PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A CLASSROOM-BASED STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Abdullah*1, Alishba Gul2, Talha Amjid3

*1MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali khan University Mardan
2University of the West of Scotland, Paisley Campus
3Lecturer in English, Government Degree College Mardan

*1abdullahenguob77@gmail.com,2alishbigul22@gmail.com,
3talhaamjid439@gmail.com

Abstract

The emergence of intercultural competence (IC) has become an inseparable part of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the twenty first century, allowing students to navigate the cultural disparity and be able to communicate effectively in a wide range of situations. This qualitative study explored the application of instructional strategies to develop IC by primary English teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in Pakistan, the reaction of students to instructional strategies, and the difficulties encountered by ECDs. The observations (classrooms based) were carried out in six weeks in the grades one to five with a focus on the use of role-plays, cultural comparisons, authentic materials, and collaborative activities. Thematic analysis provided the understanding that, despite differences in the strategies used by teachers, they were not implemented consistently because, on the one hand, the traditional teaching methods were firmly established, and on the other hand, the number of students in the classes was quite large, the resources were limited, and there was a high dependency on the translation-based approach. The students were seen to exhibit enthusiasm and interest especially in interactive and multimedia based activities; however, their understanding of the deeper cultural norms and values was shallow. The results also point out the gap between the IC theory and classroom practise and emphasise the importance of systematic reflection, teacher training, curriculum change, and adequate means to facilitate meaningful intercultural learning. The research supplements the applied linguistics discipline by providing empirical data in the nature of IC teaching at primary level in Pakistan and therefore provides practical implications to teachers, curriculum developers, and policy makers to enhance culturally sensitive ELT activities.

Keywords: Intercultural Competence (IC), English Language Teaching (ELT), Primary Education, Instructional Strategies, Classroom-Based Study

1. Introduction
1.1 Background of the Study

In the twenty first century, the English language has evolved to as being a foreign language, but has now become a universal language. This process has added to the urgency of teaching language skills to learners; more than just linguistic competence is required, which is intercultural competence (IC), through which they can negotiate cross-cultural differences, succeed in communication and meaningfully interact with multicultural communities. Intercultural competence is conceived as the combination of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that allow people to understand, respect and to respond to cultural differences in an appropriate manner (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). It includes the knowledge of their cultural being, the value of other views and the adjustment of their communication methods to cultural backgrounds.

The emphasis of English Language Teaching (ELT) has traditionally been on the grammatical correctness, learning vocabulary, and the translation-oriented approach, especially in the Pakistani context. Even though these methods promote the linguistic precision, they rarely support the ability of learners to communicate effectively within cross-cultural borders. Such incompetence is particularly eminent in primary-level schools within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in which students have minimal experience of real intercultural interactions. Students might therefore achieve formal competence in English but not have competence and sensitivity of intercultural communication.

The increasing communication with the global media, social networking, and the cooperation with other countries increased the relevance of IC in ELT. As a result, teachers play a critical role in introducing the young learners to intercultural knowledge and practises. Role-plays, simulations, cultural comparisons and collaborative projects have been shown to improve the intercultural awareness, empathy and the

communicative competence of the students (Fantini, 2009). However, research studies that examine the application of these strategies in primary classrooms in KP are limited in the empirical research. Current studies are mostly focused on secondary or tertiary institutions, which implies a significant gap in the knowledge of how IC can be cultivated in the initial stages of teaching English.

