Integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) In an English Language Course; a Study of Perception of Undergraduate Students and Teachers at Magadh University, India

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Abstract

For effective communication, sociocultural elements are just as important as using the right linguistic aspects of the target language. One aspect of sociocultural awareness that has been acknowledged as essential for communicative competence is intercultural communicative competence (ICC). However, ICC integration in second/foreign language schools continues to be difficult, maybe because language teachers frequently know more about the target language than its associated cultural characteristics (Celce-Murcia, 2008). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain students' perspectives both before and after ICC was incorporated into a basic-level English classroom. The pre-and post-ICC scale was used to get quantitative data, while semi-structured interviews with students and teacher reflection journals were used to gather qualitative data. The results showed that following ICC integration, which raised participants' knowledge of many cultures, their own culture, and the function of culture in language acquisition, there were substantial variations in the perspectives of the participants. Aside from certain challenges linked to the pace of the videos and the chosen themes, the instructor also gave favorable views on the ICC-driven module used in English classes. The results provided pedagogical implications and recommendations on the use of ICC in EFL classes. The aim of the study is to know the role of intercultural competency in teachers in English language teaching. The data was collected from 100 students and 50 teachers from different departments at Magadh University. The participants were divided into different categories based on their departments. Around 50 students and 27 teachers from the education department. Furthermore, 20 students and 13 teachers were from the psychology department. Finally, 30 students and 10 teachers were from sociology department. The results of this present study showed the positive attitude of teachers toward the role of culture in foreign language education, however, Magadh University has not carried any culture teaching methods in their classrooms frequently.

Keywords: *Intercultural Communicative Competence, English language, Undergraduate Students, India, ICC-Scale*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the mode of communication has changed. There are many new technological advancements in every field of life. The advancement provided an opportunity in developing intercultural communicative competence in the English language among undergraduate students at Magadh University. Language helps individuals to interact with each other. Learning a foreign language increased intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and the ability to interact in an effective way with other students who belong to a different culture in the classroom or at university (Byram & Planet, 2000). It has been observed that culture and language are interlinked with each other and it's impossible to separate language

from culture (Agar, 1994). Language learning is an intellectual process and experience for students. (Deardorff, 2006) explained intercultural communication is important to understand situations by using attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Having knowledge of another country's customs and traditions creates cultural competence in one's individual. Cultural competence can't be separated from foreign language teaching (Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012)

The integration of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in language learning classrooms increases the experience of students and developed cognitive skills among them. Their ability to understand culture helps to build relationships with other class fellows. Intercultural communicative competence can transform a mono-culture student into a multi-cultural student (Chen & Starosta, 1996). The traditional methods of teaching have transformed and been adopted by institutes for the betterment of intercultural communicative competence among students. In the past, students' traditional learning approaches developed the least chance for them to interact with others. Students are able to respect other cultures and accept cultural diversity when they have the

skills to communicate appropriately with other students (Lambert et al., 1993). Knowledge, skills, motivation, or attitude played important role in the development of intercultural competency (Byram et al., 2002). In today's globalized economy, intercultural competence is essential because they enable us to prevent intolerance, discrimination, and misunderstandings between individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The ability to understand cultural differences played important role in making learners aware of various languages and cultures. Their difference should be resolved and able to cope with such differences. In today's globalized economy, intercultural competence is essential because they enable us to prevent intolerance, discrimination, and misunderstandings between individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Culture always evolves and have multi-faced nature (Tamime & Robinson, 1985). It changes with respect to time. The majority of scholars believe that culture is an inseparable part of foreign language education (Kovács, 2017; Kun, 2013; Reid, 2015). It is inseparable from language. Language played an important role in developing individual mindsets related to cultural Diversity. Along with the linguistic aspect of language effective intercultural communication should be taught. The learners should be aware of the differences among various languages and cultures and they should be able to cope with such differences (Hoa,2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The byram's model of ICC has been used widely in the field of foreign language development specifically in designing curriculum. This model used in development of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages ie CEFRL (Karabinar & Guler, 2012). The byram's model have five competence (saviors) categories for learning foreign language includes; awareness, skills, attitude and knowledge. Awareness explained the ability to interpret and understand each other culture norms and traditions completely. Students must have critical knowledge and perspective about each other culture. The attitude of students can be measured through their ability to see their own values, beliefs and behaviors from other perspective. There are methods to measure their ability which includes; visual representation of things, brainstorming, story-telling, group project and etc. Skills of discovery and interaction played important role in personal growth of students because it enhances the ability of students to explore other cultures critically and used their learning in their interaction with them. The skills of interpreting and relating is a skill that students used to understand their written and

