

# Developing Intercultural Competence by Building up Awareness of Racism through ELT

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# Introduction

Intercultural Competence



Cultural Awareness  
(awareness of racism)



Set of TBLT lessons

Improve Language  
Knowledge and Skills

Internalized racism  
Interpersonal racism  
Institutional racism  
Systemic/Structural racism

Knowledge  
Attitudes  
Skills  
Values and Beliefs

# Problem and Objective

# Statement of the Problem and Objective

Students of English are not building up **cultural awareness** when they learn English which **hinders the development of intercultural competence**. (Curriculum, Textbooks, Teachers)



To make students **more culturally aware** of cultural and social phenomena (racism)



To make students **more competent** in their intercultural interactions

# Research Questions

# Research Questions

1) What is the impact of the intervention to build up **awareness of racism** to foster the development of **intercultural competence**?

2) What are the **students' perceptions** on the intervention as a means to **learn about racism**?

3) What are **students' perceptions** on the intervention as a means to **learn English**?

# Literature Review

# Intercultural Competence and TBLT

## TBLT

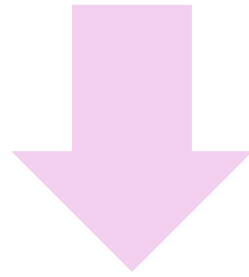
TBLT has been proved to be effective in **increasing** learners' **knowledge** about **cultures**. East, M. (2012)

Some studies have shown this method to be quite **effective** in **developing intercultural competence** and in bringing some potential in the **language learning** process. Ishii, E. (2009).



# Intercultural Competence and ELT

How can students be interculturally competent?



What can teachers do in the classroom to help their students become more interculturally competent?

# Intercultural Competence and Its importance in ELT

Byram (2002) Intercultural competence involves:

Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

Values

# Intercultural Competence and Its importance in ELT

Qizi (2021) The development of Intercultural Competence involves:

Foster new **attitudes** that respect cultural diversity and value other cultures.

Advancing new **skills** that allow learners to listen, observe, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and relate information, context, and reality.

Acquiring **knowledge and comprehension** about the cultural or social phenomena to develop **cultural awareness**.

# Intercultural Competence and Its importance in ELT

## Deardorff's Model of Intercultural Competence (2006)

Individuals raise their **knowledge** about culture

Individuals build up new **skills** when experiencing interactions in intercultural contexts

Individuals can modify their **attitudes**

Individuals develop **cultural awareness**

# Cultural Awareness

## What is cultural awareness?



# Cultural Awareness

*“Cultural awareness is a **critical aspect of learning and development that focuses on understanding, appreciating, and respecting the differences and similarities that exist among people from various cultures.**” Smith (2020)*



# Cultural Awareness

Cross, T. L. (1989). Smith, J. (2023, June 15). Wisner, W. (2023, May 26).

Individuals can reevaluate their personal **values and beliefs**.

Individuals adapt their **behavior** to respect cultural differences.

Individuals have **knowledge** about other cultures.

Individuals can **construct** their own cultural identity and **reflect** on its influence on other people's beliefs and practices.

Individuals can **recognize** and **change** their personal **prejudices** towards certain cultures.



# Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Competence

What can teachers do in the classroom to help their students become more interculturally competent?

Intercultural Competence:

- 1) Knowledge
- 2) Attitudes
- 3) Skills
- 4) Values
- 5) Cultural awareness
- 6) Intercultural interactions

Cultural awareness:

- 1) Knowledge
- 2) Attitudes
- 3) Skills
- 4) Values and beliefs

# Racism

# Racism as a Social and Cultural Phenomena in ELT

ELT has shifted towards inclusion, equity, and intercultural skills.

Race

Racism

***“Discourse, knowledge, and social practices that, by means of inferiorization, denigration, marginalization, and exclusion, construct and perpetuate unequal relations of power between groups of people defined by perceived racial difference.”***

Kubota, R. (2020).

# METHODOLOGY

# Type of Study and Context

## Action Research Study

The study was developed in a public university in Veracruz, Mexico.

11 females and 5 males / Engineering students

The participants were aged 20–24 years.

B1 English level course

# Description of the Intervention

1) Pre-survey: Survey to check previous knowledge and awareness of the types of racism.

2) Pre-class activity: Homework about the highlights of the life of Nelson Mandela.

3) Class focused on historical facts about racism.



*What is racism?*

*Watch the video and answer. What is apartheid?*  
[What is Apartheid? - Nelson Mandela, and South Africa's history explained](#)  
[- YouTube](#)

*Speaking ...*

Make a list of racist experiences that you can identify in your daily life. Share your list with a partner. After that, share your ideas with the whole class.



Complete the biography of Nelson Mandela, one of the people who have fought against racial discrimination. You can use simple past, past continuous, simple present and present perfect.