Considering these factors, it is high time and necessary to review the classroom-based intercultural competence promotion strategies in primary English classes in KP. This type of research can potentially result in understanding of successful pedagogical strategies, clarification of the issues that teachers have to face, and student reactions to intercultural teaching, thus, furthering the evolution of culturally responsive ELT practises.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa primary English classrooms continue to use conventional rote-learning and translation teaching methods, which focus on grammatical and lexical inquiry and pay little or no attention to the intercultural aspect that is essential to the learners to perform well in international environments. It has been shown that the inclusion of cultural content in the teaching of English languages leads to a substantial increase in the intercultural competence of the learners; however, in many EFL classrooms, the teaching of such content is fraught with challenges because of the lack of pedagogical guidance, the unavailability of the necessary materials, and the absence of a systematised approach to the process (Liu, 2024). In addition, research on intercultural competence indicates that in the absence of a deliberate integration of cultural training, students can attain linguistic proficiency but still be poorly equipped to engage in genuine cross-cultural communication. This consistent deficiency in the curricula and classroom practise creates the need to research the instructional method and the issues of teachers in the primary setting.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives used to direct the study are:
1.   To determine the instructional practises that primary English teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had employed in developing intercultural competence in students.
2.   To investigate how students react and interact on these strategies.
3.   To investigate the issues of the teachers who attempt to introduce intercultural activities in English language classrooms.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed in the study include:
1.   Which are the teaching methods used by teachers to promote intercultural competence in primary English classrooms?
2.   What is the reaction of students to such instructional strategies?
3.   What are the difficulties that teachers face in the implementation of intercultural activities?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will be relevant to the applied linguistics field, as it will explore a less studied field: the acquisition of intercultural competence in primary English Language Teaching classrooms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It offers empirical data on teaching techniques that work and underlines the problems that teachers experience in applying culture material on the lesson. The results can be useful in teacher training programmes, as they provide information on the effective methods in nurturing intercultural competence in young learners. Another benefit to curriculum designers is the ability to include intercultural goals in primary ELT curriculum such that the education of language goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, the research will facilitate the acquisition of global citizenship skills that will equip students to cope up with culturally diverse settings in the virtual and physical realms. The study addresses the gap between theory and practise in the classrooms, which makes it applicable not only to policy-makers and educators but also to researchers.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Theoretical Foundations

The role of intercultural competence (IC) in language acquisition is gaining preference and is becoming an indispensable aspect of mastering a language, since mastery of a language involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to communicate effectively across a culture (Byram, 1997). The concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) by Byram conceptualises IC as a set of attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness that help the learner to interact with interlocutors of other cultures. The model defines attitudes (openness, curiosity), knowledge (knowledge about oneself and other peoples), skills (interpretation, relation, and interaction), and critical cultural awareness as the key elements of the model (Byram, 1997; 2021).

The conceptualisation of IC as a dynamic and developmental process is complemented by Deardorff (2006). According to her process model, internal outcomes, which include empathy, adaptability, and cultural awareness, came before the external outcomes, which would be appropriate and effective intercultural behaviour. Deardorff (2006) has also argued that effective IC is a result of the combination of attitude, knowledge and skills thus granting the learners the ability to decode and mediate cultural disparities in communicative situations. Combining the structural elements of Byram and the process orientation of Deardorff, the scholars can examine both content and pathway of the development of IC in the classroom. These paradigms supply the theoretical contexts of researching teaching methods and student behaviours in fundamental English classrooms.

2.2. Intercultural Competence in ELT

One of the most significant areas of developing IC is the English language teaching (ELT), particularly when English is used as lingua franca (Baker and Ishikawa, 2022). As language learners increasingly engage in the authentic communicative situations, they are increasingly expected to manoeuvre through diverse cultural norms and values by using English. Incorporating IC in ELT increases cultural sensitivity, motivation, and critical thinking among learners, which makes them prepared to act in a proper manner during multicultural interactions (Saraswati, 2025).

However, despite theoretical focus on IC, many ELT programmes, especially in non-Western ones, still focus on teaching grammar and translation. As an example, the curriculum studies in Southeast Asia have shown that although intercultural goals are often expressed in policy papers, they are rarely implemented in the classroom (Permatasari, 2023). Similarly, in Pakistan, the common teaching techniques used in primary English classes do not allow students to explore other cultural views than the local environment (Nurmaisyah, 2025). It is these gaps that underscore the need to conduct an empirical investigation on how IC can be successfully integrated into primary ELT.

