

MODULE ONE: UNIT FOUR

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

RECOMMENDED READING

Abbott D (1998) *Culture and Identity* London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton

This book is one of a new series of concise and easy-to-read topic books for sociology students. It can be useful for teachers of English in that it discusses new perspectives on interpretations of culture, and the way people respond to it.

Related issues addressed are **age, stratification, ethnicity, gender, socialisation, subcultures**, etc.

Byram M (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

The book explores the issues of teaching and evaluating the learner's ability to relate and communicate with people who speak a different language and live in a different cultural context. The book suggests a model for intercultural communicative competence and defines appropriate modes of assessment of that model. It is useful for language teachers because it provides a framework for developing specific skills in the language classroom.

Byram M and Fleming M. (1998) (eds) *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

This book addresses the ways in which language learning is related to learning about other cultures and to acquiring an ability to communicate across cultural frontiers. Especially interesting is the chapter called 'The Privilege of the Intercultural Speaker' by Claire Kramsch.

Cushner K and Brislin R (1996) (eds) *Intercultural Interactions* London, UK: Sage Publications, Inc.

As the title suggests, this book is a helpful guide to anybody interested in the field of cross-cultural communication. Theoretical issues are examined in the light of critical incidents arranged according to what typically happens during extensive cross-cultural experiences. These are followed by careful analysis leading to alternative explanations. Highly readable and suitable for a variety of training programmes. Chapter Two, Information for Teachers and Cross-Cultural Trainers is particularly useful for those interested in the issues of intercultural education and training.

Fantini A (1997) (ed) *New Ways in Teaching Culture* Alexandria, Virginia, USA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc

This volume focuses on new ways of teaching culture. It contains six parts. The first part presents theoretical concepts about teaching language and culture for achieving intercultural communicative competence. The other four parts deal entirely with classroom activities that illustrate different new ways of teaching culture. These ways include different explorations in the language classroom – linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and intercultural. The last part contains a selected list of annotated bibliography.

O'Sullivan K (1994) *Understanding Ways* Sydney: Hale and Iremonger Pty Limited

In this book the author explores and demystifies the barriers surrounding our cross-cultural communication based on an overview of the research in the field. It provides practical strategies to develop skills for effective communication. If you are really interested in the intercultural communication matters, this is your 'cup of tea' – very user-friendly, enjoyable, fun to read.

Roberts C, Byram M, Barro A, Jordan S and Street B (2001) *Language Learners As Ethnographers* Clevedon, Avon, UK: Multilingual Matters

This is a useful and easy-to-read book. It summarises the main theoretical issues concerning ethnography combining them with aspects of its application inside and outside the classroom.

Seelye N (1994) *Teaching Culture* Lincolnwood Illinois USA: National Textbook Company

The book provides useful ideas for teachers who want to teach their students understanding of other cultures. At the end of each chapter the teacher is presented with "suggested activities" which show how to apply the theoretical concepts in the classroom. The book presents not only the rationale for the development of intercultural skills but also suggests concrete activities for attaining them.

UNIT FOUR

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

THE AIM OF THIS UNIT



In this unit you will be introduced to the concept of **intercultural communicative competence** (ICC) as a teaching goal; you will be assisted in considering the implications of a variety of approaches to the development of the competence; you will become familiar with the process of selecting objectives for the practice of teaching-and-learning ICC; you will be introduced to the principles and methods for assessing the impact of teaching towards intercultural communicative competence.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the unit you will have been:

- involved in a theoretical dispute concerning the nature of ICC
- acquainted with major theoretical concepts connected with ICC
- invited to reflect upon principles and methods for teaching ICC in the classroom
- exposed to models of assessing the components of ICC
- involved in critical analysis of the above.

As you can see from the diagram on the following page Unit Four consists of three Sections:

- what is intercultural communicative competence
- intercultural communicative competence in the classroom
- methods of assessment.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

**WHAT IS
INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATIVE
COMPETENCE**

**INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATIVE
COMPETENCE
IN THE CLASSROOM**

**METHODS OF
ASSESSMENT**

INTRODUCTION

Our point of departure will be the distinction between two imaginary characters: the **tourist** and the **sojourner**. Both travel abroad and find out that people differ but the tourist simply acknowledges otherness as a feature of exoticism and does not truly engage with it. The sojourner, for her part, needs to get to grips with otherness, adopt or adapt to its rules of behaviour, gain an understanding of what underlies the superficial level of every-day life and what the local people take for granted. The sojourner is the person who needs to develop a competence to communicate interculturally. ICC should be able to cater for this need.

SAQ 1



Predicting some of the skills necessary to communicate across cultures

Let us imagine a sojourner in a foreign country. Below is a list of challenging situations she is likely to encounter in a foreign culture. In the column against each situation try to predict what skills can help her through in each case. The first has been done for you:

She might have to:	She should be able to:
get involved in customs she does not understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• have curiosity and openness to engage in them• have an ability to tolerate a degree of ambiguity
read and understand documents – signs, plates, menus, train schedules etc – which are different from the ones she is used to in her native culture	
try food she is not accustomed to	

understand when people use references to TV stars, local celebrities, etc which are not popular in her country	
find that people use rules of behaviour different from the ones in her culture.	
often find herself misunderstanding people, and feel she is misunderstood	
realise that the body language people use differs from what she is used to	
find herself overwhelmed because too much seems to go on at the same time.	

No Answer Key is provided at this stage as we shall return to this issue after we have introduced the concept of **intercultural speaker**.

The **intercultural speaker** is another abstraction. She is the successful communicator in situations of intercultural contact, like the ones described above. The faculties she possesses are the ones needed for acting adequately in intercultural communication. They form a complex, called intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The goals and methods for acquiring those faculties are the agenda in intercultural training.

We continue discussing the intercultural speaker, her competences and the methods for achieving them in turn.

4.1 WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE?

One way of setting the agenda for training is by outlining the desired outcome as the ideal successful learner. A rough description was sketched above. We shall now elaborate on it.

1) The Intercultural Speaker

The portrait of the **intercultural speaker** is drawn in the text below summarising one of the most popular models - Byram's (1997). This model is specifically geared to intercultural training at school.

Extract One

The intercultural speaker has curiosity about the new culture and a willingness to try the novelty. She is ready to suspend her disbelief and judgement about things that surprise her. She tries to avoid judging the meanings, beliefs and behaviours of others by the standards in her own culture (this skill is called de-centering in psychological literature). The IS also has a knowledge of the history and present of the country which allow her to get oriented in references to salient facts and figures. Her knowledge of the general processes of communication in her own culture help her discover the ways the foreign one operates. Drawing on her general frame of knowledge, she is able to interpret and discover meanings laden in various documents of the culture. The dysfunctions will not deter her because she is prepared for differences and will actively seek ways to overcome them.

(based on Byram 1997: 11)

As you read the text, you probably found that the portrayal is made in terms of three categories:

- attitudes
- skills
- knowledge.

SAQ 2



Classify the qualities of the intercultural speaker

In the text above, underline the description of each category – attitudes, skills and knowledge - and place it in this table beside the respective heading. The first has been done for you:

attitudes	curiosity about the new culture
skills	
knowledge	



You can return to SAQ 1 and check whether the portrait sketched there coincides with this one.

Now we know the qualities that the successful intercultural speaker possesses. The next step is to find out how to train learners in the skills, give them the knowledge and instil the necessary attitudes. This, of course, may not be as easy as it sounds.

A competence is by definition the knowledge that one needs in order to perform certain skills. The question is whether the complex of skills for intercultural communication, comprising components of non-cognitive nature can really be called a competence. Next, we consider some terminological issues connected with the title of intercultural communicative competence.

2) The Terminological Riddle

All the words in the title **intercultural communicative competence** have come under dispute for different reasons. In the course of the debate the nature of the notion and the approaches to it will be revealed.

The dispute we shall follow is between researchers in the study of communication concerning the name of an Association they are about to form. You will be provided with an account of the proposals for the different terms and then invited to conclude what implications each term holds. The proposals have been arranged here in relation to which part of the name they question and their physical format is that of conference handouts.

a) cross-, trans- or inter- cultural

Proposals have made in favour of three attributes: cross-cultural, trans-cultural, and intercultural.

- cross-cultural

1.

Extract Two

Cross-cultural seems better to translate the very essence of what our Association is all about. We do not just want to improve contacts between and amongst cultures but that we actually strive towards crossing borders of prejudice, bias etc, ie we want to reach across frontiers of all kinds. Therefore, the “cross” sends a much more powerful (metaphorical) message/image to those who want to join us. Our focus is more specifically across linguistic cultures, and its application is wider than simply **communication**, since it encompasses areas such as the transformation of our sense of self, the acquisition and application of ethnographic approaches to enable us to unravel the cultural practices we are engaged in, and the recognition of and ability to deal with encounters with the other.

