



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ProblematISING Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teaching and Learning



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As ELT professionals, we
are never just teaching something
called English but rather are
involved in economic and social
change, cultural renewal, people's
dreams and desires

(PENNYCOOK 2016:30)

Presentation Map

1

An attempt to define intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

2

Theoretical frameworks

3

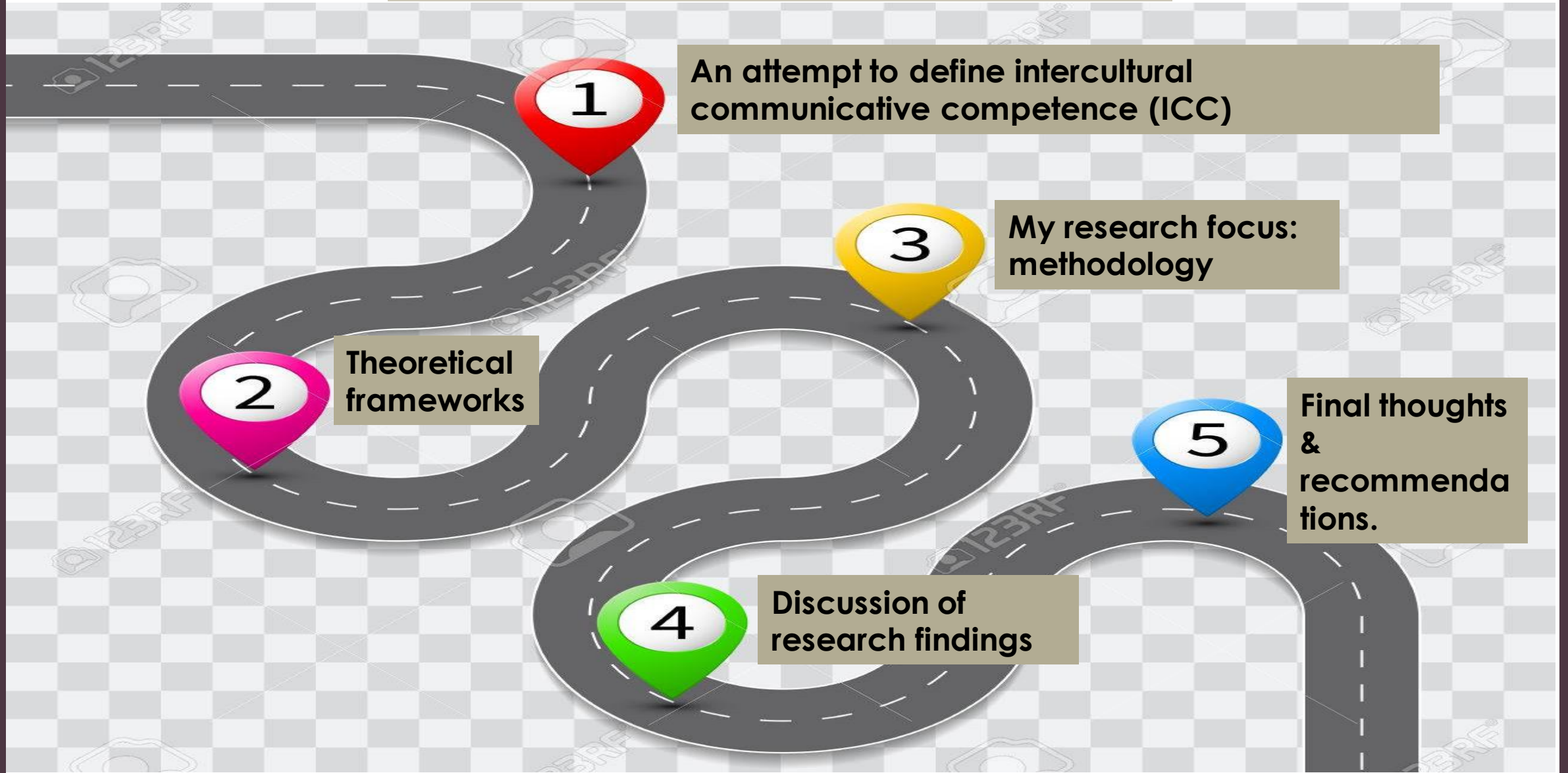
My research focus: methodology

4

Discussion of research findings

5


Final thoughts & recommendations.