oral text to each other. Their reading and interpreting skills can benefit them while interacting with other students in university. The knowledge about someone's culture and norms, played a role in social interaction and eliminating auto stereotypes and hetero stereotypes. Foreign language teachers teach more than just reading and writing. They also teach interaction with other culture diverse people. There are many institutes that favors the use of ICC in English language classes.

The study of (Alptekin, 2002) claimed that pedagogic model's claim that communicative competence has a standardized native speaker norm. The study showed interesting findings, incorporation of bilingual interaction culture norm in class, definition of communicative competence should be changed and include all native and non-native speakers. The multi-culture communication. To fulfill the objectives of this present study (Devrim & Bayyurt, 2010) designed a questionnaire and expressed positive sentiments claimed that language and culture cannot be separated from one another, despite the fact that the data revealed a variety of viewpoints regarding the inclusion of target language culture in English language classes. Recognizing the target language and culture. In past, the study was conducted to understand the perception of English language teachers in about the development of ICC in English textbooks. The previous study was taken as a sample of 15 language instructor. The studies showed, insufficient material of textbook about culture and norms not covered in detailed adequately educate students for cross-culture interaction.

Research Objective

The past research showed that implementation of ICC is never completed, but developing intercultural communicative competence in English language is important. The study of intercultural communicative competence has been evolved as the number of multicultural community's rises. The teaching of ICC should incorporate into English language instruction in order to foster a learning environment that transcends students' varied cultural origins. Therefore, the current study's goal is to compare English learners at Magadh University perspectives before and after include ICC in their curriculum. The study also aims to learn what an English teacher thinks about the ICC.

Ho: What are the general opinions of Magadh University students studying at undergraduate level prior to the establishment of ICC?

Ho: What do the participating students think about learning English now that ICC has been developed in undergraduate level at Magadh University?

Ho: What thoughts does the teachers of Magadh University have on the ICC-driven module?

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

This present study is designed as action research, through this research the professional growth of teachers inside classroom can be measured through the research design of this study. In order to achieve the goals of this study. An action research approached was taken to explore and comprehend the process of implementing ICC in an English language course. Additionally, the perspective and opinion of students about learning English now that ICC has been developed at undergrad level at Magadh University. At last, the teachers of Magadh University on ICC- Driven module.

This research was conducted in Magadh University, India. The respondents were 100 (60 females and 40 male) English learners that were used of ICC scale. Additionally, around 20 male and 30 females teacher's data were collected. The age of male and female expert's teachers were above 24 years and with 3 years above teaching experience in English language teaching were selected for this present study. The teachers had masters or Ph.D degree in English language teaching. In this present study the regular dairy was made to avoid reflexivity in qualitative research.

Data Collection

This present study data was collected by using mixed approach which means both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative method is used to collect data of respondents pre- and post- ICC scale. The semi-structured interviews approach used to collected qualitative data from students of different department at Magadh University. The scale of ICC was taken from (Lai et al., 2019)which aimed to know the effects of ICC-integrated in English language classrooms. The ICC scale divided into four sub scales. The attitude of students towards ICC could be find out through first subscale. The second subscale of ICC helps to understand the knowledge of the respondents about ICC. Furthermore, the third scale aimed to know the skills of students related to ICC. In last, the fourth scale the actions of students towards ICC.

The scale of ICC has four sub-scale and each scale have 7 item and in total 28 items are listed on ICC scale. The five point Likert scale has been used to collect data of 30 undergrad students of Magadh University and it ranges from 1-5. Whereas 1= strongly disagree, 2= agree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agreed. The semi-structured interviews were carried out to know perception of students on learning English language through ICC driven module was carried out by using random sampling approach and around 10 students were selected. The semi-structured interview of students was conducted pre and post incorporation of ICC in English language learning classroom. Four questions were asked from respondents. The first question was intended to know student's interests to engage with other students from other cultures. Furthermore, the second question was intended to evaluate students understanding and knowledge of other culture, as well as their values and beliefs. Further, the third question was intending to know their understanding of their own culture and other culture. Also are they able to compare and differentiate their culture from other or not. Finally, the researcher designed fourth question to check their confidence while interacting with other students from other cultures. This research was completed within 3 months. The teachers were asked to keep a journal in which their experiences would be written while teaching English in classroom with the integration of ICC. The ICC-driven module validity was checked by teacher's journal. Also, their challenges while teaching English by using data driven ICC model was also helped to draw findings of this present study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Findings