(IALIC inaugural meeting handout: 1999)

- intercultural

2.

Extract Three

It is my view, as an anthropologist and a literary scholar, that ‘cross-cultural’ and ‘intercultural’ are terms that refer to different processes. Cross-cultural reflection has long been part of anthropological research, whereby the structures and characteristics of one culture are compared to those of another in search for some ‘universal’ elements to human behaviour, be it social, cultural, linguistic etc. ‘Cross-cultural’ implies comparison and the term is used in such a way in anthropology. It does not necessarily imply that the cultures have met in any way other than in the body of a researcher. ‘Intercultural’ is different. ‘Intercultural’ implies a field in which a range of languages and cultures meet and interact, or react in such a way as to present a melting pot of inter-relation. They may meet in the sphere of the social or the personal. Martin Buber theorised this space in sociology and theology as ‘das Zwischenmenschliche’ – the ‘interhuman’ – the space between human beings. What human beings bring into relation is cultural and psychological.

(IALIC inaugural meeting handout: 1999)

- transcultural

3.

Extract Four

Intercultural simply fails to resist the essentialising ‘territorial view’ of culture – the notion that one can ever be positioned **between** cultural systems. As such, the term continues to persuade us that it is cultural systems not individuals which are in communication with each other. Equally, **cross-cultural**, to my mind, perpetuates an undue preoccupation with cultural difference and comparison. ... Alternatively, we should at least be specific about what we refer to – **inter-group**, or **inter-ethnic**, or, in the case of the so-called Cross-cultural Capability, **international** communication. But can any communication ever be anything other than cultural?

... I still prefer the sense **transcultural** creates of moving through and across cultural systems, in whatever way they may be constituted and conceived. It allows better for the fluidity of these systems, their porous boundaries and constantly re-orientating expressions.

(IALIC inaugural meeting handout: 1999)

It will have become obvious that the notion is the same, but approached from different perspectives, with different research bias. Next we shall consider some of the implications of the terms.

SAQ 3



Considering implications of the term **intercultural**

A list of implications of the term **intercultural**, emerging from the suggestions for an association name has been developed below. As you read, tick the number of the proposal which discusses them (there may be more than one). The first has been done for you as an example.

- A. Communication takes place between individuals.

1.	2.√	3.√
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- B. It is shaped by individual, as well as by group values and characteristics.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- C. The groups which reveal common features of communicating can be ethnic, regional, professional etc.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- D. The discipline dealing with ICC takes up the task to study and apply the newly emerging tendencies of contact between cultures and people.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- E. The discipline has a wider field than communication, including the study of identity, the acquisition of skills etc.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- F. A major concern for ICC is to educate the 'citizen of the world' through language education.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- G. The academic field, called ICC uses interdisciplinary approaches, drawing on psychology, ethnography, sociology, anthropology.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

- H. The field needs to cross frontiers – national or of prejudice and bias.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

I. Comparison between the cultures does not strive to establish any 'universal' human features but rather to assist communication.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

J. The cultures studied need to be in contact with each other, that is: when a person operates in a culture other than his native, both cultures - his native and the 'host' interact in the fact that he draws upon both.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

K. The comparison between the cultures should avoid emphasising the differences

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----



Because we have adopted the term **competence**, for us ICC is a complex configuration of skills and knowledge, it projects knowledge into real-life situations, but not in an automatic way; it is measurable, although we do not know yet by what indicators.

We proceed with a discussion of the specifics of ICC knowledge.

3) The Competences

The Chomskian term **competence** applies to inborn or acquired knowledge which generates linguistic skills. On the analogy, a set of linguistic and social knowledge has been formulated by van Ek (1976) as a model of **communicative competence** and later - as an European standard for **intercultural communicative competence** (van Ek and Trim 1991).

Van Ek characterises the knowledge needed for ICC as basically scientific. It is split into knowledge (equal to competence, in his view) derived from the subject matter of certain linguistic and social-science disciplines. Presuming that you will be familiar with these sciences, we shall explore van Ek's classification drawing upon your knowledge.

SAQ 4



Identifying the cognitive base for ICC in the subject matter of sciences

The list of competences preparing for the acquisition of intercultural skills is in the boxes on the left, labelled as a competence of a specific kind. The description of each competence is printed in the boxes on the right. Try to match each description of a competence (on the right) to the type of competence (on the left) from which it proceeds. Match them by drawing a line. The first has been done for you.

Sociolinguistic competence	the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts
Strategic competence	the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formulated in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear their conventional meaning ... that meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when seen in isolation
Social competence	when communication is difficult we have to find ways of 'getting our meaning across' or of 'finding what somebody means'; these are communication strategies, such as re-phrasing, asking for clarification
Discourse competence	the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms is determined by such conditions as setting, relationships between communication partners, communicative intentions etc.
Linguistic competence	everyday language is situated in a sociocultural context and complies the use of a particular reference frame which is partly different from that of the foreign language learner; a certain degree of familiarity with that context helps
Socio-cultural competence	involves both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations



Byram (1997: 11) raises two types of objections to the formulation of these competences. Firstly, there is little evidence that any knowledge needs underlie, for instance, the skill to repair misunderstandings in communication, called strategic competence in the model. The socio-cultural and social knowledge is also applicable in a very oblique way in the course of performing intercultural skills. These objections question the nature of competences in a model for intercultural communication.

Secondly, setting the native speaker as a model for achieving linguistic competence creates a paradoxical situation. Meaning attribution, as we have seen so far, is a projection of one's identity. Attributing meanings "natively", as linguistic competence requires it, would mean that non-native communicants would have to abandon their identity and adopt a different one. This will be called objection to the Native Speaker model and discussed at length at the end of this unit.

To resolve the problem of skills-knowledge contingency, Byram proposes a model where the competences proper – scientific knowledge - are supplemented with a group called *savoirs* – functional knowledge applicable to situations of communication. Next is a review of the *savoirs*.

4) The *Savoirs*

The application of intercultural skills is conditioned by a form of social and linguistic knowledge which differs from the scientific body of knowledge for the respective disciplines. The competence which utilises knowledge in a specific intercultural way is called **savoir**. The French word conveys the meaning of **knowing how** rather than any scientific insights, which, in Byram's view, reflects the functional nature of the skills in question. Here is the system of the **savoirs** connected with linguistic and social knowledge:

- skills to interpret and relate - *savoir comprendre*
- skills to discover and /or interact - *savoir apprendre/faire*
- knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal – *savoirs*
- attitudes of relativising self and valuing other - *savoir être*.

Compared to the familiar tripartite classification into skills, knowledge and attitudes, you will find that the skills appear split into two groups – skills to interpret and relate, on the one hand, and skills to discover and interact, on the other.

What makes the four components a **system**, rather than an inventory, are certain relations that hold amongst them. Byram has chosen as an organising principle the staging of the factors as the speaker needs them in intercultural communication. On the following page is his description.

Extract Five

Knowledge and attitude factors are preconditions, although I shall argue that they are also modified by the process of intercultural communication. The nature of the process is a function of the skills which a person brings to the interaction. These can be divided into two broad and related categories: first, skills of interpretation and establishing relationships between aspects of the two cultures; second, skills of discovery and interaction. The former involve the ability to analyse data from one's own and another country and the potential relationships between them. Skills of discovery can be operated in some circumstances independently of, and in others in combination with, skills of interaction. New data may be discovered in interaction with interlocutors from another country in particular times and places, and new data may also be gathered from other documents and sources without the need for interaction. Whatever their provenance, these data need to part of the analysis of relationships.

