

**การเสริมสร้างสมรรถนะในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม  
เพื่อทักษะการสื่อสาร อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพในชั้นเรียน  
ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ**

**FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE  
COMPETENCE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS IN THE ESP CLASSROOM**

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## บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มุ่งเน้นให้เห็นความจำเป็นในการสร้างความตระหนักรู้เรื่องประเด็นระหว่างวัฒนธรรมให้กับนักศึกษาในสาขาวิชาต่างๆ และความจำเป็นในการเสริมสร้างทักษะการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในการเรียนการสอนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ ทั้งนี้ การสร้างความตระหนักรู้และการเสริมสร้างทักษะดังกล่าวเป็นเรื่องที่ท้าทายและต้องอาศัยความพยายามอย่างยิ่งสำหรับผู้สอนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ เนื่องด้วยผู้สอนนั้นมีบทบาทสำคัญในการช่วยให้ผู้เรียนมีความตระหนักรู้และมีทักษะทางการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม เพื่อให้ผู้เรียนจะสามารถสื่อสารได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพเมื่อไปประกอบวิชาชีพในสังคมโลกาภิวัตน์ ดังนั้น บทความนี้จึงได้อธิบายเรื่องสมรรถนะในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในบริบทการทำงานในสังคมโลกาภิวัตน์ โน้มน้ำใจขององค์ประกอบในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม และสัดส่วนของเนื้อหาทางการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในตำราสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะทุกสาขาวิชาที่มีวางจำหน่ายอยู่นอกจากนั้น บทความนี้ยังได้นำเสนอแนวทางการแสวงหาข้อมูลต่างๆ เพื่อสร้างและพัฒนารายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ โดยใช้การวิเคราะห์สถานการณ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม แนวทางการสอดแทรกองค์ประกอบทางการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในเอกสารหรือตำราที่ใช้ในการเรียนการสอน แนวทางการใช้และประยุกต์ใช้แนวการสอนและกิจกรรมต่างๆในห้องเรียนที่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวกับการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม โดยมีอาจารย์ผู้สอนรับบทบาทในการอำนวยความสะดวกในกระบวนการเรียนการสอน รวมถึงแนวทางการใช้เครื่องมือในการประเมินผลเพื่อวัดประสิทธิภาพของการสอนและประเมินสมรรถนะทางการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของผู้เรียน ในบทสรุปนั้น ได้มีข้อเสนอแนะเพื่อเป็นแนวทางในการพัฒนาเอกสารหรือตำราที่ใช้ในการเรียนการสอนและการพัฒนารูปแบบการเรียนการสอนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ รวมถึงยังได้ชี้ให้เห็นบทบาทของสมรรถนะในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมที่มีต่อการดำเนินงานของบัณฑิตในตลาดแรงงานนานาชาติ

**คำสำคัญ:** ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อจุดประสงค์เฉพาะ ความตระหนักรู้เรื่องประเด็นระหว่างวัฒนธรรมสมรรถนะในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม ผู้ที่มีสมรรถนะในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม การวิเคราะห์สถานการณ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม

## Abstract

This article aims to discuss how raising intercultural awareness of students through diverse disciplines and fostering intercultural communicative skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms is a compulsory, challenging and demanding task for ESP practitioners who play a crucial role in equipping students with intercultural communication skills to become interculturally competent communicators in their future global workplace careers. To achieve this goal, this article starts with comprehensively outlining intercultural communicative competence in a global workplace context, including a current review of intercultural elements and their proportion in commercial textbooks for all disciplines of ESP courses. Thereafter, the article highlights inputs for devising and developing intercultural ESP courses by conducting an intercultural communicative situation analysis, embedding intercultural elements into ESP instructional materials, adopting and adapting various intercultural teaching approaches and class activities guided by ESP teachers who take on the facilitator role in the teaching-learning process; utilizing assessment tools for gauging the effectiveness of teaching and evaluating the students' intercultural communicative competence. It concludes with suggestions and recommendations for ESP instructional material development, pedagogical development and highlighting the role of intercultural communicative competence in terms of students' employability in the global job market.

