

# **Intercultural Understanding in Language Teaching and Learning**

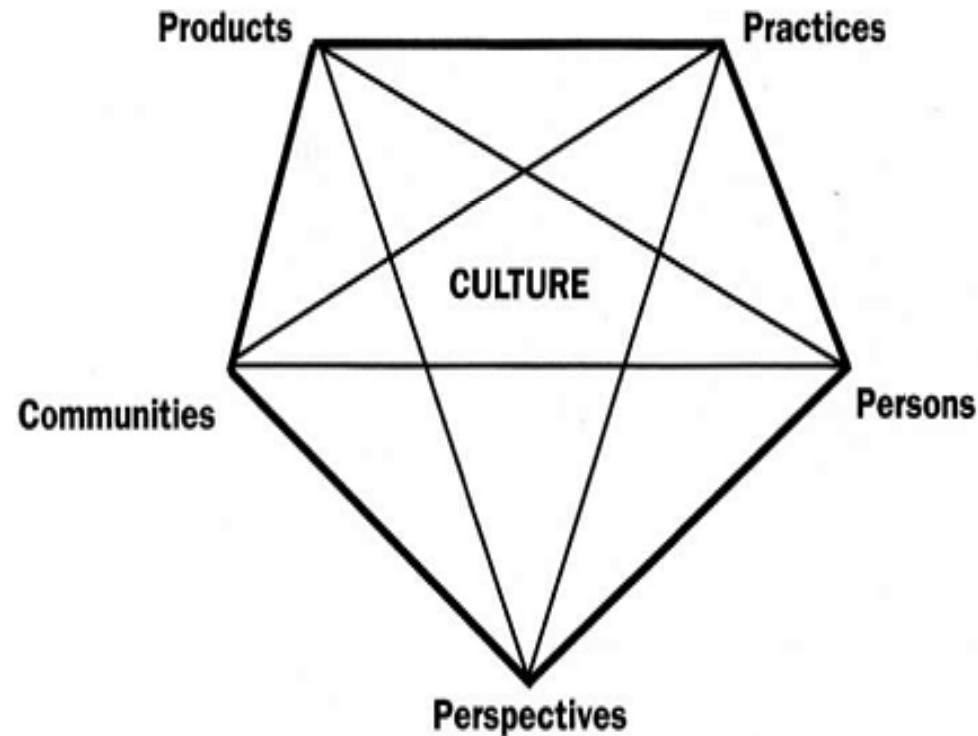
# To start with...

- According to Kramsch (1998), language is related to culture in the following ways:
  - Language **expresses** cultural reality
  - Language **embodies** cultural reality
  - Language **symbolizes** cultural reality
- As suggested by Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler (2003, p.44), language is **“not simply structural, but social and communicative.”** Learning a new language, therefore, becomes more complicated due to the complexity of the linguistic forms that get tangled with the socio-cultural aspects.