(Byram 1997: 33)

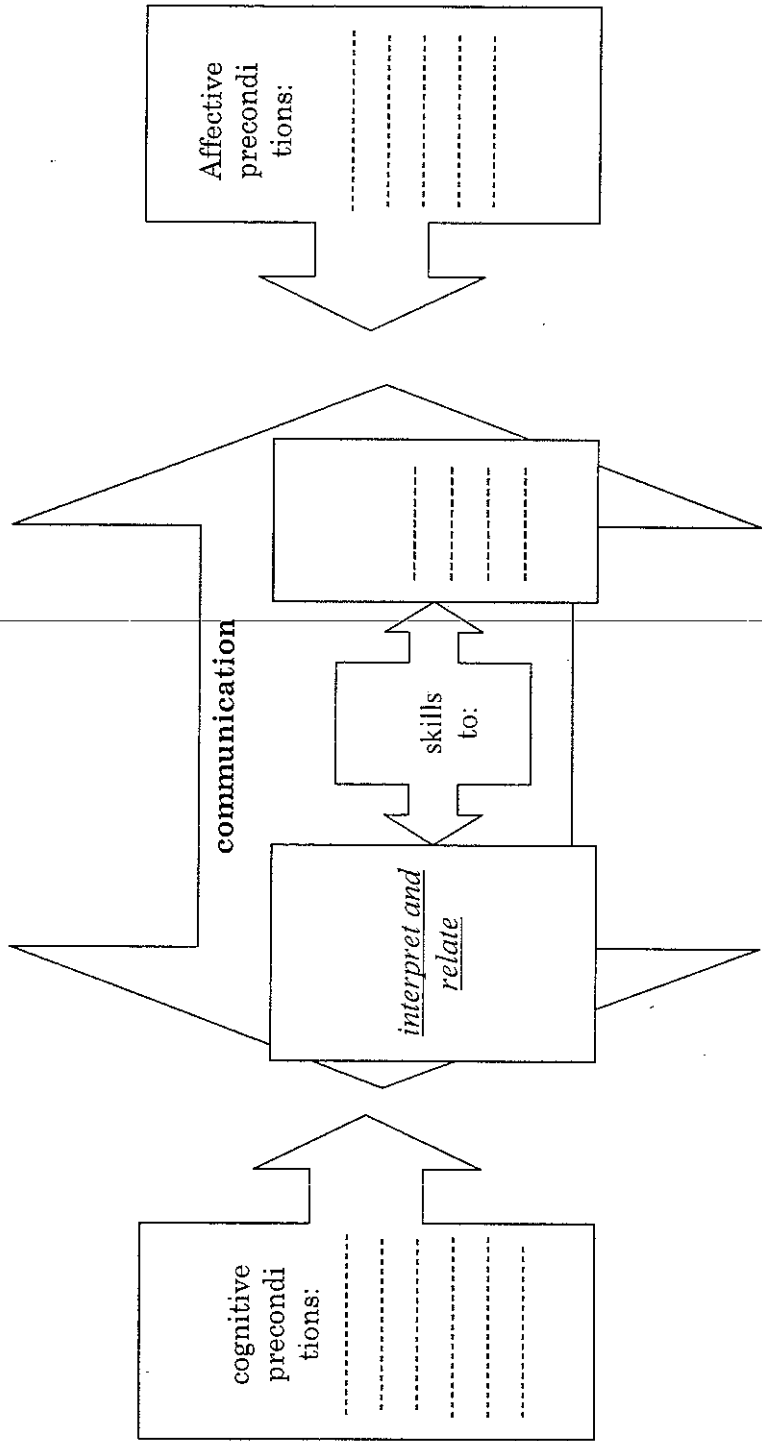
SAQ 5



Classifying the savoirs

Using the description of the functioning of the **savoirs** in communication, try to place them in the scheme on the next page according to their place in intercultural communication. The first one has been placed for you.





These have been the **savoirs** related to linguistics and social sciences. But communication demands drawing upon other spheres of knowledge as well. Apart from discovering, relating and interacting, one necessarily makes judgements about what they encounter in the process of communication. To cover the area of evaluating reality, Byram introduces a fifth component, called **critical cultural awareness**. It presents an ability to engage with social reality, as its French title suggests - **savoir s'engager**. In the next section we shall trace the development of the idea.

5) From Political Education to Critical Cultural Awareness

Consider the case of a Ukrainian teacher. She is describing a foreign language lesson focussing on a non-foreign language problem. You will easily guess what the activity was. Try to identify the problem.

Extract Six

NB! In a situation where the national identity question has been a taboo for many years this lesson must be conducted very carefully, as the students being inspired by the irony of the poem about the English, sometimes write poems to which the listeners can react very emotionally and their reactions can sometimes get quite aggressive, as it did in my case where a girl wrote ironically about Russians and another girl openly attacked her for being unfair to Russians. The funny thing was that the one who attacked was Ukrainian and in this way we managed to sort the problem out. However, in my opinion, it is better that they discuss these issues openly and with the teacher's participation than leave them to their own resources, leaving the issue to smolder.

On the other hand this class was very positively charged. I had a feeling that the students really enjoyed sharing their traditions and customs on neutral ground. Since they were speaking English, it was as if they lost their partiality and became genuinely interested in each other and at the same time more confident of themselves. It also influences my relationship with the group, as I saw later.

(Byram 1998:55)

Obviously, as a language learning activity, a class of Russian and Ukrainian pupils were asked to write a poem modelled on an ironic one about the English. Irony applied to either nation in that classroom, however, raised painful associations with the situation in the former Soviet Union.

The problem was that a political issue in a society appeared in the course of class work and the teacher worried that engaging with it might interfere with her work. She thought developing language skills and sharing native customs her primary concern and the political issue – a source of distraction.

Here is the teacher's reaction to the same problem a year later:

Extract Seven

Re-reading the paper a year later, I can not help noticing that so many changes have taken place in our society during this time and the issues that seemed so painful and new have become every-day topics in the newspapers. Nevertheless I am grateful to this project that I and my students had the chance to address these topics when they seemed so painful, but in fact were most necessary to us all. I hope our experience would encourage teachers in other countries not to avoid topics that might seem dangerous at the time but use them as a possibility to be made use of.

(Byram 1998: 55)

The problem of engaging with political issues, like identity and tolerance, and the ways to do so have long formed part of the so-called **political education**. Diachronic studies reveal a rich history but we shall stick to the present and study a recent educational document of the Council of Europe. The aim of our critical document review is to find points of contact between Language Education and Political Education.

6) Council of Europe - Basic Concepts and Core Competences of Education for Democratic Citizenship

a) cognitive competences

- legal and political: knowledge of rules of collective life – of power in a democratic society
- knowledge of the present world: historical and cultural dimension – capacity for critical analysis
- knowledge of the principles and values of human rights and democratic citizenships: based on the concept of freedom and equal dignity.

b) affective competences and choice of values

- the importance of conviction and adherence to principles – thinking of oneself as an individual in relation to others – belonging to a group or groups – a personal and collective affective dimension – values of freedom, equality and solidarity – positive acceptance of differences and diversity – beyond a narrow conception of tolerance.

c) capacities for action (social competences)

- capacity to live with others and co-operate: construct and implement joint projects
- capacity to resolve conflict in accordance with the principles of democratic law: calling on a third person – open debate
- capacity to take part in public debate: argue and choose in a real-life situation.

You may have found opportunities for most of the aims in political education to be achieved in language-and-culture teaching.

SAQ 6



Identifying which aims of political education can be achieved in language teaching

Briefly outline ways in which at least three specific objectives for political education can be achieved alongside linguistic aims. Be as specific as you can.

Example:

The capacity to **live with others and co-operate: construct and implement joint projects** can be achieved by training students to do project work at language lessons. Developing the skill to understand others is also connected with language.

1.
.....
.....
2.
.....
.....
3.
.....
.....

There is no Answer Key for this SAQ as the examples you give are closely related to your own understanding of the objectives and your previous experiences.

Concurrence of purposes between language learning and political education has been revealed by many researchers, P. Doye – among many others.

Doye (1993) has systematically represented the interaction between political education and language teaching in what he calls **a model of language teaching for international understanding**. Below are the principles of this model:

- cognitive orientation: language learning shall supplement the international dimension of the acquisition of knowledge about and understanding of other countries, cultures and societies
- evaluative orientation: political education shall lead learners to reflection on social norms, including those of their own, in order to develop a capacity for political judgement. This corresponds to the aims of foreign language teaching to train learners to respect the norms of other societies and to evaluate them in an unprejudiced way
- action orientation: both political education and foreign language teaching aim to instil in learners a disposition for engagement and interaction with others; in the case of foreign language teaching the 'others' are usually from another culture and society and the interaction is, psychologically if not sociologically, of a different kind, but is an extension of engagement with people in one's own society.

Doye presents his model in terms of orientations, keeping an eye on the general direction in the course of language and culture learning. For the purposes of teaching and assessment in the classroom, however, aims and objectives are more suitable. Such a formulation is available in Byram's model of ICC, as the fifth component **savoir s'engager**, or **critical cultural awareness**.

Extract Eight

Overall aim: An ability to evaluate on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries

Objective (a): identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures

Objective (b): make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria

Objective (c): interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

(Byram 1997: 63)

SAQ 7



Applying *savoir s'engager* to the Ukrainian case

With a view of the case of the Ukrainian teacher quoted in Extract Six and Seven study Byram's aim and objectives for his *savoir s'engager* and try to find which of the objectives caters for that teacher's problem. A gap-filling exercise helps you to reflect on the situation.