**Key words:** English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Intercultural Awareness, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Intercultural Communicator, Intercultural Communicative Situation Analysis

## Introduction

The modern, globalized workplace increasingly requires professionals who possess intercultural communicative competence to effectively communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds to perform successfully as an organization. This article serves as a contributing point to raise the students' awareness of intercultural communicative competence and vitalize its role across global workplaces in order to build up their confidence when dealing with intercultural situations at their future workplaces. Particularly, this article attempts to provide some insights into the components of intercultural communicative competence in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course design; it also offers suggestions for ESP practitioners who are teachers, material providers and course designers. Furthermore, it presents perspectives on teaching methodology, instruction materials, and course evaluation in all disciplines of ESP courses. The integration of intercultural communication components to ESP course syllabi will be a driving force of motivation in preparation for students across all professional fields to become more interculturally competent communicators in their future workplaces.

### 1. The role of intercultural communicative competence in the global workplace

#### 1.1 Notions of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural communicators

Among the previous studies of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), Hofstede (1980, 1991, cited in Hazrati, 2014) briefly identified the notion of this phenomena as national cultures contrast. The characteristics of ICC were developed by Byram and Mogan (1994, cited in Candel-Mora, 2015) who proposed the three dimensions that are comprised of the knowledge dimension, attitude dimension and behavior dimension. Defining ICC was further explored by Chen and Starosta (1996, cited in Negrea, 2015) who proposed four elements in ICC: 1) the desire to find out about things, 2) the desire to learn them, 3) the desire to break down cultural barriers, and 4) the wish to find out about ourselves. Byram (1997, cited in Dabaghi & Heidari, 2015) and Candel-Mora (2015) highlighted the main components of intercultural competence as knowledge, skills and attitudes whereas Matsumoto (2003, cited in Liton & Qaid, 2016) considered intercultural competence to be a generic competence. A more specific view was made by Bennett & Bennett (2004, cited in Liton, 2016) who elucidated the term ICC as the effective communicative ability in intercultural situations and the ability to appropriately relate to different cultural contexts. In recent studies, a multi-aspect view was provided by Liton and Qaid (2016): "intercultural communication competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures and it involves the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact with people of different cultural background successfully". While the term "intercultural communicative competence" has been extensively defined, scholars also attempt to figure out the characteristics of people who are equipped with intercultural communicative competence. In early studies, there was no clear demarcation between the definitions of a competent intercultural communicator. For example, such a person requires not only language proficiency but also interpersonal skills and intercultural skills when dealing with interlocutors from different cultures in globalized workplace contexts, as defined by Byram (1996, cited in Negrea, 2015) and Dudley-Evans and St John (1998). In the workplace, Jendrych (2011) compared good communicators and poor communicators and the former are much more successful at making progress in their careers than the latter. According to Jendrych, "If an organization wants to create a favorable image and be perceived as a reputable enterprise, it

needs good communicators.” One of the recent studies by Negrea (2015) concluded that people with such competence utilized their knowledge of language and culture to create interactions that led to successful communication in their workplace.

### **1.2 Emerging needs of intercultural communicative competence in the global workplace**

Global workplaces require qualified professionals with efficient communication competence. Goals are often accomplished by competent communicators who have the communication skills and team working skills to achieve their aim of maximizing profit (Ala-Louko, 2017; Lazar, 2017). Therefore, Negrea (2015) insisted that intercultural communication competence is one of the most important skills professionals across all careers need to utilize for effective communication in culturally diverse global workplaces; this idea is supported by Liu and Zhu (2016) and they emphasize the fact that, “these professionals are not only required to be experts in their working practices, but also competent at intercultural communication in English at the workplace”. For example, flight attendants need to satisfy passengers from all over the world with both language communication competence and intercultural communication competence. The studies conducted on intercultural communication needs of hotel staff in Thailand (Moore, 2013) and university graduates in Japan (O’Connell, 2014) recommended that workers need to be equipped with both linguistic and intercultural workplace communication skills in order to create effective workplace communication between expatriates and local staff.

Hazrati (2014) who devised an aviation English course found that in order to minimize miscomprehension problems, foreign aviation crews need to possess intercultural competence; in addition to English language skills when dealing with foreign aviation personnel in workplace situations. These instances vitalize the role of intercultural communication competence and reflect how it fulfills customer satisfaction in all workplace contexts such as interactions between the hotel staff and client, doctor and patient, engineer and contractor, air hostess and passenger, lawyer or accountant and client, etc. In particular, culturally diverse workplaces require communicative competence between people of different social and cultural backgrounds; as this creates an unquestionable need for successful communication.