2.3 Intercultural Competence Instructional Strategies.

A growing body of research recognises effective teaching methods in developing IC in language classrooms. Role-plays and simulations provide the learner with the chance to simulate intercultural interaction in the conditions of verisimilars, thus developing the interpretive and relational skills (Snigdha, 2022). Research also indicates that participatory classroom practices, which allow learners to express their views and engage actively with content, enhance engagement, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding (Abdullah, Alam, & Rafi, 2026). This reinforces the use of interactive strategies in primary ELT classrooms to promote intercultural competence. Cultural comparisons or practises that question the differences and similarities between cultures prompt the learners to critically question their own worldview with the understanding of values and practises of others (Kiss, 2024).

The usage of original material, e.g. literary texts, videos, and social-media content was also found to increase the cultural knowledge and empathy of learners. Authentic materials take students through real cultural situations in life, thus, provoking reflection and discussion (Permatasari, 2023). Moreover, the activities about the culturally different peers enable negotiation of the meaning and intercultural communication competencies, which is consistent with the sociocultural theories of learning (Saraswati, 2025). Even though these strategies have strong theoretical underpinnings, empirical data show that their

application in the classroom is still not regular, which is explained by insufficient teacher training, government-imposed curricula, and the lack of instructional models that would be considered context-fit (Nurmaisyah, 2025).

2.4 Classroom-Based Studies

Empirical research studies on the issue of IC in the classroom setting shed some light on the potential advantages as well as on the practical problems related to the incorporation of intercultural material. Research in the secondary and tertiary setting demonstrates that ICC-based lessons can help learners to become more motivated, more culturally aware, and more communicatively competent (Snigdha, 2022; Kiss, 2024). Educators describe the positive attitudes to IC integration, but commonly list barriers like insufficient teaching direction, large classes, and limitation of assessment tools (Permatasari, 2023).

Despite these results, there is still a relative lack of research in primary-level classrooms particularly in non-Western environments like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The existing body of scholarship is mainly focused on adolescent or adult learners, thus creating gaps in the understanding of how young learners develop IC, the most effective strategies, and how teachers can help learners to develop intercultural learning during introductory courses in English. The realisation of these gaps explains why the current study has focused on a classroom-based analysis of instructional strategies and responses of the learners in primary English classrooms.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The current research paper follows an integrated approach whereby it combines the ICC model of Byram and the process model of IC of Deardorff. In outlining the central aspects of IC attitude, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness, Byram provides a framework that provides a framework to assess the instructional strategies. The model created by Deardorff highlights the developmental process with a special emphasis on internal consequences that represent the openness and empathy leading to the manifestation of intercultural behaviours. Together, these frameworks guide the examination of classroom-based strategies, learner engagement, and the difficulties that are bound to arise in promoting IC, thus, making sure that both the theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural learning are taken into consideration.

Methodology
3.1 Research Design

This research was based on a qualitative research design to investigate the implementation of instructional strategies to create intercultural competence (IC) by primary English teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan and the reaction of the students as well as challenges of the teachers. To study the human behaviour and teaching process in context, qualitative research is suitable to conduct such a study (Dornyei, 2007). It enables a profound comprehension of classroom dynamics, teacher ideologies and pupil reactions, which are not attained using quantitative approaches only. Qualitative methods have been used to study the nature of the teaching practises and learner engagement in previous studies of IC in language classrooms (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Farrell and Ives, 2015).

3.2 Context of the Study

It was carried out in English classes of the Pakistani primary schools in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Such classrooms are usually based on a traditional teaching methodology with a very high focus on the translation methodology. In this respect, English teaching frequently includes sentences translation between English and Urdu or Pashto and memorising vocabulary and grammar rules without much communicational activity (Khan and Azeem, 2012). The translation approach still prevails in most South Asian primary schools because of the traditions of educational activities and evaluation systems, which focus on right written production rather than communicative skill.

