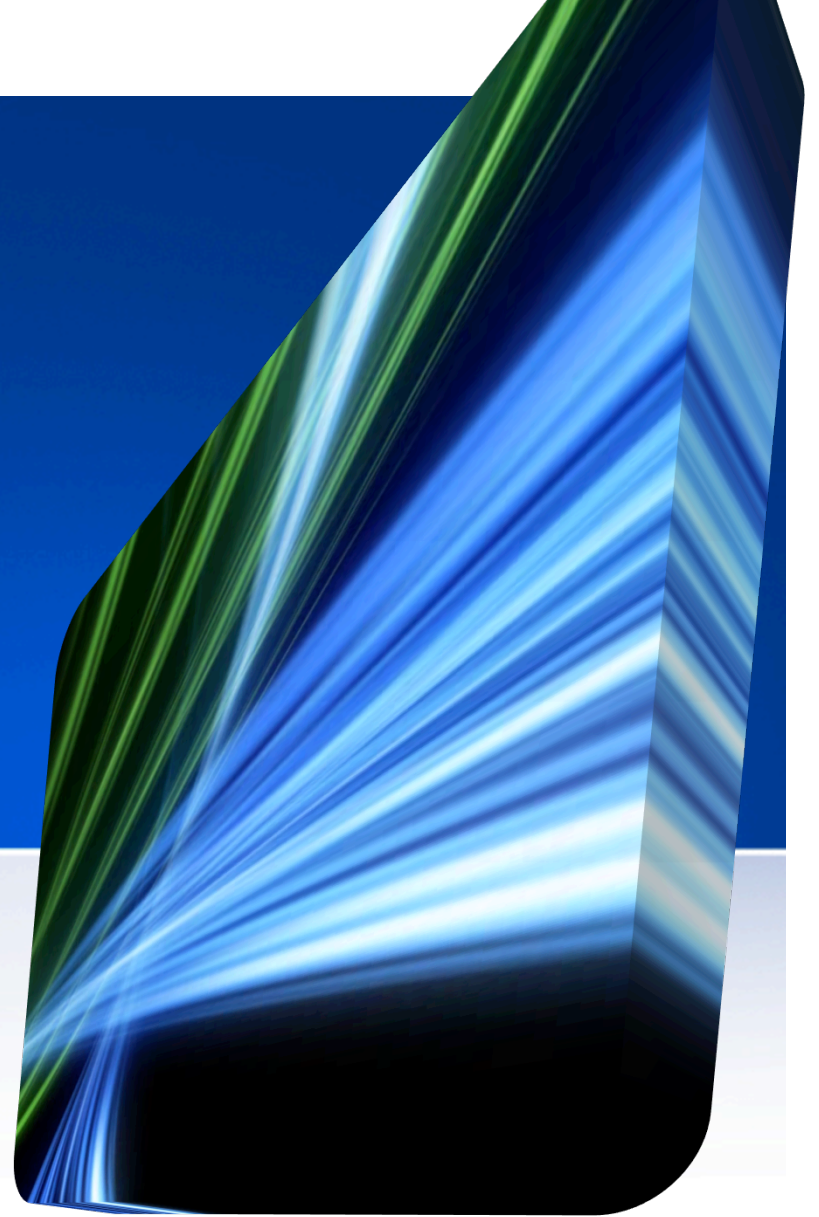# Intercultural Communicative Competence Development
In
Tele-tandem Learning Context

Sami B. Al Hasnawi
University of Al Qadissyia
Iraq
PhD Candidate
University of Southampton
School of Humanities
Modern Languages
sami_basheer95@yahoo.com
sbah1g12@soton.ac.uk

Outline

1. *Introduction*

- *The real impact of technology could be recognised from:*

- The relative absence of "'BALL' (book-assisted language learning), 'PALL' (pen-assisted language learning), and 'LALL' (library-assisted language learning)."

- The relatively high use of 'CALL', computer assisted language learning.

(Kern,2006)

2. *L2 Intercultural Competence and Tele-collaborative Multi-literacy*

- *Intercultural competence* is a dynamic process of transforming knowledge into action. L2 learners' intercultural competence requires both knowledge and internalisation of cultural values.

- Online Telecolaborative Activities pave the way for establishing cultural and linguistic awareness for the intercultural competence formation process.

- Linguistic and cultural varieties awareness in the community, as an expansion to the language-based view of literacy, has become necessary to consider as a sort of *multi-literacy* (New London Group, 1996).

- To make a shift in the 21st century world of education, Soliya, working with the MIT's Saxelabl Social Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory (SSCNL), has presented 'exchange 2.0', 'Connect Program' that is founded in 2011 by iEARN, Global Nomads Group & Soliya. This has been implemented in over 100 universities in 27 countries across the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Europe and North America since 2003, see Soliya website.