### **1.3 Intercultural communicative competence as a determining factor in professional performance**

In terms of an entity’s performance, Jendrych (2011) affirmed that career skills, language skills, awareness of cultural differences and tolerance to other cultures will contribute to the success of the company. On the other hand, as Liton (2016) revealed, a common business failure generally results from professionals with poor communication performance due to a lack of intercultural competence. To illustrate, owing to a lack of awareness of intercultural pragmatic differences, Australian salesman, who had adequate Japanese language skills, working for a duty free shop faced a loss of sales (Marriot & Yamada, 1991, cited in Moore, 2013). Similarly, Chinese health-care workers in an American nursing home also experienced communication barriers since their knowledge of language left out certain cultural aspects necessary for understanding (Uvin, 1996, cited in Moore, 2013). In the modern business world, failures suffered by multinational enterprises generally result from neglecting cultural differences; therefore, managers must be cross-culturally trained to face the challenges of global competition (Lazar, 2017). Anderlini (2011, cited in Brown & Martindale, 2013) acknowledged that the Mattel Corporation, in the USA, had

to shut down its stores in China after only two years due to a failure to adapt to local cultural preferences and practices. Blockmans et al. (2015) researched the communication problems of healthcare professionals and pharmacists who are insufficiently trained to communicate with patients due to their lack of proficiency in local languages and cultural insensitivity. In a study done by Kehagia and Nteliou (2016), they put an emphasis on fostering intercultural competence to prevent intercultural conflict and business failures. From the aforementioned, it is apparent that successful communication in business and workplace environments is often hindered by a lack of intercultural competence.

Accordingly, Liton and Qaid (2016) pointed out that the lack of intercultural understanding regarding customers' affairs will lead to the loss of business; as a result, cultural adaptation and cultural adjustments are necessary for remedying such situations. In regards to ESP curriculum developers and practitioners, they can analyze case studies focused on the failure of professional communication due to lack of intercultural competence, for their ESP classroom. Subsequently, this will raise students' awareness and teach them valuable real-world lessons. Likewise, this will make them more successful communicators and prepared for better professional situations.

## **2. Incorporating intercultural communication skills into the ESP course design**

### **2.1 A current review of intercultural components in commercial textbooks for ESP courses**

More recently, many tertiary institutions have had a tendency to choose commercial textbooks for all ESP disciplines. Since the need to integrate intercultural communication components in the subject matter for ESP courses has been growing, a brief review was made on a cross section of ESP commercial textbooks to gauge the extent to which they have fulfilled the students' needs. In "Communication Skills in English for the Medical Practitioner" (McCullagh & Write, 2008), intercultural aspects are embedded in "Communicating with challenging patients" (Unit 12, Section 3, p.112-120) highlighting that different cultures have different expectations of children's behaviors and parents' attitudes during the consultation period (p.118). On the contrary, intercultural awareness is downplayed in integrated language skills-based doctor-patient communication in "English in Medicine" by Glendinning and Holmstrom (2005). In contrast, Stott and Pohl (2014), in their text entitled: "English for the Hotel and Catering Industry 2", describe intercultural awareness issues facing guests from different cultures (Unit 25, p.52-53). Mol (2008), the author of "English for Tourism and Hospitality in Higher Education Studies", included the cultural effects for destination planning (Unit 9, p.70) in the tourism and culture section. In a management context, the "culture and change" topic in "English for Management Studies in Higher Education Studies", authored by Corballis and Jennings (2009), highlighted how organizational culture can affect internal communication (Unit 2, p.17). Among the aviation English textbooks, "Flightpath: Aviation English for Pilots and ATCOs" (Shawcross, 2011) and "Aviation English for ICAO Compliance" (Emery & Roberts, 2008) focused more on linguistic accuracy than the intercultural aspects that are totally ignored in workplace communication. Similarly, intercultural elements are left out of customer service and workplace communication in "Tech Talk" (Hollett & Sydes, 2009) for technical students. The findings of these shortcomings indicate that, in many ESP textbooks, cultural aspects are embedded in interactional and transactional communication for each discipline but still remain scarce and authors place more emphasis on the discipline-specific lexis and linguistic aspects, as Liton (2016) noted. All these circumstances call for integration of intercultural components into the content of discipline-specific

English courses along with intercultural ESP course design to determine and utilize the input from the most relevant real-life intercultural communicative situation analysis.