Students of primary schools between the ages of 5 and 10 years are typical of primary classrooms in the KP and include students of grades 1-5. In these situations, students tend to know little about spoken English out of the classroom and little about authentic cultural materials. This supports the necessity of exploring the instructional techniques that could be used to promote intercultural awareness within the framework of the

current teaching practises. Past studies in the same context have shown that conventional means can hardly help in building the communicative and cultural competence of the learners, thus encouraging the consideration of more interactive ones (Rahman and Pandian, 2003).

3.3 Participants
The interviewees were the government schools in KP in the primary English classes of grades 1 to 5. The major sources of data were teachers and students. Classrooms that were regularly teaching English and where it was possible to observe classes were chosen by purposeful sampling. Qualitative research should be done using purposive sampling due to the fact that a researcher can choose those cases that are most likely to yield good and relevant information (Patton, 2002).

Five teachers (one teacher per grade) and their students were involved. The teachers were of different levels of experience with some having less than ten years of teaching practise and others having over ten years of teaching practise. This diversity contributed to the fact that a wider scope of instructional strategies and issues was taken into account. The emphasis on grades 1 to 5 facilitated the fact that the study involved the study of IC instruction in the primary level whereby the foundation of language habits and attitudes are developed. Earlier studies have highlighted the significance of researching primary classrooms since young learners are at the developmental phase of social and cognitive growth (Lightbown and Spada, 2013).

3.4 Data Collection Methods
As a primary data-collection method, classroom observations were conducted in order to answer the research questions. The observations release the first-hand information about the teaching methods, the classroom life, and student involvement (Merriam, 2009). The observations were carried out within six weeks, and the classrooms were visited twice a week, spending about 40 minutes there. This rate took care of a thorough grasp of training patterns, educator methods and the reaction of students in English classes.

The teacher activities, instructional materials, student participation and interactions related to intercultural competence were recorded on field notes. Extra consideration was given to those moments when teachers were teaching cultural material, working with genuine materials, role plays or discussions, or reflected with students concerning cultural practises.

Observations in the classroom have been a popular method of research into the field of language teaching to study pedagogical intervention and classroom practises (Farrell and ives, 2015; Borg, 2006). In IC research, observations assist in recording what is actually performed by the teachers, rather than what they claim doing in practise (Byram, 1997).

3.5 Data Analysis
All observation notes were entered into a qualitative data analysis software and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is an established method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. It allows researchers to organize data into meaningful categories that reflect recurring behaviors, beliefs, or practices. Thematic analysis is widely used in language education research because it enables the researcher to interpret data in light of existing theory and emerging patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Studies examining intercultural competence often apply thematic analysis to classroom interactions to uncover how cultural content is incorporated and how learners negotiate meaning (Díaz González & Tarrío, 2013).

Results and Data Analysis
The chapter outlines the results of the observations that were carried out in the primary English classes (Grades 1-5) located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhaw (KP), Pakistan. The research questions include: (1) What instructional strategies are used by teachers in order to develop intercultural competence (IC)? The structure of the analysis is based on the following research questions: (2) What is students reaction towards such strategies? (3) What are some of the difficulties associated with teachers having intercultural activities? The data were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and thus, similarities that emerged across the classrooms were determined.

4.1   Instructional Strategies Teachers use to build intercultural competence.

4.1.1. Role-Plays and Simulation.

Educators put in place role-play activities that provide images of situations of various cultures although not very often. An example is the case of a Grade 4 classroom where the teacher asked students to play a scenario of greetings in an English speaking nation. It was observed that the students were initially hesitant but their involvement was heightened after they were assigned roles in pairs. This design is consistent with the earlier studies that showed role-play improves the ability of the learners to understand and bargain cultural norms (Snigdha, 2022). However, in many of the classes, these activities were limited by big classes and short time of instruction which provided superficial involvement.

