

## **INTERCOMPETENCE: SOURCES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN LOCAL AND EXPATRIATE ELT PERSONNEL**

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Intercompetence is an intermediary stage in behavioural competence which occurs during confrontation with a new culture. It is a common, two-way phenomenon within ELT when expatriate personnel work within foreign institutions—when (a) local and expatriate colleagues belong to different professional–academic cultures, and (b) the expatriates fail to understand the protocols of the host institution. Each party thus fails to behave appropriately within the terms of the other. By looking at four cases, the paper demonstrates how intercompetence can pervade and damage the effectiveness of many aspects of ELT work. An ethos of change is inherent in the professional–academic culture of Western ELT. Failure to recognise and address intercompetence can increase local perceptions of this change as cultural imperialism in ELT. Intercompetence may be significantly decreased if management strategies are introduced to provide all parties with opportunities to observe, reflect upon and learn about the new situations within which they are working. These strategies should capitalise on ELT expatriates' experience of learning new cultures, acquired while working in a range of culturally marginal situations.

### **1. DEFINITION**

I define intercompetence as an intermediary stage in acquiring behavioural competence—akin to the concept of interlanguage in language learning. It is seen where actors take on uncharacteristic, and perhaps clumsy behaviour while trying to cope with a new culture.<sup>1</sup> Within the context of this paper, I wish to look at how it occurs wherever expatriate and local personnel come into contact with each other in a work situation. This is especially the case in ELT projects and other situations where expatriate teachers or curriculum developers are working in foreign institutions.<sup>2</sup>

First, I shall describe instances of intercompetence within a particular set of ELT situations, and then present a variety of interpretations on the possible causes of the phenomenon. In conclusion, I shall discuss implications for management.

At first sight, the reader may feel that the ensuing descriptions of conflict are statements of the obvious—things which are bound to happen when people with different viewpoints

try to work together. However, I intend to show that even if the conflicts brought about by intercompetence cannot be prevented, an understanding of these conflicts may lead to their reduction. In my opinion, such conflicts are rife when expatriates work in foreign institutions. They are rarely reported officially or accounted for in management strategies, which, as a result, fail to bind the efforts of expatriate and local personnel in any durable fashion.

Each example by itself says little. It is when several examples are compared that a cumulative thick description of the phenomenon to which I wish to attach the label “intercompetence” is built up.<sup>3</sup> It is my aim to present the concept of intercompetence as a model for anomalous behaviour within ELT work settings, which needs to be tested in other situations.

## 2. EXAMPLES OF INTERCOMPETENCE

The following examples of intercompetence are of classroom and seminar situations involving interaction between expatriate and local lecturers. They were observed during the course of my work as a curriculum development consultant while visiting provincial faculties of education where American Fulbright and British VSOs worked alongside local lecturers.<sup>4</sup>

### *Case 1. Language lab confrontation*

The first case is that of an expatriate lecturer who was working with a new language laboratory at a faculty of education. A local colleague and I visited her<sup>5</sup> to see what she was doing. I label the behaviour described here as *expatriate intercompetence* because, despite her professional efforts, this lecturer was somehow failing to connect with important aspects of local protocol and thus failing to effect the innovation intended.

During our observation of one of the expatriate lecturer’s lab sessions, we noticed that:

At a table at the back of the ... [lab] sat a university employee. ... As the student entered they had to sign ... [a register] at the table. ... The expatriate lecturer complained about this “bureaucracy”, and about this “lab assistant” (her words) who she said eats breakfast in the lab and doesn’t help. As the lesson began, my local colleague and I discussed the lab assistant and wondered if there was a communication problem between him and the expatriate lecturer. My local colleague ... discovered from the lab assistant that it was his job to see the students to their places and to help them to operate the booths when they had problems. He was also in charge of the lab in the sense of having the key<sup>6</sup> and being trained to do minor maintenance work. The lab assistant complained, however, that the expatriate lecturer had not asked him to do this job and that he couldn’t speak English to be able to communicate with her.