The puzzling nature of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

- Different understandings and contours.
- Often used interchangeably with multi-cultural competence, Cross-cultural competence, global competence.
- 'Development of cognitive, affective and behavioural components, in addition to cultural knowledge and is demonstrated by such as factors as increased awareness of one's own identity and culture in relation to others, and changes in attitude and behaviour' Byram and Feng 2006





Teaching ICC in English language classrooms: Theoretical frameworks



A structural
functional approach

Postmodern
conception of ICC

A structural functional approach



Traditional culture pedagogy



Culture is taught as a set of fixed beliefs, values and artefacts localised within one nation.



transmission of foreign cultural information; The five F's (*food, fashion, famous people, festivals, and flags*)



Provide a list of 'to do' and 'don't' 'cultural recipes'.



The aim was to look for “ a common universal ground of basic physical and emotional needs to make the foreign culture less threatening and more accessible to the language learner.” Kramsch (1993: 224).

Sample from EFL textbook

- ❖ Learners need to read all the texts showing touristic places and they have to write short descriptions of the UK as a way to develop their ICC

TEXT 6 :

Facts Sheet about the United Kingdom



- The United Kingdom, consisting of Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland), Northern Ireland, and many smaller islands, is twice the size of New York State with 244,101 km².
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK that shares a land border with another sovereign state—the Republic of Ireland. Apart from this land border the UK is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel and the Irish Sea.
- The terms United Kingdom, Great Britain and England are often confused. Great Britain comprises England, Wales, and Scotland. The United Kingdom also includes Northern Ireland.
- The United Kingdom is a unitary state governed under a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary system, with its seat of government in the capital city of London. It is a country in its own right and consists of four administrative divisions (or countries): England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- By mid-2010 the population of the UK was estimated to have grown to 62,262,000.
- The UK is a developed country and has the world's seventh-largest economy by nominal GDP and eighth-largest economy by purchasing power parity. It was the world's first industrialised country and the world's foremost power during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The UK remains a great power with leading economic, cultural, military, scientific and political influence. It is a recognised nuclear weapons state and its military expenditure ranks fourth in the world.
- The UK has been a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council since its first session in 1946. It has been a member of the European Union and its predecessor the European Economic Community since 1973. It is also a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Council of Europe, the G7, the G8, the G20, NATO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization.

Source: <http://www.myenglishpages.com>.

Speaking :

What do you know about English speaking countries? State some of them.

Reading:

Vocabulary:

- List tourist attractions in the United Kingdom. Use your own knowledge to define some of them then find the exact definition in your English dictionary.
- Cooperative work: Here are different texts (The Tower of London, The Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey, Stonehenge, Kew Gardens,) about tourist attractions in the UK. Read all of them, then work in groups to write a short descriptions of the UK.

The Tower of London

One of the most important tourist attractions in London is the Tower of London.



Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress, more commonly known as the Tower of London, is a historic castle on the north bank of the River Thames in central London, England. It lies within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, separated from the eastern edge of the City of London by the open space known as Tower Hill. It was founded towards the end of 1066 as part of the Norman Conquest of England.

The Tower of London has played a prominent role in English history. It was besieged several times and controlling it has been important to controlling the country.

Sample from EFL Textbook

- Knowledge transmission



Here is all what you can learn about London. Enjoy reading.

London

London is the capital city of England and the United Kingdom, the largest metropolitan area in the United Kingdom, and the largest urban zone in the European Union by most measures. Located on the River Thames, London has been a major settlement for two millennia, its history going back to its founding by the Romans, who named it *Londinium*.

London is a leading global city, with strengths in the arts, commerce, education, entertainment, fashion, finance, healthcare, media, professional services, research and development, tourism and transport all contributing to its prominence. Together with New York City, London is the world's leading financial centre. London is known for its cultural diversity. More than 300 languages are spoken in London. In March 2011, London had an official population of 8,174,100, making it the most populous municipality in the European Union, and accounting for 12.5% of the UK population.

London contains four World Heritage Sites:

1. The Tower of London:
First built by William the Conqueror in 1078 as a palace and royal residence. It lies on the bank of the River Thames.
2. Kew Gardens:
The world's largest collection of living plants.
3. The site comprising the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey, and St Margaret's Church:
Historic buildings showcase the growth of the English monarchy.