## **2.2 Intercultural communicative situation analysis for ESP course design**

A glaring need for intercultural communicative situation analysis has been discussed and recommended in studies conducted by scholars such as O’Connell (2014), Graves (2000, cited in Negrea, 2015), Liu and Zhu (2016), and Ennser-Kananen (2016). As they suggest, the essential purpose of conducting an intercultural communicative situation analysis, by ESP practitioners, is to explore the students’ target needs for intercultural communication via collecting authentic inputs from target participants who will reflect their knowledge and experience on intercultural issues in professional and workplace situations. These include interactional and transactional communication they were involved with. For instance, doctors, nurses and foreign patients will reflect what their specific intercultural communication needs are, based on the communication problems they encountered. O’Connell (2014) collected real-life workplace communication scenarios between Japanese and foreign workers from intercultural observations for his study and collected language samples to be used as listening comprehension exercises in ESP classrooms. O’Connell also listed frequently-used vocabulary and phrases in English in the context of intercultural business communication between Japanese and foreign workers. Outcomes of analyzing these intercultural communicative situations in workplaces greatly raises the students’ intercultural awareness and foster intercultural competence. More importantly, intercultural communicative situation analysis in workplaces, conducted by ESP practitioners, paves the way to initiate intercultural-communication-based ESP course design and it provides inputs for inclusiveness, development and assessment processes in ESP curricula (Graves, 2000, cited in Negrea, 2015).

In an analysis of a cabin service training course conducted by Liu and Zhu (2016), they discovered that poor intercultural communication skills of cabin crew draw passengers’ complaints and make them unsatisfied with their services. In response to such outcomes, they recommended a tailored ESP course framework comprised of three interrelated components: language skills, cabin service practices and intercultural communicative competence. In regards to this, ESP practitioners in every professional area should conduct an intercultural communicative situation analysis in order to seek input from stakeholders who are involved in target situations for ESP course design; for instance, medical students could take a study tour in international hospitals to observe real-life intercultural communicative situations, make audio-visual recordings, conduct a survey and interview doctors, nurses and patients with diverse cultural backgrounds.

## **3. Pedagogical aspects in fostering intercultural communicative competence in ESP classroom**

### **3.1 Embedding intercultural content into ESP instructional materials**

The inclusion of intercultural communicative contents is increasingly crucial for discipline-specific English courses such as English for Business Communication, English for Engineers, English for Hospitality, English for Medical Practitioners, English for Accounting, English for Law, English for Information Technology, and so forth. Utilizing these materials will enable students to catch up to the fast changing professional communication developments in global contexts. Thus, materials without intercultural contexts will discourage students’ intercultural competence acquisition as they prepare for their future global workplace communication tasks. As a

matter of fact, such materials enable students to analyze and select what language structures and rhetoric patterns suit target situations in their future workplaces (Loukianenko, 2004). This objective is further discussed by O'Connell (2014) who suggested focusing more on analysis of intercultural communication discourses in modern day ESP teaching materials. Most importantly, Ennser-Kanan (2016) recommended conducting in-depth research such as real-life intercultural situation analysis, by ESP practitioners, before they design, develop and update the materials.