My local colleague’s dissatisfaction with this stage of affairs culminated in a confrontation, during the discussion after the lab session, which in turn brought out a deep-seated conflict between the expatriate lecturer and local technical staff:

The discussion became extremely heated. ... The technician and ... [the expatriate lecturer] began to state complaints against each other which had obviously been smouldering for a long time.

... My local colleague’s argument was that the expatriate lecturer was not attempting to work

within any of the university regulations, which may have been turned in her favour, but was instead defying them and breaking the rules to try to create a teaching situation which was not realistic in the local university context, and which certainly could not be maintained after her departure. The expatriate lecturer wanted to use the language lab outside the working hours of the lab assistant so that she could have special groups of students in the lab and also spend time developing lab materials. This would be a basic infringement of regulations as she was not allowed to have the key to the lab, and was only supposed to be in the lab when the keyholder, the lab assistant, was there [between 8.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.] to watch the equipment for which he was responsible. The audio-visual aids technician, under whom the lab assistant worked, said that the expatriate lecturer, in requesting the key and the use of the lab outside hours from the dean, had complained that he, the technician, was lazy and had several times not turned up for work when the expatriate lecturer had needed him to operate the video or audio equipment.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the technician said this was unjust, as on the occasions the expatriate lecturer had cited he had been ill or had been attending to a family emergency.

The technician and the lab assistant also said that they thought the expatriate lecturer was unprofessional in the way in which she favoured particular groups of students who were nice to her and invited her to their homes at weekends, by giving them special classes, and that *these* students would be the ones she would give special sessions to in the lab. They felt that this was not a valid reason for wanting to break regulations by having a personal key or for asking them to work overtime—the only alternative. My local colleague supported the technician in his argument. The technician went away and brought his work record book to the lab to prove the expatriate lecturer wrong in some of her accusations.

... The expatriate lecturer believed firmly that the university system was counterproductive to education, and that she had the welfare of her students as her highest priority. She wanted to leave something behind and could not believe that the system was unchangeable. If she could make changes, surely those who came after could. My local colleague, on the other hand, firmly believed that the existing system could be made to work, and saw development in terms of the whole system, which would need to carry the technical staff along with it. (Observation notes 1.)

A further dimension of the language lab event was that it seemed that it was not only the expatriate lecturer who was being intercompetent. I also perceived *local intercompetence* in the way in which my local colleague dealt with the situation, which seemed also to upset local protocols. I felt that it was not his business to interfere in the relationship between the expatriate lecturer and her local colleagues in someone else's faculty. Furthermore, I felt that the friction which existed between them, which had been "smouldering" for some time:

... might well have continued to smoulder without needing to be brought to a head. As it was, the bringing out of these complaints, instigated largely by ... [my local colleague], did not serve to bring about any degree of reconciliation, and may well have ruined what already existed of a work relationship between ... [the expatriate lecturer], the lab assistant and the technician. ... [The local lecturer's] reputation may also have been damaged, especially as ... [my local colleague] was basically attacking her. ... He even went so far as to go and see the vice dean with the technician to make an oral report on what he had seen, and he wrote a small note on his visit in the technician's record book. (Observation notes 1.)

### *Case 2. Lecturer–student confrontation*

During a visit to another faculty of education two local lecturers and myself co-observed the class of another expatriate lecturer who was trying out new materials. My local co-observers had been working with me on the design of the new materials and wanted to see how the expatriate lecturer was using them.

During the observation I perceived *local intercompetence* in what seemed to me to be my local co-observers' disregard for the protocol of the institution they were visiting. This seemed anomalous behaviour in that one would expect local personnel to be expert in the protocols of their own situation. What I considered to be a considerable disturbance was created when, after the classes, they held a discussion with the students about the new methodology. I did not attend because I had business elsewhere:

[My local colleagues] were in the class for about thirty minutes, and when they came out looked quite disturbed. ... [One of them] announced in a very loud voice in the middle of the staffroom that they had had a "bloody battle" ... They had had a very heated argument to defend the course. Apparently a lot of shouting had taken place and every single hitherto non-participating student had said their piece. Everyone had shouted at once and both ... [my local colleagues] had ended up shouting back to all corners of the room at once. (Observation notes 2.)