Nelson Mandela \_\_\_\_\_ (born) in 1918 in south Africa. When he \_\_\_\_\_ (grow up), Black people was treated differently than white people. The South African government \_\_\_\_\_ (keep) Black people away from white people. This separation was called apartheid, which means "apartness." A white person and a Black person were not allowed to get married, had a meal together in a restaurant, or \_\_\_\_\_ (sit) together on a bus. Black people also had to carry identity papers at all times and were only allowed to live in certain areas.



# Description of the Intervention

## 4) Class about internalized racism.



Discuss...

1. Why do you think the children gave positive characteristics to the white doll?
2. Why do you think the children gave negative characteristics to the black doll?
3. How do you think the black children felt after the experiment?



Read and answer the questions

Internalized racism happens when someone from a marginalized racial group starts to believe and act on negative ideas about their own race. This can happen because of the stereotypes and prejudices they've faced from society. For example, a person might start to think that their own race is inferior or less worthy than others. They might also start to treat people from their own race badly because of these beliefs. Internalized racism can be harmful because it can make people feel ashamed or unworthy of themselves. It can also lead to self-hatred and low self-esteem. Overcoming internalized racism involves recognizing these harmful beliefs and working to challenge and change them. It's important to remember that everyone deserves respect and equality, regardless of their race.

- 1) WHEN DOES INTERNALIZED RACISM HAPPEN?
- 2) WHAT PREJUDICES ABOUT MEXICAN PEOPLE HAVE YOU HEARD?

Writing ...

Why do you think internalized racism happen? (give at least 2 reasons) (50 words)



## 5) Class about interpersonal racism.

Watch the video...

[What is interpersonal racism? -](#)

*In your own words  
what is interpersonal  
racism?*

Read the text and answer the questions

**Interpersonal Racism** is racism that occurs *between* individuals. The organization Showing up for Racial Justice explains it as follows:

When a white person can take their misinformation and stereotypes towards another group and perform an act of harassment, exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, hate or violence they are committing an act of interpersonal racism towards an individual or group. When we move beyond talking about prejudice and stereotypes in our society we generally focus on acts of interpersonal racism. These are the kinds of acts that we hear about in the media—a hate crime, an act of job or housing discrimination, negative racial comments about People of Color, racial profiling or violence by a police officer towards a Person of Color.

Report the phrases



1. "I defended myself with the best of my ability."
2. "I'm not a racist."
3. "I don't have an anger problem."
4. "I'm the one who was attacked."
5. "The video didn't start in the beginning."

## 6) Essay 1: Reflection on internalized and interpersonal.



# Description of the Intervention

## 7) Class focused on institutional racism.

Watch the video and take note of words you don't understand

[Institutional racism in US explained through a YouTube](#)

Answers and compare your answers...

Do you think those situations happen in your country? Make a list of examples where institutions (schools, banks, governments, courts, etc.) can be racist.

What is institutional racism?

Institutional racism is when unfair treatment is built into systems and organizations, making life harder for certain groups based on their race or ethnicity. It's not always obvious but still causes harm. For instance, in schools, it can mean unequal resources or opportunities for students of different races, leading to disparities in education quality. In workplaces, it might result in certain races being passed over for promotions or paid less for the same work. Healthcare systems may also perpetuate discrimination from healthcare providers, resulting in poorer health outcomes for some races having less access to treatment or services. Institutional racism perpetuates unfairness and inequality in society. Recognizing, discussing, and collectively working to dismantle it are crucial to ensuring equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of race.

Write 5 sentences using modal verbs...

Write ideas using modal verbs to avoid institutional racism.

Example:

Schools should admit people no matter the color of their skin.



## 8) Class focused on systemic/structural racism.

Discuss...

1. What did you see in the video?
2. Do you think those situations happen in your country?

Read the text

Racism is not always conscious, explicit, or visible, racism is often systemic and structural. Systemic and structural racism are forms of racism that are embedded in systems, laws, written or unwritten policies, entrenched practices and beliefs that perpetuate unfair treatment and oppression of people of color.

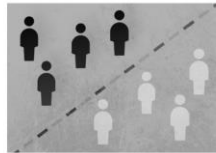
**Systemic racism is so embedded in systems that it often is assumed to be a natural, inevitable order of things, and example of this is Slavery.**

Examples of systemic racism include:

- 1) Redlining: It is a discriminatory practice in which governments, institutions do not assign services and investments for neighborhoods considered "disfavored" neighborhoods have significant numbers of racial and ethnic minorities residents.

Speaking ... (Third conditional)

What would you have done if you had experienced discrimination related to systemic racism?



## 9) Essay 2: Reflection on institutional and systemic/structural racism.



# Description of the Intervention

## 10) Class focused on historical facts about racism.

Discuss...

1. How would you define white supremacy?



Watch the video and answer the questions. Share your answers. Share your answers in teams...