Byram's objective caters for the problem of conflicts on the basis of national identity. The intercultural speaker should be aware of the between Ukrainians and Russians in the post-communist era, of the strive of the Ukrainians to fight their way out of the omnipotent in a previous period Russian (very much merged with Soviet) identity. In a modelled on an English poem where self irony would be an expression of a totally different attitude, transfer might induce to Russians on the part of Ukrainians. The exercise, therefore, should be based on a common criterion for both nationalities involved – The successful intercultural speaker is able to agreement in such a complicated situation.



4.2 ICC IN THE CLASSROOM

This Section will first give you a picture of variations of intercultural competence which serve the goals of educating different groups of learners. Then we shall review specific class room objectives and materials for teaching towards ICC.

1) Curricular Goals

The curricula at various educational institutions set intercultural training as their goal. The competence, of course, varies according to its domain of application, approaches and target audience. The intercultural skills needed by a businessman, for example, will be very different from those needed by a pupil.

SAQ 8



Identifying the kind of ICC needed by various groups of learners

Below and on the following page you can read the ICC goals for three specific situations: a teacher-training college, a high school and a vocational training centre. As you read, try to decide which goals best serve the purposes of which institution and write it down in the space after the description.

Extract Nine

The Intercultural Dimension of Communicative Competence has:

A **linguistic** component: the ability to use the functions of informing, describing, expressing conditions, intentions, agreeing and disagreeing; the ability to use lexical collocations related to the fields of work, unions, banking, trade, phoning etc.; numerals, expressions of quantity, adverbs, intensifiers, discourse markers, modal verbs; use of intonation and stress.

A **paralinguistic** component: body language and gestures in accordance with the cultural codes and the situation.

A **sociolinguistic** component: the ability to use and interpret different types of discourse depending on the variables of the communicative situation and the rules which characterize this kind of communication, e.g. how to address oneself to a boss, a colleague, a foreigner, how to recognise and use formal, informal or colloquial register.

A **sociocultural** component: intra- and inter-cultural competence - knowing the specificity of their own and the communicant's culture at three levels – personal, corporate and national culture; the influence of this knowledge (cultural conditioning); the perception of this knowledge by others.

A **referential** component: knowing the different fields of experience and their relation: working conditions, wages, professional organisations, economic, political and social aspects of life, food, beverages, leisure etc.

A **discursive** component: The capacity of understanding and producing oral and written interactions within and outside the country via different means – fax, phone, letter, visiting a company etc.; reading professional journals, company documentation, memos, graphs etc.

A **strategic** component: the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to realise and maintain contact with the interlocutors in face to face meetings, negotiations with one or many partners, group discussions, interviews etc.; manage and recognise the communicative intentions of the speaker: hostile, neutral, friendly, diplomatic etc.

(Binon and Claes 1995: 323-353)

These are the objectives for the

Extract Ten

The trainees should:

- have and seek knowledge about the socio-cultural environment and background of the target language community (ies) or country (ies)
- have and seek knowledge about their own country and community and how others see them
- possess active knowledge ready to apply and interpret and to make accessible to the learning situation and styles of their students
- know how language works in communication and how it is used successfully for understanding. They should know about the shortcomings of language and foreign language users and how misunderstandings can be avoided.

(Edelhoff in Sercu 1996: 256)

These are the objectives for

Extract Eleven

The basic premises for building intercultural communicative competence should be:

Language and culture should be taught in an integrated way. Cross-disciplinary approaches with history, geography and other subjects should be sought.

The objectives of teaching intercultural communicative competence can be defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The model on which the teaching of intercultural communicative competence is based is that of dialogue, not monologue.

Teaching for intercultural communicative competence involves identity formation and is directed towards empowerment and independent learning.

(Sercu 2000: 31)

These are the objectives for

2) Approaches

Soderberg (1995: 286) classifies two main trends in intercultural communication training:

Extract Twelve

Training with the intention of adapting the person's behaviour to certain cultural standards easily becomes introduction to intercultural etiquette: "Please remember to bring a present to the Japanese negotiator, because in Japanese culture presents are means to get and maintain good personal relations." ...Handbooks written within this tradition are *Do's and Taboos Around the World* (Axtell 1985) and *Mind Your Manners. Managing Culture Clash in the Single European Market* (Mole 1992) The objectives of this tradition within intercultural training are to teach the rules of the game in order to adjust the behaviour of the communicators so that they will communicate effectively and appropriately. ...

Within the other trend, great emphasis is laid on awareness and understanding. The students have to become aware of how they themselves are deeply rooted in cultural traditions which may unconsciously influence the way they look upon other cultural values, and the way they communicate with members of other cultures. According to this pedagogical tradition, understanding one's own cultural background is just as important as being aware of cultural differences and understanding the fundamental assumptions of other cultures. Cross-cultural training within this tradition makes great efforts to integrate the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of the learning process in activities which give the participants opportunities for self disclosure and self reflection.

(Soderberg 1995: 286)

As a matter of convention, we shall call the first **the behavioural trend** and the second – **the awareness trend**.

Institutions connected with training businessmen and other professionals for their intercultural contacts normally focus on the behavioural trend. Byram, whose model of savoirs and competences was presented in some detail above, represents the awareness trend.

Because of the different philosophy, the two trends also differ in their classroom application. Below is an illustration of the exercises used by the trends.

SAQ 9



Identifying behavioural or awareness bias in exercises

Try to place each exercise with the behavioural or the awareness trend by the goals they aim to achieve. The behavioural trend attempts to induce a certain type of behaviour, the awareness trend - to develop analytical tools for understanding and adapting.

In the grid after each exercise tick the column B for behavioural, or A – for awareness. Please check the Answer Key after considering **all the four exercises**.

Multiple choice

The trainees are invited to choose individually their preferred responses to questions about socially accepted attitudes. A group discussion allows them to justify their choice and to compare it with the choices made by other members of the group.

The choices are discussed in a plenary and the trainer indicates which responses match with which culture. A new discussion in smaller groups gives them time to compare what they have just discovered with their personal experience and to understand the reasons for the different choices in other cultures.

The multiple choice questions

1. The best manager is:	a. an impressive person
	b. a good organiser
	c. an open person
	d. a wise person
2. Superiors are	a. nerve-racking trouble makers
	b. persons to be proud of
	c. persons about whom you don't say certain things
	d. persons without problems, who find solutions
3. What arguments you use to push your ideas through in a meeting?	a. it has always been done
	b. it is the only sensible approach
	c. the other view is stupid
	d. it is the only way to find a consensus
4. The success of a negotiation depends on:	a. knowing whether the partner is a good or bad guy
	b. the number of medals the partner has earned
	c. tax advantages
	d. how often tea or coffee and biscuits were served
5. The best way to resolve conflicts is:	a. to ask the people with the right status
	b. to avoid them
	c. to prevent them
	d. to confront them head-on

Below are the answers to the questions in the Multiple choice in a variety of cultures (presented by the instructors after the initial group discussion):

	France	Netherlands	USA	non-Western
1	a	b	c	d
2	a	d	b	c
3	c	d	b	a
4	b	d	a	c
5	d	b	c	a

Whose exercise?

A	B
---	---

It is advisable that you check the Answer Key after you have placed the four exercises.

Word rating

Words from the Bible and basic Indo-European concepts are listed for the trainees to indicate their affective value on a scale. They do this individually first, then discuss in smaller groups to justify their choice and to compare.

Example:

Give the following words an affective rating ranging from -3 to +3.

-3: this word gives you very unpleasant feelings

-2: this word gives you unpleasant feelings

-1: this word gives you rather unpleasant feelings

0: this word gives you no particular feeling

+1: this word gives you rather pleasant feelings

+2: this word gives you pleasant feelings

+3: this word gives you very pleasant feelings

aging	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
hero	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
aggression	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
independence	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
responsibility	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
control	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

Responses may vary between cultures. The word 'independence', for example, has a very positive connotation in the USA, a negative one in Turkey; 'responsibility' is positive in France and in the French-speaking region of Belgium (honour) but rather negative in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium (burden). The word 'control' has a positive connotation in the USA (shows interest for quality), but a negative one in France (undue interference).

A person who values belonging to tradition, happiness and quiet is a 'hand-on' manager. He is not overtly ambitious, if he values respect, politeness, forgiveness, modesty. Dynamism and modesty are shown by dominating values of sensuality. If nothing is particularly dominating, a strong personality emerges.

Whose exercise?

A	B
---	---

Two more exercises before you check the Answer Key!

Blank filling

Fill in the blanks with the words in the list. Words may be used more than once. Countries: Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain. Nationalities: British, Dutch, French, Germans, Italians.

Senses of humour vary considerably across cultures. Jokes are practically essential for the (1) , who often use them to cover up embarrassment, but they are problematic with the (2)..... , who only let their hair down in private. The (3)..... attitude is more spicy and intellectual. As for the (4)..... their great sense of public dignity means that they like taking the mickey out of people. In (5) humour tends to be satirical and enigmatic, but jokes have simply no official role in (6) , where people are not given to laughing at themselves.