4.1.2. Cultural Comparisons

The cultural comparison exercises were sometimes used by the teachers, e.g., comparing the local festivals to the western holidays. Although these activities exposed students to the different aspects of various cultural practises, educators were inclined to showcase through such activities as factual information, instead of critical thinking. These are those results that are consistent with other research works that were carried out in similar settings, whereby cultural comparisons do not necessarily develop more profound intercultural knowledge unless through guided reflections (Permatasari, 2023).

4.1.3. Use of Authentic Materials

Authentic texts such as videos with English-speaking children, narrative texts, and visual materials on social media were used selectively. An example of this is that Grade 3 students were shown a short video that showed a birthday party in the United Kingdom. According to teachers, these materials increased the level of engagement; but there were technical barriers that hampered a regular use like the limited projectors and unreliable power supply. This confirms previous results that genuine materials can provide intercultural learning but require institutional assistance in its application (Saraswati, 2025).

4.1.4 Collaborative Activities

Group activities such as group discussions and storytelling in pairs were seldom designed to encourage intercultural communication. In the case of students working in groups, their communication was mostly based on a task completion and not sharing of cultural views. The given observation is consistent with the studies that suggest that collaborative learning may develop IC, but the potential of collaborative learning is frequently not leveraged in the primary classrooms that follow the traditional approaches (Nurmaisyah, 2025).

4.2. Reactions of the students towards Intercultural activity.
4.2.1. Engagement and Motivation

The students displayed a high level of interest in role-plays and multimedia activities, especially when the latter was based on the interactive approach. It was observed that younger learners (Grades 12 to 2) were keen in terms of imitation and dramatisation, and older learners (Grades 4-5) were curious about cultural practises. The ability to understand and discern is shaped by knowledge pertinent to the research topic.

4.2.2. Understanding and Awareness

The capability to comprehend and discern is informed by knowledge applicable to the topic of the research. Regardless of the witnessed enthusiasm, students had a primitive cultural knowledge. Most of them could recognise the outward differences between Pakistani and English speaking setting- such as festivals and food, but had difficulty in explaining more in depth cultural norms, values, or social expectations. This observation is in line with the previous studies in primary ELT classrooms, in which IC interventions are likely to stimulate awareness, but not always the critical cultural understanding (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006)

4.2.3 Language Challenges

The lack of English proficiency hindered the ability of the students to share ideas during intercultural engagements. As was observed, teachers often used translation-based practises to pass cultural information, thus limiting genuine interaction. This fact is consistent with some studies which suggest that linguistic constraints are one of the major obstacles to successful IC development in the primary classroom (Khan □ *)& Azeem, 2012).

4.3. Problems of Teachers in applying Intercultural Activities.
4.3.1 Constraints of Curriculum and Assessment.

Teachers stated that the requirements of curriculums give emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and translation activities such that there is little room to conduct intercultural practises. Assessment systems strengthen written rightness instead of communicative competence, which constrains the capacity of teachers to emphasise teaching IC. The observations are supported by those of Pakistan and other South Asian settings in which standardised curricula limits pedagogical innovations (Rahman & Pandian, 2003).

4.3.2 Resource Limitations

The problem of resource shortage such as the lack of teaching materials, the presence of multimedia materials, and the lack of the space to work in groups became a serious issue. Teachers were found to be challenged by the inability to be able to use videos or storybooks regularly in the process of experiential IC learning. It is consistent with the studies which emphasise limited resources as a potential barrier to the implementation of IC strategies in practise (Saraswati, 2025).

4.3.3 Large Class Sizes

Big groups (40-50 students) hindered personalised instructions and engagement in interactive processes. It was observable that teachers mostly had to use lecture type of instruction thus limiting the possibility of role-play, discussion and inter-cultural activity. According to previous research in ELT classrooms, the size of the classes is one of the keys to hindering the application of IC-focused pedagogies (Farrell, 2015).

