**Title:** Intercultural Competence: A New Nexus to Cooperative EFL Learning and Classroom Life among Ethiopian University Students

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***ABSTRACT***

*Higher education foreign language classrooms today are striving to cope with cultural diversity on one hand and interactive pedagogies on the other. In effect, students are often exposed to intercultural cooperative group learning. Intercultural cooperation, as such, entails individuals’ ability to effectively communicate and function across different cultures – i.e., intercultural competence (IC). It follows that learners’ IC is likely to influence (hence, predict) their cooperative classroom life (CCL), but the degree of this nexus remains an overlooked yet exigent question. The present study addresses this question by appraising the significance of IC as a perceived predictor of cooperative EFL learning and classroom life among Ethiopian university students. A quantitative correlational design was employed to answer the research questions. The data were gathered through Intercultural Competence Scale (ICS) and Classroom Life Measure (CLM) questionnaires administered to 292 randomly sampled Communicative English Skills students in Debre Tabor University. Correlation and multiple linear regressions were computed via SPSS to analyze the data. The results have revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived IC and CCL among the target students. Moreover, learners’ IC level is found to be a statistically significant positive perceived predictor of CCL, where intercultural knowledge, behavioral performance and affective orientation significantly contribute to this effect as individual IC factors while intercultural self-efficacy and consciousness display do not relatively seem to have significant contributions thereto. Following the findings, the study offers new implications and directions for intercultural cooperative EFL learning theory, research and pedagogy in higher education.*

***Keywords:*** *culture, intercultural competence, cooperative learning, cooperative classroom life, foreign language teaching, English as a foreign language (EFL), higher education*