4. The historic settlement of Greenwich:
In which the Royal Observatory marks the Prime Meridian, 0° longitude, and GMT.

Other famous landmarks include Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, Piccadilly Circus, St Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge and Trafalgar Square. London is home to numerous museums, galleries, libraries, sporting events and other cultural institutions, including the British Museum, National Gallery, Tate Modern, British Library, Wimbledon, and 40 West End theatres. The London Underground is the oldest underground railway network in the world.

Byram model of ICC

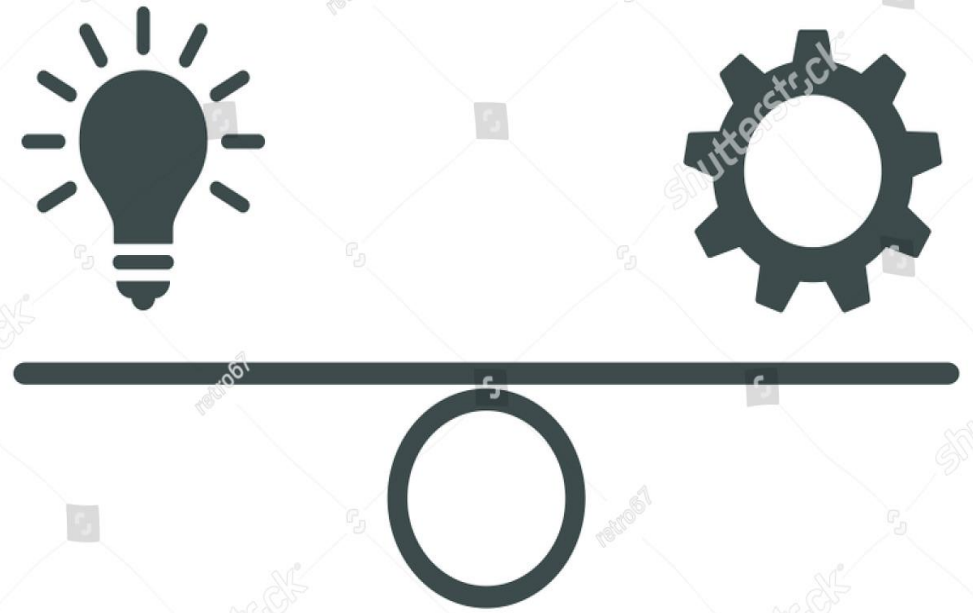
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

	<i>savoir comprendre</i> skills of interpreting and relating to Otherness	
<i>savoirs</i> knowledge of self and Other and of processes of interaction	<i>savoir s'engager</i> critical cultural awareness, education towards world citizenship	<i>savoir être</i> critical attitudes of curiosity and openness towards Otherness while relativising self
	<i>savoir apprendre/ faire</i> discovering and interacting, sustaining sensitivity to the Other, acting as mediator	

Problematifying current approaches to ICC

- Can we apply them evenly across a 'whole national culture'?
- Reductionist and comparative approach, little engagement with complexity.
- The current models mainly focuses on learners' cognitive skills in a fixed rather than in a flexible way.
- The lack of actively engaging learners in interactive situations as they would normally do in real life communication.
- Less recognition of the impact of mobility and the global forces on cultures.

- How do EFL teachers perceive ICC ?
- How do EFL teachers operationalise ICC models in their language classroom?
- What are the aspects they aim to develop in their learners when implementing the 'intercultural' element?



