
”We don’t need to read from the same book, to be on the same page”: The development of an intercultural communicative competence program in a United Arab Emirates Science and Engineering University.

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Résumé

In the 21st century, our schools and workplaces are fast-paced and multicultural where communication styles vary considerably. These differences often lead to misunderstandings, bad decisions and mistrust. This session will discuss the development and implementation of an Intercultural Communication program, in a United Arab Emirates Science and Engineering university. Using a transdisciplinary approach borrowing from situated linguistics (Condamines & Narcy-Combes, 2015), sociology, and business disciplines, a course was calibrated to provide Emirati engineering students with the skills needed for effective interaction in a global society, and examines the relationship between communication, language and culture.

The language-culture nexus has been well-established in the literature (Holliday, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Kramersch (2011) emphasised the need for a ”symbolic mentality” where subjective experience, past and present, is as important as social convention in interpreting other people’s ways of being, communicating, and interacting, thus emphasizing its situatedness and the importance of being able to interpret this circumstance. Given that the United Arab Emirates has a unique cultural context, the opportunity to explore how ”intercultural communicative competence” models might be adapted provided yielded rich and interesting data. Preliminary research findings from the pilot project will be shared in the session, and the major themes which emerged will be discussed, with recommendations made for future research.

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Holliday, A. (2011). *Intercultural communication and ideology*. London: Sage

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Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

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