# What is culture?

**Moran (2001) formulated 5 dimensions of culture:**

Figure 3.1: The Five Dimensions of Culture



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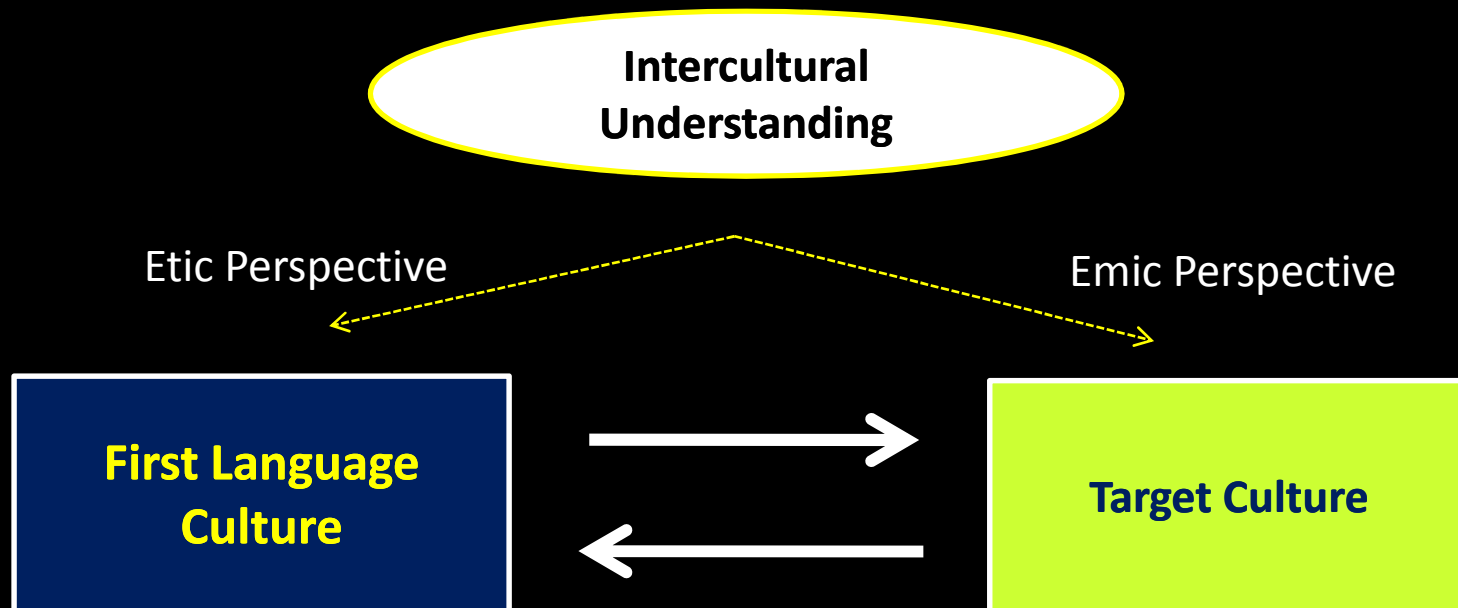
- Culture is defined by Moran (2001) as:

the evolving way of life of a GROUP of PERSONS,  
consisting of a shared set of PRACTICES associated with  
a shared set of PRODUCTS, based upon a shared set of  
PERSPECTIVES of the world, and set within specific  
*social contexts*

# So, what does it have to do with language?

- Since language use is a form of cultural **PRACTICES**, by **PERSONS** in **COMMUNITIES**, understanding the cultural **PERSPECTIVES** underlying the practices becomes very crucial.
- Here, cultural understanding (and also awareness) should become an inseparable part in language teaching and learning.
- Intercultural understanding will help language learners decide whether the language features or expressions they use are culturally **appropriate**, **polite**, and **acceptable**.

# Intercultural Understanding



# Which Cultures to understand?

- Does English culture exist?
- Which country should become our reference?
- Three most possible references:
  - U.S. American
  - British
  - Australian

# American Cultural Values (Levine & Adelman, 1993)

1. Personal control over environment
2. Change
3. Control over time
4. Equality and egalitarianism
5. Individualism and privacy
6. Self-help



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7. Future orientation
8. Action and work orientation
9. Informality
10. Directness, openness, and honesty
11. Materialism

# So, what next? What cultural forms do we need to teach?

- There are some possible materials to utilize:
  - (Authentic) Texts, both written and spoken: articles, song lyrics, literary works, letters, greeting cards, announcements, legal documents, news reports, speeches, dialogues, etc.
  - Audio (and or) visuals: talk shows, debate, pictures, photographs, movies, plays, etc.
  - Cultural products: bus tickets, clothes, kitchen utensils, etc.

# Some important issues

- Teaching culture **EXPLICITLY** or **IMPLICITLY**
- The **authenticity** of the materials
- Teachers' **cultural knowledge**
- Cultural conflict
- Understanding culture is not about **RIGHT vs. WRONG**

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**Questions, please..**