Theory - Practice



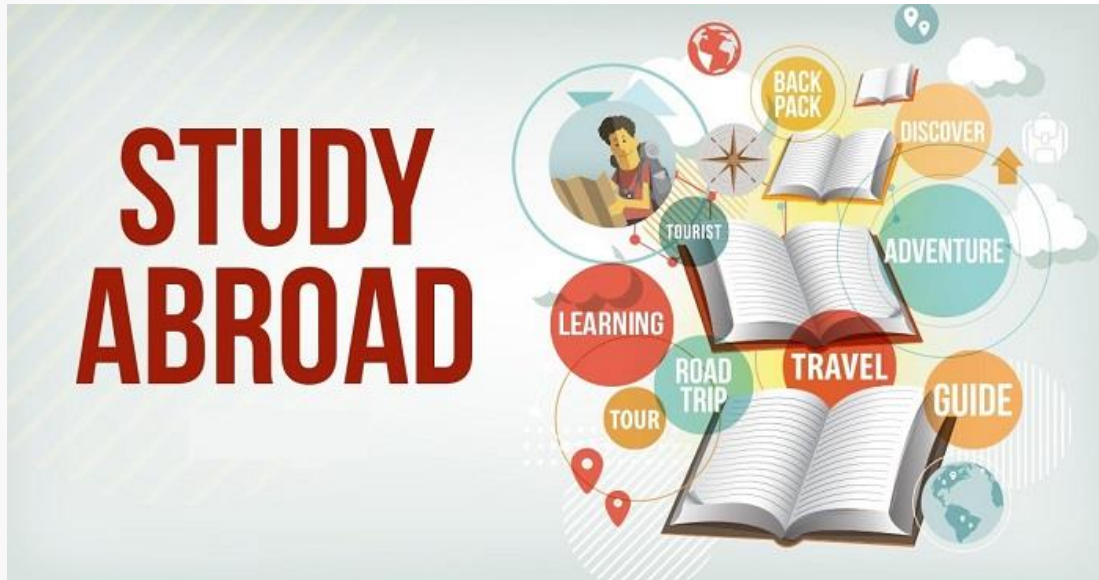
Research
methodology

Case study of teaching
EFL in an Algerian HE

Qualitative
approach

Thematic analysis
(NVivo 12)

Teaching English in the Algerian higher education: An overview of the research context



- The internationalisation of the Algerian higher education.
- English language teaching curriculum reforms.
- ICC as a new skill to prepare students for international mobility.

Discourse of tolerance, understanding and openness

Interview extracts

Themes

“As an ICC teacher, I am supposed to form students to be able to move and who has this potential to use language and to be understood and not misunderstood, especially this point is very important, because the lack of this intercultural competence leads to misunderstanding.

“I think we are living in a globalised era and globalisation also plays an important role in teaching (.) we cannot study English without having an idea about countries such US and England (.) We need to learn about these countries to appreciate [...]

“It widens the students’ horizons that is they’ll know much more than they expect (.) they will have such a reflective inquisitive mind to know more that is they will not become and judgmental they will not judge”.

“What I want to do as a teacher is help student to avoid this cultural shock. If I have these kind of learners that are no more shocked by the difference, I want my students to be tolerant and tolerance is the peak of intercultural competence”.

- Awareness of differences

- Positive attitudes

- Openness and understanding
(Literary texts are used as materials to develop ICC)

- Tolerance

Discourses of tolerance, understanding and openness

Interview extracts

“It’ something you cannot teach unless you live it so culture cannot be taught one hundred percent it has to be lived (...) we learn that from experience”.

Yes, at the beginning of the year, learner were more nervous and impulsive (.) they did not accept some issues (.) But day after day they got used to these kind of discussions and their attitudes changed a lot.