In order to meet the learners' target needs for intercultural communication, the characteristics of ESP materials should include 1) relevance, 2) diversity, 3) authenticity, and 4) compare-contrast-adjust aspects. Liton's findings (2016) confirmed that teaching will be more effective if the materials are culturally relevant to learners' knowledge and experience. For instance, in business English courses, business negotiation is one of the core content areas and learning this topic area enables students to engage in intercultural communication when negotiating with people of different backgrounds and cultural communities (Liton & Qaid, 2016). Xue (2015) laid emphasis on the fact that, "the content of ESP teaching materials should be of diversity and richness to promote teaching quality effectively." To exemplify, in business English context, intercultural aspects should be incorporated into a variety of functional situations such as negotiations, meetings, presentations, telephoning, and so forth (Jendrych, 2011). Similarly, Moore (2013) and O'Connell (2014) suggested a comprehensive multi-aspect approach in an ESP course design which fosters both language proficiency and intercultural skills in diverse workplace contexts in order to produce effective interculturally-competent professionals in their related fields. According to O'Connell (2014), ESP courses should adapt "authenticity" in textbooks and instructional materials. To support this, providing students with authentic "real life" intercultural communication materials through the use of online programs and multimedia resources will get them familiar with processes, procedures, and dynamics of intercultural workplaces. On the other hand, embedding "compare-contrast-adjust" aspects into ESP instructional materials will result in contrasting and adjusting target cultural concepts to local and regional norms (e.g., business cultures in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) member countries). In this regard, Loukianenko (2004) proposed that there are aspects of contrastive linguistic and rhetorical analysis in business correspondence, such as rhetorical patterns of business letters, memos, requests, complaints and reports written by local professionals and their foreign counterparts (e.g., analyzing linguistic and rhetorical features of a genre of business letters). Loukianenko's approach was echoed by Liton (2016) who believes that such an approach in ESP teaching materials will facilitate students' ability to compare and contrast their own culture to foreign cultures in specific professional situations and global workplace contexts.

### **3.2 Training ESP learners for acquisition of intercultural communicative competence**

Since students' acquiring intercultural communicative competence is complementary to the students' language communication skills in their future workplaces, they must develop these skills first in the ESP classroom. As argued by Blockmans et al. (2015), the starting point of intercultural communicative competence acquisition is using socially and culturally appropriate phrases during the initial and final phases of the professional encounter by identifying the interlocutors' needs, beliefs and preferences according to their cultural backgrounds. As viewed by Kehagia and Nteliou (2016), students' intercultural communication skills could be acquired by motivating them to

join international exchange programs in which their language and cultural competencies will be promoted. By interacting with foreign speaking classmates through multimedia (i.e., chat, emails, Line, Facebook), students acquire experience in intercultural competence (Semenchuk, 2015). In so doing, at the end of the ESP courses, “students would have acquired the intercultural skills required for the job and contexts that they will be occupying in the future” (Candel-Mora, 2015). Kehagia and Nteliou (2016) also suggested that, “students’ intercultural awareness needs to be acquired and further developed, in order for them to be fully prepared for the requirements of the global professional market”. To sustain and develop students’ acquisition, they should be actively involved in the intercultural communication activities to reflect their own intercultural experiences; this should be effectively fostered both inside and outside classrooms (Crowther et al., 2000; Garam, 2012a, cited in Ala-Louko, 2017).

### 3.3 Intercultural teaching approaches in ESP courses

ESP teaching in an intercultural context places particular stress upon cultural differences and practice in communicating with interlocutors such as colleagues, clients, suppliers and business partners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, ESP courses should equip students with intercultural skills so that they can assure their future employers they will be interculturally-competent employees who will perform their duties successfully in the highly competitive global workplace. Accordingly, ESP practitioners should take into consideration adapting these skills into their career-oriented class activities. As Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) noted, intercultural competence-based teaching and activities includes conducting productive meetings, using direct or indirect negotiation tactics and using politeness strategies in letters or conversations. In teaching scenarios, the emphasis is usually put on language accuracy and discipline-specific lexical competence, indicating that ESP teaching in many countries still minimizes the significance of intercultural issues; which in turn will play a major role in hampering students’ professional communicative competence. That is why ESP courses offered at tertiary levels are typically not applicable or practicable in developing students’ intercultural communicative competence in their future careers (Liton, 2016; Liton & Qaid, 2016). One of the teaching methods used for integrating culture into the ESP courses is spending an entire session on intercultural awareness-raising activities in class (Kavalir, 2013). Besides classroom teaching, Jendrych (2011) suggested that in internship programs across different organizations, students will deal with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, these experiences will equip them with problem-solving skills in intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts.

Among the intercultural ESP teaching approaches proposed by scholars, the comparative-contrastive approach is useful when making connections between the source culture and the target culture (Kavalir, 2013). Casanave (2004, cited in Connor & Traversa, 2013) reflected that, “using intercultural contrastive rhetoric approach in ESP writing classroom (i.e., writing across cultures) promotes ESP learners’ awareness about different conventions of writing in different cultures”. To support this, in the study of Constantin and Molea (2014), they described how culturally-driven genre conventions are composed differently in England and Germany. This shows that technical genres contrast from one culture to another in English for engineering courses. In the same way, collecting discipline-specific lexical items and studying the discourse characteristics of the two languages within the same ESP register (e.g., technical manuals, job

applications, financial reports, and so forth) can help ESP students raise their intercultural awareness (Charteris-Black & Musolff, 2003, cited in Dabaghi & Heidari, 2015). As Jendrych (2011) argued, students are more motivated if they know they learn things that they will need in real-life business situations.