### *Case 3. Apparent inhospitality*

Another example of what appeared to be *local intercompetence* was seen in the anomalous behaviour of two local assistant lecturers. They were the normal teachers of the class to which I was giving a guest lesson, and they were seen "smoking at the back" while observing the class (observation notes 3). This seemed inconsistent with observations of formality elsewhere in the local classroom and institution culture (see Holliday, 1991a; pp. 61–66, 270–276).

### *Case 4. A shared seminar presentation*

In a seminar in which I made a joint presentation with two local colleagues (*A* and *B*), there was more evidence of both *local* and *expatriate intercompetence*. This was marked by a confusion between the perceived roles of the three presenters. It seemed that *A* felt that *B* had stepped on his territory; and I found it difficult to obtain the territory I needed for my part of the presentation. *A* had given his part of the presentation, while *B* sat beside him behind the presenter's table:

I tried to move from my arm chair to the seat behind the presenter's table, which I wished to sit on to give the presentation. *A* and *B* were still sitting ... [behind the table] and did not seem to want to move immediately. There was not sufficient room for me as well, and I had to ask one of them to move. *A*, who was on the left, moved out. I got the impression that they were being very territorial with regard to the presenters' table. (Observation notes 4.)

Later, when it was *B*'s turn:

*B* began, as planned, by explaining something about the video. He stood up in front of the table, thus very close to the front row of participants. This seemed to signal something "practical", in contrast to the sitting down presentation of myself and *A*. However, *A* also stood up, in his position at the side of the table, and joined in ... The whole thing appeared to get out of hand as the discussion broke in part into local language. (Observation notes 4.)

In the post-mortem after the seminar:

*B* showed considerable anger at (i) *A* interrupting his part of the presentation with what he termed petty references to *A*'s own interest area, during the video sequence, and (ii) me saying in my part of the presentation part of what he was supposed to have said in his. He said that

he had been embarrassed and had lost face, and that one of the senior people whom *he* had invited had at one point said, “And what have *you* to say ... We came to hear *you*”. *B* said that he was pleased that more of the people that *he* had invited had not turned up [to see his disgrace]. *B* seemed to think that we were trying to push him out. (Observation notes 4.)

### 3. INTERPRETATIONS

There are many ways of looking at the events described above. However, I wish to pinpoint two major sources of conflict, the opacity of the local protocol and the different professional–academic cultures to which the expatriate and local personnel belonged.

#### 3.1. *Opaque local protocol*

As an outsider, the expatriate is always bound to have difficulty understanding protocols of the very unfamiliar situation presented by the foreign host institution. These protocols can be derived either from the local national culture, from the culture of the host institution or of the classroom. They can also be influenced by local professional–academic cultures, which I shall discuss below. They can consist of a range of norms from administrative (e.g. the technician, as key-holder, bearing the full responsibility for the operation of the language laboratory) to deeper, more tacitly held behaviour. The basic lack of understanding on the part of the outsider expatriate would inevitably lead to a failure to behave appropriately.

3.1.1. *Expatriate intercompetence.* The expatriate intercompetence seen in the language lab confrontation (Case 1) is therefore not surprising.

On the surface, the expatriate lecturer was trying to change the local system for the better. I do not wish to discuss the viability of this line of action *per se*: the point I wish to make is that, at a deeper level, in pursuing this objective she was upsetting the protocol which governed the relationship between academic and technical staff. Her rationalisation, oriented though it was to a desire for pedagogic quality, failed either to perceive or appreciate the social bonding function of these relationships. In this respect, my local colleague’s anger was not so much at the expatriate’s desire to change things, which my local colleague may indeed have shared, but at the way in which she was trampling over local protocols. Furthermore, the expatriate’s desire for professional quality was seen by local personnel as unprofessional—as an unjustified desire to be treated as a very special case—to work outside the institutional conditions which were common to all universities in the country.