Themes

- The importance of experience
- Positive attitudes

Discussion of findings: Teachers perspectives



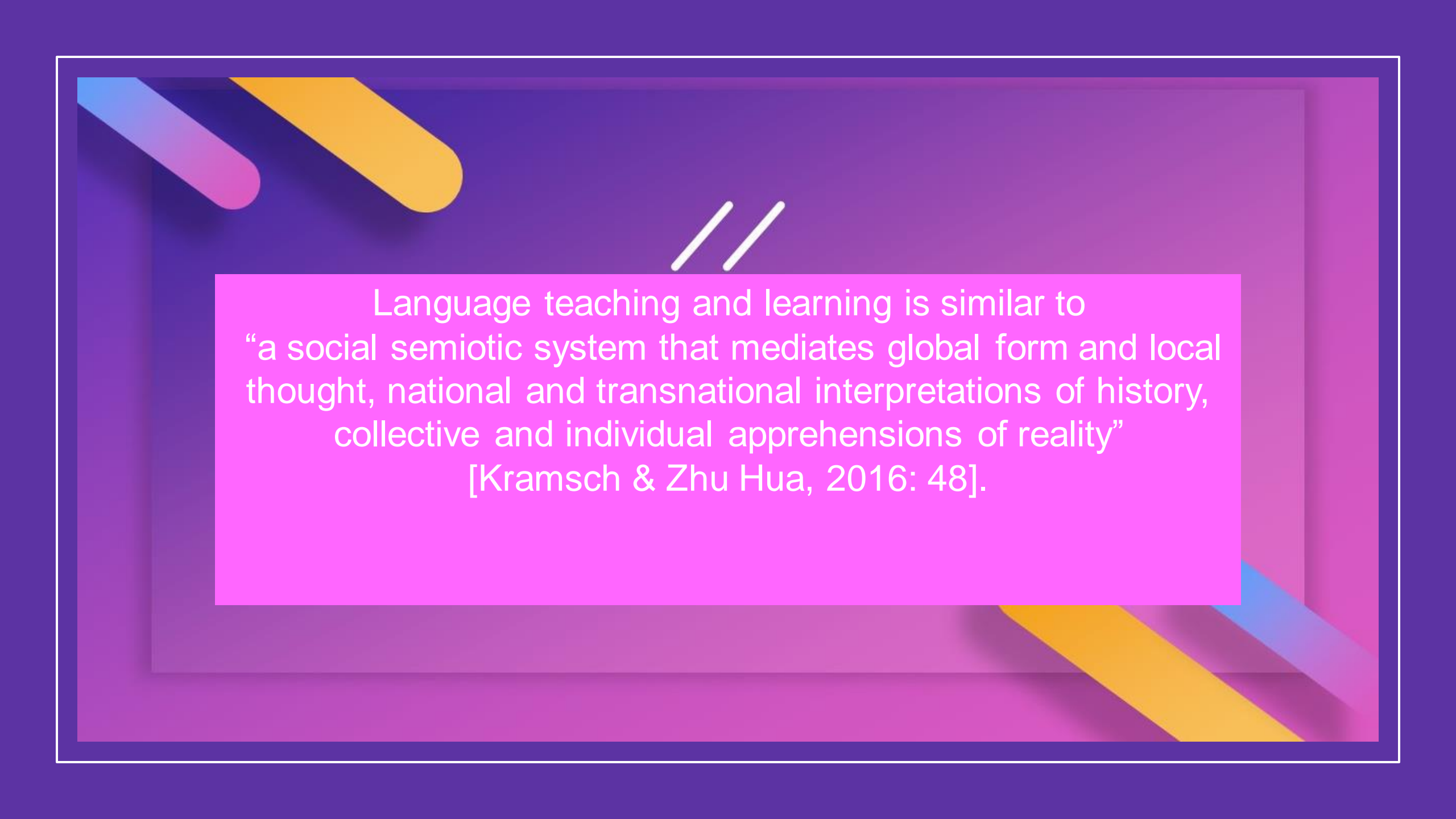


Pedagogic concerns

- The danger of falling in the trap of national homogeneity, reductionist and essentialist understanding of language and culture relationship.
- Issue of Ownership of English language when it comes to material selections.
- Lack of training for EFL teachers.