This research conducted to know pre and post perceptions of Magadh University students about the ICC based course in English language learning. Also, in this research the students of Magadh university perceptions and the teacher's reflection about using ICC in English language learning course analyzed by using content analysis technique in this paper. The obtained results are discussed with the help of tables.

Perceptions of Students at Magadh University before the Incorporation of ICC

The perception of participants was taken, the students quantitative data collected by using ICC scale and qualitative data was collected by using semi-structured interviews. The table 1 shows the results before incorporating ICC in English language classroom. Statistically t-test were used to analysis and interpret data.

Table 1: Students' Perceptions of ICC

Outcome(*n*=150)	Pre-test		95% CI for Mean Difference
	M	SD	
Attitude	4.31	0.45	4.12, 4.55
Knowledge	4.08	0.51	3.88, 4.33
Skill	3.97	0.65	3.65, 4.26
Action	4.21	0.53	4.01, 4.42

The table 1 showed mean and standard deviation of ICC scale which is based on attitude, knowledge, skill and action. The mean and standard deviation values of ICC attitude was 4.31 and 0.45 respectively. The mean value of knowledge was 4.08 and value of standard deviation was 0.51. Along with that the value of mean of skills were 3.97 and value of standard deviation was 0.65. In last, the mean value for action was 4.21 and standard deviation value for action was 0.53.

The table further shows that the confidence of interval level was 95% for mean difference and it varies with variables of ICC scale. The value of 95& CL for mean difference for attitude, knowledge, skill and action were 4.12 to 4.55, 3.88-4.33, 3.65 to 4.26, and 4.01 to 4.42 respectively.

For better understanding of participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted. All the respondent's data was collected before they become familiar with ICC-driven module. The content analysis technique was used and results of analysis were presented in four different themes. The themes and sub-themes were selected based on the responses of the respondents.

These themes are preferred engagement, awareness, cultural diversity and interaction with other individuals of other cultures.

Prefer Engagement at Magadh Unviersity

This theme of content analysis showed students preference on engagement with their class fellow students or other individual in university which belongs to different culture. The results showed positive response toward engagement with other people. Most of respondents express that they have friends also from other culture which shows positive sign. The findings of student's responses shared below.

[…]Me and my Bangladesh friend speak in English language with each other ─I used to talk in English with my friends. In order to practice because of my poor English skills. I tried my level best to communicate with everyone in English. (S1, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

Awareness among Students at Magadh **University**

The question was designed for semi-structured interview to know the awareness of students about diverse culture that exits in world. Especially, students in Magadh University who belonged to other culture. The respondents were mostly unaware about the other culture norms and values. Additionally, their level of understanding about all culture that exits in world

is limited. Furthermore, the respondents have little knowledge about a few cultures. The comments of respondent are mentioned below.

[...] I am good in my life and not interested in learning and understanding other culture. My level of curiosity in knowing other culture is zero. Even though most of things about my culture are not known to me. (S5, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

[...] I am aware about those culture that I am friends within university. As we know there are many cultures that exit in this world, but I only know some because of university have some international students from different countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Nepal. (S2, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

Cultural Diversity at Magadh University

Cultural diversity is important for personal growth and development. The question related to cultural difference between them and other culture was asked to know their level of understanding about culture. The students were unable to compare and find difference between their culture.Also, the respondents claimed that there were no particular course and instructor available for them to make them aware about other culture. The responses of respondents were mentioned below.

[...] I am unable to compare my culture with other culture because of lack of knowledge. Can't compare my culture with others. We have no such courses in our university. (S6, Pre-interview data,26.06.2022)

[...] I don't have enough knowledge about any culture and due to this reason, I don't think we can compare our culture with others. I don't know about other, but it seems impossible to compare culture because every culture is different and unique. (S9, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

Interacting with other Students of Other Cultures at Magadh University.