A dialogical approach takes into account “the students’ own culture and how it interacts with the target culture, increases awareness of the different perspectives and the possibilities of exploring further cultural differences in intercultural communication contexts” (Seelye, 1997, cited in Kavalir, 2013). The simulated authentic workplace approach is proposed and supported by Xue (2015) who asserted that students will be motivated in these activities knowing that the perspectives and outcomes are to be useful in their future workplace. In the conceptual metaphor approach, according to Dabaghi and Heidari (2015), “it enables students to comprehend one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain; for instance, talking and thinking about arguments in terms of war, time in terms of money, life in terms of journey and so forth”. As they noted, this approach raises students’ awareness of cultural diversity by comparing the languages, which will shed light on how different languages conceptualize different concepts in genres and text types. The experiential learning approach is noted by Ala-Louko (2017), who argued that it can best be taught through a practical approach by sharing cultural knowledge and reflection, where students’ real-life experiences are part of the learning process. The activities involve discussions, role plays, reflection, simulations, case studies, critical incidents, films, videos, games and computer-based tasks; in addition to contacts with people from other cultures (Ala-Louko, 2017). Teachers should also employ project-based teaching and promote students to participate in intercultural exploration projects, such as assigning students do projects on topics and issues in inter-ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations)-cultural contexts. All in all, Hazrati (2014), who devised and developed an aviation English course, suggested that, “effective ESP teaching requires curriculum designers, trainers, teachers, and testers to go beyond the traditional ways of teaching and evaluation which emphasize only linguistic competence”.

### 3.4 The teacher’s role as a facilitator in intercultural ESP classrooms

ESP teachers generally underestimate the importance of intercultural communication in their instructional materials and they instead underscore linguistic competence in professional communications. As a consequence, Liton (2016) suggested that teachers’ current roles in teaching ESP courses are as facilitators who enhance students’ intercultural awareness while they integrate intercultural contents and activities in their ESP teaching. Most importantly, as Liton and Qaid (2016) contended, “ESP practitioners need to shift from a traditional teaching practice to an intercultural one to develop both linguistic and intercultural competences of the learners”. Jendrych (2011) maintained that teachers need to help students achieve good sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence by teaching them the various functions of socializing with diverse cultures such as dress code, body language, topics to avoid in conversations, ways to manage conversation successfully and so forth. Indeed, as Zoranyan (2008) pointed out, since many language teachers are not really in the cultural training business, they assume that intercultural components in teaching is just an optional part of their lessons and intercultural aspects in teaching should not be emphasized. Jendrych (2011) believes that, due to a limited number of hours of instruction in an ESP course, intercultural skills cannot be developed properly at a tertiary level. In recent studies, Xue (2015) found that if ESP

teachers lack proper perceptions of a society's culture and appropriate professional backgrounds, their teaching may not meet students' professional needs and cultural competence. As a result of such limitations, teachers tend to concentrate on certain linguistic competencies rather than non-linguistic ones. Consequently, in those scenarios, students' communicative competence will not be fully developed. In order to remedy these situations, a paradigm shift is needed for linguistic-competence-oriented ESP teachers to raise their awareness of the need to adapt curriculum goals that embody intercultural communicative competence; in addition to linguistic competence in discipline-specific contexts.