3. The Pedagogical Implications of Intercultural Communication (1)

- Being a dynamic process as a result of the inevitable interculturally transmitted attitudes, information and norms, **culture** could not be identical to language (Bolten, 2001).However, both language and culture could be seen as integrative parts of the individual's identity (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005).

- "[language] plays a crucial role not only in the construction of culture, but in the emergence of cultural change" (Kramsch, 1996: 3). Such a continual scheme of change involves the integration or replacement of new values with the previously adapted ones in the individual's cognitive space for the sake of 'self-identity' (Libben and Lindner, 1996: 13).

- Pedagogically speaking, according to Mao's (2009:145) view, the main aim of considering culture in the L2 learning process is to 'nurture' learners' intercultural competence as a communicative function of language. It is also stated that "[l]anguage learning helps learners to avoid stereotyping individuals, to develop curiosity and openness to otherness and to discover other cultures" (Council of Europe, 2008:29).

3. The Pedagogical Implications of Intercultural Communication (2)

- Tele-collaborative activities potentially enhance the process of improving students' intercultural communicative competence where they could provide those learners with various sources of knowledge that traditionally culture-related materials could not (O'Dowd, 2007).

- To promote intercultural understanding, it is accordingly necessary for the learner to be aware of other's identity and deeply understand that to avoid the illusion of one's universal culture.

- As an example, Soliya's 'Connect Program' teletandem participants discuss some issues related to identity, religion, culture, and other social-political ones.

4. Autonomous Learning in Teletandem Context

- To transform experience for learning, "[...] learners must become autonomous in their capacity for refining and increasing their knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Byram,1997:69).

- Learning autonomy is necessary for "[...] a wider development in education that aims at preparing young people for lifelong learning through the ability to organise and direct their own learning inside and outside the school context (Camilleri, 1999: 5).

- For Brookfield (1980; cited in Palfreyman, 2006), how people learn outside a formal educational setting does not simply reflect the idea of individualism in learning, but rather it significantly shows networks of some other people acting as models for those learners, feedback and scaffolding sources, see Vygotsky's (1978: 86-7) 'ZPD'.

5. Teacher/Learner Roles in Teletandem Learning Context (1)

- As an international tele-collaborative context, tele-tandem is viewed as a potential source for improving learners' target language, intercultural awareness, and computer literacy (Belz & Thorne, 2006).

- In view of such a learner-centred approach, the teacher is no longer seen as the answer provider for previously analysed information, but rather he has become mainly the supplier of the source of information which depends on the learner's decision of its importance (Planet and Byram 2000: 90).

- For some scholars, among others, the instructor's role in such a learning activity is a useful guide for assisting learner autonomy, supporting learners' perception of the online environment that eases teachers' workload(Teles, 2000 and Canagarajah, 1997).

- The instructor should be involved especially in "discerning, identifying, explaining, and modelling culturally-contingent patterns of interaction in the absence of paralinguistic meaning signals"(Belz,2003:92).

- it is important for teachers to be careful about selecting the communication tool that is appropriate to the aim and content of that tele-tandem class interaction.

5. Teacher/Learner Roles in Teletandem Learning Context   (2)

- They "need to be critically aware of the connections among technology, culture, ideology, and specifically about the ways in which technology amplifies and constrains aspects of language learning and research" (Chapelle, 2003: 9).

- This necessitates the notion that they have to be well trained on this kind of technologically-based learning; how to question and describe one's home culture to be models for their learners (O'Dowd, 2007).

- With that in mind, Soliya's 'Connect Program' is held by well-trained facilitators. Those facilitators have undergone minimally 20 hours training period guided by skilful trainers. The training program includes skill-building related activities such as listening, summarising, directing good questions, observing and addressing group dynamics, and working with online apparatuses.

6. Conclusion

- Regardless of the difficulties that might be faced, it could be concluded that tele-tandem learning, as represented in Soliya's 'Connect Program', usually provides learners with the opportunity to be linguistically and culturally aware of the differences in the world.

- It might be defined as a learning environment that introduces learners with different multi-sources of knowledge.

- This potentially assists autonomous learners to improve their L2 intercultural communicative competence via supporting each other to overcome any interactional failure or misunderstanding.

- However, it should not be expected that participating in tele-tandem by itself could develop learners' intercultural communicative competence regardless other related supporting factors like collaboratively well-trained teachers to choose the right topic, participants and the possible means of such on-line interactions to achieve that aim.

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Thank you

ANY QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS?