

DEVELOPING ENGLISH MAJORS'  
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE  
IN THE CLASSROOM:

*“We have learnt [...] how much more we need  
to learn about Intercultural Communication”*

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIC	Assessing Intercultural Competence
AIE	Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters
AL	Applied Linguistics
BASIC	Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Communication Effectiveness
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CS1	Classroom Study 1
CS2	Classroom Study 2
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ES	Exploratory Study
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
IC	Intercultural Communication
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
IDI	Intercultural Development Inventory
INCA	Intercultural Competence Assessment
IS	Intercultural Speaker
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NCC	National Core Curriculum
R	Respondent
RQ	Research Question
S	Student (in the Exploratory Study and Classroom Study 1)
St	Student (in Classroom Study 2)
T	Teacher



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# Introduction

The imperative for intercultural learning is not particularly new. It was recognised some decades ago in relation to the worldwide changes encapsulated in the word *globalisation*. Many came to realise that due to a combination of economic, political, social and technological factors, the boundaries of the world as they knew it had changed, which prompted researchers and theorists from various disciplines to engage in the study of intercultural communication. A host of studies started to emerge addressing culture, cultural difference and the processes of appropriate and effective intercultural interaction in a variety of contexts. However, in the current climate of global interconnectedness and rapidly shifting populations, in an era when the issue of immigration has become highly politicised across the globe, the need for a critical understanding of interculturality seems more pressing than ever before.

Current trends in Applied Linguistics (AL) and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) reflect a recognition of this need. Firstly, AL has witnessed a shift in its focus to real-world language problems (Grabe, 2010), which means that greater emphasis is now laid on social, cultural and political aspects of language (Duff, 2010). Secondly, foreign language knowledge has come to be seen as having an intercultural dimension, as evidenced by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 103-105)*, which lists *intercultural awareness* and *intercultural skills and know-how* under the general competences to be attained by learners. There is now an understanding that in the global era the negotiation of meaning can be an extremely complex process: learners are likely to encounter not only people with a set of beliefs, values, ideologies and behaviours very different from their own, but also multilingual-multicultural individuals, who may hold a variety of beliefs, values and ideologies (Kramsch, 2006). In such situations, being merely communicatively competent in the foreign language, as in knowing how to get one's message across accurately and appropriately, would mean being ill-equipped for fruitful cooperation. It is also necessary to possess the means of analysing a range of social and cultural processes and to have a critical understanding of our own, as well as other cultures and societies (Byram, 1997), hence the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

This thesis is dedicated to exploring issues related to ICC development and research. My decision to investigate ICC was greatly influenced by my own experiences. As a university student I had the opportunity to spend a study-abroad year in the Netherlands, where I came to realise some of the complexities involved in intercultural interaction, and also recognised the immense

importance of being competent in these situations. Later, as a teacher of English as a foreign language I found myself in classrooms which were characterised by considerable cultural diversity, where my own as well as learners' ICC came into play on a daily basis. I was intrigued by the concept and welcomed the opportunity to teach intercultural communication courses at the University of Pécs. It was here that I decided to delve into this subject matter and address the following questions: What is ICC? How can it be developed and assessed in the classroom? What are the challenges involved in this endeavour? What are the challenges involved in researching this endeavour? In this thesis I aim to provide answers to these questions.

In doing so, I draw on a review of the literature, as well as the findings of three empirical studies I conducted at the Institute of English Studies, University of Pécs. The first, exploratory study enquired into the classroom practices characterising the intercultural communication courses taught at the institute, and also investigated teachers' and students' opinions about these courses. I relied on the findings gained in planning the intercultural communication seminars which I would later offer at the same institute. In these seminars I resolved (1) to take a social constructivist approach to developing English majors' ICC, and (2) to investigate this development. Two classroom studies were therefore carried out with the aim of gaining a better understanding of various aspects of the students' intercultural learning in the social constructivist classroom. The specifics of the three research phases, such as the number of participants, the data sources and methods of analysis, as well as the seven research questions guiding the research, are outlined in Table 1 on page 4.

The thesis is divided into two parts, which include three chapters each. In Part 1 I aim to provide a critical review of the literature. In Chapter 1, I explore two concepts integrated in ICC: intercultural communication and competence. I first survey various views of what culture and intercultural communication entails, and point to their different theoretical underpinnings and inherent assumptions. I then examine approaches to the concept of competence, starting out from Chomsky's (1965) notions and eventually leading up to its use in current educational discourse. All of this lays the groundwork for the topic of Chapter 2: the construct of ICC. Here I discuss how the construct is conceptualised by scholars from different scientific fields, and take a closer look at Byram's (1997) model of ICC, since this was an especially important source for the purposes of the empirical studies. Chapter 3 then offers insight into the ways in which this competence can be developed and assessed, supported by a range of studies. It is here that I elaborate on the concept

of the social constructivist classroom, and consider its relevance to ICC development. Above all, these three chapters represent the interdisciplinary nature of the field, including insights from a number of different disciplines, but with a more pronounced focus on AL and FLT perspectives.

Part 2 begins with an overview of the three phases of the empirical research in Chapter 4 where I give information about the setting and participants, outline the research questions and methods, and also dwell on the measures taken to ensure that quality criteria were met in the studies. The phases are then discussed in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 6, in which the findings are also provided and reflected on. Those presented in Chapter 5, related to the exploratory study, reveal a number of important points about teachers' and students' attitudes to the intercultural communication courses. At the same time, they point to an institutional need to determine an approach to intercultural learning and teaching which would be most beneficial for these English majors. Chapter 6 differs from other chapters in that it is much lengthier: the findings, including the participants' emic perspectives, are reported in rich detail for the sake of thick description. It provides insight into the classroom processes of my own seminars, reveals the ways in which the social constructivist approach was found appropriate, elaborates on several aspects in connection with the students' intercultural learning, and summarises the challenges that were experienced in teaching the seminar and researching the participants' ICC development.

Table 1  
*Phases of the research*

	Research questions	Data sources	Methods of analysis
<b>PHASE 1</b> <b>Exploratory study</b> (2010/2011)  16 student participants 3 teacher participants	(RQ1) How is IC taught in the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university? (What topics, materials, activities and forms of assessment are used?)	Semi-structured one-to-one interviews with the three teachers	Qualitative content analysis
	(RQ2) What is the teachers' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?		
	(RQ3) What is the students' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?	Questionnaire filled in by the students	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ4) Which topics and activities do the students enjoy the most and the least?		
	(RQ5) In what ways have the courses proved useful for the students?		
<b>PHASE 2</b> <b>Classroom study 1</b> (2011/2012)  16 student participants  Myself as the teacher-researcher	(RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>2. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> <li>3. Follow-up focus group interview with four students</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background questionnaire</li> <li>2. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>3. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> <li>4. Follow-up focus group interview with four students</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis
<b>PHASE 3</b> <b>Classroom study 2</b> (2013/2014)  12 student participants  Myself as the teacher-researcher	(RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students' end-of-lesson reflections</li> <li>2. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>3. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background questionnaire</li> <li>2. Self-evaluation sheet on the students' ICC</li> <li>3. The students' end-of-lesson reflections</li> <li>4. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>5. The students' written assignments and in-class work</li> <li>6. The students' portfolio</li> <li>7. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics

# PART 1

## Chapter 1:

### Key concepts: Intercultural communication and competence

#### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.2 Intercultural communication

##### 1.2.1 Cross-cultural and intercultural

##### 1.2.2 Different conceptualisations of culture and intercultural communication

##### 1.2.3 Approaches to the study of intercultural communication

###### 1.2.3.1 The functionalist approach

###### 1.2.3.2 The interpretive approach

###### 1.2.3.3 The critical approach

#### 1.3 Competence

##### 1.3.1 Competence from the perspective of linguistics and sociolinguistics

##### 1.3.2 Competence from the perspective of cognitive psychology

##### 1.3.3 The competence-based approach in Europe and Hungary

#### 1.4 Conclusion

## 1.1 Introduction

The study of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is no simple matter, as will be underlined in later chapters. From a theoretical stance, the main reason behind this is that within the concept of ICC a number of other concepts are integrated: *intercultural communication (IC)*, *culture*, *communication*, *competence*, and *communicative competence*. Most of these are highly complex in themselves, and there are multiple viewpoints on how they can be grasped. The purpose of this chapter is to guide the reader through conceptual building blocks, all of which amount to a more profound understanding of the ICC model that was used in the empirical studies presented in Part II of this thesis. I first discuss different ways of approaching *intercultural communication*, together with *culture* and *communication*, and then examine various perspectives on *competence*. In Chapter 2 I also explore frameworks of *communicative competence* in connection with the abovementioned model drawn on.

## 1.2 Intercultural communication

### 1.2.1 Cross-cultural and intercultural

The birth of the field of IC dates back to the late 1940s – early 1950s, when U.S. Foreign Service officers, development workers and business personnel found that the foreign language training they received did not adequately prepare them for their work overseas (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002), and “realized that their lack of knowledge of foreigners’ cultural practices and communication styles impeded their effective functioning” (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 212). Consequently, the U.S. government established the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and hired, among others, the noted anthropologist Edward T. Hall to develop training courses for these workers in what came to be known as intercultural communication.

Initially, these training courses focused on the macro-level details of certain cultures, but Hall and his colleagues soon became aware that their trainees were not interested in theories of culture and communication but instead wanted practical guidelines to help them in their day-to-day interactions with foreigners (Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002). For this reason, Hall’s subsequent work was chiefly concerned with interpersonal communication, including nonverbal communication – “therefore, he departed from the mainstream anthropological approach, which focused primarily on a culture’s broader social, political, and religious systems” (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 213). This departure was of great significance, because as Martin and Nakayama (2010) point out, the emphasis at the FSI on practical guidelines about the dos and don’ts in a foreign environment is what gave rise to the parallel discipline of cross-cultural training.

Although the terms *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* are often used interchangeably (see, for instance, Kramsch, 1998, p. 81), they mean different things. However, as is rather characteristic of the field, there is no consensus about the nature of this difference. This lack of consensus is perhaps unsurprising, since the study of IC is associated with a number of disciplines, including, but not limited to, social psychology, communication studies, international business studies, anthropology, FLT and AL. According to several scholars from various intellectual traditions (see Bowe & Martin, 2007; Fries, 2002; Gudykunst, 2000) cross-cultural suggests some sort of comparison – as in “a cross-cultural study of education in Western Europe” (Fries, 2002, p. 2), whereas intercultural



implies interaction – an example to research in intercultural communication would be “examining self-disclosure when Japanese and Iranians communicate with each other” (Gudykunst, 2000, p. 314). This difference is also reflected in some of the classics of the field: take sections like ‘*Self-assertion*’ in Japanese and in English or *Comparing illocutionary forces across languages* from Wierzbicka’s (2003) *Cross-cultural pragmatics* on the one hand, and sections titled *Promoting rapport in intercultural interaction* and *Adapting to unfamiliar cultures* in Spencer-Oatey and Franklin’s (2009) *Intercultural interaction: A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication* on the other.

At the same time, this separation of cross-cultural and intercultural does not hold up when we consider the fact that many training programmes deemed cross-cultural do in fact set out to prepare trainees for interaction with members of other cultures. A survey of the literature reveals that the difference between the two terms when applied to development programmes is that of focus and aim. For instance, the term *cross-cultural training approach* is used by FLT, AL and anthropology scholars Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan and Street (2001) in sharp opposition to their *language learners as ethnographers approach*. These authors associate the former with the work of some social psychologists and communication studies experts and claim that the cross-cultural training approach “concentrates on developing a rather general cultural awareness through decontextualized exercises” in which “broad brush statements about culture” are made, and cultural differences are “turned into inventories of facts and used to explain history or communication problems” (p. 32). By contrast, they see their own approach as one that “focuses on the lived experiences of everyday life in a local and holistic way” where “behaviour and meanings are analysed to *understand* differences” and “‘thick descriptions’ are written to develop particular cultural knowledge as well as general cultural awareness” (p.32, emphasis in the original).

This disparity is seen elsewhere as one not necessarily between cross-cultural and intercultural, but between the two worlds of training and education, or the business sector and the academic sector (see Fleming, 2009), and already points to the vast differences in certain discourses within the field, which are explored further in the next sections. As for this thesis, the term *intercultural* is used throughout in keeping with the tradition in FLT, while maintaining two very important points for future reference. First, if we take cross-cultural to connote comparison and intercultural to entail interaction, then “understanding cross-cultural differences in behaviour is a prerequisite for understanding intercultural behaviour” (Gudykunst, 2000, p. 314). Second, if we

view training as involving the development of intercultural knowledge and skills for practical purposes, and education as taking a less reductionist and more holistic perspective on culture – for purely pragmatic reasons, since the two positions are not quite so discrete in many actual development programmes – then we must bear in mind that training is “a necessary and significant part of a broader process of education” (Fleming, 2009, p. 4).

## 1.2.2 Different conceptualisations of culture and intercultural communication

How we think about one of the key conceptual building blocks, culture, determines our understanding of others like IC. Culture, however, is an incredibly slippery word that is “notoriously difficult to define” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 13) and is therefore “subject to over-definition on the one hand and misunderstandings and over-simplifications on the other” (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 18). In their seminal work titled *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions* American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) famously cited and classified 164 definitions of culture, whereas in a more recent writing Sarangi (1995, Section 2.4, para. 1) claims, “many scholars now acknowledge that any definition of culture is necessarily reductionist”. Moreover, Verschueren (2008) goes so far as to say the notion of culture should “be discredited as analytically useless” (p. 26).

Nevertheless, some do aim to give a single definition, and try to offer a fuller picture by providing a list of culture’s characteristics along with it. Let me take a brief look at two distinct ways in which the subject matter is approached. First, consider communication studies scholars Samovar and Porter’s (2003) definition:

For our purposes we define *culture* as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (p. 8)

This definition tells us that culture is:

- (1) a ‘deposit’ of non-material (beliefs, attitudes, roles, etc.) and material (objects, possessions) elements,
- (2) acquired (i.e. not innate) through ‘individual and group striving,

- (3) shared by a group of people and
- (4) transmitted from one generation to the next.

The subsequent list of features compiled in their work includes some that are already suggested by the definition, as well as others such as: (5) culture is based on symbols – the importance of language as a symbol system is emphasised here; (6) culture is subject to change; and (7) culture is ethnocentric, that is we interpret and judge other cultural groups with reference to our own culture, which we understand to be the centre of everything (Samovar & Porter, 2003, pp. 10-11).

What this definition and the accompanying list of characteristics of culture do not include is mention of its heterogeneity, and that cultures “are the sites of struggle for power and recognition”, both of which are proposed by the applied linguist Kramsch (1998, p. 10). Rather than thinking about culture as a *deposit* of several different elements, Kramsch refers to it as a *process* (p. 8). She argues that it “is constructed across day-to-day dialogues” (p.51), and also points out that it is bound up with language “in multiple and complex ways” in that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality (p. 3). We can therefore see, taking only two approaches to culture, how different its conceptualisations can be.

Likewise, we can observe very dissimilar views among scholars of the field on what constitutes IC. The definition offered by Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2009) is rather telling of the authors’ communication studies background:

For us, intercultural communication occurs when a member of one culture produces a message for consumption by a member of another culture. More precisely, *intercultural communication involves interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event.* (p. 12, emphasis in the original)

What is evident from this definition is that the authors see IC as a form of interaction that is *altered* because of the interlocutors’ different cultural backgrounds.

Perhaps it is this sort of approach to IC that Verschueren (2008) rejects when he contends, “More often than not, the phenomenon [of IC] is viewed as something ‘special’, really different from other forms of communicative interaction [...] Such a view is misguided” (p. 23). The Pragmatics scholar supports his point of view by referring, among others, to variability in communicative language use. This, according to him, is not necessarily larger in intercultural

interaction than in any other form of interaction: it is simply the case that different types of variables are involved.

As a third case in point, let us consider Spencer-Oatey and Kotthoff's (2007) understanding of IC, which does not focus specifically on the alteration of the communication event or lack thereof, but is interesting because it sets out from yet another different angle. The scholars start with the assumption that people see themselves as belonging to different social groups and, as members of these groups, develop certain *family resemblances* in their behaviour, beliefs and values. Yet, the authors claim, these family resemblances

do not simplistically determine their behaviour; on the contrary, interaction is a dynamic process through which people jointly construct (consciously and/or unconsciously) their complex and multiple identities. It is the study of this dynamic process that the field of intercultural communication is concerned with (p. 2).

As we have seen through the example of mere snippets from the field, we cannot for a single moment claim that there is agreement among those who study IC on key concepts such as culture and IC. For some, culture is a deposit of various elements; for others, it is a process. Some view IC as an altered communication event in which a message is consumed; others see it as a dynamic process in which interactants' complex and multiple identities are co-constructed. So how can we make sense of the numerous different perspectives of culture and IC that exist within the field? This question has apparently occurred to others as well, including Martin and Nakayama (2010) and Roberts et al. (2001). Their answers are explored in the next section.

### 1.2.3 Approaches to the study of intercultural communication

We can outline three traditional approaches to the study of IC and, by extension, culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). These are: (1) the functionalist (or social science) approach; (2) the interpretive (or symbolic) approach; and (3) the critical approach. Table 2, found on the next page, gives an overview of the most important features of these approaches, such as the disciplines on which they are founded, or how culture, communication and identity is viewed in each one of them. As for the first one of these approaches, Martin and Nakayama (2010) seem to prefer the term 'social science approach' to 'functionalist approach' when referring to it. Here I use the latter, since the former can be misleading: social sciences may be seen to include the discipline of anthropology for instance, which, as will be discussed, has got closer ties with the second, interpretive approach.

Let us bear in mind, however, that this separation of three approaches is not so clear-cut in the work of many IC scholars. For instance, in clarifying his view of culture, Holliday (2005) explains, “this concept of culture falls somewhere within the critical, constructivist, symbolic and ‘verb’ views of culture” (p. 23). As such, it bears the marks of both the interpretive and the critical approach. Nonetheless, such a trichotomy is useful in helping us gain a more systematic understanding of work in the field of IC. In this section I consider the three traditional approaches one by one, and provide an example to scholarship in each. As we will see, all of these approaches have special relevance to the conceptualisation of the main construct under scrutiny in Chapter 2: ICC.

Table 2  
*Three approaches to the study of Intercultural Communication* (adapted from Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 51, p. 86, p. 94, p. 163)

	<b>Functionalist Approach</b>	<b>Interpretive Approach</b>	<b>Critical Approach</b>
<b>Discipline on which approach is founded</b>	Psychology, Sociology	Anthropology, Sociolinguistics	Various
<b>Assumption of reality and human behaviour</b>	External and describable reality; Predictable human behaviour	Subjective reality; Creative and voluntary human behaviour	Subjective and material reality; Changeable human behaviour
<b>Culture</b>	Learned and shared	Learned and shared; Contextual symbolic meaning	Heterogeneous, dynamic; Site of contested meanings
<b>Communication</b>	Components emphasised; Patterned, predictable	Symbolic and processual nature emphasised	Importance of societal forces emphasised
<b>The relationship between culture and communication</b>	Culture influences communication	Culture influences communication; Communication reinforces culture	Communication reshapes culture
<b>Identity</b>	Created by self, by relating to groups	Formed through communication with others	Shaped through social, historical forces

### 1.2.3.1 The functionalist approach

The functionalist approach to studying IC is founded on research in psychology and sociology, and can be characterised by the assumptions that there is a describable external reality and that human behaviour is predictable. Culture is seen here as learned and shared – this is perhaps best illustrated by the renowned social psychologist Hofstede’s view that culture is “the collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6), where “the sources of one’s mental programs lie within the social environments in which one grew up and collected one’s life experiences” (p.5).

As for communication, the functionalist approach emphasises its various components (such as sender, receiver, message, channel, and context), and views it as patterned and therefore predictable (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 94). IC scholars taking this approach believe culture influences communication, and consequently “concern themselves with communication differences that result from culture” (p. 86). Finally, identity is seen in a relatively static way, as self-created through group membership. The notion of multiple identities is at the heart of this perspective, according to which individuals have different identities relating to their being members of different cultural communities, such as nationality, religion or gender (pp. 162-163).

Among the many defining IC works that take this perspective, such as Gudykunst’s (2005) anxiety/uncertainty management theory, or Ting-Toomey’s (2005) face negotiation theory, Hofstede’s (1980/2001, 1991/2010) five dimensions of country-level cultural variation could be cited as one of the most influential frameworks in the functionalist approach. In the late 1960s – early 1970s the Dutch social psychologist conducted surveys of the attitudes and values of IBM employees in several different countries around the world. He first identified four dimensions of differences among cultures, and later added a fifth dimension – these are summarized in Table 3 on page 13. The researcher then examined how these cultural values influenced corporate behaviour in each country, and generalised his findings to reflect value and behaviour differences among national societies.

In the Power Distance dimension, for instance, Russia, Mexico and China score high, which means that in these countries “there is considerable dependence of subordinates on bosses” and “subordinates are unlikely to approach and contradict their bosses directly” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 61). In the same dimension, Austria, Israel and Denmark score low, suggesting

that “there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses”, “there is a preference for consultation”, and “subordinates will rather easily approach and contradict their bosses” (p. 61).

Table 3

*Hofstede’s five dimensions of country-level cultural variation* (adapted from Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 515-523)

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(1) Individualism – Collectivism	Individualism: stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose  Collectivism: stands for a society in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups
(2) High – Low Power Distance	The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally
(3) Masculinity – Femininity	Masculinity: clearly differentiated social gender roles  Femininity: overlapping social gender roles
(4) High – Low Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations
(5) Long-term – Short-term Orientation	Long-term orientation: the fostering of pragmatic virtues oriented toward future rewards  Short-term orientation: the fostering of virtues related to the past and present

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It is clear from this brief look at Hofstede’s framework that, in line with Martin and Nakayama’s (2010) description of the functionalist approach, it views human behaviour as predictable to some extent, and also rests on the assumption that culture influences communication. Furthermore, in focusing on broad cultural differences it downplays the contextual, heterogeneous, and dynamic nature of culture, which is emphasised in the other two approaches. In fact, the framework has been criticised not only for its western European bias, but also for its essentialist view of culture, i.e. its implication that “a particular group characteristic is the essential characteristic of a given member at all times and in all contexts” (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 106). As Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) point out, there is “a fundamental concern in applying his [Hofstede’s] findings to intercultural interaction: how can scores that are country-level averages be used to explain the influence of culture on individual behaviour?” (p. 19). This leads us to the second of the three approaches: the interpretive approach.

### 1.2.3.2 The interpretive approach

According to Martin and Nakayama (2010), scholars who take the interpretive approach to studying IC, typically anthropologists and sociolinguists, assume that (1) reality is subjective, in that humans construct it, and that (2) human behaviour is creative, which means it cannot be predicted easily (p. 59). Just like adherents of the functionalist approach, interpretivists view culture as learned and shared, but the emphasis here is not on group-related perceptions, but rather on what the anthropologist Geertz (1973) calls “socially established structures of meaning” (p. 12). In fact, interpretivists often draw on Geertz’s definition of culture: “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (p. 5).

In a similar tripartite framework to Martin and Nakayama’s (2010), Roberts et al. (2001) label this approach *symbolic*, rather than *interpretive*. Perhaps this is because the symbolic nature of communication is what is most relevant to interpretivists: the notion that the words and gestures we use have an agreed-upon meaning, not an inherent meaning. For instance, we greet others or present ourselves in particular ways “not because we need to do so in this specific form but because as members of a community, it is the way we act out our identity and sense of communality and our relation to others. These actions have symbolic meanings” (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 51). In addition, whereas scholars of the functionalist approach see communication as influenced by culture, interpretivists believe that the relationship between culture and communication is two-way: culture is also created and reinforced through communication. According to this perspective, our identities are formed through interaction as well, which is a very different, more dynamic conception of identity compared with that of the functionalist approach.

It is characteristic of interpretivist research that it provides in-depth understanding of cultural phenomena in particular communities by studying them in context, from within those communities (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 64). One example to such interpretivist scholarship is ethnography of communication. Founded on Hymes’s (1972) descriptive framework for investigating naturally occurring speech in context and in all of its complexity, studies in this tradition describe and analyse ways of communicating that have symbolic significance for members of a given speech community (Fitch & Philipsen, 2003). For instance, Blum-Kulka (1990) examined the use of directives around the dinner table by three different groups of parents: Israeli,



U.S. American, and American immigrant parents in Israel. She found, among others, that parents in all three groups were highly direct with their children, but Americans used first names and conventional politeness forms thereby affirming the child's independence, whereas Israelis used terms of endearment and nicknaming to soften their directives.

This study clearly demonstrates the essence of the interpretive approach: the different styles of directive use have symbolic significance in that they reflect “culturally varied perceptions of children's identities within the family” (Fitch & Philipsen, 2003, Section 2, para. 2). In addition, the study illustrates other assumptions of the interpretive approach – it is a prime example of how culture is maintained through communication, and of how interaction plays an important role in the development of the self.

However, just like Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) survey study of country-level cultural variation, which was previously mentioned as an example to research conducted within the functionalist approach, Blum-Kulka's (1990) investigation also tells us little about interaction between members of different cultural groups. Keeping to our distinction between *cross-cultural* and *intercultural*, both of these studies are cross-cultural in that they entail comparison across cultures rather than interaction between them. In fact, “there are few interpretivist studies of *intercultural* communication. Interpretive scholars typically have not studied what happens when two groups come into contact with each other” (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, pp. 64-65, emphasis in the original). Nevertheless, these studies contribute greatly to the field of IC in that they provide a starting point for studying and engaging in actual intercultural encounters.

### 1.2.3.3 The critical approach

The third approach to the study of IC owes much to cultural studies, critical theory and social constructivism, among other theoretical frameworks (Guilherme, 2002; Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Roberts et al., 2001). It shares many characteristics of the interpretive approach; for instance, its assumption of subjective reality and the importance of context, but critical scholars are interested in macrocontexts: the political, social and historical backgrounds that influence communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 65). At the centre of this perspective we find issues of power, oppression and political responsibility: it reminds us of the “danger in taking dominant cultural practices as the ‘givens’ of a culture” (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 53) and asks about the power relations that have caused us to see certain categories as natural and value-free. Moreover, it goes

one step further, as the aim of critical scholars is not only critical understanding of power relations but also critical action (Guilherme, 2002). It is their contention that people should become aware of the various forms of oppression present in our society and learn how to resist them, which will eventually result in social transformation.

Adherents of the critical approach focus on quite different aspects of culture, communication and identity than those of the other two approaches. For instance, they argue that culture cannot be viewed as having a physical entity and being connected merely to nation-states, since this would give the sense of simple, homogenous societies, and would entail that people in one culture are essentially different from people in another (Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2006). A non-essentialist, small culture approach is taken instead, which “considers any instance of socially cohesive behaviour as culture” (Holliday, 2005, p. 23). This notion of culture as heterogeneous originates from British cultural studies, but is expanded with the insight from various disciplines that culture is dynamic, fluid, and politically, socially and discursively constructed (Kubota, 2004; Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

At the same time, critical scholars emphasise the importance of societal forces in the communication process, and see the potential for communication to reshape culture through resistance to the dominant cultural system (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The construct of identity is also theorized as social, multifaceted and fluid: shifting and performed, as well as co-constructed within the various contexts in which language is produced (Duff, 2010; Ricento, 2005).

According to Martin and Nakayama (2010), critical studies of IC are mostly textual analyses of cultural products, such as popular media. Thurlow and Jaworski's (2010) investigation of how local, non-English languages are represented in mediatized discourse is an interesting example. The authors looked at almost six months of programming of British television vacation shows and examined their portrayal of the encounter between locals and British tourist-presenters. They found that in these very brief and highly stylised intercultural exchanges most local people were seen to use English with the presenters. Although the presenters would occasionally be shown to speak the local language, or use one or two foreign language phrases in their commentaries, this was typically rather tokenistic. In other words, whereas English was presented as the global language, local languages were exoticised and reduced to a form of touristic fun, a resource for “added local flavor or authenticity” (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010, p. 235). Moreover, the authors conclude, by means of their genre, these television shows model what intercultural interaction between locals and tourists

is, or should be like, and thereby not only enact, but also “(re)establish a neocolonial vision/spectacle of Other and of intercultural exchange” (p. 235). “What may appear to be little more than fun – the general participation frame of tourism, - unfolds as a kind of Orientalizing of local people even while appearing to celebrate them” (p. 236).

This study is an exemplar of critical research in that it aims to demonstrate the politics of language and the effects of power in the communication process. It brings into play the issue of historical and political forces in its attempt to show how certain groups are represented in the media and how this reproduces inequality. However, as Martin and Nakayama (2010) point out, most critical studies do not examine real face-to-face intercultural interaction, but focus on popular media forms of communication instead, which is seen as a limitation: “for example, although understanding different discourses about racism may give us insight into U.S. race relations, it may not provide individuals with specific guidelines on how to communicate better across racial lines” (pp. 70-71). Critical theory in general has in fact been criticised for its lack of agenda on concrete practices, and is taken to yield less practical results (see, for instance, Eisner, 1992).

## 1.3 Competence

In the previous section I explored different approaches to one of the key conceptual building blocks: IC. Now let me do the same with another important concept inherent in the notion of ICC: competence. Competence has become somewhat of a buzzword in educational discourse, and has been subject to debate ever since Chomsky’s (1965) break away from behaviourism with his notion that linguistic competence, i.e. intrinsic linguistic knowledge underlies L1 acquisition. Today competences are seen in educational contexts as “complex ability constructs contextualized and usable in relevant situations” (Csapó, 2010, p. 23). In what follows I outline the dimensions that are incorporated in such a definition, consider the ways in which different disciplines contribute to our understanding of the term, and discuss how the concept has found its way into a European-level reference framework, as well as the *Hungarian National Core Curriculum* (NCC, Közigazgatási és Igazságügyi Minisztérium [Ministry of Public Administration and Justice], 2012).

### 1.3.1 Competence from the perspective of linguistics and sociolinguistics

With his distinction of competence and performance within linguistic theory, Chomsky (1965) laid the groundwork for much of the subsequent work related to the construct. Here, *linguistic competence* is seen as the ideal speaker-hearer's tacit knowledge of the grammatical structures of their native language, whereas *linguistic performance* is the realization of this knowledge. Chomsky (1965) associates these two concepts with the structural linguist de Saussure's *langue-parole* distinction, but claims "it is necessary to reject his concept of *langue* as merely a systematic inventory of items and to return rather to the Humboldtian conception of underlying competence as a system of generative processes" (p. 3). With a return to Humboldt Chomsky includes the creative character of human language in his understanding of competence: the point that with a finite set of linguistic rules we can generate an infinite variety of complex expressions.

Of the two constructs it is underlying competence that is viewed as the main object of study in linguistic theory, whereas performance is peripheral. Chomsky (1965) therefore abstracts away from numerous factors that may influence actual linguistic behaviour:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (p. 3)

This degree of abstraction from variation has been the source of much disagreement among linguists, as variation is a central focus of study for sociolinguists, such as Hymes. As an adherent of the functional view of language, he argues of Chomsky's linguistic competence that "such a theory of competence posits ideal objects in abstraction from sociocultural features that might enter into their description" (Hymes, 1972, p. 271). With his introduction of the term *communicative competence*, the sociolinguist proposes that in the process of first language acquisition children acquire knowledge of sentences as appropriate, as well as grammatical: "He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (p. 277). In this view, communicative competence is comprised of *knowledge* and *ability for use*, where the former includes not only grammatical, but also sociolinguistic competence, as illustrated in Figure 1.

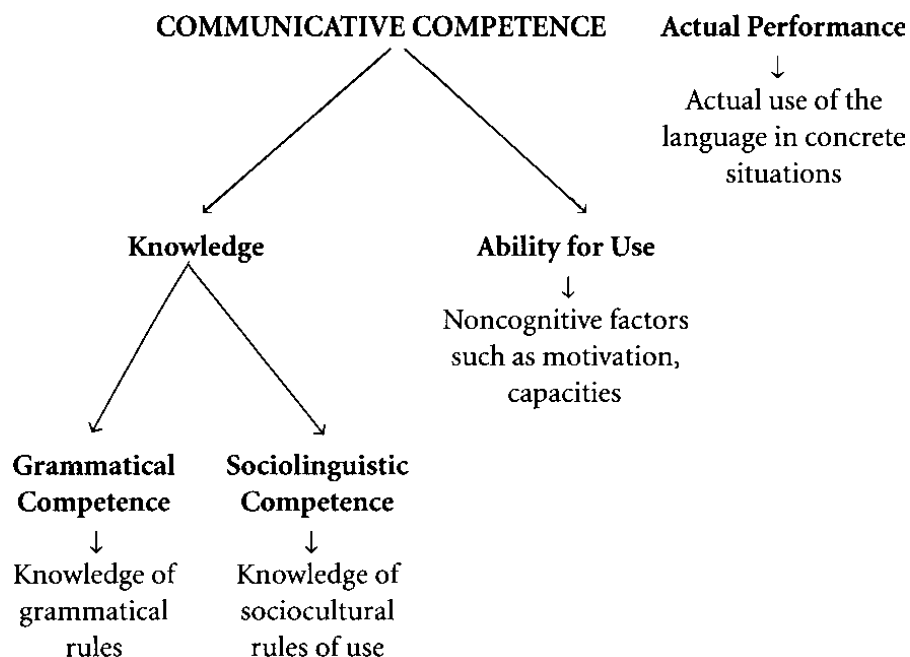


Figure 1 Hymes's Communicative Competence model (Johnson, 2004, p. 89)

Hymes's expansion of the construct of competence to include sociocultural as well as non-cognitive psychological elements has proved very influential in the field of AL. It has prompted other theorists, such as Canale and Swain (1980) and van Ek (1986) to develop their own frameworks of communicative competence for the second language learning context. These are briefly discussed as foundations for our understanding of ICC in Chapter 2.

### 1.3.2 Competence from the perspective of cognitive psychology

Competence-based education is in large part informed by the contributions of cognitive psychology to our understanding of competence. This field has, in turn, been greatly influenced by Chomsky's theory: the linguist is considered a key figure of the cognitive revolution (Csapó, 2004). In the late 1960s Chomsky (2006) pondered: "Are there other areas of human competence where one might hope to develop a fruitful theory, analogous to generative grammar? Although this is a very important question, there is very little that can be said about it today" (p. 64). Since then a more widely applicable conception of competence has been developed, and cognitive psychologists therefore think of competence today as "a psychologically determined system in which the ways of learning, the possibilities of development and improvement are largely based on innate schemes"

(Csapó, 2004, p. 45). However, the term has been used in a variety of senses even within the field, sometimes interchangeably with other concepts, as will be seen in the following discussion.

There is general agreement that two main forms of knowledge can be distinguished: *declarative knowledge*, which would traditionally be termed ‘lexical’ knowledge, and *procedural knowledge*, which is likened to what we call ‘skill’ or ‘ability’. Yet in an overview of the notion of competence it must be stressed that the value of learners’ knowledge is determined not merely by the extent of these declarative or procedural components, but also, and perhaps more so, by the ways in which they are organized (Csapó, 2004). In his framework of knowledge organization Csapó (2010) differentiates three dimensions of the goals of education, all of which contribute to the concept of competence. These are:

- (1) the disciplinary/content-based dimension
- (2) the internal/psychological dimension
- (3) the social and cultural/application dimension.

In the disciplinary approach the goal is for learners to acquire the canonized content which has been accumulated by the arts and scientific disciplines, i.e. a sort of expert knowledge, made up of many specific schemata. This is a very strong dimension in many European school systems, where, along these lines, learners are educated as ‘little scientists’: they are taught grammar, mathematics and physics as if they were to become linguists, mathematicians and physicists. Several factors have played a role in strengthening this dimension, one of which is the early phase of cognitive psychology, as it gave primacy to expertise as ‘genuine’ knowledge. The problem with expertise is that it is transferable only within certain limits and on its own cannot account for the knowledge needed by learners to cope with future professional challenges. It does not follow, however, that this approach should be excluded from school curricula.

The main objective in the internal/psychological dimension is the cultivation of learners’ thinking processes and general intellectual abilities. It is therefore the development of structures, rather than content, that is primary. Of course, improved thinking skills cannot be attained without some disciplinary content, but in the internal/psychological approach content is not the central theme around which instruction is planned; it simply serves as material through which thinking skills can be practiced. A dynamically developing field that has had wider implications for the

psychological dimension is cognitive neuroscience, the findings of which have brought the issue of general abilities to the centre of attention in recent years.

The third dimension in the framework pertains to knowledge that is socially valid, flexible, and applicable in a wide variety of contexts (i.e. not only in the individual’s professional context, for instance). This is the knowledge that individuals need as members of a society. The social and cultural approach is therefore the one that presents perhaps the greatest challenge to today’s schools, as it requires the specification of social needs with regard to useful, applicable knowledge. This has also been a central concern in the preparation of such large-scale international assessment projects as the OECD PISA surveys: the concept identified within the PISA framework to denote this type of knowledge is *literacy*. What the PISA surveys assess then as *reading literacy*, *mathematical literacy* and *scientific literacy* is essentially “the body of knowledge fifteen-year-olds need in modern societies in order to be able to participate in social processes, to create a balanced way of living as well as to develop themselves” (Csapó, 2010, p. 21). The features of the three dimensions discussed above are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Dimensions and structure of knowledge* (Csapó, 2010, p. 15)

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Disciplinary, content-based</b>	<b>Internal, psychological</b>	<b>Social, cultural, application</b>
<b>Goals of learning</b>	Acquisition of canonized content (objective, scientific knowledge)	Development of cognitive functions and intellectual abilities	Acquisition of sociocultural codes and modes of behaviour and action, preparing the individual for integration into society
<b>Emerging knowledge</b>	Expertise, domain specific skills	Thinking skills, improved general abilities	Literacy, flexible and expandable knowledge applicable in a broad range of contexts
<b>Sources for designing standards, curricula, textbooks, learning materials</b>	A systematic body of knowledge of the arts and sciences	Results of psychological and educational research	Analysis of social needs and contexts of knowledge and skills application
<b>Assessment</b>	Same context as learning	Focus on structures: content plays a secondary role	Transfer from school to everyday context

Clearly, the disciplinary, psychological, and application dimensions are all valuable facets of education. Therefore, according to Csapó (2010), it is most beneficial to integrate the three, and

thus we arrive at the concept of competence. At the same time, the implication is not that all educational processes have to draw on competences, but rather that an appropriate combination of the three dimensions is desirable, depending on a number of conditions (such as the age of the learner, for example). What is also important to clarify is that, although in this understanding the notion of competence is not identical with any one of the dimensions but is an incorporation of the three, this is not true of other conceptions of competence. Csapó (2010) shows how the term has been used in different interpretations as analogous to either one of the approaches. For instance, Chomsky's original concept is related to the psychological dimension, whereas "in the PISA terminology, *competence* and *literacy* are often used interchangeably, indicating that in the PISA interpretation, competence points to the application dimension" (Csapó, 2010, p. 23). It is agreed, however, that competence is essentially a cognitive construct, which interacts in intricate ways with non-cognitive psychological factors and the social environment in which learning takes place. As will be seen in later chapters, these aspects are also important to bear in mind with reference to ICC.

### 1.3.3 The competence-based approach in Europe and Hungary

As the economic value of knowledge has risen significantly in the past decades (Csapó, 2002), the need for educational reform has been recognized in the EU. Compared with the American education system, European systems have traditionally favoured a more content-oriented approach (Csapó, 2004), which, as we have seen, results in expert knowledge, barely transferrable to new contexts. However, with the global changes, the importance of knowledge applicable in a variety of contexts has grown considerably, and the discrepancy between knowledge transmitted by schools and that useful for learners has become more apparent. A promising answer to this problem was found in the concept of competence, which offered the possibility of preserving the content-based dimension of learning and at the same time incorporating more expandable elements. As a result, a framework of key competences was introduced at the level of the European Union, and therefore in the Hungarian NCC (Közgazgatási és Igazságügyi Minisztérium [Ministry of Public Administration and Justice], 2012) as well.

First, in 2000 it was proposed by the Lisbon European Council that education systems in the EU should be adapted to global changes and the demands of the knowledge society (European



Commission [EC], 2004). In particular, the idea of a European framework of *basic skills* for lifelong learning was conceived of. A working group of experts was therefore established with the aim of defining these skills and determining ways in which they could be integrated into curricula.

At the same time, several other European and international endeavours in connection with *competences* were in progress. These included the Eurydice survey (2002) of key competences in general compulsory education across the EU, the OECD project entitled Definition and Selection of Competencies (2005), and the OECD PISA surveys (2000, 2001). Some of these projects considered *key competences*, whereas others highlighted the importance of *generic competences*, i.e. competences that do not correspond to any school subjects and are based on cross-curricular objectives, such as complex problem solving (see Csapó, 2005). As a result, the working group of the European framework also drew on the concept of competence instead of skills in its first progress report in 2002, in which it introduced a framework of eight key competences (EC, 2004).

Within this framework, which is seen as a European-level reference tool, competences are understood as combinations of *knowledge, skills and attitudes*, whereas key competences are “those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment” (EC, 2007a, p. 3). According to the 2004 Reference Framework (EC, 2004), by the end of compulsory education these key competences should have been developed, and should serve as a basis for further learning. Yet it is also argued that it is not viable to establish basic levels of mastery, given that key competences are defined in broader terms, and their mastery is highly context-dependent. The eight key competences are:

- (1) Communication in the mother tongue
- (2) Communication in foreign languages
- (3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- (4) Digital competence
- (5) Learning to learn
- (6) Social and civic competences
- (7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- (8) Cultural awareness and expression. (EC, 2007a)

There is somewhat of an overlap between these competences and, in some domains, within the knowledge, skills and attitudes dimensions. For instance, to draw on the most relevant example,

the term *intercultural* is found in the description of two distinct key competences: the second and the sixth. In the second it is proposed that “communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding” (EC, 2007a, p. 5), and in the sixth we find that social and civic competences “include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life” (p. 9).

These eight key competences have their approximate counterparts in the current version of the Hungarian NCC (Közigazgatási és Igazságügyi Minisztérium [Ministry of Public Administration and Justice], 2012) as well, which also states that the teaching of foreign languages involves developing learners’ intercultural competence (p. 10680). The key competences were first included in the 2007 NCC, but the idea of a competence-based approach was already apparent in the 2003 version. In connection with this latter version and the corresponding *competence-based educational program packages* it has been understood that the new developments in educational policy should go hand in hand with the reform of educational practice (Pála, 2006; Vass, 2004; 2006). For example, in describing the area of foreign language competence within the educational program packages, Pála (2006) claims that these pay special attention to age-appropriate material, the learners’ interests and previous knowledge, and to developing communicative competence in integration with other competences. Furthermore, the current version of the NCC also outlines a number of basic principles regarding the appropriate pedagogical methodology for the development of competences, including the following:

- (1) fostering learners’ motivation
- (2) actively engaging learners in the learning process
- (3) emphasising learner autonomy and initiative
- (4) taking into account learners’ prior knowledge
- (5) employing work modes that support cooperation between learners
- (6) creating equal opportunities through differentiated instruction (p. 10645).

However, considering the domain of foreign language education, we can say that there is no empirical evidence yet of a profound effect of these curricular developments on actual educational practice in Hungary. In fact, “teachers have kept teaching according to their own hidden curriculum, hardly affected by official dictates” (Medgyes & Nikolov, 2010, p. 272). As a

case in point, many Hungarian foreign language classrooms are still characterised by processes which are not in line with communicative principles, or with those outlined in the above list (Medgyes & Nikolov, 2010; Nikolov, Ottó & Öveges, 2009).

## 1.4 Conclusion

This chapter surveyed a number of perspectives on two key concepts incorporated in ICC: IC and competence. The difference between *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* was first clarified, followed by a discussion of different views of culture and IC. Three approaches to the study of IC, namely the functionalist, interpretive and critical approach were then introduced in order to present the many diverse views within the field in a more structured manner. The concept of competence was then addressed. I explored how it has been conceived of in different disciplines, and how it was appropriated in European- and national-level documents as a promising solution to the discrepancy between what students learn at school and what they need to know and be able to do in real life.

Much of what was discussed here is used as underpinning and referred to in later sections. For instance, the separation of the three approaches to IC allows for a better understanding of the different approaches to ICC development, explored in Chapter 3, and the elaboration on competence provides a firm basis for examining the construct of ICC – the focus of the next chapter.

# Chapter 2: Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

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## 2.1 Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence is a concept that has intrigued many in observing that their world is characterised by greater diversity. The importance of being a competent communicator in intercultural situations is recognised by those living, travelling, studying and working abroad, and in general: people involved in ever more frequent intercultural interactions in increasingly multicultural societies. It is also recognised by researchers and theorists, who have tried to understand the precise nature of this complex construct for various purposes, such as immigrant acculturation, sojourner adjustment, international management, and social change (Wiseman, 2001), just to name a few.

This chapter is dedicated to exploring various conceptualisations of the construct. Special attention is paid to Byram's (1997) model of ICC, since the examined IC courses were in large part informed by this model. This chapter therefore both expands the concept of competence discussed in Chapter 1 and introduces new theories that serve as an important point of reference for later chapters.

## 2.2 The construct of ICC: A multiplicity of perspectives

The field of IC is characterised by inconsistent terminology and oftentimes conceptual confusion. As the reader may have anticipated, nowhere is this more striking than in the realm of ICC conceptualizations. A famous example is that of Ruben (1989), the noted communication studies scholar whose influential overview article starts out with, “Much of the impetus for the study of *cross-cultural communication competence* arose out of efforts to cope with practical problems” and a few lines later continues, “It was these problems, and the efforts to solve them which provided motivation for the kind of academic study that led to interest in the concept of *intercultural competence*” (p. 229, my emphasis).

Indeed, various terms are used as alternatives for what I here call ICC; sometimes interchangeably, and often to designate constructs that are fairly similar. Nevertheless, some regularities can be observed. For instance, communication studies scholars use the term *intercultural communication competence* relatively consistently, indicating a link with the construct of communication competence, which originates from their field (Spitzberg, 1988; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Applied linguistics and FLT scholars, on the other hand, tend to use the term *intercultural competence* or *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC), the latter to maintain a link with the construct of communicative competence, a hallmark of their field (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972; van Ek, 1986). In this thesis the term ICC is used as understood by Byram (1997), and the term intercultural competence is used – also as understood by Byram – only in instances when it is necessary to distinguish the two concepts (see Section 2.3 for a clarification of the difference between the two).

The main question is: *What exactly do these terms cover?* According to Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009), a large part of the work on ICC “is limited to identifying lists of characteristics, with few authentic examples that explain or illustrate what is really meant” (p. 51). Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) add to this their suspicion that “many conceptual wheels are being reinvented at the expense of legitimate progress” (p. 45). Let me then organise my discussion of ICC around the points in relation to which some common ground can be discovered in the field: (1) the idea that ICC involves the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations and (2) the notion that ICC has a cognitive, a behavioural and an affective dimension.

### 2.2.1 Effective and appropriate communication

Many researchers and theorists include in their definition of ICC the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (see, for instance, Chen, 2014, p. 15; Deardorff, 2004, p. 194; Fantini, 2007, p. 9; Lázár, Huber-Kriegler, Lussier, Matei, & Peck, 2007, p. 9; Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 47; Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009, p. 384). This originates in the communications studies scholar Spitzberg's (1988) general definition of communication competence: "competent communication is interaction that is perceived as effective in fulfilling certain rewarding objectives in a way that is also appropriate to the context in which the interaction occurs" (p. 68).

The effectiveness criterion points to some of the complexities of negotiating and co-constructing meaning, and the "importance of understanding and managing these processes" in order to achieve "both transactional and relational goals" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 55). What is missing, however, is explicit reference to the human element. According to Byram (1997), "the success of such [intercultural] interaction can be judged in terms of the effective exchange of information, as has been the tendency in much communicative language teaching, but also in terms of the establishing and maintenance of human relationships" (pp. 32-33).

The appropriateness criterion is perhaps more problematic, which can be explored with the help of the interpretive and the critical approach to IC. Drawing on the interpretive approach, the appropriateness criterion highlights the importance of context and the idea that competent intercultural communicators are flexible enough to adapt to it. The question then arises: *To what extent should one adapt in the name of appropriateness?* There is often an implicit assumption in ICC conceptualizations that the member of the other culture with whom we are interacting is a prototypical representative of that culture who does not possess the competence we do (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 54), a 'cultural dope' even (Verschueren, 2008, p. 24), and consequently we have to adapt to them by way of being culturally appropriate. Needless to say, this assumption can prove to be completely wrong in real-life situations. It is advisable, therefore, to see appropriateness not only as "*cultural* appropriateness with respect to the other *interactant(s)*", but also as "*communicative* appropriateness with respect to the *communication situation* in which the interactants find themselves" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 54, emphasis in the original). After all, say interpretivists, communication is processual and dynamic, and involves the co-construction of meaning.

Drawing on the critical approach, on the other hand, the appropriateness criterion raises the question: *Appropriate according to whom?* This question has stimulated discussions among IC scholars in the field of AL and FLT with reference to some of the political aspects of language and culture teaching (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1998; Risager, 2007; Roberts et al., 2001). As has already been mentioned in Chapter 1, Hymes's (1972) notion of communicative competence was interpreted for FLT, and served as a foundation for the pedagogic tradition of communicative language teaching (CLT). According to Canale and Swain (1980):

A communicative (or functional/notional) approach [...] is organized on the basis of communicative functions (e.g. apologizing, describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners needs to know and emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately. (p. 2)

What appropriateness has been taken to implicitly suggest here is that foreign language learners should model themselves on native speakers (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1998). This has been challenged on several grounds and it has been proposed that we replace the ideal of the native speaker as the model for judging appropriateness with the ideal of the intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997, p. 70). This point will be explored further in Section 2.3, in relation to Byram's (1997) model of ICC.

## 2.2.2 Comparing and contrasting ICC conceptual frameworks

The past four decades or so have brought about numerous attempts at defining and describing ICC. Given the complexity of the construct and the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, it is natural that conceptualizations differ in many ways. For instance, they can be contrasted in terms of how they approach the construct. Some see ICC as made up of certain components, some of which pertain to interaction between individuals (Byram, 1997), whereas others see it as a developmental concept, involving stages of progression that the individual may go through, thereby excluding an interactional element (Bennett, 1993).

Another point in which conceptualizations differ is the aim behind their formation. Some ICC frameworks were conceived in the hope that they would contribute to more effective international business and management practices (Kühlmann & Stahl, 1998; Schneider & Barsoux, 2003), while others include clear educational goals in the wider context of political education for social change (Byram, 1997). Still others were developed as foundations for assessment

instruments (1) that are culture-general (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005), (2) to meet the needs of engineering companies with multinational operations (INCA Project, 2004), or (3) to gauge “the impact of intercultural experiences on the lives and work of both sojourners and hosts” (Fantini, 2007, p. 5).

However, there is a facet of theorizing about this construct that reveals some agreement among scholars. Echoing the conceptualization of competence as it was seen in Chapter 1 and also in line with Spitzberg and Cupach’s (1984) understanding of communication competence, a number of ICC conceptual frameworks distinguish three dimensions of ICC: the cognitive, the behavioural and the affective dimension (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2014; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Wiseman, 2001).

In this section, I first examine two frameworks which differ from all the others presented here in that they do not represent this triad of cognitive, behavioural and affective elements in ICC. I find it important to include them here because they are both prominent frameworks in the field, and provide the basis for two distinct assessment instruments which I introduce in Chapter 3. All other frameworks discussed later, however, conceive of ICC along the lines of the abovementioned triad. Note that in this thesis I do not aim to give a comprehensive account of models existing in the field – this would be futile and possibly counterproductive. This overview is rather an attempt at comparing and contrasting some of the most influential perspectives of ICC.

Let me then begin my discussion with Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which differs from others in a number of respects. First, it is not a model for competence, but for intercultural sensitivity, and second, it is not a list model outlining the components of ICC, but a more dynamic developmental model determining the stages that an individual may go through in responding to cultural differences. The author conceptualises this development along six stages, signifying changes in worldview structure: three ethnocentric stages, where the individual’s own culture is experienced as central to reality, and three ethnorelative stages, where the individual’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. The six stages are as follows:

- (1) Denial: the individual denies the difference of other cultures, or associates his/her experience of cultural difference with the undifferentiated ‘other’;
- (2) Defense: the individual can discriminate cultural differences, but feels threatened by them and tends to denigrate other cultures in favour of his/her own;



- (3) Minimization: the individual experiences elements of his/her own culture as universal, and subsumes differences into familiar categories;
- (4) Acceptance: the individual accepts cultural differences and is able to regard others as different, but equally human;
- (5) Adaptation: the individual develops the ability to shift his/her frame of reference to other cultural worldviews through empathy;
- (6) Integration: the individual's experience of self is expanded in that he/she can move in and out of different cultural worldviews.

As can be seen, the emphasis is not placed on the specific abilities that are developed, but rather on the different stages of the individual's responses, which evolve over time. Furthermore, the DMIS downplays the interactional element present in some other models, and only refers to the role of communication as a developmental strategy in the ethnorelative stages (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007).

The second framework of ICC introduced separately from others is that developed by Ruben (1976). This framework rests on the assumption that "behavioural competencies are best assessed through behavioural measures – measures of competency that reflect an individual's ability to display concepts in his behavior, rather than his intentions, understandings, knowledges, attitudes, or desires" (Ruben, 1976, p. 337). Therefore, it encompasses the following seven dimensions:

- (1) Display of respect: "the ability to express respect and positive regard for another person", e.g. "through eye contact, body posture, voice tone and pitch, and general displays of interest" (p. 339);
- (2) Interaction posture: "the ability to respond to others in a descriptive, nonevaluating, and nonjudgmental way" (p. 340);
- (3) Orientation to knowledge: the ability to recognize "the extent to which knowledge is individual in nature", e.g. "views of what is 'true' or 'right' are likely to be quite different" (p. 340);
- (4) Empathy: "the capacity to 'put oneself in another's shoes', or to behave as if one could" (p. 340);

- (5) Self-oriented role behaviour: “the capacity to be flexible and to function” in two sorts of roles, requiring behaviours that are related to: (1) “a group’s task or problem-solving activities” and (2) “the relationship-building activities of a group” (p. 340);
- (6) Interaction management: the ability to manage interaction effectively, “displayed through taking turns in discussion and initiating and terminating interaction based on a reasonably accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others” (p. 341);
- (7) Tolerance for ambiguity: “the ability to react to new and ambiguous situations with little visible discomfort” (p. 341).

It is evident from this discussion that in devising this framework the scholar also took the possibility of ICC assessment into consideration. The dimensions included in this view of the construct represent observable behaviour, and do not conform to the cognitive-behavioural-affective tradition of ICC conceptualisation. As such, as will be seen in Chapter 3, this model provides the foundation for direct, rather than indirect assessment tools.

Let me now turn to six other frameworks from various disciplines, of which the reader will find an overview in Table 5 on the next two pages. These frameworks were chosen to be presented here for three reasons. Firstly, like the DMIS and Ruben’s framework, they are frequently referred to by other authors, often in review-type articles and chapters (see, for instance, Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Brabant, Watson, & Gallois, 2007; Dai & Chen, 2014; Lázár et al., 2007; Sinicrope et al., 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Wiseman, 2001). Secondly, they are similar in that they all include cognitive, behavioural and affective dimensions as part of ICC, but demonstrate well the key differences between the perspectives of AL/FLT scholars and communication studies scholars. Finally, similarly to the DMIS and Ruben’s conceptualisation, some of them underpin ICC assessment instruments discussed in Chapter 3. I will compare and contrast these frameworks along the following lines, which are purely subjective foci that arose from the search for similarities and differences: (1) their cognitive, behavioural and affective domains, and (2) their central elements.

Table 5  
ICC conceptual frameworks

Source/Discipline	CONSTRUCT/Components	Sub-components/Attributes
Arasaratnam (2009) Communication studies	<p><b>INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE</b></p> <p>(1) <b>Affective dimension</b> One's ability to emotionally connect with someone from a different culture</p> <p>(2) <b>Cognitive dimension</b> One's ability to employ differentiated constructs in intercultural contexts</p> <p>(3) <b>Behavioural dimension</b> One's ability to engage in behaviours that are associated with intercultural as well as interpersonal competence</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>e.g. 1. Intentionally seeking interaction with people from other cultures 2. Adapting behaviours or changing communication patterns according to the other 3. Engaging in friendships with people from other cultures</p>
Byram (1997) AL/FLT	<p><b>INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE</b></p> <p>(1) <b>Linguistic competence</b> (2) <b>Sociolinguistic competence</b> (3) <b>Discourse competence</b> (4) <b>Intercultural competence:</b></p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p><b>1. Attitudes:</b> curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own</p> <p><b>2. Knowledge:</b> of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction</p> <p><b>3. Skills of interpreting and relating:</b> ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own</p> <p><b>4. Skills of discovery and interaction:</b> ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction</p> <p><b>5. Critical cultural awareness:</b> ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries</p>
Fantini (2007) AL/FLT	<p><b>INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE</b></p> <p>(1) <b>Attitudes</b> (2) <b>Knowledge</b> (3) <b>Skills</b> (4) <b>Awareness</b> + <b>Host language proficiency</b></p>	<p>Sub-components listed in the form of questionnaire items</p>
Gudykunst (2004) Communication studies	<p><b>PERCEIVED COMPETENCE</b></p> <p>(1) <b>Motivation</b> Our desire to communicate appropriately and effectively with strangers</p> <p>(2) <b>Knowledge</b> Our awareness or understanding of what needs to be done in order to communicate appropriately and effectively</p> <p>(3) <b>Skills</b> Our abilities to engage in the behaviours necessary to communicate appropriately and effectively</p>	<p>1. Need for predictability 2. Need to avoid diffuse anxiety 3. Need to sustain our self-conceptions 4. Approach-avoidance tendencies</p> <p>1. Knowledge of how to gather information 2. Knowledge of group differences 3. Knowledge of personal similarities 4. Knowledge of alternative interpretations</p> <p>1. Ability to be mindful 2. Ability to tolerate ambiguity 3. Ability to manage anxiety 4. Ability to empathise 5. Ability to adapt our communication 6. Ability to make accurate predictions and explanations</p>

Source/Discipline	CONSTRUCT/Components	Sub-components/Attributes		
INCA Project (2004) AL/FLT; Intercultural studies; Management science	<b>INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE</b>			
		<b>(1) Motivation</b>	<b>(2) Skill/Knowledge</b>	<b>(3) Behaviour</b>
	<b>1. Tolerance for ambiguity</b>	Readiness to embrace and work with ambiguity	Ability to handle stress consequent on ambiguity	Managing ambiguous situations
	<b>2. Behavioural flexibility</b>	Readiness to apply and augment the full range of one's existing repertoire of behaviour	Having a broad repertoire and the knowledge of one's repertoire	Adapting one's behaviour to the specific situation
	<b>3. Communicative awareness</b>	Willingness to modify existing communicative conventions	Ability to identify different communicative conventions, levels of foreign language competencies and their impact on intercultural communication	Negotiating appropriate communicative conventions for intercultural communication and coping with different foreign language skills
	<b>4. Knowledge discovery</b>	Curiosity about other cultures in themselves and in order to be able to interact better with people	Skills of ethnographic discovery of situation-relevant cultural knowledge (including technical knowledge) before, during and after intercultural encounters	Seeking information to discover culture-related knowledge
	<b>5. Respect for otherness</b>	Willingness to respect the diversity and coherence of behaviour, value and belief systems	Critical knowledge of such systems (including one's own when making judgements)	Treating equally different behaviour, value and convention systems experienced in intercultural encounters
	<b>6. Empathy</b>	Willingness to take the other's perspectives	Skills of role-taking de-centring; awareness of different perspectives	Making explicit and relating culture-specific perspectives to each other
Ting-Toomey (1999) Communication studies	<b>TRANSCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE</b>			
	<b>(1) Knowledge blocks</b> The process of in-depth understanding of important intercultural communication concepts that "really make a difference	A list of knowledge blocks offered by chapters in the source book, e.g.: Chapter 1: a set of guiding assumptions about intercultural communication Chapter 2: a mindful intercultural communication model...etc.		
	<b>(2) Mindfulness</b> Attending to one's internal assumptions, cognitions, and emotions, and simultaneously attuning to the other's assumptions, cognitions, and emotions	-		
<b>(3) Communication skills</b> Our operational abilities to interact appropriately, effectively, and satisfactorily in a given situation	Core communication skills: 1. Mindful observation 2. Mindful listening 3. Identity confirmation 4. Collaborative dialogue			

### 2.2.2.1 The cognitive, behavioural and affective dimension

A first look at Table 5 makes it clear that the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains are operationalized under different headings in these frameworks. Arasaratnam's (2009) framework differs from all the others in that it does not refer to specific concepts related to these dimensions, and simply uses the terms *cognitive*, *behavioural* and *affective*. This makes it difficult to pinpoint what these actually entail. As for the other five frameworks, we can see that apart from the one

devised for the INCA project (2004), all of them use the separate concepts of *knowledge* and *skills* to capture the cognitive and behavioural factors of ICC, respectively. In the case of the INCA project, knowledge and skills are taken together to account for the cognitive element – although the reason behind this is not explicitly stated – and the concept of *behaviour* stands for the behavioural element.

There is more variance, however, with respect to the affective domain. It is seen as *attitudes* by the AL/FLT scholars Byram (1997) and Fantini (2007), *motivation* by Gudykunst (2004) and the INCA project (2004), and *mindfulness* by Ting-Toomey (1999). To some extent, this difference is understandable: in the field of education the construct of competence is viewed as including the dimension of attitudes, rather than motivation (see, for instance, the Reference Framework of key competences discussed in Chapter 1, EC, 2004), whereas in communication studies the consideration of motivation as the affective element is grounded in Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) theory of communication competence.

It is the concept of mindfulness that is problematic, especially if approached from the point of view of AL. This concept is nowhere to be found in second language acquisition models; neither is it included in overviews on individual differences, such as that offered by Dörnyei (2005). It is used by both Gudykunst (2004) and Ting-Toomey (1999), but while the former refers to it as one of six skills, the latter places it in a more prominent position as representing the affective dimension of ICC. Both authors refer to Langer (1989), who proposes that mindfulness entails creating new categories, being open to new information and being aware of more than one perspective. This description clearly echoes that of Byram's (1997) attitudes dimension, and also resonates with the skill/knowledge dimension of empathy in the INCA project (2004) framework. However, both Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey relate mindfulness not only to such awareness, but also to "paying focused attention to the *process* of communication taking place between us and dissimilar others (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 16, emphasis in the original), which brings the concept closer to Byram's skill of interaction or the INCA project's communicative awareness.

The example of mindfulness is just one of many which the reader may identify from Table 5 as causing confusion. It is only natural, especially in a field that is highly interdisciplinary, that different scholars interpret certain concepts in different ways. Yet the main difficulty arises from the fact that many ICC frameworks "are presented in rather abstract terms, with little unpacking of

what the concepts mean in practice, let alone any detailed descriptions or analyses of authentic intercultural interaction that can illustrate them” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 79).

#### 2.2.2.2 Differences in central concepts

Another approach in comparing the six frameworks without getting too entangled in their conceptual webs is looking at their central concepts. Since we have already touched upon mindfulness, a central factor for Gudykunst (2004) and Ting-Toomey (1999), I will only focus on the following concepts: (1) communicative competence or host language proficiency, (2) (critical cultural) awareness, and (3) anxiety or stress and tolerance for ambiguity.

Starting with *communicative competence* or *host language proficiency*, it is immediately noticeable in Table 5 that it is included in AL/FLT frameworks, but is only seen at the level of communicative awareness in the INCA project (2004) framework, and is left out completely in other frameworks. This is not surprising if we consider Gudykunst’s (2004) standpoint, for instance, who claims, “the processes operating when we communicate with people from other cultures [...] are the same as the processes operating when we communicate with people from our own cultures” (p. xiii). I believe it is safe to say that many intercultural encounters involve at least one of the interactants speaking a foreign language. It seems that this facet of IC is disregarded entirely in the communication studies frameworks. Byram’s (1997) framework, on the other hand, is firmly rooted in the context of FLT; therefore, for him “teaching for linguistic competence [in the foreign language] cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural competence” (p. 22). A detailed description of how communicative competence in a foreign language relates to his ICC model is found in Section 2.3. Finally, Fantini (2007) refers to host language proficiency not among the dimensions, but as an additional element that is taken to affect ICC, in the sense that a lack of proficiency constrains one’s understanding of the host culture. What proficiency means exactly is not specified, only in the form of a questionnaire scale which depicts 14 levels from 1) *no ability at all* to 14) *proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker* (Fantini, 2005, p. 11).

The second relevant concept, *awareness*, is again central to AL/FLT frameworks as a separate dimension, but not to others. Similarly to the previous example, there is a difference in how the concept is approached by Byram (1997) and Fantini (2007). *Critical cultural awareness* is a key element in Byram’s framework: he proposes the teaching of IC be integrated within a philosophy of political education, so that the intercultural speaker is, for instance, “aware of their

own ideological perspectives and values” (p. 64) and “brings to the experiences of their own and other cultures a rational and explicit standpoint from which to evaluate” (p. 54). This critical perspective is, to some extent, present in the INCA project (2004) framework as well, where respect for otherness includes critical knowledge of behaviour, value and belief systems. Fantini, on the other hand, does not explicitly add the aspect of criticality to his *awareness* concept, although elsewhere (2000, p. 29) he connects it with Freire’s (1970) *conscientização*, signifying critical consciousness. In Fantini’s (2005) view,

awareness [...] is enhanced through reflection and introspection in which both the individual’s LC1 [native linguaculture] and the LC2 [second linguaculture] are contrasted and compared. [...] Awareness [...] is always about the “self” vis-à-vis all else in the world [...] and ultimately helps to clarify what is deepest and most relevant to one’s identity. Awareness is furthered through developments in knowledge, positive attitudes, and skills, and in turn also furthers their development. (p. 2)

So far in this section some concepts have been explored which are fundamental to AL/FLT frameworks, but are missing from, or only hinted at, in others. As an example to the opposite, let us consider *anxiety*, incorporated in Gudykunst’s (2004) framework. Anxiety is a key component of the scholar’s (Gudykunst, 1993) anxiety/uncertainty management theory, perhaps because IC is seen here as taking place between ‘strangers’ (i.e. sojourners) and members of the host culture. The basic assumption is that strangers need to manage their uncertainty and anxiety for effective communication and intercultural adjustment to occur (Gudykunst, 2004), hence the sub-components ‘need to avoid diffuse anxiety’, or ‘ability to manage anxiety’. A similar concept, *stress* is found in the INCA project (2004) framework under the skill/knowledge dimension for tolerance for ambiguity, which makes clear the scholars’ assumption that it is ambiguity in situations of intercultural contact that causes stress, rather than, say, a linguistic deficit. Anxiety is seen as an important affective variable in the field of AL and FLT in general. Therefore, it may be considered surprising that, although anxiety is included in conceptualisations of ICC from which the aspect of communicating in the foreign language is missing completely, it is not mentioned as connected to ICC in the AL/FLT frameworks.

From all the existing ICC frameworks I have chosen to rely on Byram’s (1997) framework as the theoretical foundation for the studies presented in this thesis. The specifics of his model, his notion of the intercultural speaker, and critiques of his work are discussed next.

## 2.3 Byram's model and the intercultural speaker

It has long been understood that the language and culture of a group of people are inextricably bound together (Kramsch, 1998); foreign language teachers have therefore been teaching elements of the target culture along with the language for many years. For instance, with the spread of what we have called the interpretive approach to culture in the USA of the 1970s, the teaching of everyday culture started seeping into foreign language classrooms, and the distinction between *big C* culture (literature, arts, history, geography) and *small c* culture (behaviour, norms, values) became popular (Risager, 2007). What this has meant in most foreign language classrooms, however, is that providing learners with information about the target country, and especially representations of the dominant culture, is “the major and sometimes only approach to equipping learners with sociocultural competence” (Byram, 1997, p. 19). For instance, when learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) learn about ‘British culture’, they would most typically gain knowledge of white Anglo-Saxon values and cultural practices. Byram argues that, although the introduction of the national culture of a country is a valuable endeavour, it is not sufficient.

At the same time, the communicative approach to language teaching (CLT) gained ground in the 1970s and 1980s (Risager, 2007), based on Hymes's (1972) notion of communicative competence. As seen in Chapter 1, the sociocultural element is central to Hymes's understanding of the construct, but in CLT this element is largely underplayed. In Roberts et al.'s (2001) words, “despite its roots in Hymes' work, [...] communicative competence has come to be interpreted somewhat narrowly and prescriptively, as appropriate language use rather than competence in the social and cultural practices of a community of which language is a large part” (pp. 25-26). With its emphasis on appropriate language use, the communicative approach accommodates the assumption that the ultimate model for foreign language learners is the native speaker (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1998). The premise of Byram's ICC model is that the ideal of the native speaker needs to be challenged and the abovementioned practices of culture teaching in FLT need to be rethought.



### 2.3.1 The intercultural speaker

It can be argued that the approach viewing the native speaker as a model for learners is detrimental and misleading for at least three reasons. Firstly, it tends to look upon learners as incomplete native speakers, and ignores the significance of their own social and cultural identities (Byram, 1997). Secondly, it disregards the reality that the term ‘native speaker’ refers to a heterogeneous group of individuals with differing uses of their native language, and with diverse cultural values and practices (Kramersch, 1998). Finally, it does not take into consideration the fact that learners may use the foreign language in a variety of contexts with not only natives, but also non-natives. This is especially true for learners of EFL, who are likely to interact with other learners in a situation where English is a lingua franca, since “the majority of the world’s English users are now to be found in countries where it is a foreign language” (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 209). In these situations mutual intelligibility is not necessarily dependent on native-like competence.

In a working paper written in preparation for the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) Byram and Zarate (1994) therefore introduced the concept of the *intercultural speaker* (IS):

A language speaker who does not strive to attain the hopeless ideal of approaching native-speaker competence linguistically and culturally, but who develops his or her ability to mediate between a number of cultural perspectives and between the target language and the first language. (Risager, 2007, p. 114)

The two authors also outlined four dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an attempt to refine the concept of sociocultural competence (Byram & Zarate, 1994, 1997). The framework for these dimensions was then further modified to eventually become a model for ICC (Byram, 1997). This model is then an account of the competences which a foreign language learner should develop in order to become an IS. It is important to add, however, that the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) did not adopt the concept of the IS, even though it repeatedly refers to intercultural skills and know-how, awareness, and competence. In fact, its position on the native speaker remains ambiguous: it “postulates at one point an ideal of a plurilingual speaker whereas descriptions of Thresholds are dependent on native speaker intuitions” (Byram, 2003, p. 12).

### 2.3.2 The model

Byram's (1997) model was chosen as a basis for the study for several reasons. Firstly, it was devised from a foreign language education perspective in that it draws on the construct of communicative competence and expands it to include an intercultural dimension. Secondly, the ICC dimensions are defined in terms of educational objectives, which are further elaborated on by the author, and are complemented by stages of planning a curriculum for ICC, as well as suggestions on how they can be assessed. In short, the model was designed with foreign language teachers in mind, like no other comprehensive ICC model to my knowledge. Thirdly, it underpins assessment instruments, parts of which have been used in the empirical studies, and which are presented in Chapter 3. Finally, it incorporates insight from all three approaches to IC discussed in Chapter 1 – the functionalist, interpretive and critical approaches: it views culture as learned and shared, acknowledges the role of language as a key symbolic system carrying cultural meaning, and highlights the role of critical thinking for social change.

The construct of ICC, according to Byram (1997), is made up of (1) linguistic, (2) sociolinguistic, (3) discourse and (4) intercultural competence, of which the first three put the 'communicative' into the equation, and are reformulations of van Ek's (1986) similar concepts in his framework for comprehensive foreign language learning objectives. The fourth, intercultural competence has five dimensions: (i) attitudes, (ii) knowledge, (iii) skills of interpreting and relating, (iv) skills of discovery and interaction, and (v) critical cultural awareness. It is this last dimension, critical cultural awareness which is placed at the centre of the model, an important point which I will return to. Finally, three locations of acquiring ICC are also specified: the classroom, fieldwork, i.e. structured learning outside the classroom, and independent learning, and it is acknowledged that these are overlapping categories of location (p. 65). An illustration of the model is provided in Figure 2.

As the figure clearly shows, this is a *list model*, in that it does not represent any links of dependency among the four competences or the five dimensions (Byram, 2009, p. 325), although a previous illustration (Byram, 1997, p. 73) does suggest that these relationships are complex. It is presented descriptively, i.e. it outlines what characterizes the IS, but these descriptions are used to formulate teaching objectives; it is therefore proposed as a *prescriptive model* (Byram, 2009, p. 325). I now turn to a discussion of the three competences pertaining to the communicative element

of the model, and the dimensions of intercultural competence are elaborated on in the subsequent section.

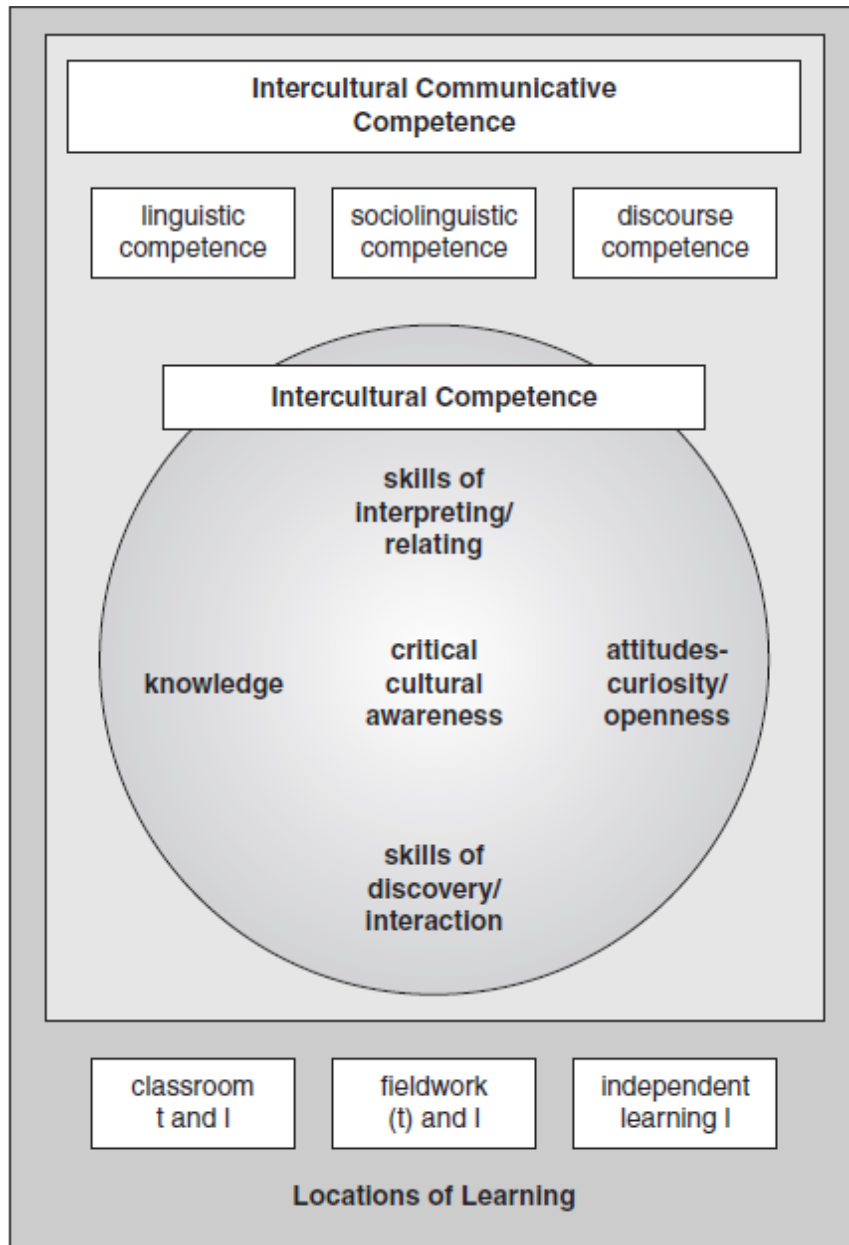


Figure 2 Byram's ICC model (Byram, 2009, p. 323)

### 2.3.2.1 The communicative element

We have seen that a great many ICC conceptual frameworks leave out the foreign language component. Inherent in the others, however, is the notion that “language has a privileged role within intercultural encounters because it is the most important (although not the only) symbolic system which enables group members to share their cultural perspectives, beliefs and values” (Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard, & Philippou, 2014, p. 23). This is also recognized by Byram (1997), who builds on earlier frameworks of communicative competence, and in doing so, consciously maintains a link with AL perspectives. Here I present two influential frameworks of the competences required of a foreign language learner, and examine how they relate to Byram’s (1997) conceptualization. (See Dombi, 2013 for a more comprehensive review of CC models).

The first of these is Canale and Swain’s (1980) framework, in which three separate competences are outlined as part of CC:

- (1) grammatical competence: includes “knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (p. 29)
- (2) sociolinguistic competence: includes two sets of rules:
  - i. sociocultural rules, i.e. those pertaining to “the extent to which certain propositions and communicative functions are appropriate within a given sociocultural context” (p. 30)
  - ii. rules of discourse, i.e. those pertaining to the cohesion and coherence of groups of utterances
- (3) strategic competence: includes “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication” (p. 30)

By contrast, van Ek (1986) identifies six competences in his framework of communicative ability:

- (1) linguistic competence: “the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear their conventional meaning [i.e.] that meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when used in isolation” (p. 33)

- (2) sociolinguistic competence: “the ability to use and interpret language forms with situational appropriateness” i.e. awareness “of ways in which the choice of language forms [...] is determined by such conditions as setting, relationship between communication partners, communicative intention, etc., etc.” (p. 30)
- (3) discourse competence: “the ability to perceive and to achieve coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns” e.g. “knowing how to open a conversation and how to end it” (pp. 30-31)
- (4) strategic competence: the ability of “getting our meaning across” or “finding out what somebody means” (e.g. rephrasing, appeal for assistance) when communication problems arise (p. 49)
- (5) socio-cultural competence: a degree of familiarity with the sociocultural context in which the language is situated; the use of a particular reference frame (p. 31)
- (6) social competence: the will (involving motivation, attitude and self-confidence) and the skill (involving empathy and the ability to handle social situations) to interact with others (p. 31)

It is clear that these two frameworks share a number of common points. Grammatical competence in the first is basically identical with linguistic competence in the second, and they also conceptualize strategic competence in the same way. What is different is that in van Ek’s (1986) framework sociocultural and discourse competence are separated from sociolinguistic competence, and a wholly new dimension is added: that of social competence. In other words, the social and cultural elements gain greater weight in van Ek’s model, since it is placed in the context of general education. Therefore, in his understanding “FLT is not just concerned with training in communication skills but also with the personal and social development of the learner as an individual (Byram, 1997, p. 9).

Another aspect, however, in terms of which the two models overlap is that they present the native speaker as a model for foreign language learners. As clarified in earlier sections, this is seen as problematic by Byram (1997), who proposes a reformulation of van Ek’s (1986) model. In this reformulation van Ek’s last three competences contribute to the intercultural element of the ICC model, whereas his first three competences are refined in the following way to constitute the communicative element:

- (1) linguistic competence: the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language
- (2) sociolinguistic competence: the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor
- (3) discourse competence: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes (Byram, 1997, p. 48).

This redefinition is in line with the idea of the IS, rather than the native speaker, as a model, introduces notions of discovery and negotiation of meaning, and implies links with other dimensions of Byram's model, such as knowledge and skills, which are considered next.

### 2.3.2.2 The intercultural element

The five dimensions for intercultural competence are described in the following way:

- (1) Attitudes (*savoir être*): curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own
- (2) Knowledge (*savoirs*): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction
- (3) Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own
- (4) Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction
- (5) Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 1997, pp. 50-53).

These are then further specified through a setting of objectives, prescribing what teachers should aim to develop in their learners. For each dimension some of these objectives are listed in Table 6 on the next page (for a full list of objectives, see Byram, 1997, pp. 57-64).

As we can see in Table 6 and in additional clarification in Byram's (1997, pp. 57-64) monograph, the attitudes of the IS include curiosity and openness in relation to not only the dominant culture of the other, but also the experience of a variety of social groups within the other's society. In my understanding, this means that the IS can appreciate the complexity of cultures. These attitudes also include willingness to suspend one's *ethnocentrism*, which, as has been discussed, is our tendency to interpret and judge other cultures with reference to our own culture, which we understand to be the centre of everything (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 11).

At the same time, the IS possesses culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, as well as knowledge of how culture affects language and communication (Sercu, 2004). The specific forms of knowledge required are therefore incredibly extensive, from knowledge of the political and economic factors in the relationship between countries to that of language variety, non-verbal behaviour, or rites of passage.

As for the skills of the IS, they require engagement in a wide range of ethnographic processes, such as observing, asking, reflecting, analysing and interpreting. In addition, they incorporate the ability to interact in such a way as to ensure understanding and avoid dysfunction, and at a different level, the ability to act as mediator.

Finally, the critical cultural awareness of the IS entails awareness about one's own and others' ideological perspectives, about the potential conflict between them, as well as about "the ways in which they have been formed and the complex of social forces within which they are experienced" (Byram, 1997, p. 35). It is this dimension that establishes a link with political education in a number of ways, as seen in the next section.

Table 6

*A selection of objectives for Byram's intercultural dimensions (1997, pp. 57-64)*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<p>(a) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable;</p> <p>(b) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices;</p> <p>(c) willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment</p>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<p>(a) about historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries</p> <p>(c) about the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins</p> <p>(h) about the processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country</p> <p>(i) about social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and one's interlocutor's</p> <p>(k) about the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country</p>
<b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b>	<p>(a) ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins</p> <p>(b) ability to identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present</p> <p>(c) ability to mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena</p>
<b>Skills of discovery and interaction</b>	<p>(a) ability to elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena</p> <p>(c) ability to identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances</p> <p>(d) ability to use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other</p> <p>(g) ability to use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture</p>
<b>Critical cultural awareness</b>	<p>(a) ability to identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures</p> <p>(b) ability to make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria</p> <p>(c) ability to interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes</p>



Before I move on, however, let me make a few important points in connection with the development and assessment of the intercultural component, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Firstly, Byram's (1997) model does not include a definition of levels or degrees of ability, nor does it propose a didactic ordering of what aspects are to be taught prior to others (Byram, 2009, p. 325). The author suggests that a threshold for ICC can be determined, but also claims that such a threshold is highly context-dependent (Byram, 1997, p. 78). What is obvious is that many aspects included in this ICC model require long-term exposure in order for development to occur, as Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p. 67) point out.

Secondly, the objectives defined for the intercultural dimensions are not all observable as behaviour. "As a consequence, performance assessment cannot be the only approach if all aspects of the five *savoirs* are to be assessed" (Byram, 1997, p. 89). In any case, the question of how ICC can be assessed is a difficult one, and raises several ethical issues.

### 2.3.2.3 The critical element

As has been pointed out, critical cultural awareness is a central factor in the model and is linked to political education. However, the different layers of this critical element are yet to be explored. Barnett's (1997) distinction of three forms of critical thinking can prove useful here. According to the scholar, the first one of these is the dominant view of critical thinking in higher education, which is "focused on formal bodies of thought" and includes "synthesis, analysis, logical argument set within the permitted moves of a particular discipline" (p. 68). The two other forms of critical thinking are critical self-reflection and critical action. It is clear from Byram's (1997) definition of critical cultural awareness that it is more or less reconcilable with the first form, and is absolutely congruent with the second form. In fact, a closer look at the concept reveals that it can also be linked to the third form.

Byram (1997) proposes that the IS has "a rational and explicit standpoint from which to evaluate" (p. 54) and that "the reference point of international human rights is a useful one" since "it helps all language teachers and learners to avoid the trap of cultural relativism" (p. 46). At the same time, it is acknowledged that the definition of human rights is largely indebted to western concepts, and that some language teachers may not feel comfortable with adopting an explicit political standpoint in language and culture teaching (pp. 45-46), an aspect which can pose moral debates pertaining to the very concept of ICC (Byram, 2003).

Nevertheless, Byram (2009, p. 327) argues that teaching for critical cultural awareness can be related to teaching for *intercultural citizenship*, which implies promoting political action in civil society. For example, this active citizenship may take the form of “challenging attitudes and behaviours [...] which contravene human rights, and taking action to defend and protect the dignity and human rights of people regardless of their cultural affiliations” (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 21). Although phrased in a more circumspect manner, this approach is reminiscent of the fierce critical pedagogy of Giroux (2004), for instance, who claims:

We also need to link knowing with action, learning with social engagement, and this suggests addressing the responsibilities that come with teaching students to fight for an inclusive and radical democracy by recognizing that pedagogy is not just about understanding, however critical. (p. 19)

### 2.3.3 Critiques of Byram’s model

Various aspects of Byram’s (1997) model have been criticized. One such criticism refers to its understanding of culture as that connected to nation-states, which is viewed as essentialist, implying homogeneity and ignoring the complexities of the phenomenon:

Byram (1997: 20, 32, 36, 39-40) appears to equate the concept of ‘culture’ with that of ‘nation’. Such a position does not adequately recognize or value nation-internal diversity (e.g. Germans of Turkish extraction or Frenchmen of North-African origin) or the existence of ideologically or ethnically bound groups that span national borders (e.g. the Muslim *ummah* or community) or who have no national borders (the Sinti-Roma people; the Kurds). (Belz, 2007, p. 137)

Although it is true that Byram’s (1997) focus is on national cultures, it is important to bear in mind that he acknowledges the possibility of other foci (p. 5), emphasizes that national cultures are heterogeneous (pp. 39-41), and stresses the need to equip learners with the means to analyse diverse cultural representations (p. 20). Moreover, he points out that his “focus on national cultures is a conscious strategy [...] a consequence of writing for a particular audience of language teachers working within a tradition that focuses on national cultures” (Byram, 2009, p. 330).

The model can also be criticised for its treatment of language and culture as two separate entities (Risager, 2007), as evidenced by the potential separation of what we have called the communicative element (i.e. linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence) from the intercultural element (i.e. intercultural competence with its five dimensions). While it is apparent

that Byram (1997) does not propose such a separation in foreign language classrooms – the context for which the framework was originally devised – this feature does lend the model to work beyond FLT perspectives. An example to such work is the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Council of Europe, 2009), a self-evaluation tool which is further discussed in Chapter 6.

A final criticism is that of the structuralist view inherent in the model, which is seen as fuelled by the need for assessment. Kramersch (2009) argues for a post-structuralist perspective in language teaching and claims that symbolic competence, which is based on similar grounds to those of Byram's (1997) critical cultural awareness, can and should be taught, but not assessed: “we should then measure what can legitimately be measured and refuse to measure the rest, even though it is essential that we teach it” (p. 119). The assessment of ICC, and particularly of its central dimension, critical cultural awareness, does indeed pose many questions: “not only the technical problems of validity, reliability, and impact, but more importantly the ethical issues involved” (Byram, 2003, pp. 12-13). At the same time, many advocate the assessment of the construct through less direct forms than tests, such as self-assessment, as discussed in Chapter 3.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Like Chapter 1, this chapter also aimed at representing the interdisciplinary character of the field of IC. Here I explored various views on how the construct of ICC can be conceptualised. Since the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately is often included in definitions of ICC, I looked more closely at the different ways in which effectiveness and appropriateness may be understood. I then set out to survey some of the ICC frameworks existing in the field. It has become clear that scholars with various disciplinary backgrounds are invested in pinpointing what characterizes a person who is competent in intercultural interaction and that there are as many frameworks as there are views of culture, communication, IC and competence. I therefore resolved to take a pragmatic approach and discussed eight influential frameworks, of which six had some common features.

Byram's (1997) framework was analysed more closely, since the study presented here was largely informed by this model. I examined the notion of the IS as well as the communicative, intercultural and critical elements of the model, and finally, considered critiques of it. What remains

to be discussed in connection with ICC is the possible ways in which it can be developed and assessed, which is the focus of the next chapter.

## Chapter 3: ICC development and assessment

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The contexts of intercultural teaching and learning
  - 3.2.1 Compulsory education
  - 3.2.2 Tertiary education and professional contexts
  - 3.2.3 The context of the empirical studies: Hungarian tertiary education
- 3.3 Approaches to ICC development
  - 3.3.1 The facts-oriented approach
  - 3.3.2 The ethnographic approach
  - 3.3.3 The critical approach
  - 3.3.4 The social constructivist classroom
- 3.4. ICC assessment
  - 3.4.1 Indirect assessment tools
  - 3.4.2 Direct assessment tools
  - 3.4.3 Blended assessment tools
- 3.5 Conclusion

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the interdisciplinary nature of ICC in that insights from various disciplines were considered for a better understanding of what characterises a person who is competent in intercultural interactions. This chapter is more pedagogically-oriented: it surveys the ways in which this competence is developed and assessed.

First, I examine the different settings in which structured intercultural learning may take place: compulsory education, tertiary education, and professional contexts, paying special attention to the larger context of the empirical studies presented in this thesis, namely Hungarian tertiary education. I then outline three broadly defined approaches to ICC development, which result in different types of intercultural learning, and are therefore all important to take into account. Finally, I focus on the numerous ICC assessment tools that have been used for diagnostic as well as developmental purposes.

The following key questions are thus addressed here: What objectives are set for intercultural learning in national curricula in Europe and how are these realized in practice? What are the aims and methods of the different ICC development programmes in these contexts? What approaches to ICC development and assessment do these programmes take?

## 3.2 The contexts of intercultural teaching and learning

Intercultural learning can occur in a wide range of contexts. It can happen informally, from daily experience through, for instance, influences from family, peers, or mass media, as well as formally, in a structured educational setting (Barrett et al., 2014, pp. 27-28). In Chapter 3 the main emphasis is on how an individual's ICC develops as a result of pedagogical endeavours, but the role of informal learning is not ignored: in Section 3.3.4 I consider the ways in which informal intercultural learning can become integral to classroom learning.

Yet even if we focus specifically on structured ICC development, we still find great variation in its forms. Firstly, ICC is now mentioned in national curricula across Europe as part of foreign language competence, which means teaching for ICC should be incorporated in FLT in compulsory education (EC, 2007b). At the same time, a growing number of institutions of higher education offer courses on IC (Fantini, 1997) in Business Studies, Social Studies, and Foreign Language Studies curricula, among others. Finally, *cross-cultural training* has an enduring tradition in professional contexts in which employees are required to engage in intercultural interaction on a daily basis (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). In this section I review research on ICC development in these three contexts.

### 3.2.1 Compulsory education

What is unique about the context of compulsory education is that it allows for long-term development of learners' ICC. The general purpose of ICC development is seen here as “a contribution at the individual level to societal well-being; for example by facilitating a policy of multiculturalism, by improving the integration of ethnic minorities and thus by supporting social cohesion” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 225). It is typically viewed as the responsibility of

foreign language teachers (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 226). Since it was recognized by the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) that foreign language knowledge includes an intercultural strand, national curricula have also come to take account of this. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this is also true of the Hungarian NCC (Közigazgatási és Igazságügyi Minisztérium [Ministry of Public Administration and Justice], 2012).

Yet, moving on from purely conceptual grounds, let me overview what aims, contents and methods of teaching for ICC at primary and secondary school level are prescribed by foreign language curricula. This question is addressed in the *Languages and Cultures in Europe*, or *LACE* study (EC, 2007b, pp. 5-11), in which data from 12 European countries were analysed. It was found that the development of intercultural competence receives considerably less attention than that of linguistic competences and communication skills. Where the construct is referred to, it is the knowledge and attitudes dimensions that are emphasized. Another finding was that recommendations for methodological approaches are scarce in the curricula, and if mentioned, promote approaches which “are considered generally to be slightly more didactic (i.e. characterised by teacher input) in nature than experiential (i.e. characterised by learner intake)” (p. 7).

The next question then arises: To what extent are these curricular features reflected in actual classroom practice? This was also investigated in the *LACE* study (EC, 2007b, pp. 7-10), which included an online survey and telephone interviews with teachers. Results show that teachers use a wide range of methods, techniques and activities that are conducive to intercultural learning, but most of these originate in the canon of communicative language teaching, rather than that of intercultural education. Of all the respondents 92.5% said they needed more guidance as regards ICC development, specifically to gain a better understanding of the concept itself and in order to improve their methods. Yet other studies enquiring into teachers’ attitudes and practice in this respect paint a more dismal picture. For instance, Bandura and Sercu (2005) draw the following conclusion from their investigation involving 424 teachers from seven different countries:

Traditional teacher-centred approaches, addressing foremost the acquisition of knowledge and positive attitudes, dominate in culture teaching in all countries and techniques involving the students’ initiative and autonomy are less popular. [...] Though ‘comparison of cultures’ appears to be an activity frequently practised, other activities aiming at the acquisition of intercultural skills, such as ‘reflect critically on one’s sources of information’, ‘explore an aspect of the foreign culture’ or ‘practise skills useful in intercultural contact situations’ are not. It strikes us that the picture in the different countries is similar. (p. 83)

The situation does not seem any better in Hungary. Lendvai (2012) points to the “weaknesses of intercultural aspects in foreign language teaching” (Abstract section, para. 1), and Lázár’s (2006) research into the cultural component in EFL teaching in this context also reveals that (1) culture-related activities are not systematically incorporated in the lessons and (2) teachers have a poor repertoire of methods to develop learners’ ICC (p. 100).

What these studies tell us is that both national curricula and foreign language teachers’ practices are in need of improvement for better quality ICC development in compulsory education. One way forward seems to be the integration of ICC development in foreign language teacher education programmes at tertiary level, as this has been shown to have a significant effect on how teachers approach the subject matter in their classrooms (Lázár, 2006, p. 81). Along with professional contexts, it is this context, higher education, which is discussed next.

### 3.2.2 Tertiary education and professional contexts

Much of the literature tends to draw a distinction between *intercultural education* at tertiary level and *cross-cultural training* in professional contexts, associated with the academic and the business sector respectively. Taken as polarities, education and training are seen as drawing on very dissimilar aims and methods, partly due to a difference in how they are financed (Fleming, 2009, p. 1). Yet in reality many intercultural development programmes are designed in such a way that there is an overlap between what is traditionally thought of as education and training (Fleming, 2009, p. 5). It then largely depends on the actual setting – the university department or the organization – to what extent such a programme focuses on the development of attitudes, knowledge, skills or critical cultural awareness, to what degree it is driven by a moral or a commercial imperative, and whether it places emphasis on foreign language learning.

In fact, if we take a look at two large-scale investigations into the nature of ICC development programmes – one involving mostly university instructors and the other mostly consultants, trainers and coaches – we discover that the findings are surprisingly similar. In the first study (Fantini, 1997) 53 respondents, mainly from the U.S., but also from 10 other countries, were asked about their IC courses: their content, tools and methodologies, among others. The second study (Berardo & Simons, 2004) is characterised by a fairly wider scope. Here, 261 interculturalists from 27 countries, again, with the majority from the U.S., completed an online



survey enquiring into not only the tools and methodologies they used, but also their views on the top challenges in the field. Although the results of the two studies are difficult to compare in many ways, for example, they use different terms for possibly similar concepts and practices, there are still a number of points on which they coincide.

For instance, instructors and trainers in both surveys report relying on models such as Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) five dimensions of cultural difference, Hall's (1959, 1966, 1976) proxemics and his distinction between high- and low-context cultures, or the *Iceberg Model* of culture (American Field Service [AFS], 1984). These models represent relatively static views of culture and all correspond to what we have called the functionalist approach to the study of IC. Interestingly, although 92.4% of the respondents commonly use them in their work, they rate several other tools and methodologies as more effective (Berardo & Simons, 2004, p. 43).

Other methodologies mentioned by a great number of participants in the two studies include (1) case studies, (2) exercises and activities, (3) simulations and role plays and (4) collaborative work. Unfortunately, many of these are not elaborated on, since they are based on respondents' own materials, as, for instance, in the case of *exercises and activities* in the second study (Berardo & Simons, 2004). What is striking, however, is that while several respondents in Fantini's (1997) investigation claim they draw on observation and exploration tasks in their courses, these do not feature prominently among Berardo and Simons's findings. Moreover, references to activities involving reflection, interpreting and critical analysis are scarce in both studies.

Based on these reviews of interculturalists' practice in tertiary education and professional contexts we can say that the field is characterised by a great variety of approaches to ICC development. Instructors and trainers seem to be aware that models representing monolithic concepts of culture tend not to capture effectively the complexities of intercultural encounters that their students or trainees may be experiencing on a daily basis. At the same time, critical perspectives appear to be less prevalent in these development programmes. Of course, a lot might have changed in this respect since these studies were conducted, but to my knowledge, no large-scale survey of ICC courses has identified such a shift. This is perhaps not surprising in the case of trainings where the emphasis is on short-term professional development, but one would imagine the university as the ideal setting for critical intercultural learning. This is not to say, however, that

ICC development programmes with a predominantly critical focus do not exist – this is discussed further in Section 3.3.

### 3.2.3 The context of the empirical studies: Hungarian tertiary education

The scope of this thesis does not allow for an all-encompassing review of research on individual development programmes. Instead, large-scale investigations are examined in Section 3.2 for a broad understanding, and studies of single programmes that represent a specific approach are explored in Section 3.3 for deeper insight. However, research carried out in the context of Hungarian tertiary education requires special attention, since the studies presented in this thesis were also conducted in this context.

A number of studies, both conceptual and empirical, have been published in the past decade or so on intercultural teaching and learning in Hungarian tertiary education. These were typically conducted in either business studies programmes, or foreign language studies/language teacher education programmes, with the exception of research done by Bajzát (2010). The researcher examined on the one hand what elements of foreign language knowledge and intercultural competence are required of engineers at six different companies in Hungary, and on the other, to what extent engineering students' education is in line with these professional requirements. She relied on data collected with the help of interviews (N=6) and questionnaires (N=92 and N=70), which she claims were reliable measures (p. 87), and also drew on data from job advertisements. Results show that companies seek employees with good communication skills in English and preferably an additional FL, but rarely mention intercultural competence as necessary. At the same time 86% of engineers report working with foreign colleagues in a multicultural environment where English is used as a lingua franca, and many of them have had opportunities to take part in training abroad. Bajzát concludes with recommendations as to how engineering students' foreign language education could be changed, including a focus on all components of CC and intercultural competence (p. 188).

As an example to investigations carried out in business studies programmes, Falkné (2005) asked 420 students of the Budapest Business School in a questionnaire survey about their views on the importance of their IC course, and found that all participants considered it either very useful or useful. Unfortunately, the paper outlining the specifics of this study does not include mention of

the reliability and validity of the instrument used. However, the researcher briefly outlines the syllabus of the course. The reader therefore learns that culture models mentioned in the previous section as featuring monolithic views of culture are drawn on heavily, but case studies and exercises are also made use of.

Similarly, Tompos (2006) offers an overview of an IC course at a different university but also in a business studies programme, and reflects on some of the difficulties related to teaching IC based on her personal experience. This course is delivered in English and aims to develop students' CC as well as intercultural awareness. Just like the course described by Falkné (2005), it relies on culture models, case studies and exercises, but it is emphasized here that the instructor encourages students to think critically about the issues discussed in class. Students are required to hold mini-presentations in small groups and compare and contrast cultures in light of the models they had learnt about. Tompos (2006, pp. 180-182) identifies four areas of difficulty in ICC development: (1) internet sources and some intercultural textbooks present information that is often unsystematic or false, and may perpetuate stereotypes; (2) many students lack the skills required for a critical analysis of these sources, which the scholar explains with their age; (3) the expectations of a teacher in Hungary to be an expert clash with the reality that one cannot be knowledgeable about all cultures, therefore resulting in loss of face; and (4) the time spent on ICC development in the programme described by the scholar, one term, is insufficient. As will be seen in Chapter 6, points (2) and (4) in particular are highly relevant to the empirical studies presented in this thesis as well.

Golubeva (2002), on the other hand, conducted research involving foreign language majors training to become teachers. The researcher centred her study on the knowledge dimension of intercultural learning, and used a questionnaire to gain information on the ways in which students (N=68) prefer to acquire cultural knowledge, as well as the ways in which they in fact learn about culture. Similarly to Falkné (2005), whose study was discussed above, Golubeva does not elaborate on issues of reliability and validity, but claims that the sample cannot be seen as representative of the whole population (p. 125). Findings reveal that the majority of students prefer to learn by travelling or sojourning abroad, but in reality rely on television, videos, films, books and music as their main sources of cultural input. What this tells us is that reliance on audio-visual materials might also prove to be useful in structured ICC development.

Focusing on a very similar context, Lázár (2003, 2006, 2011) offers a body of work enquiring into the role of ICC in language teacher education. As member of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), a Council of Europe institution working towards reform in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, she co-wrote an IC textbook (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003) and a publication presenting guidelines for the teaching and assessment of ICC (Lázár et al., 2007), and addressed the issue of how ICC can be incorporated in language teacher education (Lázár, 2003). The researcher explores the topic in greater detail in her dissertation (2006), reporting on the results of a questionnaire study (N=106 and N=287), case studies, and document analysis. Lázár also gives a detailed account of the measures taken to ensure validity, reliability and credibility. As discussed earlier, findings indicate that the majority of participating in-service English teachers draw on a small number of activities with a cultural focus, and that ICC development should be integrated in language teacher education programmes so as to ensure that culture becomes a more recognized element in the foreign language classroom.

Finally, at the same university where the empirical studies addressed in this thesis were conducted, Dombi (2013) carried out research into English majors' ICC and its relation to the following individual differences variables: (1) willingness to communicate, (2) perceived communication competence, (3) language use related anxiety, (4) motivation, (5) perceived second language competence and (6) frequency of intercultural contacts. It followed the tradition of mixed-method research in that both qualitative and quantitative means of data collection were employed. Introspective methods were used in eliciting self-reflections from 45 students, and a questionnaire study was conducted with 102 participants. A more detailed description of the instrument drawn on in the questionnaire study is offered in Section 3.4.1 of this thesis. Dombi's results show relatively high average ICC scores among the participants, a strong negative relationship between students' anxiety and their ICC, as well as a significant correlation between their willingness to communicate and their ICC. Participants' perceived communication competence was also found to be a very strong predictor of their ICC. In addition, students' answers revealed that, on average, they had spent little time in foreign countries, but vast differences were discovered in this regard. What these findings imply is that students' anxiety, willingness to communicate, self-image as communicators and the different scope of their intercultural experiences are all very important factors to be considered when planning an ICC development programme in this context.

The research presented here shows that there is heightened interest in the role, aims, and methods of, as well as attitudes toward intercultural teaching and learning in Hungarian tertiary education. We have seen that the methodologies employed at Hungarian universities are very similar to those used by the respondents in Fantini's (1997) and Berardo and Simons's (2004) study. Furthermore, a number of scholars call for the systematic incorporation of intercultural education in higher education programmes, whereas others offer suggestions regarding various aspects of ICC development: it should be planned for longer than one term, it should include the use of audio-visual materials and methods that inspire critical reflection, and it should take into account students' affective variables.

At the same time, to my knowledge there is no published study exploring students' ICC development paths in the course of a semester while providing a rich description of classroom processes. In their overview of perspectives and studies concerning teaching for intercultural competence, Byram and Feng (2005, p. 925) stress the need for "research that investigates the relationship between teaching styles, materials, methods, and the ability to take new perspectives, to be critical, to understand, and act according to the principles of democratic citizenship". The studies discussed in this thesis are an attempt at exploring this relationship and thus filling the gap in the literature.

### 3.3 Approaches to ICC development

So far I have examined research on ICC development in the different contexts of primary and secondary education, tertiary education, and professional settings. I also took a narrower focus and surveyed conceptual and empirical studies on intercultural teaching and learning at Hungarian universities. In short, the previous sections offered a general picture of the subject matter, but did not delve into the specifics. In this section, in order to gain a more profound understanding of classroom practices, I discuss three broadly defined approaches to ICC development: (1) the facts-oriented approach, (2) the ethnographic approach, and (3) the critical approach. I first give a general outline of the major focus and the theoretical basis in each of the three cases and then present individual development programmes as examples of how these perspectives have been applied.

### 3.3.1 The facts-oriented approach

What Byram and Feng (2005) call the facts-oriented approach to ICC development focuses on cultural facts mostly related to nation-states. Much of the work taking this perspective gives specific information about the attitudes, values and, most emphatically, the communicative behaviour of people in a given country, and offers guidance about “the dos and don’ts” in this setting (p. 919). This approach is therefore typically associated with business trainings, preparing businesspeople for sojourns abroad and negotiations with others ‘from’ a different culture. Traditionally, it does not place weight on foreign language learning, but rather on the development of intercultural knowledge and skills for practical purposes (Byram & Feng, 2005). Development programmes that rely predominantly on this approach are thus regarded as defined by the aim of commercial success, instead of critical understanding for social cohesion.

The emphasis here is not only on cultural facts but also on cultural differences between nation-states. It is based on conceptualisations of culture and IC that are very much in line with the functionalist tradition, as discussed in Chapter 1. As such, it makes use of culture models that enable easy comparison of cultures, such as Hofstede’s (1980/2001, 1991/2010) or Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (1997) dimensions along which cultural differences may be observed. This approach is therefore often labelled *cross-cultural* rather than *intercultural*.

The facts-oriented approach is vastly criticized for its reductionist perspective and essentialist view of culture, which is considered as leading to the reinforcement of stereotypes (Byram & Feng, 2005). One may argue, however, that the knowledge of cultural facts is an essential starting point from which a critical non-essentialist view can subsequently be attained, particularly in contexts where learners have limited opportunities to come into contact with the ‘Other’ (Byram & Feng, 2005). Let us also bear in mind that, firstly, it is not only business training programmes that may follow this approach and, secondly, many training programmes adopt other perspectives besides the facts-oriented approach. Nonetheless, in order to get a deeper insight into the ways in which this approach of ICC development has been applied in training programmes, I now turn to Tomalin’s (2009) account of training activities that have been devised from a predominantly facts-oriented perspective.

In discussing instruments for intercultural business training, Tomalin (2009) outlines three types of activities, namely experiential, comparative, and reflective activities, all of which he illustrates with a number of examples. Experiential activities are mainly used to raise awareness

about differences in general, and to help participants adapt to new forms of behaviour. For instance, the card game called *Barnga* is applied in the following way:

The game is played in small groups and each player moves from group to group and becomes aware as they do so that other players are playing by different rules. Success in the game is achieved by understanding those differences and adapting behaviour to the new regulatory environment. [...] No one talks or writes during the game. The only communication is by gestures or grunts. (p. 118)

On the other hand, the aim of comparative activities is to gain understanding of the paradigms that differentiate cultures. Here, participants are required to reflect on the attitudes, core values and behaviours present in their own (business) culture, and to compare them with those in other cultures. Some comparative activities include discussions about critical incidents of intercultural contact, for instance a situation between a migrant worker and a host country manager, where participants consider what constitutes best practice in resolving the conflict. Others, such as the *Communication Matrix*, entail descriptions of cultures along several dimensions. For example, the communication style of people of different nationalities may be compared in the following manner: “Where the British are rather informal, the Japanese prefer formality” (p. 121). Finally, reflective activities are mostly diagnostic in that they facilitate participants in evaluating what they have learnt, and aid them in identifying the issues they feel they still need to know more about. They may present their issues to the whole group in the form of *need-to-know cards* that are posted on the wall, or have individual coaching sessions with trainers in order to seek answers to their questions.

It is particularly the comparative activities here that critical interculturalists may deem as reductionist in the perception they convey about culture. Tomalin (2009) takes note of this: “some readers will criticise such an analysis as simplistic, bordering on stereotyping. I will respond by saying that businesspeople need platforms from which they can investigate cultures in more detail” (p. 121).

### 3.3.2 The ethnographic approach

Adherents of the ethnographic approach within the field of IC believe that such skills as observing, interviewing, analysing, interpreting, and reporting are central to ICC development (Byram & Feng, 2005). The IC textbook written by Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2006), for instance, presents

a range of research tasks, all of which are intended to aid learners' ethnographic and intercultural learning. Learners are encouraged to write a research diary, observe themselves and others in interactions, interview people (considering the interview as cultural interaction), and examine texts within their everyday social settings.

The simultaneous development of these ethnographic skills and ICC can happen within settings other than the classroom, such as study-abroad (SA) programmes. A belief held by many is that due to the naturalistic setting in which students are immersed, the constant exposure to the target language, and students' experiential learning, SA ultimately and inevitably leads to foreign language development, as well as a deeper understanding and appreciation of the new culture (Coleman, 1997; Freed, 1998). This belief is attested to in numerous studies, particularly ones enquiring into programmes where learning is guided, at least to some extent. A study by Jackson (2005), for example, explored Hong Kong Chinese students' intercultural learning during a SA period spent in England. The case study made use of qualitative data from students' journals, interviews, and participant observation. The author analysed emerging patterns in students' diary entries and narratives, and thus measured learning outcomes in relation to the goals of the sojourn programme, which were the following: (1) attitude shift, (2) skills of observation and discovery, (3) cultural knowledge, (4) skills of interaction, and (5) critical cultural awareness (p. 166). The findings reveal that, having overcome initial difficulties, students made progress in terms of all the original aims of the programme, and that keeping diary logs encouraged them to reflect more deeply and critically on their SA experiences. What this means is that students' ICC development here was quite possibly the outcome of both experiential learning and critical reflection on intercultural experiences through writing diaries.

Some ICC development programmes, however, involve access to both structured and naturalistic settings, as seen in the case of the course *The Intercultural Teacher*, reported on by Lundgren (2009). This full-time one-semester course was introduced within a teacher education programme at a Swedish university, attracting 14 participants. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Byram (1997), it aimed to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes through experiential learning and the application of various theoretical and practical tools. The group, which included students from Sweden, Vietnam, Malawi, India and Spain, was taught by Swedish as well as foreign guest lecturers.



The course was divided into four modules, of which the first provided a theoretical background on concepts and issues related to culture, interculturality, communication, identity, values, citizenship education and conflict solving, among others. In addition, this module focused on familiarizing students with ethnography in practice. They then drew on this knowledge in the second module, in which they were offered the opportunity to do field studies in various educational contexts: the Swedish students in Jerusalem, El Salvador and India, and the international students in Sweden. Students were required to observe and analyse their observations of daily life and educational conditions within the unfamiliar setting, and thus employ ethnographic skills to achieve a deeper intercultural understanding. In the final two modules students took part in theoretical studies built on what they had learnt during the period of field studies, and also completed a written assignment. These reflections on what students had experienced were then analysed by the author. The findings demonstrated that students' ICC had indeed developed through experiential learning and the application of the ethnographic perspective.

### 3.3.3 The critical approach

The critical approach to ICC development corresponds perfectly to the critical perspectives I explored in Chapter 1. Applied to education in general, this approach calls for the rethinking and redefining of such constructs as language, power, culture, subjectivity, and knowledge (Canagarajah, 1999), and focuses on raising learners' awareness about the forms of oppression in our society, including within education, with the ultimate goal of empowering learners. As we have seen, some of these perspectives have found their way into IC education theory as well: critical cultural awareness is the central dimension of Byram's (1997) model, for instance. Byram and Feng (2005) suggest that "insights from citizenship education, education for democracy, human rights and peace education, and cultural studies can be drawn to establish criteria of evaluation and mediation between cultures" (p. 916). The critical approach to ICC development is therefore mostly seen as following a moral imperative, rather than being committed to commercial success, and is typically connected to the academic, rather than the business sector.

Intercultural development programmes taking this perspective incorporate in their curricula insights from cultural studies and critical theory on the nature of culture, communication, identity and power, which I have previously touched upon. The aim is, of course, to develop learners'

criticality, and in some cases to inspire critical action. This is achieved by reading either examples of fictitious situations involving intercultural contact, or articles written by critical scholars. For instance, in their IC textbook, Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2006) present stories that are deconstructed from a critical point of view, with an emphasis on such concepts as identity, stereotype, discourse, culturism, and otherization. The textbook also offers a selection of texts drawn from writings of scholars from the fields of applied linguistics, cultural studies and media studies, which are accompanied by reflective tasks. From this it becomes clear that analysis, reflection and criticality are at the heart of the critical approach, pointing beyond ‘mere’ cognitive, affective and behavioural IC learning (Davidson-Lund, 2009).

As an example to programmes following the critical approach, I have chosen a cross-cultural management and marketing course introduced by Jack (2009), as it takes a predominantly critical perspective. This course was taught by the author to undergraduate students of mixed nationality in the context of a management department at a university in the UK. It was the teacher’s intention when designing the course to transgress convention in cross-cultural management training: he therefore employed Hofstede’s (1980/2001, 1991/2010) work only as an example to the political nature of truth, and relied primarily on Said’s (1978) *Orientalism*, in order that students come to understand, among others, the concepts of colonialism, hegemony and cultural imperialism.

The course was divided into two halves entitled *Constructing the Other: Classifying, Knowing and Managing Difference* and *Deconstructing the Other: Postcolonial Discourse and the Politicization of Difference* (Jack, 2009, p. 103). Whereas the first half comprised workshops on language, communication, ideas of the nation-state and national cultures, as well as the application of cultural theory to elements of management and marketing, the second half was mainly centred on postcolonial theory (pp. 105-106). In discussing students’ response to this course, the author-teacher states that, although some found it interesting and worthwhile, others were more resistant toward the issues presented. The author concludes that, by the end of the term, none of the students achieved the level of criticality aimed at, and points out that this is partly because he “trapped the aims and objectives of the course too much into the domain of formal knowledge [...]. While there were several instances of class activity where personal reflection was encouraged, there was no meaningful space for critical *action* to occur” (p. 110). I would also add that intercultural learning

is a long process (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 67), which possibly does not occur in the course of one semester, especially if it is taught in isolation, with no support from other courses.

### 3.3.4 The social constructivist classroom

In the previous sections I explored three approaches to ICC development: the facts-oriented approach, the ethnographic approach, and the critical approach. I summarized the principles that distinguish each perspective from the other two, and provided examples of how these approaches have been applied in practice by individual development programmes. I have also pointed out, however, that the three approaches are clearly separated only in theory. It is apparent, for instance, that a critical evaluation of cultural facts is impossible without knowledge of these facts. It has also become clear that all of these perspectives have something different to offer in terms of developing learners' ICC; it therefore seems essential that development programmes strive to systematically incorporate all three approaches in their curricula.

In fact, the suggestions offered by a recent Council of Europe publication entitled *Developing Intercultural Competence through Education* (Barrett et al., 2014, pp. 29-30) seem to support this conclusion to some degree, emphasising that, in a classroom where meaningful ICC development is to take place, learners should be encouraged to work together through cooperative learning, and activities should engage learners in comparison, analysis, discovery and reflection. The following activity types are recommended:

- (1) activities emphasising multiple perspectives
- (2) role plays, simulations and drama
- (3) theatre, poetry and creative writing
- (4) ethnographic tasks
- (5) use of films and texts
- (6) image-making/still images in class
- (7) social media and other online tools (pp. 39-47)

We can add to this Byram's (1997, p. 65) view that "the dichotomy of 'classroom' and 'real world' is a false one": acknowledging and drawing upon learners' out-of-class experiences is essential.

Yet “for experience to become learning, learners must become autonomous in their capacity for refining and increasing their knowledge, skills and attitudes” (p. 69).

All of this implies that since ICC is a complex ability construct its development should also be multifaceted, and should take place in an environment where cooperation and learner autonomy are encouraged; where learners’ previous experiences are built on. Drawing on the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), as well as the works of other theorists such as Bandura (1969), Piaget (1970), and Bruner (1977), social constructivist learning theory seems to offer valuable insight in this respect. A central notion of this learning theory is that each of us constructs their own, idiosyncratic version of reality through shared social activity. “The ‘real world’, it is argued, does not exist out there as a set of concrete, objective facts; it is constructed by us as social beings in our everyday lives and language is the chief instrument for doing this” (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 47). For the language learner in the IC classroom, taking this approach would mean a shift in their perspective when observing and trying to understand others’ cultural practices:

People would be observed getting things done, making things work – functioning within certain contexts – but as well as describing these activities in functional terms, the constructivist pauses to question how these activities have come about, what makes them significant and how participants work at making them into ‘reality’. (Roberts et al., 2001, p. 49)

Furthermore, in social constructivist learning theory knowledge is seen as a social product, sustained by social processes (Burr, 1995), learning is viewed as a social, as well as an active process, and the role of cultural artefacts and/or more knowledgeable others who serve as facilitators or models is key (Lantolf, 2000; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). The constructivist classroom can therefore be characterised by the following:

- (1) Learning is a social and collaborative activity; learners are encouraged to interact and engage in dialogue; the teacher acts as facilitator;
- (2) In-school learning is related to out-of-school learning and other experiences; tasks and activities are set in meaningful contexts and are therefore motivating;
- (3) The teacher builds on learners’ prior knowledge;
- (4) The teacher encourages learner autonomy and initiative;
- (5) Language is key to development;

- (6) Critical thinking, reflection, questioning, investigating, explanation, feedback and real-world problem solving are of great importance (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, pp. 37-47).

Returning to Byram's (1997) model, the ultimate aim of ICC development from an FLT perspective is to attain the ideal of the IS, who communicates appropriately and effectively, is curious, open and critical, and at the same time possesses knowledge as well as the skills of interpreting, relating, discovery and interaction. It is apparent from the above that the educational approach derived from social constructivist learning theory corresponds greatly to this aim.

### 3.4 ICC assessment

In a study conducted by Deardorff (2006, p. 241), 23 well-known intercultural scholars and 24 administrators from higher education institutions in the U.S. agreed that ICC can and should be assessed. However, ICC assessment poses countless challenges, the first of which is defining what exactly it is that we are assessing. According to Deardorff (2009, pp. 481-486), it is advisable to prioritise certain aspects of ICC, since one of the most frequent pitfalls is aiming to assess too much at once. Another challenge pertains to the methods of assessment. For instance, "whereas most educators and trainers know how to assess knowledge and skill, awareness and attitude are seldom part of traditional assessment" (Fantini, 2000, p. 31). This leads us to the third challenge: the ethical issues that may arise. As has been discussed, the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) includes intercultural elements among the general competences required of a foreign language learner, but does not define levels of ICC. Yet if this was resolved in later editions, descriptors of the dimensions of attitudes and critical cultural awareness, for instance, would almost certainly "imply a moral judgement of what is acceptable or not" (Byram, 2003, p. 12).

With these points in mind, in this section I review some of the tools that can be used for ICC assessment. The literature distinguishes two formats for such tools: indirect and direct assessment (Fantini, 2000, 2009; Lázár et al., 2007; Sinicrope et al., 2007), although there does not seem to be a consensus on what exactly differentiates the two. For our purposes the former involves learners' impressions of their own ICC, or ICC development, in that it draws on self-report surveys and interviews, whereas the latter directly documents their level or learning through traditional

tests and quizzes, portfolios, and performance assessment. As is typically the case with other instructional processes, a blended approach of both direct and indirect indicators can prove most effective (Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Fantini, 2009). The assessment tools to be reviewed in the following three sections are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7  
*Reviewed ICC assessment tools*

<b>Researcher(s)/Assessment tool</b>	<b>ICC framework on which it is based</b>	<b>Method(s) of assessment</b>
<b>Indirect assessment tools</b>		
(1) Arasaratnam (2009)	The researcher's own framework of Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam, 2009)	self-report
(2) Dombi (2013)	Byram's (1997) framework of ICC	self-report
(3) Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman (2003)/IDI	Bennett's (1993) DMIS	self-report
<b>Direct assessment tools</b>		
(4) Koester & Olebe (1988)/BASIC	Ruben's (1976) framework of Intercultural Competence	observation by others
(5) Portfolio assessment	-	teachers' assessment of learners' work (learners' assessment of their own work)
<b>Blended assessment tools</b>		
(6) Fantini (2007)/AIC	The researcher's own framework of Intercultural Competence (Fantini, 2007)	self-report and assessment by others
(7) INCA Project (2004)	The INCA Project framework of Intercultural Competence (2004)	questionnaires, portfolio, cognitive/affective-oriented written exercises and behaviour-oriented group exercises

### 3.4.1 Indirect assessment tools

There is a large variety of self-report instruments in the field which aim to assess ICC or related constructs for diagnostic purposes. In fact, the variety is so large, that a taxonomy has been developed (Paige, 2004), listing instruments that aim to measure the following constructs, among others: intercultural and multicultural competence, intercultural development, global awareness and worldmindedness, cultural adjustment, and culture shock and cultural adaptation. For the purposes of this thesis, I only focus on instruments which were designed specifically for the assessment of ICC (or intercultural communication competence) and intercultural development,

and are generic, i.e. apply to all cultural groups. This has guided my selection of not only indirect, but also direct and blended tools. The only exception is Dombi's (2013) measure: the related study was conducted in the same context as the studies presented in this thesis; therefore, its culture-specific approach is directly applicable to them.

In this section I therefore discuss three instruments: one developed by Arasaratnam (2009), one by Dombi (2013), and one by Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003). Whereas the first two are based on list models of ICC, the third tool uses a development model as its starting point. I also explore studies that were conducted with these instruments. In some cases the aim of the study was merely to determine whether the instrument is conceptually sound, whereas in other cases, it also involved assessing participants' ICC, its relationship with other variables, and its development.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Arasaratnam (2009) conceptualises ICC along three dimensions: a cognitive, a behavioural and an affective dimension. It was also mentioned that the description of these dimensions, compared with those in other similar frameworks, is rather vague. Nevertheless, based on this conceptualisation the scholar has developed an instrument that measures ICC, with the aim that the tool be suitable for culturally diverse groups of participants. The self-report instrument includes five items for each of the three dimensions: for example the statement '*I usually look for opportunities to interact with people from other cultures*' is an item that addresses the behavioural dimension. Participants would then indicate their position on a seven-point Likert-type scale for the resulting 15 items.

This instrument was tested on 302 students of a large Australian university, of which 127 were international students. The researcher included measures of four other variables in the study so as to test the validity of the 15-item ICC instrument. Three of these variables, which she claims are related to ICC, but are not incorporated in her conceptualisation of the construct, are the following: (1) attitude towards other cultures, (2) motivation and (3) interaction involvement. The fourth variable, ethnocentrism was included with the belief that there would be a negative correlation with ICC. Findings reveal positive relationships between ICC and three of the independent variables: attitude towards other cultures, motivation and interaction involvement, and a negative correlation between ICC and ethnocentrism, as expected. This means that the instrument performed well, although the results of factor analysis prompted the researcher to change the original 15-item ICC measure to a 10-item instrument. Arasaratnam (2009, Discussion section,

para. 2) concludes with a call for follow-up studies with “sufficient numbers of participants in each national group” to see if the instrument “truly translates well into different cultures”.

Another study which I have already touched upon, but without focusing on the instrument used, is that conducted by Dombi (2013). The aim of the research was, first, to determine what factors contribute to students’ success or failure in situations of intercultural contact, and second, to survey students’ ICC and its relationship with some of these factors, namely (1) willingness to communicate, (2) perceived communication competence, (3) language use related anxiety, (4) motivation, (5) perceived second language competence and (6) frequency of intercultural contacts. A questionnaire containing all of these measures was therefore designed. The ICC component of the questionnaire incorporated, on the one hand, items that were based on some of the objectives outlined by Byram (1997) for the attitudes, knowledge and skills dimensions. For instance, the item ‘*I often notice differences between the way Hungarians and Americans behave*’ was included as related to the skills dimension. On the other hand, more context-specific items were added to this pool for a measure of students’ perceived ICC. Participants would then be required to estimate how competent they would be in certain described situations of intercultural interaction, by giving a percentage value to them. The ICC scale and the perceived ICC scale were eventually merged for a more reliable measure of students’ ICC.

The questionnaire was completed by 102 English majors studying at the University of Pécs. Each scale was found to display solid reliability, and findings reveal relatively high ICC scores, as well as a strong relationship between the participants’ ICC and their willingness to communicate, self-image as communicators, and anxiety. As discussed in Section 3.2.3, these findings have important pedagogical implications which are especially relevant to the studies addressed in this thesis.

The two assessment instruments presented above, namely that designed by Arasaratnam (2009) and Dombi (2013) are similar in that they both attempt to measure ICC as composed of elements – although for the communication studies scholar Arasaratnam this is *intercultural communication competence* comprising an affective, a cognitive and a behavioural dimension, whereas for the AL researcher Dombi it is *intercultural communicative competence* made up of attitudes, knowledge and skills as understood by Byram (1997). By contrast, the third assessment tool examined here is based on Bennett’s (1993) DMIS, which is found among the frameworks discussed in Chapter 2. The instrument based on this model is Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman’s



(2003) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The scholars make a distinction between *intercultural sensitivity* “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences”, and *intercultural competence*, “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways”, and argue that “greater intercultural sensitivity is associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural competence” (Introduction section, para. 1). As a construct revision of Bennett’s model, the IDI includes five dimensions: (1) Denial/Defense; (2) Reversal; (3) Minimization; (4) Acceptance/Adaptation; and (5) Encapsulated marginality. Participants are required to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree with 50 statements, each of which corresponds to one of these five dimensions. For instance, a sample item for the dimension of Minimization is ‘*Cultural differences are less important than the fact that people have the same needs, interests and goals in life*’. Validity and reliability were established for this five-factor version of the instrument.

This tool and its earlier versions have been widely used in the field to assess the intercultural sensitivity of physician trainees (Altshuler, Sussman, & Kachur, 2003), students studying abroad (Engle & Engle, 2004), high school students (Staffron, 2003), and teachers (Mahon, 2006). For example, in Mahon’s (2006) study involving 155 teachers from the U.S., 97.5% of participants were found to be at the minimization stage or below. According to the author, the implication for teacher education is that “we need to work harder at getting our university students to understand that ‘not seeing color’ is ignoring someone’s identity” (p. 401).

As a final point about indirect measures, Sinicrope et al. (2007) draw attention to the concern voiced by several researchers that participants may not be able to provide accurate self-assessments. This may, for instance, be due to the influence of social desirability, but according to Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005, Theoretical approaches section, para. 4), “a major shortcoming in studies in the past is that often participants who have little experience in intercultural situations are asked for self-reports of behavioural choices in hypothetical intercultural situations”. Nevertheless, self-report surveys remain to be the most widely used tools for ICC assessment (Sinicrope et al., 2007) for diagnostic purposes.

### 3.4.2 Direct assessment tools

Compared with self-report instruments, which involve the respondent in assessing their own competence, direct tools are scarce in the field. This may be unsurprising since this latter format usually requires some level of expertise on the part of teachers, trainers or researchers in evaluating portfolios as evidence of learning, or “comparing samples of intercultural interaction with implicit or explicit behavioural indicators” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 174). In this section I examine a well-known tool for, as well as a promising approach to more direct assessment of ICC. The tool is Koester and Olebe’s (1988) Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Communication Effectiveness (BASIC), which is used to assess participants’ ICC by observers, and the approach is portfolio assessment, which is explored with the help of a study drawing on this approach (Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen, 1999).

The BASIC (Koester & Olebe, 1988) is based on Ruben’s (1976) framework of ICC, which was elaborated on in Chapter 2. What was not mentioned is that Ruben also developed operational definitions and rating scales for each of the dimensions in his model for assessment purposes, so that participants’ performance could be rated in situations “that are analogous to those for which they are being trained” (p. 337). Although the scholar’s aim was to create a tool that could be used by untrained observers, the phrasing of some descriptions for these scales is rather convoluted. For example, the highest level on the scale for the dimension of interaction posture is described in the following way:

The individual responds to others in a manner that draws out information, thoughts, and feelings and provides evaluative responses, but only after gathering sufficient input so that the evaluative framework fits the individual(s) with whom he or she is interacting. He or she asks questions, restates others’ ideas, and appears to gather information prior to responding evaluatively. (p. 347)

The BASIC is a modified version of Ruben’s (1976) assessment tool, starting out from its “conceptual strengths and methodological weaknesses” (Koester & Olebe, 1988, p. 233). It encompasses eight scales instead of the original seven, and contains rephrased descriptions of scales for greater clarity, so that untrained observers would have no difficulty using it. For instance, the description above was revised in this way (changes are shown in italics):

*My roommate* responds to others in a manner that draws out information, thoughts, and feelings. *She or he* provides evaluative response, but only after gathering *enough*

*information to provide a response that is appropriate to the individuals involved. She or he asks questions, restates others' ideas, and appears to gather information before answering evaluatively. (p. 240)*

The resulting BASIC measure was administered to 263 college students (hence the change in the description from 'the individual' to 'my roommate'), and the new scale was found to be reliable.

Another direct assessment tool which differs substantially from both indirect measures and the behavioural scale outlined above is the portfolio. According to Jacobson et al. (1999), "portfolio assessment recognizes that learning is not always easily quantifiable, and calls on students to demonstrate their learning by selecting and presenting examples of their best work" (p. 467). The value of this form of assessment has been increasingly recognised in the field (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009), since it "allows a combination of atomised and holistic assessment", and "also provides the means of maintaining a close relationship between testing and teaching" (Byram, 1997, p. 107). Although scholars like Fantini (2009) and Sinicrope et al. (2007) list it among direct assessment tools – after all, teachers assess learners' ICC based on evidence found in their portfolios, in some ways this is not a fitting categorization since it is learners who assess their own work first, and decide what to include. Depending on the ICC development programme, the portfolio can contain a great variety of elements, ranging from "an audio-recording and commentary in which the learner has interviewed someone in the foreign language" through "a reflective account of a learner's experience of a visit to a country where the language is spoken natively", to "the content and results of a test of the learner's factual knowledge of the history and/or contemporary events of a country" (Byram, 1997, p. 108). However, there are a number of challenges associated with this type of assessment, some of which are addressed by Stocks and Trevitt (2008) and left as open questions:

The meta-cognitive skills that the portfolio is supposed to represent are difficult to pin down and assessors have to rely heavily on qualitative professional judgement when making assessment decisions [...] In terms of portfolios as a valid approach to assessment, issues of authenticity become central – how does one judge whether the portfolio represents an authentic experience, or simply an effort to play the assessment 'game'?" (Abstract, para. 2)

Jacobson et al. (1999) conducted a study in which the teacher-researchers drew on portfolios to document learners' intercultural learning. The participants were international students – 16 in the fall semester and 16 others in the spring semester – enrolled in the Intensive English Program at the University of Iowa. These students were required to compile an *intercultural communication*

*skills* portfolio by the end of the term, and present it to their class. Their assignment sheet included the following instructions:

Think of good examples from your experience in this country that show what you have learned about communicating in the culture here. [...] It might not be obvious to other people why you have put certain items in your portfolio. To be complete, you must also describe each item in the portfolio and explain what it shows about what you have learned. (p. 476)

These instructions appear too general at first glimpse, but the teacher researchers emphasise that, throughout the terms, they supported students in many ways in compiling their portfolios. Despite this, they found that very few students focused on the development of their own intercultural interactive skills; the majority reflected on broad cultural differences between the U.S. and their home countries which they had observed or heard about. The scholars found these results rather unexpected, since “students were explicitly instructed to focus their portfolios on communication skills, and to focus on their own experiences in U.S. culture” (p. 479). They categorized the contents of students’ portfolios as *interactive*, *other active* and *passive*, and claim they represent three types of intercultural learning. For instance, portfolio contents categorized as indicating passive understanding showed no evidence of personal involvement with the given features of culture. The authors conclude that, although it is difficult to state that portfolios definitively portray students’ learning, and can only provide a limited picture, they are “a productive use of class time” (p. 490). They also point out, however, that, evidently, students had difficulty understanding the concept of the portfolio, and reflecting on their own learning was a completely new experience for them.

In conclusion, it is clear that, although the BASIC offers a distinctive way of assessing learners’ ICC, it is not a viable option if the development programme takes Byram’s (1997) model as its basis, since some of the objectives related to the five dimensions of attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness are impossible to observe as behaviour. “As a consequence, performance assessment cannot be the only approach” (Byram, 1997, p. 89). On the other hand, portfolio assessment appears more promising as it seems to capture some aspects of ICC that may be lost through other forms of assessment. As opposed to all the other indirect, direct and blended assessment tools discussed here, it can be used as a form of educational assessment to document ICC *development*, rather than just a ‘*snapshot*’ of performance (Precht & Davidson-Lund, 2007). As seen, however, the portfolio may pose several challenges for both learners and teachers – a point which is underlined by my own findings presented in Chapter 6.

### 3.4.3 Blended assessment tools

In order to get a more comprehensive picture of intercultural learning, some projects have applied a blended approach to assessment. In a study investigating intercultural scholars' and higher education administrators' views on important issues related to ICC, both groups proposed that the best way to assess the construct is to use a mix of methods (Deardorff, 2006, p. 241). This is what the blended assessment tools presented here aim to do: Fantini's (2007) project involves a questionnaire that was developed to be used for self-assessment as well as assessment by others, whereas the INCA project (2004) includes a portfolio, a questionnaire, written exercises based on scenarios, and group exercises of role play.

The research project resulting in Fantini's (2007) *Assessing Intercultural Competence (AIC)* instrument enquired into the ways in which a civic service programme in Ecuador impacted participants' intercultural learning. The study was carried out through the use of a questionnaire and follow-up interviews, and involved three groups of participants: (1) British and Swiss alumni to the programme, who had previously been volunteers in Ecuador, (2) British and Swiss volunteers, who were doing their service at the time of the study and (3) Ecuadorian host mentors of these volunteers. Participants from all three groups were required to fill in the questionnaire: alumni and volunteers about themselves, and mentors about themselves as well as about the volunteers they were mentoring. For this reason, the project can be seen as representing a blended approach to ICC assessment: data on volunteers' ICC was collected not only from the self-report survey, but also from their mentors.

The instrument comprises an ICC component in addition to measures of several other variables, namely (1) personal characteristics, (2) motivation and options, (3) language proficiency, (4) communication styles and (5) intercultural areas. Regrettably, the published report does not elaborate on how the items for these measures were developed or what previous research they were based on, nor does the study explore the possible relationships between these variables and ICC. The ICC component, bearing the name *intercultural abilities* in the questionnaire, is grounded in Fantini's (2007) conceptualisation of the construct, as seen in Chapter 2. As such, it contains items for four dimensions of ICC: attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness. For instance, the statement '*I was able to contrast the host culture with my own*' is an item corresponding to the skills dimension. At the same time, a curiously similar item is included for the – in theory – very different knowledge dimension: '*I could contrast important aspects of the host language and culture with*

*my own*'. Participants were asked to mark each item twice, to indicate their level of ability at the beginning and at the end of their stay in Ecuador.

This assessment tool was administered to all participants in the study, but two datasets – those of volunteers and mentors – were eliminated from the statistical analyses for reasons that remained unclear. Therefore, these analyses were performed based on data from only 28 respondents, the alumni. Nevertheless, the instrument performed well on reliability testing, and mean scores for participants' ICC were found to be higher at the end of service in all four components. For the vast majority of the respondents the results also showed significant improvement in language proficiency, and during the interviews many of them highlighted the importance of learning the host language for intercultural success. As for the mentors' view, the research report does not reveal any specifics about their assessment of volunteers' ICC dimensions in the questionnaire, but concludes, "mentors felt that volunteers were impacted in many positive ways – in areas of knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness – and they noted how volunteers had changed, expected volunteers to pursue their life choices more effectively, and to be helpful to others" (Fantini, 2007, p. 53).

Of all the assessment instruments outlined here, it is perhaps those of the INCA project (2004) that aim to approach ICC assessment in the most comprehensive manner. This project involved academic experts and engineering employers with the aim of developing "an objective quality assurance tool, ideally set out as a series of levels, a grid of sorts, like those used for competence-based assessment in other disciplines" (Precht & Davidson-Lund, 2007, pp. 467-468). The tools were built on the corresponding ICC framework introduced in Chapter 2. As discussed, this framework comprises six components, i.e. (1) tolerance for ambiguity, (2) behavioural flexibility, (3) communicative awareness, (4) knowledge discovery, (5) respect for otherness and (6) empathy, which are envisaged along three dimensions: motivation, skill/knowledge, and behaviour. This framework is largely founded on Kühlmann and Stahl's (1998) research, but also draws on Byram's (1997) model. In accordance with Byram's view that the interpretation of evidence of intercultural learning "has to be based on explicit and agreed criteria" (p. 90), descriptors were formulated for each of these competences at three levels: basic, intermediate and full, both from the assessor's and the assessee's point of view. As an example, Table 8 gives details on how the first component of ICC, *tolerance for ambiguity* is described in the assessor's framework.

Table 8

*Levels for Tolerance for ambiguity* (INCA Project Assessor Manual, 2004, p. 9)

Level → Competence ↓	1 'Basic'	2 'Intermediate'	3 'Full'
<b>Tolerance for ambiguity</b>	1T Deals with ambiguity on a one-off basis, responding to items as they arise.  May be overwhelmed by ambiguous situations which imply high involvement.	2T Has begun to acquire a repertoire of approaches to cope with ambiguities in low-involvement situations.  Begins to accept ambiguity as a challenge.	3T Is constantly aware of the possibility of ambiguity.  When it occurs, he/she tolerates and manages it.

The next step in the INCA project (2004) was to design a series of tools for recording and assessing ICC. The available tools include the following:

- (1) two questionnaires: these are used to collect biographical information and information on the assessee's intercultural profile;
- (2) portfolio: this is a personal document that "offers the individual a comprehensive means of recording his/her developing intercultural competence" (Prechtel & Davidson-Lund, 2007, p. 482);
- (3) cognitive/affective-oriented written exercises: these are related to text-based and video-based scenarios that show critical incidents, which are followed by open-ended questions;
- (4) behaviour-oriented group exercises: these are role play activities that are observed by the assessor.

The first two of these tools are not used for evaluation purposes: the questionnaires provide the assessor with background information on the assessee, whereas the portfolio is viewed as a personal document for self-reflection. Nevertheless, they constitute an important part of the assessment process. For instance, the portfolio includes a *Biography of Intercultural Competence* section, in which participants can keep a record of and analyse their intercultural encounters, as well as reflect on the factors that may influence how they respond to intercultural situations. The questionnaire, however, contains items that can lead to confusion. Some items are too general and thus may trigger automatic responses, such as the following: '*I find it difficult to adapt to people from diverse origins*'. Also, in the case of some other items, it is unclear how the statement reflects the underlying construct to be measured. For example the item '*I often change my plans when I am on*

*holiday abroad*’ presumably corresponds to the dimension of *behavioural flexibility*, but I believe has little to do with the actual behavioural flexibility required of the IS in situations of intercultural contact. As for the last two tools, on the other hand, the responses given in the written exercises and the behaviours exhibited in the group exercises are both scored against the INCA grid by trained assessors. An example of a scenario testing the ICC component *tolerance for ambiguity* is provided in Table 9, with the corresponding assessment sheet.

Table 9

*Sample scenario testing Tolerance for ambiguity* (INCA Project Assessor Manual, 2004, p. 26; INCA Project Assessment Sheet: Intercultural Encounters, 2004, p. 7)

**Scenario ‘Feeling Confused (2)’**

You have been working for six months among people from a different country. In the workplace you do not have language difficulties as such but you notice that people often seem to say things they don’t really mean and that they exaggerate the way in which they speak. For example when somebody is working too slowly, a supervisor might say ‘you take all the time you need’ instead of ‘hurry up’. In your culture people are very straightforward and say only what they mean.

Imagine that you are writing or e-mailing to a friend in your own country. Write down the thoughts you might have in this situation. Imagine what your reactions might be and how you would deal with the situation.

**Assessment sheet for the scenario ‘Feeling confused (2)’**

<b>Feeling Confused 2 TA basic</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would do nothing <input type="checkbox"/> I don’t know <input type="checkbox"/> I would talk only to fellow nationals <input type="checkbox"/> I would talk to people as little as possible <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Feeling Confused 2 TA intermediate</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accept the situation cheerfully <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Feeling Confused 2 TA full</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Try to improve understanding by asking questions <input type="checkbox"/> Learn some dialect words and find out when to use them <input type="checkbox"/> Note down difficult or unusual words and try to use them <input type="checkbox"/> Find it exciting and challenging <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Score Feeling Confused 2 TA 1-----2-----3</b>	



Here the descriptors for the three levels serve only as guidelines for assessors. As can be seen in Table 9, the actual assessment sheets for scenarios contain a number of sample responses that will possibly be given to the open-ended questions in the scenarios. Similarly, the assessment sheets for role plays list possible behaviours that may be exhibited during the activity. Assessors are required to study the assessment sheets in order to find a correspondence between these listed sample responses or behaviours and the actual responses or behaviours, and fit any alternative answers or actions within the appropriate category, based on the guiding general descriptive texts.

The assessment tools of the INCA project (2004) were piloted in five countries with the involvement of more than 50 assesseees, and modifications were made based on their assessors' feedback (Prechtel & Davidson-Lund, 2007). However, this pilot study only "offered a limited amount of empirical data against which to validate the INCA grid" (p. 485); therefore, it was concluded that further studies were needed in order to check for the validity of the tools.

In this section I explored two blended approaches to ICC assessment: Fantini's (2007) AIC, and the INCA project (2004). Both have great merits, as well as a number of limitations, which means they cannot be used in their original forms in the empirical studies discussed in this thesis. The strength of the AIC lies in its multiperspective approach: it includes a questionnaire and follow-up interviews; assessment by self and by others. However, some questionnaire items for ICC dimensions exhibit a lack of conceptual rigour, as evidenced, for example, by two almost identical statements – one listed under skills, and one under knowledge. A further shortcoming derives from the fact that the tool was tested on a small sample of only 28 people in a single context. As for the INCA project, its strong points are numerous: it also takes a multiperspective approach to assessment, attempts to define levels of ICC and formulate corresponding descriptors, and introduces a portfolio as well as other helpful tools. However, in many cases the descriptors for different levels of the same underlying construct seem to refer to completely different constructs, and are often muddled. The scenarios it offers appear particularly valuable, but were designed for professional contexts and need to be altered if they are to suit other contexts. At the same time, some of the questionnaire items it includes are problematic, and none of the INCA tools were validated in an empirical study. Nevertheless, the studies presented in this thesis draw on some of these tools, which were, on the whole, found to be useful resources.

## 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored various aspects of ICC development and assessment. The chapter set off with the examination of three contexts in which intercultural teaching and learning may take place: compulsory education, tertiary education and professional contexts. In order to gain understanding of the first of these contexts large scale-studies were considered, revealing that although national curricula include reference to intercultural competence, their recommendations for methodological approaches are insufficient, and not in line with the complexity of the construct. This was also found to be reflected in foreign language teachers' practice of teaching for ICC. On the other hand, based on research conducted in tertiary education and professional contexts, I concluded that the field has a range of methods to offer, but culture models appear to be prevalent, whereas drawing on critical perspectives does not seem to be a priority. A survey of the relevant studies conducted in the context of Hungarian tertiary education supported this claim, and also indicated that some important issues related to intercultural teaching and learning have become part of Hungarian academic discourse.

Since the investigation of the above contexts only provided a bird's eye view of ICC development, classroom practices were examined in greater depth, as representing one of three approaches: the facts-oriented, the ethnographic, and the critical approach. These three approaches were seen as contributing in distinct ways to ICC development. I therefore proposed that intercultural teaching which is grounded in Byram's (1997) understanding of the construct requires the blending of these approaches, and argued that social constructivist learning theory offers a useful frame for this endeavour.

Finally, I considered three different groups of tools for ICC assessment: indirect, direct and blended tools. This included a discussion of three self-report instruments, a behavioural assessment scale, portfolio assessment, and two projects encompassing a combination of tools. I also explored some of the studies carried out with the use of these tools, and found they are characterised by varying degrees of validity and reliability, and all have a number of merits as well as shortcomings. Whereas most of these instruments are appropriate for providing a 'snapshot in time' of ICC, the portfolio was seen as particularly relevant to my own research, as it allows for educational assessment. In summary, the literature on ICC development and assessment was heavily drawn on as a source of ideas for both the classroom practices and the research processes which the studies presented in this thesis involved. These are elaborated on in the next chapters, in Part 2 of the thesis.

## PART 2

### Chapter 4: Background to the three empirical studies

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Setting
- 4.3 Participants of the three empirical studies
- 4.4 Purpose of the research and research questions
- 4.5 Methods of data collection and analysis
  - 4.5.1 The exploratory study on three intercultural communication courses
  - 4.5.2 The two classroom studies on developing students' ICC
- 4.6 Issues of trustworthiness
- 4.7 Role of the researcher
- 4.8 Ethical considerations
- 4.9 Conclusion

#### 4.1 Introduction

Part 1 of this thesis was dedicated to exploring (1) key concepts inherent in the notion of ICC, such as culture, IC and competence, (2) the construct of ICC itself, as well as (3) aspects of its development and assessment. A number of empirical studies were reviewed, revealing the need for further research into the ways in which participants' ICC may be developed by means of formal instruction. At the same time, there is a recognition that the aims and processes of ICC courses and trainings are ultimately determined by the contexts for which they have been designed (Feng, Byram, & Fleming, 2009). For this reason, any study that sets out to examine ICC development in a structured educational setting should also take note of a variety of contextual factors.

This chapter offers an overview of my three studies which aim at thick description of the processes and outcomes of an ICC development programme at a Hungarian university, and provide emic perspectives of students and their tutors. They were carried out for several reasons and with a number of aims. Firstly, in the 2010/2011 academic year I was granted the opportunity to teach a seminar entitled *Introduction to Intercultural Communication*. I surveyed the literature and designed the syllabus, but was intrigued by the gaps in the literature mentioned above. I therefore

conducted an exploratory study involving (1) other teachers holding IC seminars and the related IC lecture at the institute, as well as (2) students who had participated in these courses. The aim of this exploratory study was to gain insight into classroom practices and teachers' and students' opinions about the courses. The findings proved very useful and informed the planning phase for the seminar I would offer the following term, but also revealed an institutional need to determine an approach to teaching IC which would be most beneficial for students. Consequently, I carried out two classroom studies in order to gain a deeper understanding of various aspects of English majors' ICC development in this particular setting. Here I present a general outline of the three studies, which are discussed separately and in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6. For an outline of the three phases of research – the research questions, number of participants, data sources and methods of analysis in each study – please refer to Table 10 in this chapter, which is the same as Table 1, found in the *Introduction* to this thesis.

## 4.2 Setting

The three studies were conducted at the Institute of English Studies, University of Pécs, which is one of the largest universities in Hungary, with 26,699 Hungarian and 1,764 international students enrolled in the year 2011 (PTE Statisztikák, 2011). More than half of the student population comes from the region – i.e. from Baranya, Somogy and Tolna county, but other regions of the country are also represented (Galántai & Trendl, 2014). In addition, due to the popularity of the city among tourists and the university among international students, the larger setting of the three studies can be described as increasingly multicultural. This is underlined by the fact that the number of international students enrolled in programmes offered by the Medical School has doubled in the last decade, and is now slightly higher than that of Hungarian medical students (Faubl, Zuhorn, & Füzési, 2014).

The Institute of English Studies is part of the Faculty of Humanities and runs programmes at BA, MA and doctoral level. The IC courses explored in the three studies I conducted are part of the BA in English Studies curriculum, which includes a seminar series and two lecture series on IC. These have been offered since the 2006/2007 academic year. All students are advised to enrol

in the seminar and the introductory lecture series in their first year, and students choosing a study track of applied linguistics are also offered a second series of lectures in their final year.

### 4.3 Participants of the three empirical studies

The first, exploratory study (ES) involved two groups of participants: (1) three teachers (two males and one female), and (2) 16 second- and third-year BA students of English studies, all native speakers of Hungarian. Two of the teachers have held the seminar *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* since its inclusion in the curriculum in 2006, whereas the third teacher has held lectures with the same title. All student participants had previously completed the seminar, but one student had not yet taken the lecture at the time of data collection, i.e. the second term of the 2010/2011 academic year.

The participants of the second (N=16) and the third study (N=12) were BA students of English Studies who were enrolled in my *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar in the first term of the 2011/2012 and that of the 2013/2014 academic year, respectively. The two groups of participants were different in a number of ways. Firstly, of the sixteen participants of Classroom Study 1 (CS1) eleven were Hungarian and five were Erasmus students from Latvia, Poland and Spain, whereas Classroom Study 2 (CS2) involved only Hungarian students. Also, the number of female students was three times that of male students in CS1 (twelve female and four male participants), whereas the number of male students was slightly higher in CS2 (five female and seven male participants). Finally, four students also volunteered to take part in a focus-group interview (two Hungarian, two Latvian – three female, one male student) in CS1, but there were no volunteers in CS2. Chapters 5 and 6 offer a more detailed description of the research participants, including, in the case of the participants of CS1 and CS2, information on the foreign languages they speak and the opportunities they have had for intercultural interaction.

## 4.4 Purpose of the research and research questions

Byram (2008) differentiates between three types of educational research: “research that seeks to establish explanations in terms of cause and effect, research that seeks to understand the experience of people involved in education, and research that attempts to create change” (p. 91). The three studies were conducted with all of these purposes in mind. The ES aimed to determine what topics, materials, activities and modes of assessment were drawn on in the IC seminars and the introductory lecture, and to find out about teachers’ and students’ opinions about these and the courses in general. In this sense, its original purpose was to understand the experience of the two groups of participants by uncovering their “insider perspective” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). It was therefore driven by the following research questions:

- (RQ1) How is IC taught in the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university? (What topics, materials, activities and forms of assessment are used?)
- (RQ2) What is the teachers’ attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?
- (RQ3) What is the students’ attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?
- (RQ4) Which topics and activities do the students enjoy the most and the least?
- (RQ5) In what ways have the courses proved useful for the students?

The purpose of the two classroom studies, on the other hand, was threefold. Firstly, they aimed to explore explanations in terms of cause and effect in the sense that I examined students’ development in the social constructivist classroom where it was assumed that teaching (following the social constructivist approach) would result in learning (students’ ICC development). They did not, however, follow an experimental design to establish correlations between specific teaching methods and the learning that occurred, but rather attempted to evaluate the effects of teaching through the analysis of data from students, and also based on my notes and reflections as the teacher of these courses. Secondly, they aimed to gain some understanding of students’ views about their own development as well as the social constructivist approach. Finally, they were founded on the teacher-researcher’s philosophical standpoint that it is desirable to develop English majors’ ICC in a formal educational setting, including the development of their criticality, and that this is possible, at least to some extent, in the social constructivist classroom, over limited time. In this sense, the

two classroom studies sought to create change, as they were rooted in the belief that (1) student criticality should be developed in higher education and that (2) the focus of foreign language education should be engagement in communication with others, rather than mere information exchange. The following research questions were therefore formulated:

(RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?

(RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?

The research questions are presented along with the data sources and methods of analysis on page 89 in Table 10, in which the phases of the research are outlined.

## 4.5 Methods of data collection and analysis

The research presented here follows what is usually referred to as a qualitative approach in that it (1) includes a smaller sample of participants, (2) explores the participants' emic perspectives and interpretations of their experiences, (3) draws on a wide range of data to capture rich details, and (4) involves analysis that is fundamentally interpretive (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 37-38). In addition, the classroom studies took place in the natural setting, i.e. the classroom, which is also characteristic of the qualitative approach. However, although the data are in large part qualitative in nature, some of the data are numerical and have been analysed quantitatively. In what follows I give an overview of the methods of data collection and analysis used in the three studies, which are summarized in Table 10 on page 89.

### 4.5.1 The exploratory study on three intercultural communication courses

In enquiring into teachers' and students' views about the introductory IC seminars and lecture I relied on the following sources of information in the ES:

- (1) Semi-structured one-to-one interviews with the three teachers
- (2) A questionnaire filled in by the students.

Conducting interviews is considered an appropriate method of data collection for phenomena that cannot be directly observed, such as participants' self-reported perceptions or attitudes (Creswell, 2003, p. 173). The semi-structured type of interview was chosen because it allows for comparability across interviewees due to the set of pre-prepared questions, and at the same time creates space for participants to freely elaborate on certain issues, resulting in a degree of richness that would be difficult to achieve through tightly controlled structured interviews (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). Some questions enquired into specific areas of the teachers' practice, whereas others were more general in that they asked about positive aspects and difficulties related to the courses. The teachers were also encouraged to elaborate on additional topics they found important.

As I was also interested in the students' perspectives, I designed a questionnaire, which seemed the most viable option for collecting data on the attitudes and opinions of a larger group of participants. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended items, and aimed to shed light on (1) what the students liked and disliked about the seminar and lecture in general, (2) which specific topics and activities they enjoyed the most and the least, and (3) in what ways the courses have proved useful for them. The instrument was carefully designed and reviewed by two other researchers, which is suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 96) as a way of maximizing the effectiveness of questionnaires.

Whereas the teachers' interviews as well as the students' answers to the open-ended questions were analysed in the iterative manner of qualitative content analysis (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 243), the data made up of the students' responses to the closed-ended questions were entered into SPSS, and descriptive statistics were used to get a sense of the basic features of the data. Due to the fact that there were only 16 student participants in this study, no other type of statistical analysis was carried out. The reader will find a more comprehensive account of the methods of data collection and analysis used in the ES in Chapter 5, together with the findings of the study.

#### 4.5.2 The two classroom studies on developing students' ICC

According to Dörnyei (2007), classroom research strives for "a situated understanding of learning, documenting, and analysing the dynamic interplay of various classroom processes and conditions that contribute to variation in learning outcomes" (p. 178). One of the key phrases in this



description is *situated understanding*, emphasising the need for data to be interpreted with reference to the classroom context, which is essentially seen as a social context. The studies discussed here were intended as *process-product studies* (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 14); that is, they aimed to consider both the classroom processes and the learning outcomes. As a result, I set out to explore the subject matter by collecting data in a variety of ways. A great deal of thought was put into the construction of all data sources, and the opinion of a senior researcher was taken into consideration when designing them.

The data sources drawn on in CS1 were the following:

- (1) A background questionnaire
- (2) The teacher's notes and reflections
- (3) A questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development
- (4) A follow-up focus-group interview with four students.

The questionnaire on the students' linguistic and cultural background was administered at the beginning of the term, the teacher's notes and reflections were written sporadically during the term, and the second questionnaire was filled in by the students on the final lesson. The focus-group interview was conducted with four volunteers from the group one month after the course had finished.

As will be seen in Chapter 6, the findings of CS1 are rich and manifold, revealing several important points about the social constructivist classroom as well as about how the students view their own development. However, I decided to include further sources of information when designing CS2, in the hope of gaining a more systematic understanding of the students' ICC development. I therefore relied on the following data sources in CS2:

- (1) A background questionnaire
- (2) A self-evaluation sheet on the students' ICC
- (3) The students' end-of-lesson reflections
- (4) The teacher's notes and reflections
- (5) The students' written assignments and in-class work
- (6) The students' portfolio
- (7) A questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development.

The first two of these were filled in by the students at the beginning of the term, (3), (4) and (5) were continuously written and collected during the term, whereas (6) and (7) were completed at the end of the term. The self-evaluation sheet on the students' ICC and their portfolio were two data sources of special importance. In the task sheet for the latter, submitted on the final lesson, the students were required to reflect on the ways in which their ICC had changed by drawing parallels with what they had written about their ICC in the self-evaluation sheet at the start of the course. Furthermore, I hoped that the analysis of their end-of-lesson reflections, assignments and in-class work would provide me with deeper insight into their ICC development paths.

Similarly to the processes of the ES, descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis of the quantitative data, such as those collected with the questionnaires and the self-evaluation sheet, whereas qualitative content analysis was performed on the qualitative data gained from all other sources, in addition to the open-ended items in the questionnaires. In Chapter 6, I give a more detailed account of the methods of data collection and analysis in the two classroom studies, and also report on the specifics about the coding process for the sake of transparency. Besides the presentation of the findings related to the whole group, certain students' ICC development in CS2 is described in greater depth, as they were identified as interesting individual cases.

Table 10 offers an overview of the three phases of the research, by outlining the research questions, data sources and methods of analysis for each phase.

Table 10  
*Phases of the research* (as shown in Table 1)

	Research questions	Data sources	Methods of analysis
<b>PHASE 1</b> <b>Exploratory study</b> (2010/2011)  16 student participants 3 teacher participants	(RQ1) How is IC taught in the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university? (What topics, materials, activities and forms of assessment are used?)	Semi-structured one-to-one interviews with the three teachers	Qualitative content analysis
	(RQ2) What is the teachers' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?		
	(RQ3) What is the students' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?	Questionnaire filled in by the students	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ4) Which topics and activities do the students enjoy the most and the least?		
	(RQ5) In what ways have the courses proved useful for the students?		
<b>PHASE 2</b> <b>Classroom study 1</b> (2011/2012)  16 student participants  Myself as the teacher-researcher	(RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>2. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> <li>3. Follow-up focus group interview with four students</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background questionnaire</li> <li>2. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>3. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> <li>4. Follow-up focus group interview with four students</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis
<b>PHASE 3</b> <b>Classroom study 2</b> (2013/2014)  12 student participants  Myself as the teacher-researcher	(RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students' end-of-lesson reflections</li> <li>2. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>3. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics
	(RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background questionnaire</li> <li>2. Self-evaluation sheet on the students' ICC</li> <li>3. The students' end-of-lesson reflections</li> <li>4. The teacher's notes and reflections</li> <li>5. The students' written assignments and in-class work</li> <li>6. The students' portfolio</li> <li>7. Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development</li> </ol>	Qualitative content analysis, Descriptive statistics

## 4.6 Issues of trustworthiness

According to Dörnyei (2007), “we can only claim that our investigation is indeed a ‘disciplined’ inquiry if we can set explicit quality standards to achieve” (p. 48). This means that certain steps have to be taken at various stages of the research process to ensure that threats to validity and reliability are minimized. However, adhering to quality criteria as they are expressed in these two concepts may become problematic when working with qualitative data, which is, by its very nature, an interpretive and context-dependent endeavour, as has been emphasised. Alternatives have therefore been introduced in the literature, such as trustworthiness, which Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57) define as including the following components:

- (1) Credibility, i.e. the truth value of a study
- (2) Transferability, i.e. the applicability of the results to other contexts
- (3) Dependability, i.e. the consistency of the findings
- (4) Confirmability, i.e. the neutrality of the findings.

In the studies presented here a number of strategies were used to meet these quality criteria. Firstly, method and data triangulation was employed. Data were gathered from questionnaires, interviews, as well as the students’ coursework, and the participants of CS2 were required to reflect on their own ICC development while their work was used as a source of potential evidence for this development. It was hoped that convergence of findings would provide evidence of credibility.

Secondly, findings are contextualized and reported on in rich detail. Descriptions of the context, the setting, the research participants and the various classroom processes are offered, in order to help readers determine the extent of transferability. Although it is not possible to generalize to the wider population based on the findings, some aspects might still ring true in other contexts, especially within the institution. As Dörnyei (2007) puts it, “even if the particulars of a study do not generalize, the main ideas and the process observed might” (p. 59).

Thirdly, a detailed and reflective description of the steps leading to the findings is offered. Dörnyei (2007) points out that “a common shortcoming of qualitative studies is that it is not transparent how the inferences were derived from the raw data” (p. 296). This thesis therefore includes an audit trail in which the development of the coding categories and the

emergence of the themes is elaborated on. In addition, quotes are used as illustrations for each main coding category, and readers will find examples of negative information that runs counter to the main conclusions drawn. Similarly, alternative explanations are also considered.