Solution: (1)British. (2) Germans. (3) French. (4) Italians. (5) Greece (6)Spain.

Whose exercise?

A

Simulation

Bafa-Bafa is probably the best known simulation game. Trainees are divided into two groups with different cultures, for example the Northerners and the Southerners. A certain number of visits by two or three persons to the other group allows them to discover the culture. There is a discussion in each group followed by a class discussion.

The roles will generally confront two strongly opposed cultures – the Northerners appreciate logical thinking, while the Southerners value feelings. If the Northerners don't touch, the Southerners touch as much as possible. Northern society is a hierarchical one, whereas the Southern one is horizontal, without a leader, etc ... (in Binon and Claes 1995)

Whose exercise?

--	--



Now that you have impressions of the behavioural and the awareness approaches to ICC – read the criticism on the following page aimed at one of the trends. You will easily identify to which of the two trends it is directed. If you do not – after reading the criticism, turn to the Answer Key.

Extract Thirteen

The fact that the rules of the game can change, and that the conditions for intercultural meetings can be the subject of discussion and reflection, is beyond the conceptual frame of this pedagogical tradition. It is questionable if it is at all possible to act like a cultural chameleon, to adapt to changing cultural traditions without having culture-specific knowledge and without reasons for certain rules imbedded in the cultural etiquette. ... It is not possible to act interculturally appropriately and effectively without changing your attitudes towards the culture and adding new insight to your present knowledge of the culture.

(Soderberg 1995: 288)



This, however, need not prevent teachers from adopting any of the approaches, or combining them where possible.

3) Teaching-and-learning objectives for training the savoirs

Byram, whose model of savoirs and competences was presented above, recommends objectives and methods specific for each of the savoirs and we shall review them in turn in the following subsections. Great attention is given to this model because it has been developed for the purposes of the language learning classroom at school level.

The component of ICC which determines the nature of communication are the skills. Therefore, we start with them.

a) Skills

The distinction between the two sets of skills

- skills of interpreting and relating - **savoir comprendre**
- skills of discovery and interaction - **savoir apprendre/faire**.

helps trainers set clearer objectives for their teaching, reflecting the specifics of each group of skills. As is seen from the titles chosen for each group, the second one involves action, while the first can take place in the interpreter's leisure. The skills of interpreting can, therefore, be applied at the pace the interpreter wishes, while the skills of discovery and interaction function in real time and require fast reaction.

You will be acquainted with the objectives first as a reflection of the aim that they specify, and second – as the motive for using classroom materials and activities.

SAQ 10



Identifying the aim from a set of objectives

The list of instruction objectives below relates to one of the two sets of skills. Your task, as you read, is to find out which of the two sets of skills it relates to. Write your answer in the space after the list.

The learner should be able to:

- elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and to develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena
- identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations
- identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances
- use in real time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture, taking into consideration the degree of one's existing similarity with the country and culture and the extent of difference between one's own and the other
- identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and country
- identify and make use of public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures
- use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture.

These objectives lead towards the skills of



The overall aim for this group of skills is:

Extract Fourteen

Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

(Byram 1997: 52)

Having reviewed the aim and objectives for training the skills of discovery and interaction, we move on to the set of 'reflective' skills - the **skills of interpreting and relating**.

The model of ICC we accepted formulates the following goal for the skills necessary for intercultural communication:

Extract Fourteen

To develop an ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain and relate it to documents from one's own.

(Byram 1997: 52)

This time you will be asked to derive the objectives by considering sample activities designed to achieve them.

Apart from aims and objectives, teaching involves materials as well. Their selection and 'gearing up' for the classroom should necessarily reflect the chosen methodology of intercultural training. The need to train the skills to interpret and relate require the use of materials which are authentic, up-to-date, revealing linguistic, social and operational information about the culture. In this unit you will be exposed to several sample materials. A detailed discussion of developing and adapting materials follows in Module Three.

SAQ 11



Deducting the objectives for the development of skills from materials

There are three objectives for the skills of interpreting and relating. You will be presented with three activities. Use your general teaching competence and what you have learned so far from this Unit to deduce what cultural skills they can train. Write down your decision in the space after each activity.

1.

Food packets, wrappers, labels, pots, tins, price lists, posters, menus etc. from another culture are brought into the classroom. The students can be asked to bring similar materials from their culture. The task is to compare the materials from the two cultures for the contents, the prices, the user information etc. Some foods can be offered for tasting. Alternatively, the classroom permitting, recipes can be cooked and tasted from other countries. A similar activity can be staged with 'first aid materials'.

.....

2.

Travel descriptions of people who have visited foreign countries, eg French people – Britain, Americans – Turkey etc can be discussed paying attention to what surprises the traveller and why. Such descriptions clearly reveal features of both cultures.

(adapted from Jones 1995: 22-3)

.....

3.

Read to the students this very short – and exotic – story in which an European meets an African leader: *I held the cup up and proclaimed Zuuldibo's name in a toast. Immediately a deep and shocked silence descended upon the gathering. The boys stopped talking, Zuuldibo's smile froze upon his lips. The very flies seemed to hush their buzzing. I knew ... I had made a mistake.*

Ask the students for their own interpretations and then explain that the tribe does not know the institute of toasting. The only custom they have is cursing, so proclaiming the name of the chief of the tribe could only be interpreted in terms of the familiar custom – cursing.

(Byram and Zarate 1995: 26)

.....

There is no Answer Key for this SAQ. The skills developed through each activity formulate the three objectives for training the skills of interpreting and relating. Read on for the formulation of the objectives.

SAQ 12



Identifying the objectives for the skills of interpreting and relating

On the following page is how Byram formulates the objectives for training the skills of interpreting and relating. Compare to your own formulations and give the number of the activity that trains the objective in the space provided.

- identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins.

Activity

- identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present.

Activity

- mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.

Activity



Having dealt with the formative component of communication – the skills, we now move to the pre-conditions for communication – the attitudes, constituting the affective buffer and the knowledge, making up the cognitive one.

b) Attitudes

Hoopes (1989) has elaborated a spectrum of attitudes to the target culture, presented below. They develop from complete rejection of otherness to full saturation into the culture.

- ethnocentrism
- awareness
- understanding
- acceptance/respect
- appreciation/valuing
- selective adoption
- assimilation/adaptation/biculturalism/multiculturalism.

Intercultural training passes through a wide range of attitudes to the foreign culture – from the first stage, ethnocentrism, to, conditions permitting, the last one.

This scale represents a psychological approach to attitudes, where **attitude** means ‘disposition to a culture and its members’. Byram’s model considers an affective complex wider than the attitudes to the target culture alone. Along with favourable dispositions, it includes consciousness of the specifics of intercultural communication.

As pre-requisites for the acquisition of intercultural competence, attitudes make it possible for the learner to acquire a certain skill. Unless awareness of the specifics of the process of communication exists, the learner has no interest in developing the skill. “Favourable”, however, is too unhelpful as a description for the affective factors needed for successful intercultural training.

We shall try to formulate the affective complex by negation. Here is a list of attitudes which might prevent the learner from developing intercultural skills:

- A. lack of interest in other people’s ways and values
- B. a tendency to interpret everything from the point of view of a ‘native’ value system
- C. reluctance to go through the inconveniences which might be implied in the act of experiencing and adapting to another culture
- D. unwillingness to comply with the rules posited by another culture
- E. a tendency to look down on others who appear different
- F. inability to question the values of own culture.

SAQ 13



Identifying attitudes which form a favourable prerequisite for developing ICC

To relate the list of attitudes above to actual practice, we shall return to the activities described in SAQ 10 as developing intercultural skills plus an additional one. Your task is to decide which of the attitudes would prevent the students from developing the skill.

The activities have been reproduced for you below. The new one comes first. A grid follows where you can tick the letter of the attitude which you think would prevent the development of the skill. More than one item can be selected. The first example has been done:

1.

The materials needed for this activity are videos of English, French, German, Italian etc. speakers in their local context. Recommended are local TV programmes which are made for a home audience or as language teaching materials. Extracts from the films showing specific gestures, facial expressions and body language are chosen before the lesson and then shown to the students with the sound off. The task should select one of the features and ask the students to note what they see, describe them in detail and try to interpret their meaning. Then the tape is played again, this time – with the sound on. The students may be asked to dramatise the scene using the gesture, facial expression or body language, if they wish.

A. ✓	B. ✓	C.	D. ✓	E.	F.
------	------	----	------	----	----

2.