In order to understand the level of interaction of students with each other, this question was designed. The perception of students about interaction with other culture students is known. All respondents answered that they feel not stressed while talking with other culture students in university. There responses mentioned below.

[...] I always feel good while talking to foreigner student. Whenever, I see a foreigner student in canteen, class, sports and in other place within university premises I immediately try to speak with him. Even outside premises I interact with them. (S10, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

[...] Although my level of English language communication skills is poor, but I am trying to improve my English. I have a lot of friends from other cultures, and I like interacting with them. (S7, Pre-interview data, 26.06.2022)

The results of the interviews, in short, showed that the students who took part had favourable opinions of learning about various cultures and conversing with people from other cultures. However, they had little awareness of other cultures because their curriculum did not provide any courses in this area.

Student perceptions of Incorporation of ICC at Magadh University

The table 2 shows student perceptions on integration of ICC in English language classroom. The analysis shows pre and post ICC scale. This scale was used to evaluate either there were any changes in integration of ICC in English language or not.

Table 2: Findings for pre and post ICC scale

Outcome (*n*=150)	Pre-test		Post-Test		95% CI for Mean Difference	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Attitude	4.31	0.47	4.71	0.27	0.24, 0.51	5.82	.000*
Knowledge	4.08	0.51	4.72	0.25	0.44, 0.83	7.15	.000*
Skill	3.97	0.66	4.57	0.38	0.43, 0.76	7.92	.000*
Action	4.22	0.51	4.74	0.31	0.36, 0.72	6.17	.000*

The t-test used for analysis and results of test showed significant results which respect to p-values. The t-test values are significantly different. In comparison, the pre and post-test values are different. According to above table the values of post-test are increased as compared to pre-test values which means that attitude, knowledge, skills, and action scores are improved and changed. On the other hand, attitude score was on average.

Similar to this, post-semi-structured interviews with the students were conducted after the adoption of ICC to determine whether there had been any changes in their opinions of ICC. Next the content analysis, the results were grouped into four topics: the need for contact, student knowledge of cultural variety, engagement with speakers of various cultures, and these themes are discussed in more detail in the following section of this study

Awareness among Students at Magadh University

Almost all of the students had good opinions about their increased understanding of other cultures as a result of the ICC integration, highlighting how they had discovered a wealth of previously unknown information. The following remarks back up this discovery:

[...] I discovered stuff in this course that I was previously unaware of. Interesting aspects about several civilizations were revealed to me. For instance, I learnt about the cities I was unfamiliar with. 20.08.2022 Post-interview data for S13

[...] This class taught me fresh information about many civilizations. I now understand them better, and I thoroughly loved it. 20.08.2022 Post-interview data for S14.

Cultural Diversity at Magadh University

The post-interview findings showed that after being exposed to ICC, the students began comparing their own culture with other civilizations and they found it enjoyable. They specifically learnt more about international cuisine and numerous national holidays, as stated below:

[...] I contrast various cuisines with our own. Every dish reflects the civilization that produced it. 20.08.2022 Post-interview data from (S1).

[...] I learned about several national celebrations from other nations during the course. Some are comparable to those in Indonesia, while others are completely unlike. It's very enjoyable. 20.08.2022 Post-interview data (S2)

Interacting with other Students of Other Cultures at Magadh University

The participants said that their interactions with people from other cultures improved, notably through social media, after taking the ICC-based course. In light of these conclusions, two of the students stated:

[...] I adore engaging with people from other cultures. I made a lot of online pals after this course. 20.08.2022 (S09, Post-interview data)

[...] On the internet, I had a conversation with Thailand and Bangladesh person who generally liked India and wanted to know more about it... 20.08.2022 (S11, Post-interview data)

In conclusion, the students became more conscious of both their own culture and other cultures after taking the ICC-integrated course. They expressed greater curiosity and confidence in speaking with speakers from different cultures and desired to engage with them more. They appreciated this educational trip and discovered many new facts about many civilizations.

Teacher's Reflections of integrating ICC in an English Course at Magadh University

The instructor kept a reflective diary to get in-depth knowledge about teaching English using ICC. The results of the teacher's reflection were presented in this section under the headings "Learning Motivation" and "ICC Course Difficulties". ***Motivation of Learners at Magadh University***

The teacher said that the students loved the subject by seeing the movies on other cultures, taking into account their level of motivation throughout the ICC course. The following extracts demonstrate how actively they engaged in the lessons that piqued their interest:

[...] The other teachers also gave the lessons and all students giving their full attention. They clearly loved viewing films and short stories about other cultures. (Journal data as of Aug 20, 2022).