3.1.2. *Failure to understand intercompetence.* It is also inevitable, ironically, that, as an outsider observer, I was misinterpreting much of what I saw as local intercompetence. It is likely that local behaviour *appeared* anomalous because it was part of a local protocol that was particularly opaque. Indeed, in the student–teacher confrontation (Case 2), my notes show that, although I was concerned that my local colleagues might have damaged our relationship with the faculty:

I was left to wonder if they were not the best people to evaluate the situation, it being their culture. ... At the time [they] did not seem to think any harm had been done. (Observation notes 2.)

I had no evidence of how the local head of department actually felt about two lecturers from another faculty having a confrontation with his students.

### 3.2. *Conflicting professional–academic cultures*

I see a second, though connected, source of conflict as being between local and expatriate professional–academic cultures.

Professional–academic cultures are complex entities which influence the work habits of teachers and lecturers through professional peer and reference groups, schools of academic thought and practice, professional approach etc., generated by professional associations, unions, university departments, publishers and so on, which make up discourse communities. I argue elsewhere (citing Tomley, 1980) that the ELT profession, like the British integrated social studies and the elementary-secondary-modern traditions, is essentially *integrationist* (Holliday, 1991a: pp. 81–89). In contrast, the faculty of education lecturers in this study seem to belong to an essentially *collectionist* professional–academic culture (Holliday, 1991a: pp. 305–309), as indeed may lecturers in other tertiary institutions in the developing world where expatriate ELT practitioners are likely to work. The two conflicting cultures can be described as follows:

**Local professional–academic culture** (*collectionist*): subject-oriented, hierarchical, appreciation of formal qualifications

**Expatriate professional–academic culture** (*integrationist*): skills-based, task-based, participatory, process-oriented, problem-solving, consultative

I take the terms “collectionist” and “integrationist” from Bernstein (1971), who uses them to distinguish different educational codes within the same society. It is significant, therefore, that, unlike the problem with local protocols, the conflict between professional–academic cultures is *not* in itself connected with national cultural differences. National cultural differences, involving local protocols, will however influence the professional–academic culture of local personnel and will undoubtedly serve to exacerbate the differences where expatriates are working in foreign institutions. All of the different types of cultural influences discussed in this paper are inextricably intertwined, making it all the more difficult for each of the parties concerned to make sense of the actions of the other.

The conflict between different professional–academic cultures can be seen in the laboratory confrontation (Case 1). My local colleague, “with his doctoral appreciation of theory, was not impressed with the expatriate lecturer’s amateur, tinkering, yet probably very competent approach”, which the latter flaunted unapologetically, along with the fact that she was an ex-secondary school teacher and had never worked in a university before (observation notes 1). Indeed, on the way back from the visit, my local colleague stated angrily that he had learnt nothing and that the visit had been a waste of time (observation notes 1).

The mutual intercompetence in the joint seminar (Case 4) could well have been a confusion of roles created by a conflict of the two professional–academic cultures operating within the same event. My interests as curriculum developer throughout the seminar had been to involve local lecturers in the curriculum discussion and development process—the area

of expertise which I was trying to develop. The local lecturers were prepared to enter into this process, but for different reasons. For them it seemed to be an area for asserting their own professional–academic status and territory. At the same time, their anger at the end of the seminar seemed partly to do with the fact that they had not had sufficient opportunity to give the audience the content with which they identified themselves.

3.2.1. *Local outsiders in an alien professional–academic culture.* On the other hand, it is possible that the local lecturers were behaving in an anomalous way because they had become outsiders to events which I had set up within an *integrationist* paradigm. It was not normal within a *collectionist* paradigm for local lecturers from one university to visit less well “qualified” expatriate lecturers in another to “learn” from them. It was rare for local lecturers to take on the role of curriculum developer and to look into other lecturers’ classes, or to take part in co-operative presentations. It is significant that neither of my two local colleagues who came with me as co-observers (Cases 1 and 2) had been classroom observers before. Whereas I had, to a certain extent, been trained in classroom observation, and certainly had a strong concept of what “normal” classroom observation “should” consist of, they might not have had any such concept and were in a sense more the outsiders in this situation than I was. Thus, my two local co-observers were behaving culturally “out of character” because *they* had become outsiders to a form of professional behaviour with which they were not familiar. Although belonging to the culture which they were asked to observe, my local co-observers were having to follow very foreign procedural norms which had been set up by an expatriate curriculum developer.