Food packets, wrappers, labels, pots, tins, price lists, posters, menus etc. from another culture are brought into the classroom. The students can be asked to bring similar materials from their culture. The task is to compare the materials from the two cultures for the contents, the prices, the user information etc. Some foods can be offered for tasting. Alternatively, the classroom permitting, recipes can be cooked and tasted from other countries. A similar activity can be staged with 'first aid materials'.

A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.
----	----	----	----	----	----

3.

Travel descriptions of people who have visited foreign countries, e.g. French people – Britain, Americans – Turkey etc. can be discussed paying attention to what surprises the traveller and why. Such descriptions clearly reveal which features of both cultures.

A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.
----	----	----	----	----	----

4.

Read to the students this very short – and exotic – story in which an European meets and African leader:

~~'I held the cup up and proclaimed Zuuldibo's name in a toast. Immediately a deep and shocked silence descended upon the gathering. The boys stopped talking, Zuuldibo's smile froze upon his lips. The very flies seemed to hush their buzzing. I knew ... I had made a mistake.'~~

Ask the students for their own interpretations and then explain that the tribe does not know the institute of toasting. A custom of similar appearance they have is cursing, so proclaiming the name of the chief of the tribe could only be interpreted in terms of the familiar custom – cursing.

A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.
----	----	----	----	----	----



The aim for developing the cultural attitudes is formulated by Byram, as follows:

Extract Fifteen

Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

(Byram 1997: 50)

Given this aim and the specific attitudes we identified as preventing the development of skills, we are ready to formulate the objectives.

SAQ 14



Formulating objectives for the affective factor

The specific objectives present the opposite of the attitudes we identified as preventing the development of the skills. Try your own formulations in the space below before you check with Byram's formulations in the Answer Key.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



c) Knowledge

Knowledge in Byram's model of ICC is very different from the usual topics taught as 'culture' in civilisation courses. Like the attitudes above, it is seen as a **pre-requisite** for communication.

So what does one need to know, in order to communicate successfully in intercultural situations? Byram's answer is in terms of two broad categories:

- knowledge about facts and processes in own and target culture (**fact**)
- knowledge of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (**proc**).

The first category is connected with factual information, the second – with knowledge of how to act and interpret other people's behaviour. Achieving both is the overall aim in intercultural training.

SAQ 15



Identifying objectives for the cognitive factor

In the concrete **objectives** for the cognitive buffer factual and procedural knowledge appear quite independently of each other. As you study the list below, say whether the first or the second category is meant in each case. Indicate beside each objective, using the abbreviations **fact** or **proc**. The first has been done for you.

- historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries **fact**
- the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or proximity), of travel to and from and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems
- the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins
- the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of one's interlocutor's country
- the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on it from one's own
- the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries

- the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own
- the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and one's interlocutor's country
- social distinctions and their principal markers, one's own and one's interlocutor's country
- institutions and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them
- the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country



The concrete objectives 'feed' into the **rationale** for teaching-and-learning the cognitive factor for ICC.

In this section we have seen what aims and objectives for the teaching-and-learning of ICC exist and how they relate to classroom practice. Any teaching, however, culminates in assessment. Next, we shall review ways to assess whether the aims of intercultural training have been achieved.

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4.3 WHAT METHODS EXIST FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ACQUISITION OF ICC

Assessing ICC sounds like an aim greater than is within the powers of a teacher and deserves a few words of caution. Firstly, ICC has so far been presented as product of teaching and learning but in fact it can well develop outside any educational institution, as a result of experience, pre-dispositions etc. Ways and means of assessing the product independently of education exist but we shall concern ourselves here with what is related to teaching, specifically - to whether the aims for acquiring some of the objectives of the ICC components have been achieved.

Secondly, as you will remember, training can adopt one of two trends – behavioural or awareness, or a combination. We can reasonably expect that they differ in assessment philosophy and procedure. As was done above, we shall review the methods of both and leave it to each teacher's discretion which philosophy and method suits each concrete purpose best.

- The assessment procedure is not synonymous with a test. It starts with identifying the **goal** set for teaching the specific component. Then **indicators** of success are formulated and finally - **instruments** to check whether the selected indicators can be observed in the learner. In what follows we shall discuss them in turn.

1) Identifying the Goal

Our teaching aim for training factual knowledge was formulated as follows:

- knowing the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and one's interlocutor's country.

In order to identify assessment indicators, the formulation of the aim should specify some concrete outcomes which can be tested. Here is a fuller conceptualisation of the goal:

- The intercultural speaker knows about educational systems, religious institutions, and similar locations where individuals acquire a national identity, are introduced to the dominant culture in their society in both countries.

What has been done is to specify 'the processes and institutions of socialisation' from the first formulation as educational systems, religious institutions etc, which make it easier to choose targets for assessment.

SAQ 16



Expanding the objective for assessment purposes

Try to expand a teaching goal for procedural knowledge. The aspect which will serve as our example is defined as:

- Knowledge of the types of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins.

The first step in the assessment process is to expand the objective, so that it specifies **concrete results**. Formulate your version, starting with:

The intercultural speaker knows about

.....

.....

.....



2) Choosing Indicators

The **indicators** we choose should be as specific and observable as possible. They should also reflect the position of the learner towards what is being assessed. As an indicator for the successful acquisition of factual knowledge for example, we shall choose the learner's ability to distinguish independent from state schools in Britain. A simple and straightforward way to assess whether the learner is able to make the distinction is by a test question, where the learner simply gives – or does not – the correct answer.

Here is a checklist of what a good indicator needs to be like:

- (a) present an obvious, observable act of behaviour
- (b) consist of only one feature
- (c) be revealing of knowledge informing the performance of the act of behaviour.

We shall now return to the procedural aspect of knowledge formulated above:

- The intercultural speaker knows about conventions of communication and interaction in their own and the foreign cultures, the unconscious effect of paralinguistic and non-verbal phenomena, alternative interpretations of shared concepts, gestures, customs and rituals.

On the basis of this expanded goal, a list of indicators of success has been formulated below.

SAQ 17



Selecting indicators of achieved knowledge

Test the formulated indicators of success using the checklist on the previous page as a guideline. Some indicators will satisfy all the three criteria - for those tick the OK column. If they violate criterion (a) by being something other than an act of behaviour, tick column (a). If they combine more than one feature – tick (b). And finally - tick (c), if they do not reveal that knowledge underpins the acts of behaviour. The first has been done for you as an example:

The student:

	OK	a	b	c
1. knows the cause of misunderstanding		√		
2. identifies when misunderstanding has occurred and explains why				
3. knows why a misunderstanding occurs				
4. can choose from a list of possible causes for the misunderstanding				
5. can identify a case of misunderstanding				
6. can explain the cause of it				
7. can write an essay about similar misunderstandings and how they can be avoided				



3) Test Techniques

Where skills are concerned, the ability to communicate can be best tested in a **simulation** of communication. Again, the skill to be assessed should be very clearly specified and unambiguous indicators selected because following everything that goes on in communication can be rather demanding. Using video or audio-recording can intimidate the learner and yield unreliable data.

Techniques, like portfolios, course work and continuous assessment give an opportunity to get a picture of the development of a skill.

In relation to the cognitive factors, it is also relevant to test whether the learning is **deep** or **superficial**. Entwistle provides a checklist to distinguish between the two:

1. an intention to understand material for oneself
2. interacting vigorously and critically with the content
3. relating ideas to previous knowledge and experience
4. using organising principles to integrate ideas
5. relating evidence to conclusions
6. examining the logic of the argument

(Entwistle in Byram 1997: 90)

So one can try to test both the **availability** of knowledge and its **quality**.

SAQ 18



Evaluating whether test techniques examine the quality of learning

A number of techniques for testing the cognitive factor are listed below. They all ascertain the **availability** of knowledge. But do they test the **quality** of the learning as well? Do they answer all the questions in the quality checklist, only one of them or none?

As you read the techniques, check whether they can reveal any of the characteristics qualifying learning as superficial or deep, using Entwistle's checklist. A grid after each technique presents its points as numbers. Tick the number of the quality assessable by the test techniques. More than one can be tested by one technique, or a technique may be unsuitable for testing ICC at all. The first one has been done for you as an example:

- asking the examinee to justify her answer at the exam

1.	2.	3. ✓	4.	5. ✓	6.
----	----	------	----	------	----

- assigning project-work, e.g. collect publicity material for British public schools

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
----	----	----	----	----	----

- multiple-choice questions

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
----	----	----	----	----	----

- a discursive essay

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
----	----	----	----	----	----

- a descriptive essay

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
----	----	----	----	----	----

- self-assessment (by a questionnaire)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
----	----	----	----	----	----



SAQ 19



A recapitulation of the effectiveness of test techniques

The following text reviews the good and bad sides of some assessment techniques mentioned above. On the basis of our discussion so far and on your sound judgement, fill in the blanks below.