4.3.4 Teacher Education and Confidence.

The conceptual level of the teachers regarding IC affected implementation. Educators who had little experience in intercultural training were less confident about planning and implementing activities in intercultural, and the results of the study have been echoed in international ELT studies (Byram, 1997; Díaz González & Tarrío, 2013).

5. Discussion

In this section , the author presents the results of Chapter 4 and explains them within the theoretical framework and existing literature. The discussion is structured in the form of the research questions of the study (1) what are the instructional strategies that teachers employ to foster intercultural competence (IC), (2) how students react to such strategies, and (3) what challenges do teachers encounter in adopting intercultural activities. The discussion highlights how the findings validate, elaborate, or contradict the previous researches in analogous situations.

5.1. Institutional competence in intercultural competence development.

The researchers found that educators used a mixture of role-plays, cultural comparisons, authentic materials and collaborative tasks to promote IC but the application was limited. Role-plays and simulations worked very well with students and especially younger students, but they were restricted by large classroom sessions and time. This coincides with Snigdha (2022), who found out that role-plays improve the interpretation and relationship skills of learners, but their real-life implementation is often not possible in the classroom.

Cultural comparisons enabled the students to understand the differences between local and foreign cultures, but the teachers presented them as facts instead of encouraging the critical reflection. This observation correlates with that of Permatasari (2023) who found that, when cultural differences are put into context and

with discourse as opposed to being presented as a list, intercultural awareness is enhanced. The exposure to the real-life cultural situations was also limited due to the limited use of real-life materials (videos, storybooks, or social media content). As Saraswati (2025) remarked, genuine materials can also greatly contribute to cultural knowledge, yet the ongoing utilisation will have to be supported by the institutions and the teachers should be familiarised with the concepts of IC.

Teamwork was not properly used as a channel of intercultural communication. Students used to work in pairs or groups, but even during their work, they usually worked on completing exercises, but not discussing cultural perspectives. The same trend was identified by Nurmaisyah (2025), as formal guidance is necessary to make cooperative learning effective in developing IC.

In general, new findings indicate that although teachers are aware of IC strategies, their effective application is constrained by traditional teaching strategies, curriculum constraints, as well as resource constraints. This is a reiteration of Byram (1997) point that the creation of IC involves both pedagogical will and facilitating classroom designs.

5.2. Reactions of Students towards Intercultural Activities.

Students were found to be very engaged in interactive and multimedia based activities and showed curiosity and eagerness. Drama and imitation assignments were positively accepted by younger learners, whereas the older students (45) were more open to discussions of cultural content. These findings are in line with the findings of the earlier research that has stressed the importance of engagement and motivation as key antecedents of intercultural learning (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

Nonetheless, the cultural knowledge of students was not very in-depth, but as a rule, it concerned only observable differences (e.g., clothing, food, holidays) and not the cultural values or norms. This observation supports the difference that exists between cultural awareness and intercultural competence, which was discussed by Deardorff (2006). Although they raised awareness, the activities did not always enhance internal attitudes and skills that ensure the internal intercultural competence which include empathy, perspective-taking, and adaptability.

Another barrier was language proficiency. Poor command of English narrowed the proficiency of the students to share their ideas, pose questions, or negotiate meaning in case of intercultural assignments. Teachers tended to go back to explanations that were based on translations and this minimised possibilities of intercultural interaction. This validates the findings of Khan and Azeem (2012) who observed that linguistic barriers limit the engagement of primary learners on IC-oriented activities.

5.3. Problems of the application of intercultural activities.

The paper identified various issues that teachers encounter in the process of applying IC in primary or Basic English classroom.

Curriculum/assessment limitations became a major issue. Educators indicated that formal curricula focus on grammar, vocabulary, and translation practises and do not allow intercultural practises. Rahman and Pandian (2003) also reported similar observations that standardised curriculums in South Asia tend to inhibit pedagogic innovation, focusing on written accuracy as opposed to communicative or intercultural proficiency.