The examples of local intercompetence may therefore have been local behaviour moving outside its normal protocol in order to strive to cope with a new set of conditions set up by a process of innovation from outside.

3.2.2. *A confusion of roles.* This state of affairs would lead to a confusion of roles, which might explain some of the local intercompetence observed. Whereas I had intended that my local colleague should be consulting the expatriate lecturer to learn something about language laboratories (Case 1), he had misinterpreted this role and was taking it upon himself to act as trouble-shooter and consultant.

Similarly, the local lecturers’ smoking at the back of the class (Case 3) may have been caused by a confusion due to the attention given them through the visit by expatriates, which was enabling them to realise a status that they did not previously have; and my breaking the rules (in their terms) by being communicative in the classroom, which involved allowing late students into the lesson, was being misconstrued by them as a licence for informality. Their ability to judge the degree of appropriacy of this behaviour was thus confused by signals coming from the project which conflicted with traditional protocols.

### 3.3. *An inherent ethos of change*

Bernstein argues that the integrationist paradigm is essentially innovatory. It represents a new order which seeks to break down the subject boundaries, hierarchies and status structures of the more traditional collectionist code:

“The integrated code will require teachers of different subjects to enter into social relationships

which will arise ... out of shared, co-operative, educational tasks. ... I suggest that [this] may tend to weaken the separate hierarchies of collection ... [and] may alter both the structure and distribution of power regulated by the collection code. Further, the administration and specific acts of teaching are likely to shift from the relative invisibility to *visibility*. ... Thus, a move from collection to integrated codes may well bring about a disturbance in the structure and distribution of power, in property relationships and in existing educational identities." (Bernstein, 1971: 62–63)

The local lecturers in the cases cited above are members of English departments where they teach a collection of *subjects* such as linguistics, grammar, spoken English or essay, which have been seen as independent entities pursued separately and privately. Their involvement with expatriate ELT, which has involved them in observation and teamwork, not only between subjects, but also between faculties, involves an erosion of this system.

The situations described in this paper involve myself as a curriculum developer, with an overt brief to introduce change, and expatriate lecturers attached to aid programmes whose briefs might not have been so overtly to introduce change, but who, by their presence, imply a desire to improve the current state of affairs. However, I wish to make the point, on the basis of Bernstein's observations, that Western ELT inherently demands innovation, and that this should be a factor to be taken into consideration whenever local and expatriate ELT personnel work together in local institutions. The expatriate work culture is inherently a culture of change, which local lecturers must learn to cope with, if they are to work effectively with expatriates, and which must itself learn local cultures if it is to have appropriate effect.

Because of the inherently Western nature of the expatriate professional–academic culture, any inability of local personnel to work with and absorb it can easily lead to local accusations that the expatriates are practising a form of cultural imperialism. Lack of local understanding, fuelled by a lack of expatriate efforts to understand and fit in with local protocols can lead to an appearance of aggression.

#### 4. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The incidence of intercompetence has important consequences for the effective management of ELT operations in foreign institutions. The confusion of roles between expatriate and local personnel, and the actions of expatriate lecturers which offend local protocol, can be a cause of widespread misunderstandings between the parties concerned. This can in turn lead to a break-down of long-term co-operation, and in the case of ELT projects, project failure. For this reason, management, if it is to be effective, needs to take intercompetence into consideration.

Two management hypotheses can be formulated:

**Hypothesis 1:** *Expatriate intercompetence*, caused by the failure of outsiders to understand local protocols demands that innovation (a) can only be effectively managed in the long term by insiders, (b) needs to be verified by further investigation of local

cultures, and that (c) outsider expatriate personnel need to be given time and incentive to learn the necessary local protocols.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Local intercompetence*, caused by insiders becoming outsiders within frameworks set up by expatriate personnel, demands that local personnel be given time and incentive to learn the professional-academic culture inherent in the new frameworks if they are to be effective in curriculum change.