The technique of multiple choice questions is not suitable for checking cultural knowledge because it does not reveal if learning has taken place. involves applying skills from another area and the grade would not reflect knowledge only. is only suitable for raising awareness of the issue, rather than checking any available knowledge.

Testing the students by critical analysis of a situation involving one or more cases of communication breakdown can reveal the student's ability to As for the causes for the misunderstandings, the student's ability to explain them can be tested by eliciting for the answers. Because misunderstandings are often described by complicated technical vocabulary, the students should only be exposed to rather than theoretical generalisations of the cases. The number of the situations including misunderstandings should be within reasonable boundaries. If the learner's ability is to be tested on a wider scale of material, assessment is a good choice.



The behavioural and the awareness trends differ in their selection of assessment procedures in the field of attitudes. This is the reason why we shall review them in detail below.

4) Attitudes

The trend called by us **behavioural** proposes a varied range of testing techniques mostly based on the principles of psychometrics, classifying expressed opinions as indicators of an attitude. The attitudes they envisage, as we registered, relate to the image of the nationality in question. The awareness trend, for their part, take a wider notion of attitudes, with a view of whether they facilitate intercultural communication or not. They adopt the method of holistic descriptions.

In this section we shall juxtapose both types of test with a view of their applicability to concrete situations.

a) Behavioural tests

Firstly, we shall review a case of assessment to study (a) what techniques are used and (b) how they operate.

In a study of the affective component of ICC, a group of Belgian researchers (Sercu 2000: 92ff) used a combination of three methods: **semantic differential**, **social distance scale** and **preference test**. Three were used so that the data can be triangulated to check the validity of the results. Below are samples of the data collecting procedure for each method. As you read you may decide to do the tests yourself.

The semantic differential

Adjective pairs, possibly applicable to Germans, have been selected on the basis of psychometric research so that each adjective stands at the opposite pole of a scale. The scale consists of 7 points to allow for a variety of choices. Both negative and positive poles appear on the left-hand side so as to prevent automatic scoring. Here is a sample of the form used at the test:

GERMANS						
dirty						clean
dull						smart
strong						weak
pleasant						unpleasant
fast						slow
small						large
beautiful						ugly
cold						hot
heavy						light
bad						good
peaceful						aggressive
coward						brave

Social distance scale

With this instrument the students are asked about the relationships they would engage in with the target group. The scale is designed as a cumulative continuum and assumes that respondents will accept automatically each position lower than the one marked by them, e.g. if they agree to have a German husband/wife, they will automatically agree to a German boy/girlfriend etc.

Would you accept a German person as:	Yes	No
a member of your school		
a member of your class		
next to you on the bench		
as your girlfriend/boyfriend		
as your wife/husband		

The preference test

In this test, the students have to select between pairs of nationalities. The instruction is to choose by all means and to react quickly, without too much thinking. Below is reproduced the form for the test:

Poles/ Russians	Fleming/ French	German/ British
French/ Germans	Walloons/ Germans	Fleming/ Walloon
Americans Walloons	Germans/ Fleming	British/ Fleming
Americans Fleming	British/ Americans	Poles / Russians
British/ French	Germans/ Americans	Walloon/ British
French/ Walloons	French/ Americans	

Here are some of the results established by the psychometric tests. Check if they justify your feelings about the yield of the tests.

Extract Sixteen

- scores regarding Germans tend to be negatively polarised
- Germans rank behind most of the other target groups addressed in the study...
- in all the age, gender and regional subgroups Germans could be observed to score differently from Flemings, Americans and French. British and Walloons were only sometimes scored significantly different from Germans. Whereas year of schooling and gender were found not to make a significant difference to pupil attitudes towards Germans, the influence of school type and regional location appeared more ambivalent.

(Sercu 2000: 108 abbreviated)

Psychometric testing gives information about dispositions towards specific nations. The data read as a scale of preference in comparison to the dispositions towards others.

b) Testing in the awareness trend

We now return to Byram's assessment procedure based on holistic description. Our purpose is to see how his proposed method works for an affective factor. We shall retrace the steps of the assessment procedure we described for the cognitive factors above.

The affective factor we shall use as an example is formulated as:

interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices.

SAQ 21



Identifying the stages in the assessment procedure

Following is the description of what is done at each step in the assessment process applied to this factor. As you read, name which stage is being performed. The first one has been done for you.

1. Expanding the objective

The intercultural speaker does not assume that familiar phenomena – cultural practices and products common to themselves and the other – are understood in the same way, or that unfamiliar phenomena can only be understood by assimilating them to their own cultural phenomena, that they need to discover the other’s understanding of these, and of phenomena in their own culture which are not familiar to the other.

2.

Evidence of withholding their own perspectives and of attributing value to the other’s view of phenomena in learner’s own culture should necessarily involve **action** rather than a professed preference. So the indicator can be a deliberate **selection** of non-native descriptions of native phenomena over native ones for the purposes of presenting the phenomenon to an audience.

3.

In an **interview** situation the examinee is asked to select a text for the purpose of explaining traditional Bulgarian customs – martenitsa, kukeri, horo, etc. from a set of two texts: one written by a Bulgarian ethnographer and the other – by an English-speaking traveller. The first one is done with a great deal of scientific detail but particularly ethnocentric; the other – less informed in the specifics but done from a foreign perspective. Having made her choice, the examinee justifies her choice.

Alternatively, the students are assigned to prepare a **portfolio** presenting Bulgarian customs and traditions to foreign peers. Then the work is checked for evidence of the student’s ability to decenter.

Which type of testing would you prefer? Why? Make a note of it in the space below.

SUMMARY

In this unit you were introduced to the concept of **intercultural communicative competence** as an instrument setting teaching aims and objectives for training people for intercultural contacts. Its components were revealed to relate to linguistic and social disciplines, functioning in communication in the selective form of **savoirs**. The main body of the competence, formative for communication, consists of skills conditioned by cognitive and affective factors. You were also introduced to two possible approaches to ICC: the first – striving to develop behavioural patterns acceptable in intercultural situations; the second – aimed at raising awareness of difference and developing analytical instruments of adapting to otherness. Some methods of teaching and assessment were suggested as an illustration of the approaches.

In the next module you will begin with the way from the ‘fluent fool’, as the possessor of good linguistic knowledge, to the intercultural speaker.

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SAQ 1

Predicting some of skills necessary to communicate across cultures

There is no Answer Key to this question as you will be asked to check after doing the section on the **intercultural speaker**.

SAQ 2

Classify the qualities of the intercultural speaker

attitudes	curiosity about the new culture suspend her disbelief and judgement avoid by the standards in her own culture (de-centering)
skills	interpret and discover meanings she will actively seek ways to overcome dysfunctions in communication
knowledge	has a knowledge of the history and present of the country has a general knowledge about how communication proceeds

SAQ 3

Considering implications of the term intercultural

A. Communication takes place between individuals.

	2.	3.
--	----	----

B. It is shaped by individual, as well as by group values and characteristics.

	2.	3.
--	----	----

C. The groups which reveal common features of communicating can be ethnic, regional, professional etc.

	2.	3.
--	----	----

D. The discipline dealing with ICC takes up the task to study and apply the newly emerging tendencies of contact between cultures and people.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

E. The discipline has a wider field than communication, including the study of identity, the acquisition of skills etc.

1.		
----	--	--

F. A major concern for ICC is to educate the ‘citizen of the world’ through language education.

	2.	
--	----	--

G. The academic field, called ICC uses interdisciplinary approaches, drawing on psychology, ethnography, sociology, anthropology.

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

H. The field needs to cross frontiers – national or of prejudice and bias.

1.		3.
----	--	----

I. Comparison between the cultures does not strive to establish any ‘universal’ human features but rather to assist communication.

