

## CHAPTER 9

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# Cultural Competence in Social Action-based Learning: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives

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### INTRODUCTION

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The communicative approach (CA) takes its reference action as language interaction described in terms of functions and notions. Thus, the students are prepared mainly for language interaction, which is speaking with the others (Puren, 2004). This goal was in line with the political project of the Council of Europe during seventies, which aimed at enabling the Europeans to travel across countries or meet the natives of the target language in their home country and interact with them in the target language and hence the situation prioritized alongside of language interaction was the tourist trip situation as indicated in Van Ek's (1975) *The Threshold Level in a European-Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults*:

*“Nevertheless, by far the largest single group of learners, everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country” (p.2).*

Based on the reference situation (short term contact situation when visiting abroad) and action (language interaction) indicated in the above quote, Puren (2020a) outlines the fundamental characteristics of CA in table 1 as follows:

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The reference situation of SABL, linked with permanent social and professional environments, is multilingual and multicultural along with its reference action, which is social action as opposed to language interaction. This aspect of SABL necessitates a serious consideration of a new cultural competence since the issue is not about managing differences and misunderstandings alone in short term interactions in short term encounters but adopting and/or creating a common culture of action too in order to be able to carry out permanent joint actions effectively. Thus, the cultural competence in SABL relate to the capacity of forming a common cultural competence (co-culture) for social actors to be able to act effectively in major domains of social life. Just as intercultural competence is related to representations, the common cultural competence is related to common design that the social actors adopt and/or create to be able to act together effectively. Besides, cultural competence in SABL is not reduced to intercultural competence nor is it restricted to co-cultural competence but rather cultural competence with all its dimensions are embraced in it although a specific cultural component, that of co-cultural competence, is seen as necessary for the social actors to carry out joint actions effectively. This implies that transcultural, metacultural, intercultural and pluricultural components have their integral importance and functional necessity within the cultural competence to be mobilized by the social actors in SABL.

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