Based upon these two hypotheses I present four interrelated management strategies (Fig. 1). The eventual *indigenisation* of the work done by expatriates (A in Fig. 1) is frequently a stated aim of both the local and expatriate powers that be. The ODA concept of counter-parting in aid projects, in which expatriate project managers train local personnel eventually to take their place, is designed to fulfill this aim. As the confusion of roles between expatriate and local colleagues described so far in this paper shows, this process is bound to be complicated and highly problematic, and needs to be discussed in detail elsewhere. However, the three other management strategies are necessary supports to the process. Both an important outcome and a necessary part of the process of counterparting is the *mutual learning* of each other's cultures by the expatriate and local personnel (C and D in Fig. 1). This whole process, in itself a form of innovation within the host educational environment, needs to be supported by further, *ongoing investigation* into this environment (B in Fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> This investigation needs to be *ethnographic* if it is to fully address the cultural nature of the deep phenomena which bring about intercompetence.<sup>9</sup>

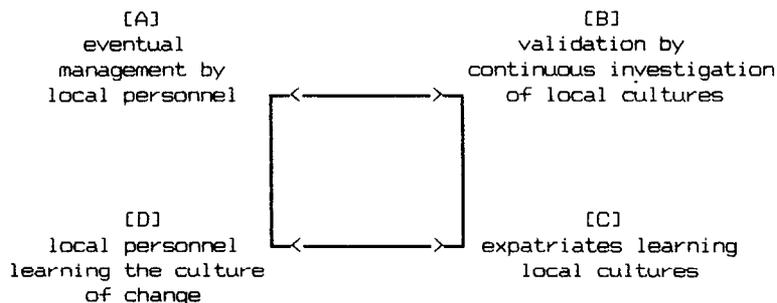


Fig. 1. Management strategies for successful local-expatriate collaboration

## 5. LEARNING TO BE COMPETENT

In conclusion, the basic message I wish to convey is that the successful collaboration between expatriate and local personnel within local institutions depends largely on the degree to which different parties can learn about each others' professional-academic cultures. This can be achieved at different levels. Expatriate ELT personnel must organise their jobs in such a way that they create a work environment in which there is room for these different parties to observe and learn about each other. It is the expatriate's responsibility to do this because theirs is the culture of change which carries potential situations of confusion and conflict.

This learning of the other culture by both local and expatriate personnel (C and D in Fig. 1) can take different forms depending on the local situation. This can be achieved in a variety of ways. One possibility is through staff development schemes which provided local lecturers with opportunities to learn about the culture of change. At the same time, through working closely with the local lecturers, the expatriate curriculum developer can learn about the professional–academic culture of the local lecturers (Holliday, 1991b).

It is also important to introduce this type of learning at the classroom level. Case 1 in particular has shown how what happens in the classroom also affects relationships outside the classroom. An essential part of professional–academic cultural integration needs to be through “proper” classroom practice. In the following example from my observation notes, an expatriate lecturer learns sufficient about the local classroom culture to diminish her intercompetence, and thus perhaps reduce the counterproductiveness of her intrusion.<sup>10</sup> This was manifested in the degree of integration achieved with the traditional aspects of the classroom culture:

Several students were carrying flowers. One of the students gives a flower to the expatriate lecturer, which she takes and keeps during part of the lesson ... she holds it as they do. (Observation notes 5.)

In another class:

[she] showed her cultural integration by being very strict with late-comers, telling them they could not come in, but at the same time knowing when to make exceptions. ... [Although] she was masterful at managing learning in a very communicative way ... she was also very concerned about maintaining her professional status by presenting theory. She might be right about this. (Observation notes 5.)

The expatriate lecturer was able to learn more about the culture of her students because she had created a learning environment in which students were allowed to work by themselves in groups, and which provided the lecturer with opportunities to step back and observe their behaviour.