(1) What's the origin of racism  
YouTube

- 1) Is white supremacy something from the past?
- 2) Is The U.S. considered a racist country? Why?
- 3) What does the theory of social Darwinism say?
- 4) Has social Darwinism used for justifying white supremacy?

Do you consider Mexico a racist country? Why?  
Write 5 sentences using the future to express how do you think the racism in Mexico will change or evolution in the next years?



## 11) Movie task

- 1) Students watched a movie and identified situations which showed the four different types of racism.
- 2) Students categorized the situations.

# Description of the Intervention

## 12) Final quiz/survey

- 1) Conceptual knowledge.
- 2) Competence of students to identify the types of racism in context.
- 3) Competence to provide examples.

## 13) Final interview

- 1) Students' perceptions.
- 2) Knowledge and competence to identify racism in context.

# Data collection and data analysis procedure

## Data collection tools:

- 1) Pre-survey
- 2) Essay 1
- 3) Essay 2
- 4) Movie task
- 5) Final quiz/survey
- 6) Final interview

- Descriptive and qualitative analysis
- Quantitative analysis.

# Findings and Discussion

# Findings and Discussion

***Assertion 1: Students became more aware of racism by acquiring more knowledge about racism.***

	Correct definitions provided		
	Pre-survey	Essays	Final Survey
Racism	43.75%	100%	93.75%
Internalized R	0%	100%	81.25%
Interpersonal R	0%	100%	50%
Institutional R	0%	100%	100%
Systemic/structural R	0%	83.33%	50%

In final interview 100% of the students were able to indicate that they had gained further understanding on racism.

# Findings and Discussion

***Assertion 2: Most of the students became more aware of racism after the intervention by defining and distinguishing between various forms of racism.***

**Table 2.** Percentages of participants who could provide correct definitions and examples in each case.

	Correct definitions provided			Correct examples provided			
	Pre-survey	Essays	Final Survey	Pre-survey	Essays	Final Survey	Final Interview
Racism	43.75%	100%	93.75%	62.5%	-	-	-
Internalized R	0%	100%	81.25%	0%	100%	84.37%	87.5%
Interpersonal R	0%	100%	50%	0%	83%	87.5%	68.75%
Institutional R	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	90.6%	100%
Systemic/structural R	0%	83.33%	50%	0%	66.66%	78.12%	68.75%

# Findings and Discussion

***Assertion 3: Students were able to identify racism in context and real-life situations after the intervention.***

**Table 3.** Identification of racism and its types in context

	Pre-survey	Movie-Task	Final Survey
Racism	56.25%	-	81.25%
Internalized R	0%	55.55%	81.25%
Interpersonal R	0%	88.88%	62.5%
Institutional R	0%	100%	93.75%
Systemic/structural R	0%	100%	75%

# Findings and Discussion

In the final interview, 87% of the participants claimed to feel capable to identify racism around them. Some of the comments were:

***[I can identify if I am racist or if another person is racist with me, even if it's on purpose or not.]***

***[I didn't see the racism in the street before; now I identify it better.]***

***[Now I understand the context, and if I broaden what I know, I know that I can identify them, and I will be able to help in any situation.]***



## Findings and Discussion

***Assertion 4: The intervention had a positive impact because the students changed their perceptions in a positive manner.***

***[The lessons gave me many things to reflect on because there are many concepts that we don't know, and now we can recognize situations, concepts related to racism, and actions that we didn't realize were racist.]***

***[They were entertaining, and doing something different compared to a typical English class was interesting.]***

***[They are necessary because not all people are aware or sensitive to the situation that still exists; some do not even know that they are committing racist acts. If they do it, at least they have to know about it.]***

## Findings and Discussion

***Assertion 5: Student's perceptions on the intervention as a means to learn English were positive.***

The data showed that 100% of the participants answered that the lessons helped in language development, specifically in learning new and relevant **vocabulary**.

***[Yes, a lot because I consider that they expand our vocabulary and go far beyond an English book, because it feels like something more real.]***

***[Yes, the topic is more interesting, and you learn more words.]***

***[Vocabulary, speaking, and reading comprehension.]***

# Conclusions

Key points to build up cultural awareness and promote intercultural competence.

1. The teacher's role
2. Materials
3. Process

# Conclusions

(1) Teachers must be prepared in terms of **knowledge** of the cultural phenomenon as well as in terms of **English teaching methodology**.



# Conclusions

(2) The materials are necessary to **complement** the lack of content regarding cultural awareness in current textbooks.



# Conclusions

(3) The process requires a good setup for **sensibilization** to be able to change students' insights and attitudes.



# Conclusions

Students acquired new **knowledge** about racism.

Students changed **attitudes** and **beliefs**.

Students developed some **skills** to identify racism in context and in their daily lives.

The **intervention** demonstrated to be an **efficient tool to build up awareness** of **racism** and learning **vocabulary**.

Thank you!



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