Implementation was also limited by resources. The accessibility of storybooks, multimedia resources, and room to work in groups did not allow the frequency and quality of IC activities to be as high. Saraswati (2025) pointed out the fact that meaningful intercultural instruction cannot be entirely done without material support.

The size of classes did not allow focusing on the individual and making the work interactive. Observers were able to observe that ineffectively managing classrooms, teachers turned to lectures-like approaches and eliminated the possibility of role-plays or group discussions. The class size is also noted as one of the main factors influencing teacher autonomy and variety of activities by Farrell and Ives (2015).

Lastly, it was essential with teacher training and confidence. Teachers who had little exposure to the concepts of IC were reluctant in the design of activities. The current observation is consistent with Byram (1997) and Diaz Gonzalez and Tarrillo (2013) who emphasise that the key to the successful implementation

of IC is teacher competence. Lack of professional development means that teachers have difficulty in relating theoretical models to practical strategies in the classroom.

5.4. Theoretical Framework Relating to Findings.
The results can be viewed in the context of ICC model of Byram and process model of Deardorff. The model by Byram focuses on the elements of IC, which are attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness. Activities observed gave primary focus on knowledge (cultural facts) and skills (role-play enactment), whereas attitudes (openness, curiosity) and critical cultural awareness had not yet been developed, since the students were not allowed to discuss their thoughts much.

The process model developed by Deardorff emphasises the internal results (empathy and perspective-taking) as the preconditions of the external intercultural behaviour. Internal outcomes in the observed classrooms were not developed because of superficial engagement, teacher centred learning, and language barrier. This is evidence of a disconnect between theoretical models of IC and the practise in the classroom which shows that pedagogical scaffolds, material and teacher training are required.

5.5. Implication of ELT Practise in KP.
The paper suggests the following implications:
1.   Teacher Training: Professional development programme is to be based on intercultural pedagogy, including role-plays, cultural reflection, and working with real materials.
2.   Design of the Curriculum: Primary curriculum should incorporate clear intercultural learning goals and standards of assessment.
3.   Resource Allocation: The schools are to provide multimedia resources, storey books and sufficient space to carry out interactivity activities.
4.   Classroom Management: Group rotation or peer facilitation can be used as a way of classroom management strategies to improve student engagement in intercultural tasks since they operate in groups.

These recommendations could also serve to reduce the gap between the theoretical models of intercultural competence and the realities of classroom learning and, therefore, allow KP primary learners to acquire not just concern but also the attitudes and skills that are necessary to achieve true intercultural competence.

6. Conclusion
This paper has analysed the growth of intercultural competence within the primary English classrooms within the state of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, the instructional methods of teachers, the reactions of the learners, and the obstacles in executing the activity-based intercultural learning. It was observed in the classroom that the strategies used by teachers in their classrooms included role-plays, comparisons with different cultures, and use of authentic materials and collaborative tasks but these approaches were not applied consistently because of the established teaching practises, large class sizes and resource insufficiency. Students showed eagerness and interest, especially in interactive and multimedia tasks, but their understanding of the cultural norms and values was limited to the surface, due to the language level and the use of a translator. The results shed some light on a gap between classroom practise and intercultural theory, indicating that achieving authentic intercultural competence goes beyond teaching to cultural content, specified needs encompass reflexive structuring, facilitated interaction, and conducive teaching environment. The research has serious implications on ELT in KP and other similar settings. Design of curriculum must also include clear intercultural goals and teacher-training programmes should help teachers have pragmatic intercultural learning strategies. Interest and internalisation of intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills of students may be facilitated by provision of original materials, interaction activities and classroom assistance. The study though limited to primary classrooms and observational data highlights the use of pedagogy, curriculum, and teacher capacity to bring meaningful intercultural development. Further studies are needed to determine the intercultural implementation in the context of different levels of education, the teacher attitudes, and the effectiveness of intercultural teaching interventions in the context of long-term effects on the communicative competence and cultural sensitivity of the learners.

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