A similar example is cited by Collier (1979) in his study of classrooms in Alaska. Whereas he finds intercompetence among outsiders teaching local children,<sup>11</sup> he reports one case of an outsider teacher who manages to achieve a relative degree of integration with the local classroom culture. As with the lecturer in my example, Collier’s teacher is able to learn about the local classroom culture by creating classroom situations which enable him to *observe* the culture of his pupils. Collier notes that this teacher is highly sensitive to the “non-verbal signals” put out by his pupils during classroom activities (Collier, 1979: p. 45).

### 5.1. *Capitalising on marginality*

Collier further speculates that the ability of his teacher to integrate with the culture of the class might have been connected with the fact that he was from a marginal immigrant background (Collier, 1979: p. 33). The assumption being that an experienced marginal person by nature would permit the cultivation of an ability to observe and adapt to other cultures. That the expatriate lecturer in observation 5 was also a member of an immigrant

minority in the United States, and brought up in a national culture cognate with that of her students, may lead one to the conclusion that dealing with intercompetence may be more to do with natural qualities than strategy. However, the fact that she was marginal may be the key. Expatriates who have spent much of their professional lives working abroad, constantly marginal to local cultural contexts, have developed an ability to learn culture. They have become experienced outsiders perhaps as much as the members of minority groups.<sup>12</sup> This experience needs to be mobilised and professionalised if intercompetence is to be addressed.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The use of the word “culture” is always dangerous. For the purpose of my argument I distinguish between new and foreign cultures in the following way. A *new* culture is the culture of a class group, a job, a group of colleagues or an institution that is approached by a newcomer. A *foreign* culture is within the context of a foreign country. Both can be sufficiently strange to require much learning on the part of the newcomer. The cultures faced by a project manager working within a host institution in a foreign country are *both* new and foreign and therefore present many learning problems.

<sup>2</sup>See Holliday and Cooke (1982: p. 138) who say that intercompetence occurs at every part of the interface between the ELT project and the host educational environment within which the project is operating.

<sup>3</sup>For the rationale behind thick descriptions, see Stenhouse (1985: p. 53).

<sup>4</sup>I was attached to an ODA-British Council project at the Centre for English Language Teaching (CDELT), Ain Shams University, Cairo. However, the expatriate lecturers, and some of the local lecturers referred to were not directly associated with the curriculum project itself. Through collaboration with the project, they allowed me into their classes to watch them try out materials and methodologies produced by the project. In some cases I was invited into classes where project material was not being used, for the purpose of collecting base data on the general nature of classroom work.

The situations cited in this paper and the use of ethnographic observation techniques are discussed in detail in Holliday (1991a).

<sup>5</sup>The allocation of gender throughout this paper bears no relation to real gender. For the sake of clarity, I arbitrarily refer to local personnel as male and expatriates as female. Various issues related to sex roles of teachers and learners are not within the scope of this paper, and therefore unaffected by gender labelling.

<sup>6</sup>Within the university system, if an employee possessed the key to a room, he was automatically responsible for the security of the room and all its contents.

<sup>7</sup>It was normal, in all universities, whenever lecturers wanted to use video or tape recorders, for the technician to operate the equipment for them.

<sup>8</sup>See Holliday (1991a: pp. 58–63, 120) and Holliday and Cooke (1982: pp. 135), who refer to a “means analysis” as an exploratory device which investigates the host educational environment within which a project is set, for the purpose of informing project and curriculum design. The means analysis informs all aspects of project work, as well as the design of its own procedures.

<sup>9</sup>By ethnographic I mean that the observations focused on the behaviour of lecturers and students, seeing the classroom as a culture. Ethnographic observation is open-ended and unstructured in that categories are allowed to emerge as the observation proceeds.

<sup>10</sup>This counterproductiveness had been seen in the lessons of other expatriate lecturers whose Western habit of giving explicit instructions at every stage in the lesson was in danger of offending the integrity of their students. Local protocol seemed to be that instructions given once at the beginning of the course are sufficient (Holliday, 1991a: pp. 247–250).

<sup>11</sup>Collier does not use the term “intercompetence”. This is my interpretation of the data which he presents.

<sup>12</sup>See Stonequist (1937) on marginality and Schutz (1964) on the individual’s propensity for learning culture in everyday life.

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