As a final strategy for ensuring that quality safeguards are in place, the role of the researcher is clarified in a separate section, where instances of how the researcher's previous knowledge, beliefs and biases may influence the research are presented. This is the focus of the next section.

## 4.7 Role of the researcher

As has been discussed, it is characteristic of qualitative inquiry that it is inherently interpretive. What this means is that, inevitably, “the researcher filters the data through a personal lens” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182), which introduces certain issues into the research process, such as the researcher's personal values and biases. The aim of this section is to explicitly identify these through a process of *reflexivity* (Creswell, 2003, p. 182).

Firstly, my role in the classroom studies was a dual one: I was both the teacher and the researcher. This meant that I was dedicated to my students' development and at the same time aimed to systematically investigate and document this development. I believe this form of participant research can result in an interplay between the two roles that has numerous advantages. The insight I gained from researching IC and the construct, development and assessment of ICC – from thoroughly surveying the literature and conducting the ES – has helped me to become a better teacher of IC. On the other hand, the experience of teaching for ICC has provided me with a unique perspective as a researcher of this subject matter. However, I find that this duality can also present a number of difficulties. For instance, as a teacher one is invested in positive results: eager to see remarkable progress in return for her educational efforts, and disappointed when faced with evidence that runs counter to this expectation. Therefore, throughout the research process I was conscious of not letting the desire to produce outstanding results skew my interpretations.

Secondly, I am personally connected to the research site in various ways. I was a student in the five-year English major programme at the University of Pécs, and after graduating I taught several courses at the Institute of English Studies as part of my doctoral studies. Naturally, I bring knowledge of some aspects of the Hungarian education system, since I have

studied in Hungary for many years, but I also had the opportunity to experience the system in the UK as a child and that in Holland as a university student. I believe these past experiences enhance my understanding of both the narrower research setting and the larger context, and provide me with background information that is useful for the research presented here. In addition, they have shaped many of my perceptions and beliefs about education at the institute in particular, and foreign language education in general. These, in turn, may also bring certain biases to this research.

One personal factor that may influence the research is my experience of being an English major and a teacher at this university. For instance, as a student I experienced fellow English majors' lack of willingness to communicate in the foreign language in the classroom, an issue that is touched upon in this research and has been explored by Nagy (2007). I also experienced, both as a student and later on as an instructor, that certain approaches to teaching can go a long way to alleviate this problem. Therefore, my choice for the social constructivist approach in the two classrooms of CS1 and CS2 were based not only on my understanding that it is suitable for ICC development, as proposed in Chapter 3, but also on my belief that it may contribute to greater participation.

Another factor that may undoubtedly have an impact on the research is my view that educating for ICC is hugely important in FLT for both personal and societal reasons, as is educating for critical thinking. I firmly believe that English Studies university graduates should be competent intercultural communicators as well as critical thinkers, but in my opinion the process of developing these constructs should begin well before students enrol at university. However, in my experience this is typically not the case in our educational context.

This introspective section aimed to contribute to the trustworthiness of the research by clarifying (1) the advantages and drawbacks of the dual role in participant research, (2) my connections to the research site, (3) the background knowledge, perspectives and biases I bring, and (4) the ways in which these may affect the studies discussed here.

## 4.8 Ethical considerations

As Dörnyei (2007) points out, “social research – including research in education – concerns people’s lives in the social world and therefore it inevitably involves ethical issues” (p. 63). This means that there are a number of factors that need to be considered in various phases of

the research to ensure ethical practice. These include (1) the participants' right to be informed about the aims of the study, and about the possible risks and consequences of participation, (2) their right to refuse to take part or to withdraw from the study without offering any explanations and (3) their right to remain anonymous. On the other hand, certain information one shares about the research with the participants may bias their responses (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 69). This presents the dilemma of how much information should be provided in order to remain ethical but at the same time keep negative effects on the research minimal.

With the above aspects in mind, I took the following steps in the three studies:

- (1) In the ES and CS1 I informed the participants about the background and purpose of the investigation, the fact that anonymity would be ensured and that participation was voluntary, meaning that opting out would not result in any negative consequences.
- (2) Recognising the need to obtain written consent, in CS2 I drew on a consent form (found in Appendix F), which included the same points.
- (3) However, in the case of both CS1 and CS2 I only let the students know about the aims of the research after data collection, at the end of the course.

Additional information about ethical considerations involved in the individual studies can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 in the *Data collection methods and procedures* sections.

## 4.9 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a general overview of the research I conducted with the ultimate aim of understanding English majors' ICC development as well as the classroom processes and contextual factors contributing to it. After giving a short description of the setting and the research participants, I presented the purpose of the research together with the research questions for each of the three studies. This was followed by a summary of the methods of data collection and analysis. Here I listed the different data sources I drew on in the ES, CS1 and CS2 and their rationale, in addition to outlining the methods of data analysis employed. I then discussed the measures that were taken in the studies to ensure that certain quality criteria were met. Finally, I reflected on the roles, background knowledge, beliefs and biases I have as a researcher which are relevant in the context of the research, and explained how ethical issues were addressed in carrying out the three studies.

The following two chapters provide a more comprehensive picture of these studies. Chapter 5 includes the findings of the ES: it sheds light on the classroom practices in the introductory IC seminar and lecture, and teachers' and students' attitudes to the courses. Chapter 6, on the other hand, reveals the ways in which these findings informed the design of my own syllabus, and introduces the findings of CS1 and CS2.



# Chapter 5: Exploring three intercultural communication courses

## 5.1 Introduction

## 5.2 Research questions

## 5.3 Method

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### 5.3.2 Data collection methods and procedures

### 5.3.3 Data analysis methods and procedures

## 5.4 Findings

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#### 5.4.1.2 Materials

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#### 5.4.3.2 Assessment

#### 5.4.3.3 The issue of willingness to communicate

### 5.4.4 Research question 4: The students' views about the topics and activities

#### 5.4.4.1 Topics

#### 5.4.4.2 Activities

### 5.4.5 Research question 5: How the courses have proved useful for the students

## 5.5 Conclusion

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the first of the three studies I conducted with the aim of learning more about English majors' ICC development in context. This first study (ES) is exploratory in nature. It was carried out in order to map how the introductory IC courses are taught at the Institute of English Studies, University of Pécs, and to gain understanding of teachers' and students' perspectives in relation to them.

Chapter 3 of this thesis offered a survey of the research on intercultural teaching and learning in Hungarian tertiary education. Among others, it included studies which (1) briefly touch upon the topics and methodologies of individual IC courses (Falkné, 2005; Tompos,

2006), (2) explore the difficulties of teaching IC as seen by the teacher (Tompos, 2006), (3) address students' attitude to such a course (Falkné, 2005), and (4) examine the ways in which students prefer to acquire cultural knowledge (Golubeva, 2002). However, none of the reviewed investigations encompass all of these different foci. The study presented here aimed to do just that.

## 5.2 Research questions

The ES was conducted in the hope that it would inform both my own practice of teaching the seminar and the future phases of the research. Specifically, I hoped to discover what teachers and students thought were the most enjoyable and most useful topics and activities, as well as ones that did not work, so that I would build the former into my own syllabus and avoid the latter. Furthermore, I aimed to find out what materials were drawn on and why; again, to get a better sense of what exactly it is that teachers teach in the courses as well as to get concrete ideas for my seminar. Since at the time I saw ICC assessment as a particularly problematic subject area, I was also interested in how other teachers assess students. In addition, I was curious about teachers' and students' general attitudes to the courses, and the specific benefits and difficulties they would identify, in order to determine what issues needed the greatest attention in subsequent research. Finally, I aimed to gain insight into the ways in which the students had been able to apply what they had learnt, so as to gauge the results of the courses and at the same time find out how I could tailor my seminar to students' specific needs.

I therefore formulated the following research questions:

- (RQ1) How is IC taught in the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university? (What topics, materials, activities and forms of assessment are used?)
- (RQ2) What is the teachers' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?
- (RQ3) What is the students' attitude like toward the IC courses? What benefits and difficulties do they perceive in relation to the courses?
- (RQ4) Which topics and activities do the students enjoy the most and the least?
- (RQ5) In what ways have the courses proved useful for the students?

## 5.3 Method

### 5.3.1 Participants

Three teachers participated in the ES: two males (T1 and T3) and one female (T2), all of whom speak Hungarian at a native level. Whereas T1 and T2 held individual seminars entitled *Introduction to Intercultural Communication*, T3 held the corresponding lecture. All three participants are experienced teachers who have taught for many years at the Department of English Linguistics. They offer a variety of other courses within the field of English linguistics, specifically in the areas of semantics, pragmatics and bilingualism.

The second group of participants was made up of 16 English majors, all native speakers of Hungarian, who were in their second or third year of the BA programme at the time of data collection. Of these 16 students nine (S1-S9) had completed T1's seminar and seven (S10-S16) had completed T2's seminar. All but one (S6) of them had also taken the lecture. The student participants were selected through convenience sampling: at the time of the study – in the second term of the 2010/2011 academic year – they were all attending my own lecture entitled *Intercultural Communication*.

### 5.3.2 Data collection methods and procedures

In collecting data I relied on two data sources:

- (1) Semi-structured one-to-one interviews with the three teachers
- (2) A questionnaire filled in by the students.

Teachers' interviews were based on twelve carefully worded questions, but, following a semi-structured format, participants were encouraged to elaborate further on certain issues. The interview guide was reviewed by a senior researcher to ensure that the questions covered all key domains and that question wordings were appropriate. The majority of these questions were related to the teachers' practice in the courses, in that they enquired into (1) the topics covered in the syllabus, (2) the textbooks and supplementary educational material used, (3) the activities employed, and (4) the modes of assessment. Furthermore, I asked the teachers what they thought about the students' attitudes toward the course, and also asked them to talk about positive aspects, as well as difficulties. Finally, the participants were invited to raise further topics they found important, which had previously not been discussed. All three interviews

were conducted in Hungarian and were tape-recorded. The English translation of the interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

The interviews were conducted in the first term of the 2010/2011 academic year, and lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Two of them – the ones involving T1 and T2 – were carried out in the teacher's offices at the university, whereas the third interview with T3 took place in a quiet café in Budapest, as this was the most viable arrangement for both the participant and myself. All three interviewees were very helpful and cooperative, and seemed keen to share their views on many of the issues. The eighth and ninth question in particular – concerning the difficulties in relation to the courses and suggestions as to their improvement – elicited especially extensive responses from two of the participants.

The students in the study completed the questionnaire in English, which consisted of five open-ended and two closed-ended items, as can also be seen in Appendix A. In developing this research tool two other researchers' opinion was considered as regards the suitability of the items. I chose four of the open-ended questions to be of a sentence completion type: here the students were asked to list three reasons why they liked and disliked the seminar and lecture. In the fifth open-ended question they were required to list three examples of when and how they have been able to apply the knowledge gained from the courses. Finally, in the two closed-ended items they indicated on a 4-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they enjoyed the listed topics and activities. These two lists were compiled with the help of the findings from the teachers' interviews, in which the teachers had told me the specific topics and activities they drew on.

The questionnaire was administered in the second term of the 2010/2011 academic year on an *Intercultural Communication* lecture. Students are advised to enrol in this lecture after taking the introductory IC seminar and lecture; I therefore hoped that carrying out data collection here would ensure that the participants had already completed the courses which they were asked about. I informed the students about the aims of the investigation and made sure they were fully aware that the questionnaire was anonymous, participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw, which nobody did. It took the students approximately 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaire.

### 5.3.3 Data analysis methods and procedures

Three datasets were to be analysed: (1) qualitative data from the teachers' interviews, (2) qualitative data from the students' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire,

and (3) quantitative data from the students' responses to the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. The data from the teachers' interviews were subjected to qualitative content analysis, which was made up of a series of steps. The first of these was transcribing each interview word by word. This was followed by the pre-coding phase, in which I read and re-read the transcripts numerous times in order to obtain a general sense of the data, and jotted down my reflections. These then helped me move on to more structured coding, where such codes were generated as (1) *benefits of international students in the class*, (2) *willingness to communicate issue*, or (3) *the importance of authentic examples*, just to name a few. In the subsequent re-coding phase some codes were grouped together, as links between them were identified. For instance, the codes (1) *benefits of international students in the group* and (2) *willingness to communicate issue* were found to be connected in a number of ways. This iterative process of coding and re-coding the data several times eventually resulted in the emergence of categories, which are presented in the form of guiding themes in the *Findings* section below.

The analysis of the students' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire was characterised by the same analytical moves. Interestingly, quite a few codes that were generated from this dataset coincide with those from the teachers' interviews, including, but not limited to two of those mentioned above. The aggregate data from the two data sources therefore paint a colourful picture, and illustrate certain issues from multiple perspectives.

Finally, the students' responses to the closed-ended questions were analysed with the help of SPSS. It is generally acknowledged in the survey research literature that inferential statistics should not be performed on data gathered from a sample of fewer than 30 participants (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99; Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 129). Therefore, since the questionnaire was filled in by 16 students in the ES, only descriptive statistics were used. Specifically, frequency counts were obtained and percentages calculated for the values found for each variable – i.e. the topics and activities listed in questions 4 and 5 in the questionnaire.

## 5.4 Findings

As the study explored not only classroom practices in the seminars and the lecture but also teachers' and students' opinions, the findings are manifold (Menyhei, 2011). In this section I present these findings along the lines of the five research questions in five separate sub-sections.

These sub-sections include a detailed discussion of the main themes that emerged during data analysis. Note that quotations from the teachers are given in English, but were originally articulated in Hungarian.

#### 5.4.1 Research question 1: Classroom practices

Naturally, the seminars held by T1 and T2 differ in many ways from the lecture held by T3. The seminars are normally attended by around ten to twenty students, whereas the number of students enrolled in the lecture at the time of the study was 102. These numbers seem to determine several of the classroom practices. For instance, T2 claimed she preferred to think of her course as a speaking seminar, and both T1 and T2 mentioned ways in which their seminars integrated students' English language development and intercultural content. Conversely, T3 referred to student participation in the lecture as the exception: "*the others just sit there and listen, and I see that maybe they're taking it in*". The classroom practices in the three courses, specifically the topics covered, the materials drawn on, the activities used and the modes of assessment are described in detail below.

##### 5.4.1.1 Topics

All three teacher participants stated that the topics covered in the course correspond to three broadly defined subject matters: language, communication, and culture. However, these are approached from different angles in the three courses. The topics mentioned by T1 as included in his seminar are ethnocentrism, stereotyping, otherization, and intercultural understanding, as well as the cultural and linguistic barriers that may hinder effective and appropriate IC. The teacher draws on Hofstede's (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) onion diagram to explore the topic of cultural identity, and Hall's (1966) theory of proxemics is also discussed in the lessons. The concepts of metaphor and metonymy are usually touched upon, and students are made aware of a number of universal and culture-specific aspects of spoken discourse. The topic that is dealt with in most detail, however, is that of politeness strategies, which T1 claimed was his "*hobbyhorse*".

T2's course, on the other hand, begins with drawing a distinction between *big C* and *small c* culture. Stereotypes and certain aspects of nonverbal communication are explored in her lessons as well, and she heavily relies on issues in sociolinguistics to generate discussions in the classroom. These include sexist language, politically correct speech, formal and informal,

standard and sub-standard language use, as well as taboo in different cultures. It appears that it is these topics that create the central organizing theme of the course, as “*that’s related to language, linguistics; there’s something to be taught there, something to call students’ attention to*”. Although the course content as described by T2 is in line with the general objectives for ICC development outlined by Byram (1997), the teacher emphasised at various points in the interview that she was not entirely certain what content such a course should cover. In her words: “*The topic of the course should be decided. I mean its focus [...] It’s not clear to me*”.

Finally, the series of lectures held by T3 begin with discussing various definitions of culture. The example of chimpanzees’ learnt behaviour, use of tools, and group differences are brought up, to eventually lead to an exploration of such general, cultural elements of human societies as ethics, law, religion, and arts. These are followed by issues in cross-cultural pragmatics and cross-cultural semantics. The topics of politeness and cultural differences in the linguistic representation of conceptualizations are thus touched upon. In the last two lectures the teacher talks about matters which he referred to in the interview as “*truly intercultural communication*”: namely the competences of a good intercultural communicator. Yet he mentioned that he believed the latter are “*rather trivial*” issues.

What these findings point to is that in designing their individual courses, the teachers heavily drew on certain issues in linguistics related to the topic of IC. Whereas the focal point of the seminar held by T1 is politeness strategies, T2 prefers highlighting issues in sociolinguistics, and T3’s lecture is mainly concerned with cross-cultural semantics and pragmatics. This is perhaps unsurprising considering that all three participants are linguists teaching at the Department of English Linguistics. Yet there is also some indication that two of the teachers found it difficult to see IC as a discipline in its own right.

#### 5.4.1.2 Materials

A common point of the teachers’ practice is that they prefer using materials designed or gathered by themselves from various sources, rather than relying solely on one or two textbooks. This is in accordance with the findings of Berardo and Simons’ (2004) study, in which many of the participants – IC instructors, consultants, trainers and coaches – reported drawing on “various” or “own” materials (pp. 43-50). For instance, T1 uses pictures and parts of films as illustrative aids, and T2 gives her students articles on cultural topics from *Time Magazine* and *Psychology Today*.

Topics drawn from the intercultural textbook *Mirrors and Windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003) are explored to some extent in both seminars, yet T1 claimed, “*I didn’t find it as useful as I had thought, or as much help as I had previously expected*”. T2 was of a similar opinion about the textbook, which she deemed “*unacademic*” in its approach, although, just like T1, she mentioned she was satisfied with parts of it entitled *Language Work*, which consist of activities that help students learn language through culture. T2 also makes use of the textbook *Intercultural Communication* (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006), which presents short descriptions of intercultural interaction as cases for critical analysis, but which the teacher claimed she found too difficult for her students. In the lecture, suggested readings such as *Mirrors and Windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003), *Intercultural Communication* (Scollon & Scollon, 2001), and *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics* (Palmer, 1996) are included in the syllabus, but students are not required to read these books as the relevant parts are discussed in the lessons.

Apart from the limited reliance on textbooks, another point of agreement in the three teachers’ practice is that they all draw on authentic examples from either their own or students’ experiences of intercultural contact. According to them, these always help in raising great interest. As T3 put it,

*“I haven’t noticed any great interest in the scientific perspective. [...] Only when there’s some concrete interesting thing that you could even talk about in the breaks, like I’ve been to America, or have been here, and there were some interesting cultural misunderstandings or peculiarities, now that’s what really raises their interest”.*

The teacher concluded that therefore he would like to add more examples to his discussion of culturally determined differences in speech acts, but had not managed to find any related materials. He did not mention, however, whether he had asked students for such examples in a more systematic manner.

#### 5.4.1.3 Activities

As previously touched upon, T3’s course does not involve any activities on the part of students since it is a lecture in its traditional sense. The two seminars, on the other hand, are built on a wide range of activities, but differ greatly in this respect. For instance, in T1’s seminar students are required to (1) conduct an interview with a native speaker of a language other than their own mother-tongue and (2) hold a presentation on a chosen ‘exotic’ culture. However, they are not required to write essays, which used to be included among the assignments, but were



removed from T1's syllabus since they contained "*less original ideas*" from students in that they were frequently lifted from the internet.

Conversely, in T2's seminar students are given the option to conduct an interview and hold a presentation on a cultural issue that interests them, but these are not systematically incorporated in the syllabus. However, they do need to complete two written assignments here, which can be based on (1) an interview they conducted, (2) an observational task, or (3) their own reflections connected to the topic. In T2's experience, similarly to T1's, these papers often contain excerpts that are taken from the internet.

Class discussions and reflective in-class activities are included in both seminars. In addition to completing tasks found in the *Language Work* section of the textbook *Mirrors and Windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003), students do self-reflective activities in T1's and T2's course. Furthermore, in T2's seminar analysing cases of intercultural contact from the textbook *Intercultural Communication* (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006) is another way of encouraging students to reflect critically on IC issues.

It appears that the two seminars draw on a variety of activities which, taken together, may contribute to a more comprehensive development of students' ICC. The discussions, presentations, interviews, observations, critical analysis and reflective tasks are all related in various ways to the dimensions defined by Byram (1997), and combine the three approaches to ICC development explored in Chapter 3: the facts-oriented, the ethnographic and the critical approach. What this points to is the need for the teachers to share their experiences of teaching this course with one another, which could ideally lead to a more complete understanding of the 'best practice' in the introductory IC courses.

#### 5.4.1.4 Assessment

As seen in Chapter 3, ICC assessment is a controversial issue, given the complexity of the construct and the fact that its assessment is fraught with ethical dilemmas. Part of this difficulty was expressed by T2: "*To me it's a bit different to teach a course like this, compared with the usual syntax [courses], I mean where you have absolutely measurable things*". In her seminar students' assessment is based on their in-class participation and two written assignments, each of which is two or three pages long. In their first assignment, students describe and express their views on an example of a stereotype, after having talked about how to interpret them in class. Depending on how profound students' reflective writings are, this may develop their skills of interpreting and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997). For their second assignment they

are given the possibility to opt for either another reflective essay about any one of the topics discussed in class, or one presenting the findings of an interview or an observation on how people behave and communicate.

On the other hand, students taking part in T1's seminars are graded on two very different assignments. The first one of these is a five-minute presentation on interesting facts about cultures that they had previously known little about. These 'exotic' cultures are first presented to them by watching the film *Baraka* (Magidson & Fricke, 1992), from which each student chooses a culture to talk about in front of the class. In their speech, students also define five concepts or terms closely connected to the culture in question, and do so with the help of images from the film. T1 has chosen to include this task in his seminar not only to expand students' knowledge of cultural facts, but also "*with the intention of developing their language skills*". The second assignment is an interview conducted with a native speaker of a language other than the students' own first language. The aim is to get to know as much as possible about the politeness strategies present in the interviewees' mother-tongue. Students hand in the transcription of the interview, complemented by a short description of their findings, at the end of the semester. According to T1 they are well-prepared for this task by the end of the course, as they discuss related difficulties in all of the lessons throughout the semester. If we take Byram's (1997) model as a point of reference, this assignment may develop various facets of students' knowledge, for instance that of "the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins" as well as "the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country" (pp. 59-60). In addition, it gives students the opportunity to meet and interact with someone from a different country.

Finally, T3 assesses the knowledge students have learnt in his lecture in the form of a multiple choice test, which they complete at the end of the semester. This includes items on (1) definitions, such as that of culture, communication, or cognition, (2) a variety of aspects related to IC and the connections between them. T3 explained,

*"The problem with the multiple choice test is [...] you have to put believable wrong answers in it, and it includes some that [...] are conceptually wrong. And they [the students] usually don't notice this, I mean absurd... completely absurd statements; interestingly, they often don't notice".*

As discussed below, a number of students participating in the study commented on how difficult they found the test, and listed it among the reasons why they did not like the lecture.

In summary, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty based on the interviews, but it seems that the forms of assessment used in the seminars and the lecture correspond to various

dimensions in Byram's (1997) model, although the teachers themselves did not mention this model as a reference point. Furthermore, two of the three participants reported difficulties in this regard. However, none of them rely on any of the assessment tools explored in Chapter 3; nor do they draw on the portfolio approach or employ self-assessment by students.

## 5.4.2 Research question 2: The teachers' attitudes toward the courses

The findings of the interview study reveal that the teachers have mixed feelings when it comes to the introductory IC courses. On the one hand, the fact that the topic can be approached in numerous ways was mentioned as a positive aspect, but on the other, this very quality of the field of IC also results in uncertainty. This section examines the benefits and difficulties related to teaching the seminars and the lecture as expressed by the three teacher participants.

### 5.4.2.1 The parameters of the field of IC

In comparing it to other seminars he teaches, T1 claimed he found it an advantage of this seminar that its content is less rigidly defined. He argued on a positive note, "*a syntax seminar is much more rigid than an intercultural communication seminar*", and maintained that this is the course where both the students and the teacher can reveal their range of interests. However, T2 seemed to regard this as more of a daunting matter. She said she thought of her seminar as one that provides students with "*a good opportunity to speak*", but also pointed out that it was not clear to her what the focus of this course was, or what abilities ICC entailed and how they should be assessed. Therefore, she explained, she could not phrase the learning outcomes in her syllabus: "*I can't phrase it like I can in the case of another course, like 'By the end of this course you will be able to do this. You will learn something that you didn't know before the course began' – I can't phrase it*".

Furthermore, it was repeatedly expressed by both T2 and T3 that IC as a field of study in its own right is "*not serious*", and is "*unacademic*". T3 pointed out that he liked the lecture and found it useful, "*but that's because I've really designed it according to my own ideas*". He noted that he had observed two defining trends within the field of IC: one that is more serious, as it includes pragmatics and discourse analysis, and another that is anecdotal. He claimed he regarded this second trend very concrete and practical, as it gives guidance to businesspeople, within the realms of trainings, of how they should behave in situations involving intercultural contact. He said he did not know, however, to what extent and in what ways the course at the

institute should include such practical guides. He concludes that this area of IC has practically no connection with language, whereas “*we should, as a matter of fact, relate it to such things as language, language teaching, foreign language learning, and second language learning, but it’s very difficult*”. Indeed, the dichotomy drawn by T3 is that of cross-cultural linguistics on the one hand, and what we have called the facts-oriented approach to IC on the other. This latter approach, elaborated on in Chapter 3, is traditionally linked to business trainings about the dos and don’ts in a foreign setting, placing little emphasis on foreign language learning.

The questions raised by T2 and T3 are certainly significant. While they underline Davidson-Lund’s (2009) claim that “the parameters for ‘intercultural’ as a discipline are fluid” (p. xvi), they also point to the fact that the aims and methods of an intercultural development programme are context-dependent (Feng, Byram, & Fleming, 2009), and therefore need careful consideration. One of the key issues seems to be, however, that it is not easy to determine in the case of first-year English majors in what contexts and situations they will need to use the foreign language; to what extent they would benefit from discussions of dos and don’ts. The aim of the presented study and its subsequent phases was to facilitate further considerations regarding the design of the introductory IC courses, by revealing ‘current practice’ at the time of the study, and what teachers and students thought about it. The teachers’ comments clearly demonstrate the need for such an investigation.

#### 5.4.2.2 The issue of willingness to communicate

Another difficulty addressed by both T1 and T2 is that at times it takes extreme efforts on their part to get students to speak in the seminars. This problem of English majors’ lack of willingness to communicate has been examined by Nagy (2007) in the same setting. She found that students were least willing to communicate in English in the classroom under the following conditions: (1) when they perceived a difference between their own and their peers’ level of proficiency, (2) when the teacher was indifferent or displayed negative attitudes, (3) when the topic was irrelevant, unfamiliar to them, or required too advanced L2 skills, and (4) when the interlocutors were fellow Hungarians (p. 169).