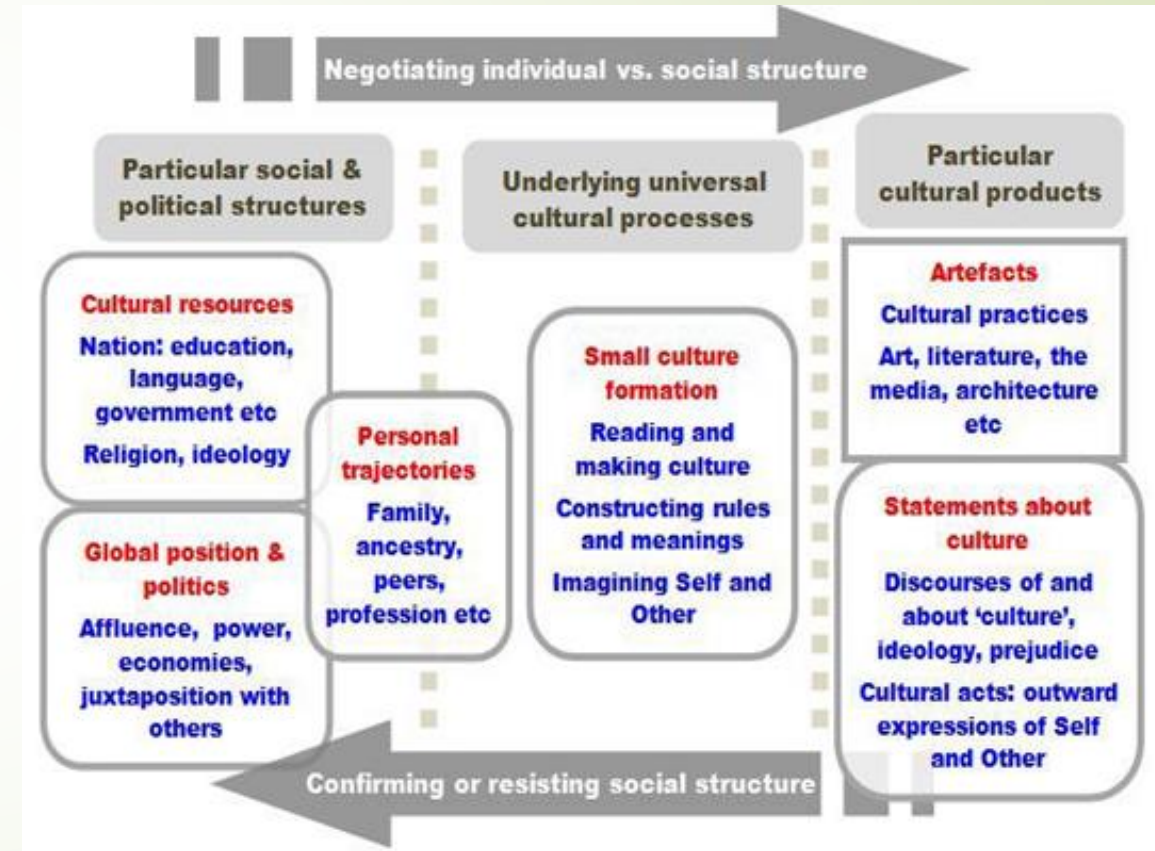
Recommendations



Language teaching and learning is similar to
“a social semiotic system that mediates global form and local
thought, national and transnational interpretations of history,
collective and individual apprehensions of reality”
[Kramsch & Zhu Hua, 2016: 48].

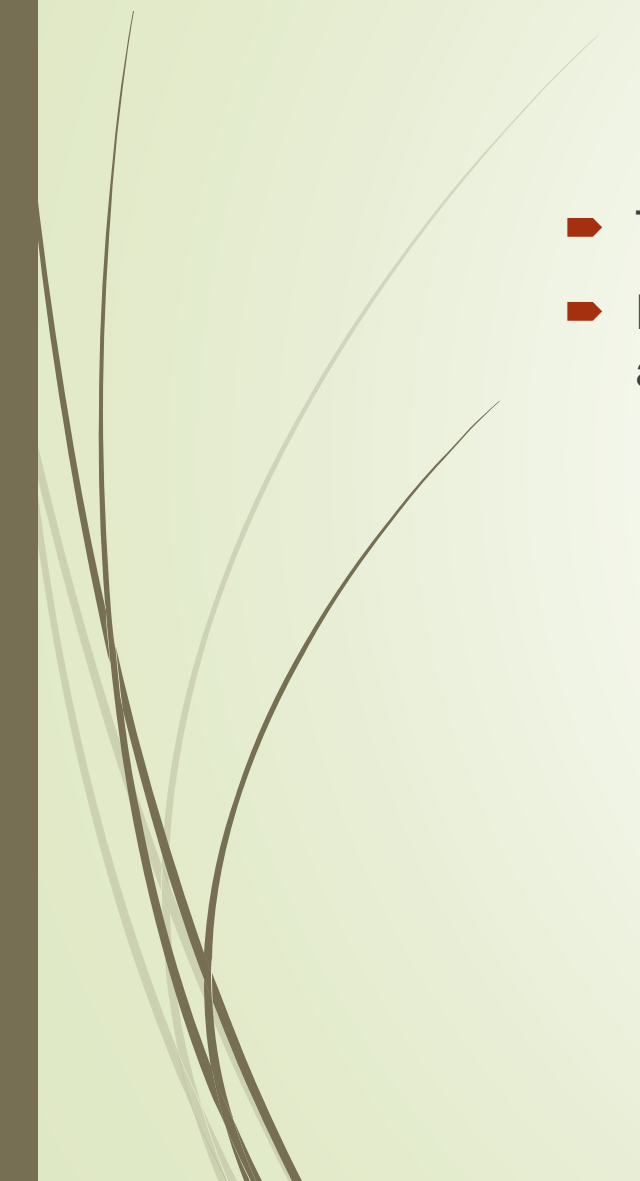
Recommendations

- Postmodern paradigm shift. Holliday's 2011 'Grammar of culture'.
- Emphasises the 'complexity', 'negotiation' and 'fluidity' of culture.
- Culture is socially constructed and not natural.

