



MODELS OF INTEGRATING THE CULTURAL COMPONENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (BYRAM, DEARDORFF, FANTINI)

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ABSTRACT

English language training increasingly emphasises intercultural communicative competency (ICC) in the age of globalisation and mobility. Theoretical frameworks by Michael Byram, Darla Deardorff, and Alvino Fantini have had the most impact on language education. This essay compares these three frameworks' cultural conceptualisation and potential to inform ELT culture integration. The research is based on critical analysis of each scholar's foundational publications and modern literature linking ICC to classroom practice. Byram's program promotes critical cultural awareness and good citizenship in other cultures through foreign language instruction. Research-based process and pyramid models by Deardorff view intercultural competence as a continual developmental cycle impacted by attitudes, internal results, and external behaviours. Fantini promotes language proficiency and outlines assessment-measurable categories and aspects of intercultural competence. The comparison shows parallels and contrasts in attitudes, knowledge, abilities, reflection, scope, organisation, and pedagogy. The paper concludes with suggestions for English language teachers who want to integrate all three frameworks to construct courses, activities, and examinations that incorporate culture.

KEYWORDS: Intercultural communicative ability; English language teaching; cultural aspect; Byram; Deardorff; Fantini; language pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language no longer emphasises grammar and formality. Students must speak English with persons from different cultures, values, and communication styles in modern classrooms. English language training now emphasises multicultural communication. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) involves using language, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and cultural resources to communicate with people from other cultures.

Theoretical and practical frameworks describe intercultural communication skills and help educators build and evaluate curriculum. Byram's intercultural communicative competency model, established in European foreign language teaching, has shaped the discipline by tying cultural learning to defined curriculum goals, classroom activities, and evaluation methodologies. Deardorff's process-oriented models, based on expert consensus, and Fantini's educational exchange programs have enlarged the subject by emphasising intercultural learning's developmental, contextual, and evaluable features.

Despite having great ideas, many English language teachers fail to incorporate culture into courses, materials, and assessments. Teachers understand the necessity of intercultural competence (ICC) but struggle to go beyond occasional cultural insights to structured



intercultural teaching, according to research in various EFL settings. Three key approaches can be compared to explain how they shaped English Language Teaching culture.

Byram, Deardorff, and Fantini English language education models are compared. Each model's conceptualisation of ICC, linguistic and cultural roles, competence structure and dynamics, and classroom application and evaluation are assessed.

Recent study on ICC in EFL classes utilising one or more of the three models supplements these core texts. This secondary literature illustrates model interpretation and contextualisation, not a systematic review.

Analysis is three-phased. Each model starts with its core components, ideas, and educational framework. Second, the models differ on how they view ICC, competence construction and change, language and culture, and assessment. The study finishes with culture-in-English-language education ideas.

Foreign language education underpins Byram's intercultural communicative competency approach. What are called "savoirs" include curiosity, openness, knowledge of one's own and other cultures, understanding and communication skills, discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. These elements help students reflect on their values and identities while engaging with others. Byram links ICC to intercultural speakers and democratic citizenship, stating that language education should prepare students to contribute critically and ethically in diverse societies. Language teachers have explicit normative categories for setting objectives, structuring learning activities, and constructing evaluation descriptors.

Deardorff developed empirical models from intercultural expert consensus. Her pyramid approach to intercultural competence begins with respect, openness, and curiosity. These attitudes promote cultural and sociolinguistic knowledge, interpersonal skills, adaptation, flexibility, empathy, and an ethnorelative worldview. External outcomes—good intercultural behavior—top the pyramid. The process model highlights that attitudes foster knowledge and skills, which shape internal outcomes that influence outward behaviour, while ongoing experience feeds back into attitudes and knowledge. Deardorff's concepts are broad and context-independent, making them adaptable to numerous educational contexts with less apparent language classroom connections.

Fantini defines intercultural communication competency as the ability to communicate across languages and cultures. His research shows that ICC has three main areas—relationships, communication, and the host environment—and four development dimensions—knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness. ICC requires host language understanding, not talent. To evaluate programs and communicate intercultural outcomes to stakeholders, Fantini presents scales, descriptors, and instruments for longitudinally evaluating ICC development. He studies educational exchange and service programs.

Comparing these three models shows convergences. Successful international learning requires qualities like openness, respect, and curiosity, according to all three. Learning about oneself and others, communicating, and being reflective or critical are also important. They share a structure that promotes English language instruction, which encourages students to understand various cultures, communicate in real time, and interpret meanings in context.

These models affect ELT cultural integration differently because to their aim and orientation. Byram's paradigm, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural objectives and vocabulary for syllabi, textbook evaluation standards, and classroom assessment rubrics, is

best for foreign language instruction. Deardorff's models are used at the institutional level to identify graduate attributes or internationalisation results, though they are more wide. They encourage teachers to consider intercultural competence as a continuous process and reward internal results like flexibility and empathy, which may not be obvious in classroom performance but may be encouraged through reflection activities, portfolios, and experiential projects. Fantini's paradigm embeds ICC in genuine intercultural encounters and regards language competency as both an outcome and a means of intercultural development, making it useful for English learning combined with study abroad, telecollaboration, or service learning. English teachers mix their results rather than select between ways. Byram's components may assist build educational objectives like evaluating authentic texts or media from diverse cultures to improve interpretive and relational skills. Deardorff's process approach can help curriculum designers create developmental trajectories for courses and programs, prompting them to think and engage on attitudes and internal dispositions. Fantini's focus on language and assessment allows teachers to use intercultural descriptors in speaking, writing, and project-based evaluation to reward students for negotiating meaning, showing empathy, and adapting to culturally different interlocutors.

Studies in EFL contexts suggest that when teachers adopt integrative perspectives, the cultural component becomes a transversal dimension of language education. Textbook dialogues, reading passages, online exchanges, and classroom discussions can then be deliberately used to explore multiple cultural perspectives, question stereotypes, and develop critical cultural awareness. The theoretical sophistication of the three approaches is transferred into practical pedagogy.

Combining different views is a problem and an opportunity for English teachers. Using Byram's components to structure classroom objectives, Deardorff's process orientation to plan long-term developmental pathways, and Fantini's assessment tools to document learners' progress, educators can design programs that make cultural proficiency a core component of language proficiency. Integration is necessary for students to utilise English to communicate effectively and critically, ethically, and properly deal with modern cultural variety.

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