	2.	
--	----	--

J. The cultures studied need to be in contact with each other

	2.	
--	----	--

K. The comparison between the cultures should avoid emphasising the differences

1.		3.
----	--	----

SAQ 4

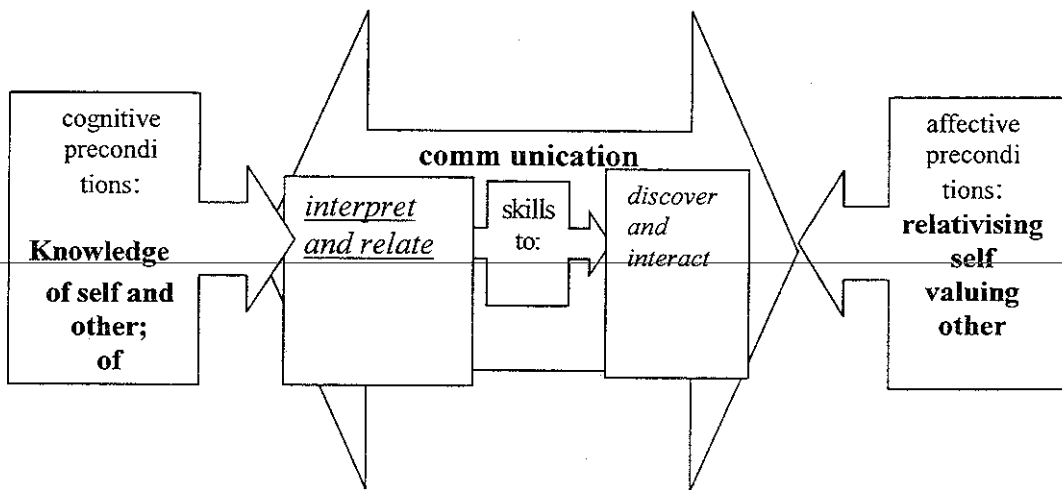
Identifying the cognitive base for ICC in the subject matter of sciences

Sociolinguistic competence	the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms is determined by such conditions as setting, relationships between communication partners, communicative intentions etc
Strategic competence	when communication is difficult we have to find ways of ‘getting our meaning across’ or of ‘finding what somebody means’; these are communication strategies, such as re-phrasing, asking for clarification.
Social competence	involves both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations

Discourse competence	the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts
Linguistic competence	the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formulated in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear their conventional meaning ... that meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when seen in isolation
Socio-cultural competence	everyday language is situated in a socio-cultural context and implies the use of a particular reference frame which is partly different from that of the foreign language learner; a certain degree of familiarity with that context helps

SAQ 5

Classifying the savoirs



SAQ 6

Identifying which aims of political education can be achieved in language teaching

No Answer Key is provided to this question as your answers would be based on personal experience.

SAQ 7

Applying savoir s'engager to the Ukrainian case

Byram's objective (c) caters for the problem of conflicts on the basis of national identity. The intercultural speaker should be aware of **the potential conflict** between Ukrainians and Russians in the post-communist era, of the course of Ukrainians to fight their way out of the omnipotent in a previous period Russian (very much merged with Soviet) identity. In a **poem-writing FLT exercise**, modelled on an English poem where self-irony would be an expression of a totally different attitude, transfer might induce **irony** to Russians on the part of Ukrainians. The exercise, therefore, should be based on a common criterion for both nationalities involved – **mutual respect**. The successful intercultural speaker is able to **negotiate** agreement in such a complicated situation.

SAQ 8

Identifying the kind of ICC needed by various groups of learners

The ICC goals come from the curricula for:

1. Vocational training (business)
2. Teacher-training
3. Secondary school

SAQ 9

Identifying behavioural or awareness bias in exercises

All of the exercises belong to the behavioural model. They use stereotypical notions about the nations to appraise the learners of what they might expect in the culture rather than prepare them to observe, analyse and interpret concrete behaviour. The answers are ready-made, analysis and thinking are invited only up to the point of **spotting** the difference. What happens, for instance, if the Japanese person they meet differs from the stereotype? How many stereotypical Japanese or Bulgarians can you find?

The criticism is directed at the behavioural approach.

SAQ 10

Identifying the aim for a set of objectives

These objectives lead towards the skills of discovery and interaction - **savoir apprendre/faire**.

SAQ 11

Deducting the objectives for the development of skills from materials

No answer key is provided at this point. Read on

SAQ 12

Identifying the objectives for the skills of interpreting and relating

- identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins. Activity 1
- identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present. Activity 3
- mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena. Activity 2

SAQ 13

Identifying attitudes which form a favourable prerequisite for developing ICC

2.

A. ✓	B. ✓	C. ✓	D.	E.	F. ✓
------	------	------	----	----	------

3.

A. ✓	B. ✓	C.	D.	E. ✓	F. ✓
------	------	----	----	------	------

4.

A. ✓	B. ✓	C. ✓	D. ✓	E. ✓	F. ✓
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SAQ 14

Formulating objectives for the affective factor

- 1) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality; this should be distinguished from attitudes of seeking out the exotic or of seeking to profit from others
- 2) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and other cultures and cultural practices
- 3) willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment
- 4) readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence
- 5) readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non verbal communication and interaction

SAQ 15

Identifying objectives for the cognitive factor

- historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries **fact**
- the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or proximity), of travel to and from and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems **fact**
- the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins **proc**
- the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of one's interlocutor's country **fact**
- the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on it from one's own **fact**
- the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries **fact**
- the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own **fact**
- the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and one's interlocutor's country **fact**
- social distinctions and their principal markers, one's own and one's interlocutor's country **proc**
- institutions and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them **fact**
- the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country **PROC**

SAQ 16

Expanding the objective for assessment purposes

The intercultural speaker knows about conventions of communication and interaction in their own and the foreign cultures, the unconscious effect of paralinguistic and non-verbal phenomena, alternative interpretations of shared concepts, gestures, customs and rituals.

Needless to say, a teacher may want it formulated differently to include, or exclude components.

SAQ 17

Selecting indicators of achieved knowledge

	OK	a	b	c
1) knows the cause of misunderstanding		√		
2) identifies when a misunderstanding has occurred and explains why			√	
3) knows why a misunderstanding occurs		√		
4) can choose one from a list of possible causes for the misunderstanding				√
5) can identify a case of misunderstanding	√			
6) can explain the cause for the misunderstanding	√			
7) can write an essay about similar misunderstandings and how they can be avoided				√

SAQ 18

Evaluating whether test techniques examine the quality of learning

- asking the examinee to justify her answer at the exam

I.	II.	III. √	IV.	V. √	VI.
----	-----	--------	-----	------	-----

- assigning project-work, e.g. collect publicity material for British public schools

I. √	II. √	III. √	IV. √	V. √	VI. √
------	-------	--------	-------	------	-------

- multiple-choice questions

Byram argues **against** using multiple choice questions while testing ICC knowledge because they test none of the qualities of deep knowledge specified in the list (p.90).

- a discursive essay

I. √	II. √	III. √	IV. √	V. √	VI. √
------	-------	--------	-------	------	-------

A word of caution concerning essays: As a teacher, would you give a good grade for excellent essay structure but poor knowledge? Or, conversely – for excellent knowledge but poor writing skills? The meta-cognitive skills often interfere with the assessment of ICC. Before adopting the technique, we need to make a choice whether we consider the meta-cognitive skill as part of ICC and grade it along with the knowledge or we ignore the writing and concentrate on the content.

- a descriptive essay

I.	√	II.		III.	√	IV.		V.	√	VI.	
----	---	-----	--	------	---	-----	--	----	---	-----	--

It seems that so little can be checked by a descriptive essay that it is not bothering with the meta-cognitive skill.

- self assessment (by a questionnaire)

This is another technique which does not work for the cognitive factor of ICC because it does not test the quality of the learning. However, it is feasible as an initial technique raising awareness of the problems to be discussed.

SAQ 19

A recapitulation of the effectiveness of test techniques

The technique of multiple choice questions is not suitable for checking cultural knowledge because it does not reveal if **deep** learning has taken place. **Essay writing** involves applying skills from another area and the grade would not reflect **cultural** knowledge only. **Self-assessment** is only suitable for raising awareness of the issue, rather than checking any available knowledge. Testing the students by critical analysis of a situation involving one or more cases of communication breakdown can reveal the student's ability to **identify cases of cultural misunderstanding**. As for the causes for the misunderstandings, the student's ability to explain them can be tested by eliciting **justification** for the answers. Because misunderstandings are often described by complicated technical vocabulary, the students should only be exposed to **concrete examples** rather than theoretical generalisations of the cases. The number of the situations including misunderstandings should be within reasonable boundaries. If the learner's ability is to be tested on a wider scale of material, **continuous** assessment is a good choice.

SAQ 20

Impressions of behavioural testing techniques

Impressions of the tests:

- seem to encourage undifferentiated thinking
- ask students to discuss features out of their context

- preferences can hardly be given in general, without bringing into the picture the situation for which the person is chosen, e.g. a German can be a very desirable partner for a sports game but not necessarily for travelling companion
- re-enforce an understanding of the term **culture** as large culture, on the national level
- impose stereotyping.

SAQ 21

Identifying the stages in the assessment procedure

1. formulating the teaching objective in great detail
2. identifying indicators of success
3. deciding on an appropriate procedure

Question sheet

This sheet is intended to deal with queries that arise during your work on these materials. The question sheet is not intended to restrict the length or number of your queries - if there is not enough space on the sheet please use it as a cover sheet and attach it to your page(s) of questions/comments. The sheet should be posted to the Course Coordinator.

Name _____

Address for returned sheet: _____

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Page reference _____ question _____

Answer _____

.....

Page reference _____ question _____

Answer _____