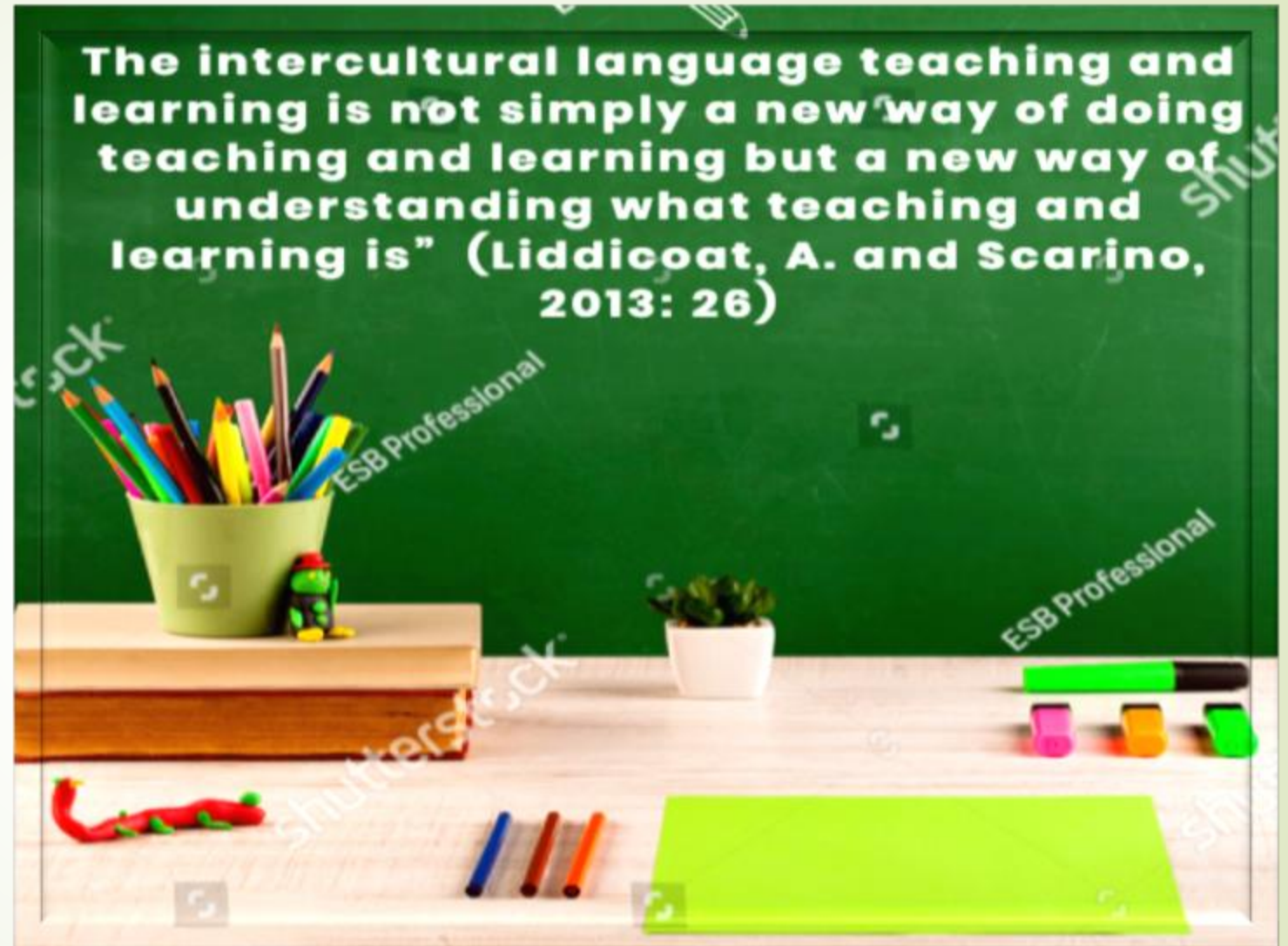




Recommendations

- The need to be context specific.
 - Nuances of meaning in relation to different social affiliations and identities (gender, age, profession... etc.)
- 

➤ Conclusion



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References

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