaching in the real language classrooms.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communicative competence, cultural knowledge, attitude, learning strategy, culture teaching