To foster students' professional communication competence, ESP practitioners need to put a concerted effort into 1) collecting and selecting appropriate professional cultural information from their real-life intercultural situation analysis, 2) adapting and importing relevant information into instructional materials, 3) exploring cultural problems and issues in classrooms, 4) developing their ideas on how they should integrate intercultural practices into their teaching, and 5) devising an intercultural-component-incorporated ESP syllabus. Teaching practices may also include 1) creating a simulated workplace atmosphere in the classroom, 2) utilizing linguistic rhetoric analysis and comparative-contrastive analysis of language and cultural samples, and 3) designing classroom activities and assessing learners' achievement. In business English classes, Jendrych (2011) recommended teaching business culture, intercultural communication, business etiquette and effective international communication; pointing out that ESP teachers should understand that perceptions of cultural differences may affect business performance significantly and is more crucial than knowing how to use language structures and business vocabulary correctly in successful business communication. Accordingly, the teacher is only a facilitator in the intercultural-communication-oriented ESP classroom and students analyze and solve a given discipline-specific intercultural issue themselves. Upon completing the tasks, students will have a sense of achievement which motivates them to focus on effective intercultural communication in professional and workplace situations. Crucially, teachers should have a teach-and-learn attitude in intercultural ESP courses and view the implementation of this approach as a challenging and demanding task when training their students to become interculturally-competent learners in their disciplines.

#### **4. Utilizing assessment tools in the evaluation of intercultural competence**

When inclusion of intercultural aspects in ESP courses emerges, perspectives on the evaluation of students' intercultural competence also plays a crucial role in ESP course syllabi. Therefore, Kehagia and Nteliou (2016) explicated that, "intercultural competence should not only be taught but also assessed in foreign languages courses." A study by Candel-Mora (2015) highlighted the ICC assessment in ESP courses and its role in career-oriented language learning. As Fantini (1999, cited in Candel-Mora, 2015) argued, "the availability of assessment tools and instruments vary depending on their focus: language or cultural aspects, and intercultural differences". Since the expected outcomes of learning intercultural skills are knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be a more effective communicator in a new environment (Fowler & Blohm, 2004, cited in Ala-Louko, 2017), the attitudes-and-skills-based models constructed by researchers should be able to assess intercultural successful behaviors of effective communicators, such as intercultural adaptation, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the interactions (Candel-Mora, 2015). On the other hand, Negrea (2015) proposed utilizing cross-cultural competence descriptors which embody the

language assessment criteria and standards. According to her, these descriptors are directly relevant to tasks and activities conducted in classroom environments. Deardorff (2009, cited in Candel-Mora, 2015) recommended using a multi-perspective approach when assessing intercultural competence. To be more specific, students' intercultural learning outcomes can be assessed by a variety of assessments such as pre-tests and post-tests, simulated tasks, reports, presentations, interviews, debates, portfolios, reflective journal assessments, interactive real-life scenarios, commentaries on different cultural aspects, case studies, and so forth, as Han (2012, cited in Candel-Mora, 2015) suggested.

## Conclusion

To sum up, in regards to ESP textbooks or instructional materials, intercultural content should be incorporated into them in the form of separate units or as a part of each unit, such as intercultural issues in specific contexts where students are motivated to express their views, broaden their awareness and increase their sensitivity. In other words, these components will raise students' awareness of how intercultural competence plays a vital role in multicultural workplace communication. To achieve this from the outset, students with diverse cultural identities should be encouraged to actively engage in discussions in class because their exposure to such activities could be culturally associated with a reluctance to speak and/or express opinions. In doing so, during class discussions, their cultural beliefs and values will be shared and intercultural barriers will be reduced. On the other hand, interculturally-trained ESP teachers should be able to select any ESP commercial texts in which an appropriate portion of intercultural communicative competence is incorporated. Also, ESP teacher development programs can narrow down their intercultural knowledge gap by conducting intercultural teacher training sessions which will raise their awareness of how to develop intercultural concepts in work-related discipline-specific contexts and seek solutions to issues regarding to setting an appropriate portion of time for discussions on intercultural communication in class. First and foremost, ESP practitioners in each professional area should conduct an intercultural communicative situation analysis to seek input from stakeholders and explore the needs of learners for ESP course designs. Lesson plans, as mentioned above, should have a variety of effective in-class and out-of-class activities and include simulations, commentaries, in-classcase studies, team teaching with intercultural experts, extra-curricular activities including study tours, interviews, debates, observations, exhibitions, forums, and so on. To assess the outcomes, ESP practitioners should set and implement effective intercultural descriptors for specific competencies in terms of course descriptions, course content, learning outcomes and course evaluation. In essence, developments of intercultural ESP course design and teaching methodology will lead to training students to become interculturally-competent communicators in their career fields and bring about success within modern globalized workplaces. Since the most recent new employment competencies within job markets include English language proficiency and intercultural competencies, communication skills that are oriented in ESP courses within vocational and tertiary institutions will play a key role to fill this gap.

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