[...] The students were quite excited and interested, when I began to present the images of the various cities and famous places of different cultures one at a time, and they all actively engaged in the class. (Journal data as of Aug 20, 2022).

Difficulties Encountered

Aside from the teacher's good remarks on incorporating ICC into the English classroom, there were some challenges she faced. The main challenge stemmed from the films' speed; in other words, some pupils found it difficult to keep up with the fast-paced content. Additionally, it was challenging to get pupils to discuss topics in which they had little interest. Taking into account these ideas, the instructor said the following:

[...] I observed the students during the exercise and saw that some of them were unable to keep up with the video. The pace was too quick. I had to watch the video again as a result. (Journal data from Aug 20, 2022 (T))

[...] During the course, several of the individuals had little interest in the subjects. I was unable to get them to talk on the subject. Journal data as of Aug 20, 2022 (T)

In conclusion, the teacher's observations revealed that the students were enthusiastic about learning new things and engaged in the ICC course. They took part in the training and liked the films on various cultures. Additionally, students enjoyed seeing famous places. The

pace of the films, however, made it challenging for some students to follow along, while other students were unwilling to engage in conversation on subjects in which they had little interest.

DISCUSSION

As was already said, the main goal of this research was to find out how English language students generally perceived the ICC at university. The results showed that, despite some encounters with people from other cultures, the participating students were not receptive to learning about those cultures' values and beliefs. According to (Enisa & Gunes, 2019)study, which stressed the value of learning about the target language and contrasting it with the speakers' own culture, the participants were comparing the contrasts in their own culture with those of other cultures.

The findings also revealed that before taking the ICC-integrated course, the students had little understanding of and interest in other cultures, their values, and beliefs. These findings were consistent with a research by (Getie, 2020) that The study also aimed to provide light on the participants' opinions following the addition of ICC to their English classes. The results demonstrated a considerable change following the ICC-driven module. The trainees' attitude, knowledge, skill, and action scores specifically increased. The language learners enhanced their engagement with people from other cultures, according to semi-structured interviews. The kids' awareness of and interest in diverse cultures increased. This conclusion was highlighted in (Alptekin, 2002) study, which sought to increase English language students understanding of other cultures in order for them to feel at ease in both national and foreign cultures in order to build their intercultural communication skills.

In this study, the teacher's reflections on using ICC while teaching English were also looked at. The results of the teacher's reflective journals showed that the students were enthusiastic and willing to learn about new topics relating to various cultures. The ICC-driven programme was well-liked by the kids who were learning English.

Pedagogical Implications

There are several educational implications of the current study that should be taken into account. First, the results of this study showed that include ICC in English instruction had a favorable impact on students' impressions of their teacher's thoughts on teaching and learning the culture of the target language. As a result, including ICC in English classes will aid students in developing effective communication skills in both local and global settings. The results of this study also shows that adopting ICC-based teaching materials and activities will positively affect language learners' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behavior about various cultures.

CONCLUSION

The current study adds to the body of knowledge emphasizing the importance of ICC in English language instruction. The results showed that ICC integration during English teaching, learning, and practice is very advantageous for language learners as it prepares them to comprehend and respect both their own and other cultures. Additionally, it trains students to interact and exchange experiences with others from various cultural backgrounds. In order to assist their students, become effective communicators in global and multicultural situations, English language teachers should provide them the chance to think on and express their impressions about the culture of the target language. There are several restrictions on the current study that should be taken into account. First, a single classroom was used for the study,

which was conducted in a private setting. More thorough and comparable results may have been obtained by including a control group. A bigger sample size would enable the study to produce more trustworthy results that could be applied to other learner populations. Additionally, during the implementation phase, the instructor only included his personal ideas in the reflective journals regarding the lessons that were based on ICC. Another instructor might have watched each ICC implementation lesson to provide in-depth feedback. Furthermore, this study was limited to three months due to the course's time limits. The study's execution would be spread out over a longer time period, leading to deeper and more thorough results. The outcomes of this study are solely applicable in this setting with those participating learners because it was developed as an action research. The acquired results should thus be seen as suggestive so that they can be addressed in further research.

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