In speculating about the reasons for this problem, the teachers in this study linked it with a number of similar issues. Firstly, both T1 and T2 referred to their observation that some students do not have enough experiences that could facilitate engaging discussions about cultural differences. Secondly, in T2’s view the problem also lies in the fact that Hungarian students may deem the topics raised in her class too simple or not serious enough, as in their

previous years spent as students they were never asked about their opinion. Thirdly, she mentioned the difficulty that students are uninformed about basic matters in world politics: *“If students were broad-minded, if they were informed, if they watched the world news or something like that, then perhaps they could contribute more to the discussions”*.

It appears that T1’s solution to this problem is giving students research tasks and making use of such illustrations and parts of films about IC *“that are appealing”*. He maintained that the films watched in class are popular among students and are of great assistance in finding a fitting topic for everyone’s presentation. He also claimed he believed that the interview assignment is *“a very positive experience for everyone”*, and brings a sense of accomplishment for students. As seen in the following sections, this is also confirmed by the student participants.

Both participants added that if international students or Hungarian students who have spent some time abroad are present, discussions are generated much more easily. Take the following comments, for instance:

T2: *“A group where [...] international students also take part is much more... how shall I put it, flows much more smoothly, it’s much more colourful, and I guess this is partly because of the foreign students’ openness... greater openness [...] so that nobody feels that using the English language here is artificial [...] The students who are more passive in group work are much more active when a foreigner is sitting there.”*

T1: *“When there were international students this topic was instantly successful, but when the group was monolingual it didn’t always succeed because [...] there weren’t that many things to talk about.”*

T2: *“It really enlivens the lessons when there is a student – and there sometimes is – who has lived abroad. Because they have the experience of how they are seen.”*

Once more we find evidence that collaboration between the teachers, as well as asking for feedback from students, could greatly benefit classroom practices, as a question raised by one teacher was answered by the other. It is apparent from the participants’ interviews that the use of intrinsically motivating supplementary materials and activities is very stimulating for students. So is the presence of international students, who, based on the teachers’ comments, can add something particularly significant to discussions about culture – partly by bringing new points of view, and partly due to the fact that their presence creates an atmosphere in which using English is more natural.

### 5.4.3 Research question 3: The students' attitudes toward the courses

The findings from the questionnaire study conducted with the students are in line with those from the teachers' interviews in many respects, and show them in a new light. In general, the students' responses reflect more positive attitudes toward the courses than do those of the teachers. For instance, the most frequently occurring answer to the question enquiring into what the students liked about the courses was related to the in-class activities and home assignments. As will be seen and supported by examples in Section 5.4.4, this means that the students are happy to complete tasks if they find them meaningful. Secondly, out of the 16 participants 14 also mentioned the teachers' personality and/or teaching style as a reason why they liked the seminars and the lecture. T1, T2 and T3 were referred to as the students' favourite teachers, or as "nice", "kind", and "funny". In addition, the atmosphere was brought up several times as a positive aspect of the courses, which the students found "friendly", "relaxed", "good", or "calm and quiet". Thirdly, based on 13 positive comments it seems that the majority of the students were also keen on the discussed topics, which were mostly referred to as "interesting". In fact, taken together, the adjectives "interesting", "enjoyable", "fun/funny" and "exciting" occurred 18 times in their responses.

On the other hand, the words "boring", "monotone" and "repetitive" were also found in the comments; although to a much lesser extent: eight times altogether. Reasons given to the questions why the students did not like the courses included administrative and management issues, such as the time slot of the lessons (mentioned six times altogether), the lack of a microphone and PowerPoint presentations, and the fact that "there were too many people" in one class, and too few in the other: "Very small group, too much activity was required". However, the problems mentioned by the most participants in connection with the seminars refer either to other students' presentations and passivity, or to the lack of certain activities. Following this general overview, in this section I discuss the positive and negative aspects of the introductory IC courses as seen by the students, with the exception of two key areas which are elaborated on in subsequent sections: (1) the students' opinions about the topics and activities, and (2) their views on how they have benefitted from the courses.

#### 5.4.3.1 Materials and authentic examples

Several students referred to the materials used in class as reasons why they liked the courses. For instance, two participants said they enjoyed the articles they read for T2's seminar, and one participant stated (s)he liked the course book *Mirrors and Windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, &

Strange, 2003). In addition, five students pointed out that the hand-outs they received from T3 were useful as they made the lectures easier to follow. The use of audio-visual materials and PowerPoint presentations were frequently praised, and the lack thereof was listed in several cases as a reason why the students did not like the courses.

Furthermore, the teachers' point that the students are especially keen on authentic examples of intercultural contact was substantiated by altogether six students' positive responses. These participants either referred to "*memorable*" and "*understandable examples*", or stated specifically that they liked how the teacher "*could tell us a lot of cultural things by experience*", or "*shared her own experiences, extra information with us*". Also, in answering the final open-ended question, a number of students referred to the usefulness of the courses in real-life situations of intercultural contact in which they had found themselves: in communication with foreign roommates, Erasmus students, or foreign people they had met at a festival. These findings underline T3's proposal that more examples should be included in the lessons, and at the same time there is evidence that examples from the students' own experience of intercultural contact could also be drawn on.

#### 5.4.3.2 Assessment

The open-ended questions brought forth both positive and negative comments about the modes of assessment in the seminars and the lecture. T1's seminar was praised by four students in this regard:

S3: "*It was easy to get a good mark.*"

S4: "*If sy prepared for the classes and did the required tasks, he/she could get a 5. + There were not so huge and high requirements.*"

S8: "*Fair grades.*"

S9: "*It was easy to get a good grade.*"

Of the students who attended T2's seminar, however, only one expressed his/her opinion on the assessment: "*There were no exams*" was listed among the reasons why (s)he did not like the seminar. Furthermore, three students mentioned the end-of-term test among the difficulties related to the lecture. Of these comments, one referred to a content validity issue:

S5: "*The test wasn't really in sync with what we have learned on the course.*"

S8: "*Hideously hard end-term test.*"

S10: "*There was only one test comprising all materials.*"

The contrast between the participants' opinions about the assessment in T1's seminar and that in T3's lecture is evident. It seems in the case of the former that the students found it easy to complete the requirements. This may raise the question whether they were challenged enough, but it is certainly clear that the students themselves found this aspect of the course positive. In the case of the latter, however, there is an indication that the end-of-term multiple choice test is too difficult, which, as we have seen, was also addressed by the teacher.

#### 5.4.3.3 The issue of willingness to communicate

The teachers' concern about English majors' lack of willingness to communicate in the classroom was echoed by the student participants as a difficulty. Although the reasons behind this have already been explored in a different study (Nagy, 2007) and T1 and T2 also listed several possible reasons, it would have been interesting to see the students' take on this. Regrettably, however, they did not go into detail in their statements pertaining to this issue, which were the following:

S6: *"Great number of my classmates were that passive that we couldn't even start a single group discussion."*

S10: *"Not everyone participated actively in the courses, some students didn't at all."*

S13: *"Much of the group was quite inactive."*

Interestingly, although this problem surfaced in the comments of both groups of participants, the findings gained from the fifth question of the questionnaire show a very positive picture about the extent to which the students enjoy participating in class discussions, as well as small group and pair discussions. The former was marked by 13 students as an activity that they mostly or absolutely enjoyed, whereas this was true of 12 students in relation to the latter. This can lead to the inference that a number of students may be inclined not to participate for various reasons, but they do in fact enjoy participating in discussions if the conditions are adequate.



## 5.4.4 Research question 4: The students' views about the topics and activities

### 5.4.4.1 Topics

As mentioned in the previous section, it appears from the students' responses that they found the topics discussed in the courses interesting: this is supported by numerous remarks related to both the seminars and the lecture. Consider the following comments, however:

S4: *"The topic itself is not my top favourite one."*

S7: *"Topics and the style of the lecture was sometimes similar: boring, but the teacher's style [...] was interesting."*

S14: *"[T3] tends to go on about topics of limited importance for a long time."*

Most students did not specify in their answers to the open-ended questions which topics they liked and disliked, with very few exceptions, such as the following: *"I liked when we were talking about stereotypes"*. This can be seen as a result of the nature of the instrument itself, and was accounted for to some extent by the closed-ended item that required the students to indicate on a 4-point Likert-type scale how much they enjoyed learning about certain listed topics. The percentage of ratings given by the participants to these topics is displayed in Table 11 on the next page. However, it became clear during data analysis that this list is incomplete, as the students' position on the included topics was overwhelmingly positive. Although the option to add other topics to the list was provided, only one out of the 16 participants did so, by including 'gender and culture'.

It is striking that in the case of 12 out of 14 topics, the vast majority of the respondents marked 'Mostly true' or 'Absolutely true' to indicate the extent to which they enjoyed learning about them. A possible reason why this was not the case with 'ethnocentrism' and 'otherization' is that these topics may not have been discussed in detail, or touched upon at all, in some of the courses. This is reflected in the high number of students who, in these two instances, chose the fifth option of 'I don't remember the topic' found next to the 4-point Likert-type scale.

Table 11  
*Percentage of ratings for topics in the ES*

I enjoyed the following topics	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the topic	Total
Features of culture	-	-	43.75	56.25	-	100
Features of language	-	6.25	56.25	37.5	-	100
Features of exotic cultures	-	12.5	31.25	43.75	12.5	100
Ethnocentrism	6.25	25	31.25	-	37.5	100
Stereotyping	6.25	18.75	25	43.75	6.25	100
Otherization	6.25	18.75	25	18.75	31.25	100
Cultural identity	-	25	43.75	31.25	-	100
Cultural barriers in IC	-	18.75	31.25	50	-	100
Linguistic barriers in IC	-	25	31.25	37.5	6.25	100
Cultural differences in beliefs and values	-	-	37.5	50	12.5	100
Cultural differences in habits	-	-	37.5	43.75	12.5	93.75
Cultural differences in verbal communication	-	-	62.5	37.5	-	100
Cultural differences in non-verbal communication	-	-	25	68.75	6.25	100
Cultural differences in politeness strategies	-	6.25	37.5	50	6.25	100

The most popular topics appear to be (1) 'features of culture', (2) 'features of language', (3) 'cultural differences in verbal communication' and (4) 'cultural differences in non-verbal communication', with 15 or 16 students (93.75%-100%) indicating their preference at the top half of the scale, but (5) 'cultural differences in beliefs and values' and (6) 'cultural differences in politeness strategies' are close runner-ups with 14 such responses each (87.5%). Although it is not possible to generalize to the larger population based on such a small sample of students, it seems that these 16 participants prefer topics that centre on difference. This is confirmed by the answers given to the last question of the questionnaire as well, where participants were asked to state how they have been able to apply the knowledge gained from the seminar and the lecture. Here, the majority of the students referred to attaining a deeper understanding of cultural differences as a great benefit of the courses.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, in which three approaches to ICC development were explored, a strong focus on cultural differences can be regarded as mostly the realm of the facts-oriented approach. I have argued that, while this approach may be criticised for its reductionism

and essentialism (Byram & Feng, 2005), it can still prove to be a valuable basis on which other, more critical perspectives can, or perhaps have to be founded. One possible reason why the students are keen on topics about difference is that the introductory IC seminars and lecture may have predominantly taken this perspective. Another reason may be these students' genuine interest in cultural differences, rather than, say, specific strategies to level the differences and arrive at appropriate and effective communication in intercultural contact.

#### 5.4.4.2 Activities

As discussed above, the seminars offered by T1 and T2 require the students to do a number of activities, which possibly contribute to the development of various ICC dimensions. Just like in the case of the topics explored in class, we can gain insight into the students' views about the activities from two sources: (1) their ratings of the listed activities in the corresponding closed-ended item, and (2) their answers to the open-ended questions enquiring into why they liked and disliked the courses. The former are presented in Table 12 on the next page, whereas the latter give further support to these findings in many instances.

Table 12 shows that there are numerous activities which the majority of the participants found enjoyable. These include reading activities, observation tasks, the interview assignment, class and group discussions and working with films and pictures. In fact, there are only three activities that were found to be less popular: (1) completing *Language Work* tasks in the textbook *Mirrors and Windows* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár, & Strange, 2003), which six students (37.5%) did not remember, (2) writing essays and (3) giving a presentation. The fact that a high number of students did not remember certain activities may partly be explained by the differences between the two seminars: some activities which are central to T1's seminar are less prominent in T2's classes, and vice versa.

Table 12  
*Percentage of ratings for activities in the ES*

I enjoyed the following tasks	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the activity	Total
Reading articles	-	18.75	43.75	12.5	18.75	93.75
Reading about cultural issues in the textbook <i>Mirrors and Windows</i>	6.25	6.25	43.75	18.75	25	100
Completing <i>Language Work</i> tasks in the textbook <i>Mirrors and Windows</i>	6.25	31.25	25	-	37.5	100
Writing essays	25	18.75	31.25	6.25	18.75	100
Observing how people behave and communicate	-	12.5	50	31.25	6.25	100
Interviewing someone from a different culture	12.5	12.5	12.5	43.75	18.75	100
Giving a presentation	25	18.75	12.5	18.75	25	100
Participating in class discussions	-	18.75	56.25	25	-	100
Participating in small group/pair discussions	6.25	18.75	37.5	37.5	-	100
Watching films	12.5	6.25	12.5	50	18.75	100
Discussing pictures	-	18.75	50	25	6.25	100

Yet there are three activities that also appeared in the students' comments about why they liked and disliked the seminars, underlining the conclusions drawn from the numerical data. The first of these is giving a presentation, which is not among the students' favourite tasks. Seven participants (43.75%) rated it at the lower half of the scale, and answers given to the open-ended question provide a little more insight into their attitude toward this task:

S6: *"There were student presentations every lesson and it took a lot of time from [T1]."*

S7: *"I held my first presentation during this course (→ a memorable moment for me)."*

S8: *"Presentations from students were sometimes a waste of time. Especially mine."*

Again, it would be interesting to explore the specific reasons behind these negative comments, but S7's and S8's remarks suggest that anxiety and the quality of student presentations may be two of them. The introductory IC seminar is compulsory for first- or second-year BA students; however, completion of a seminar on presentation skills is not among the prerequisites of signing up for the course. This may cause some students to feel ill-equipped for this task.

Secondly, it seems from the answers given to both the open- and closed-ended questions that the students greatly enjoy watching films. Ten students (62.5%) found the corresponding positive statement mostly, or absolutely true. Yet as we have seen, T2 does not place emphasis on this activity in her syllabus. Therefore, I also examined the answers given by only those students who attended T1's seminar, where films play a central role. Results are much more favourable: eight out of nine students (89%) rated this activity at the top half of the scale, and said the following about it as reasons why they liked the seminar:

S2: *"It was good that we could talk about cultural differences based on the films we watched together."*

S4: *"We watched movies/parts of movies."*

S5: *"The movies we watched were good examples on the topics we went through."*

S6: *"We've seen a fair number of films, most of them even worth watching."*

S7: *"We watched films, so I could have a rest."*

Finally, in line with T1's observation, the interview task is indeed popular, with nine counts (56.25%) altogether for 'Mostly true' or 'Absolutely true'. Perhaps due to the fact that this activity is also more prominent in T1's seminars, the ratings given by only T1's students on the Likert-type scale again represent a more positive attitude compared with the overall ratings: 89% found the statement mostly or absolutely true in this case. This overwhelmingly positive attitude is also reflected in the students' written responses:

S1: *"I [...] especially enjoyed the final task – conducting an interview with a person from a different culture – because in this way I had the chance to familiarize with the norms/cult. differences of the other culture."*

S2: *"I had the opportunity to interview Aga, an Erasmus student from Poland on politeness. I really enjoyed this task, and I could get to know Aga."*

The only negative responses regarding the interview assignment are the ones that referred to there not being such an opportunity in T2's seminars:

S10: *"We didn't meet anyone from a different culture. There were no tasks involving this opportunity."*

S12: *"We didn't make an interview with a foreign people."*

These comments demonstrate that the students are indeed keen on doing activities that they see as relevant and meaningful. Here, the "opportunity" of getting to know an Erasmus student (S2) and of gaining knowledge about cultural differences first-hand (S1) is what constitutes the added value of the interview task; it is what makes it meaningful and enjoyable to the students.

#### 5.4.5 Research question 5: How the courses have proved useful for the students

*“I’ve learned some Bulgarian habits and salad recipes”* (S8). *“I used politically correct language”* (S12). Although these two gains were not mentioned by any other participant of the 12 who answered the final question, a number of patterns can be identified of how the students believed they benefitted from the courses.

Firstly, the students found the courses useful for their academic studies in several ways. Consider these responses:

S2: *“I’m writing my thesis on non-verbal communication and for me, it’s important to learn about cultural differences in this field.”*

S7: *“They gave me help during ‘Intro to English Linguistics’ seminar and lecture.”*

S10: *“I could contribute to similar topics in other courses.”*

Whereas some said the acquired knowledge was important in relation to their thesis, others claimed that what they had learnt proved valuable in that they could understand or contribute to similar discussions in other university courses.

Secondly, the participants referred to travelling to other countries and communicating with foreign people in various situations as examples of how they had been able to apply the knowledge gained from the courses. Take the following comments, for instance:

S1: *“Last summer when I travelled to Germany. In order to accomplish the final task for the seminar (the interview), I had interviewed a German teacher about the cult. differences, lang. use. All that information was very helpful and useful last summer.”*

S2: *“In everyday communication with Erasmus students.”*

S13: *“By meeting foreign people from other cultures.”*

S14: *“When dealing with cultural differences that occurred in communication between foreigners and I.”*

S16: *“On last year’s Sziget Festival I’ve met some people from Austria and Germany, and there was no problem with communication.”*

Understandably, most of these examples do not include a lot of circumstantial details, and the students did not refer explicitly to the acquired skills brought into play either. Therefore, it is difficult to tell whether these responses in fact indicate the usefulness of the courses in developing their skills of discovery and interaction (Byram, 1997). This is the case with the following comment as well, which I identified as not belonging to any of the categories during data analysis: *“If someone in my surrounding comes up with a discriminating stereotype, I have the basis to argue against it”* (S2). It cannot be concluded with absolute certainty, but this

statement may indicate an improvement in the student's skills of interpreting and relating, or critical cultural awareness.

Finally, the majority of the participants implied some kind of development in terms of knowledge, awareness, understanding, and tolerance, most of them with reference to cultural differences. Two examples to each of these areas of development are presented below:

#### KNOWLEDGE

S10: *"I feel it useful to know habits, language etc. of other cultures to see cultural differences."*

S12: *"I am familiar with some stereotypes of different nations."*

#### AWARENESS

S14: *"Gained awareness of my own presumptions, culturally coded behaviour, and limitations when engaging in intercultural communication."*

S15: *"Now I am more aware of cultural differences and I take these differences into consideration when talking to a foreign person."*

#### UNDERSTANDING

S5: *"I understand the notion of difference and how it does not necessarily mean something bad."*

S8: *"I think I have deeper understanding of cultural differences."*

#### TOLERANCE

S8: *"Improved tolerance in everyday life."*

S9: *"I have a Russian room-mate, and the lesson taught me to accept other culture's maybe strange habits."*

It is evident from these quotes that cultural differences represent the most central theme in the field of IC for many of the participants. It is also clear that the above comments point to progress in two dimensions of ICC as defined by Byram (1997): attitudes and knowledge. What all of the answers to the last question in the questionnaire tell us, however, is that most students recognised some kind of benefit of the courses, and there is some indication of development in what I have referred to as the intercultural dimensions of ICC.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I gave a detailed account of the first, exploratory study: the research questions it was guided by, the participants, the methods of data collection and analysis I relied on, and the findings. These findings are summarised below.

- (1) Issues in linguistics related to IC are predominant in the seminars and the lecture, but with different focal points in each course. The students seemed motivated: they found most of the topics discussed in class interesting, and appeared especially keen on those about cultural differences.
- (2) The teachers use IC textbooks to some extent, but prefer relying on their own materials or ones they collected from various sources, which appeared popular with the students. Both groups of participants seemed to recognise the importance of drawing on authentic examples of IC from their own experience, and there was an indication that such examples from the students' experience could be made greater use of.
- (3) A wide range of activities are employed in the two seminars, which can contribute to the development of students' ICC in a variety of ways. Participating in discussions, watching films, and research tasks such as the interview assignment were all among the students' favourite activities, but they were not fond of giving presentations.
- (4) The teachers assess what their students have learnt in different ways, which do not include the portfolio approach or self-assessment by students. Two of the teachers referred to certain difficulties related to assessment, whereas some students claimed they liked one of the seminars because it was easy to complete, and disliked the lecture because the end-of-term test was too difficult.
- (5) Both groups of participants mentioned students' lack of willingness to communicate in the classroom as an issue. The teachers agreed that students are more willing to speak if international students are also present, and one of the teachers seemed to have found research tasks and motivating supplementary materials helpful in this regard.
- (6) The students reported that they found the introductory IC courses useful for their academic studies and in real-life situations of intercultural contact. Furthermore, they referred to development in their attitudes and knowledge.
- (7) In general, the students' attitude toward the courses can be described as very positive, and two of the teachers also claimed they enjoyed teaching them. However, uncertainty about the aims and appropriate methods of this development programme was highlighted as one of the main difficulties. What is clear is that discussion between



teachers on the one hand and teachers and students on the other would greatly benefit classroom practice.

# Chapter 6:

## Two classroom studies on developing students' ICC

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#### 6.6.3 Conclusions drawn from Classroom Study 2

## 6.1 Introduction

As was seen in the previous chapter, the introductory IC courses examined in the ES contributed to the development of students' ICC in various ways, but did not explicitly aim for the development of this construct, and none of them relied on Byram's (1997) model. As was also seen, based on teachers' interviews, there was a need to determine (1) the specific aims of these courses, as well as (2) an approach to teaching IC which would be most beneficial for the English majors at this institute. Furthermore, findings revealed that this approach should include research tasks, and should draw on appealing supplementary materials and students' own experiences of intercultural contact.

The studies presented in this chapter set out to investigate such an approach in a classroom setting: my own *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminars. Following a thorough review of the literature, I chose Byram's (1997) model as the underpinning for the aim of my course, i.e. the development of students' ICC. In addition, based on both the literature and the findings of the ES, I found that the educational approach most suitable for this endeavour would be that grounded in social constructivist learning theory (Burr, 1995; Lantolf, 2000; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the two studies enquire into the development of English majors' ICC in a seminar which placed emphasis on critical thinking, reflection and investigating, among others.

In discussing the two classroom studies I start out by presenting the research questions, and then outline the methods and findings of Classroom Study 1 (CS1) and Classroom Study 2 (CS2) separately. This involves a deeper look into the design of the course under scrutiny in CS1, from the topics and materials included in the syllabus to methods of instruction and assessment, as well as how and why some of these were changed for the second seminar examined in CS2. All of these are important for a better understanding of the findings, and also for placing them into context.

## 6.2 Research questions

In the two classroom studies I expected to find answers to the following research questions:

- (RQ6) In what ways is a social constructivist approach to developing students' ICC appropriate in the context of the BA in English Studies programme at this Hungarian university?
- (RQ7) In what ways did the students' ICC develop during the semester-long IC seminar?

These two research questions are rather complex. As for RQ6, I was interested in the students' views about the approach, but also expected to build on my own observations as the teacher of the course. Here the term *social constructivist approach* refers to that introduced in Chapter 3: an approach in which learning is seen as a social and collaborative activity, learners' out-of-school experiences are brought into play, and critical thinking, reflection, investigating and learner autonomy is of key importance. This concept is further contextualised in the next section.

In RQ7, on the other hand, *ICC* is understood as the construct described by Byram (1997), and *development* is operationalized as a shift in the individual dimensions of the construct as observed by (1) the students and (2) myself, and measured against the descriptors of the ICC objectives outlined in Table 13 on page 125. These were adapted from the objectives summarised by Byram for the intercultural component of his framework (pp. 57-64). For instance, I would consider a student's skills of interpreting and relating to have developed if I found evidence of a shift in the student's "ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives" (p. 61), which corresponds to Objective 9 in Table 13: *The student can identify ethnocentric perspectives, e.g. in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme*. The research outlined here can thus be seen as an attempt at documenting the path that this development takes in the case of the participants of the two studies.

Please also note that, rather than examining the ways in which the students' *intercultural competence* has developed, RQ7 addresses development in their *ICC*, which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, comprises a communicative element (i.e. linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence) in addition to the intercultural element (i.e. attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness). My decision to use the term *ICC* is because of the understanding that in reality, in an actual classroom in which instruction and different forms of communication take place in the L2, these elements would be rather difficult to separate. However, the main focus of both Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 was on the intercultural component, and the written objectives

for these courses did not include ones pertaining to the communicative component. Nevertheless, as discussed in the sections about the findings of CS1 and CS2, a number of students referred to changes with regard to their language competences as well.

## 6.3 Method of Classroom Study 1

### 6.3.1 Course design

#### 6.3.1.1 A general description of the course

The examined course (Seminar 1) was a series of seven lessons, which were more intensive compared with most university classes, as they were taught in three-hour-long blocks every other Thursday afternoon in the first term of the 2011/2012 academic year. All lessons were held in English, included a ten minute break, and were supported by PowerPoint presentations. These presentations, together with assignment worksheets, guidelines and checklists, were made available to the students on the interactive online learning platform *Coospace*. The lessons were characterised by pair, group and class discussions and activities, and drew on a variety of materials.

Seminar 1 aimed at the students' development in all four competences of Byram's ICC framework, with the main emphasis on intercultural competence and its five dimensions: (1) attitudes, (2) knowledge, (3) skills of interpreting and relating, (4) skills of discovery and interaction and (5) critical cultural awareness. All phases of instruction were therefore largely based on and informed by this framework. In addition, the course design was grounded in the social constructivist perspective, and I aimed to integrate the three approaches to ICC development: the facts-oriented approach, the ethnographic approach, and the critical approach, as evident in the choice of materials and activities. In the following two sections I outline a number of considerations related to designing the syllabus, and provide examples of these materials and activities, as well as how they were used in the classroom. The reader will find a list of the ICC objectives drawn on in both Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 in Table 13 on page 125, and an overview of the topics, in-class activities and home assignments for each lesson of Seminar 1 in Table 14 on pages 129-130.

### 6.3.1.2 Considerations in designing the syllabus

As is the case with every course, there were numerous factors that had to be considered when designing the syllabus for Seminar 1. The first one of these was the foreseeable needs and uses of the competences in question for the participating students. However, it is very difficult to tell in what specific contexts and situations English majors will use English and engage in intercultural communication during and after their studies. What does seem clear is that they are likely to do so in a variety of settings and with interlocutors of diverse origins, i.e. not only native speakers of the target language. This is supported by the fact that there are now ample opportunities for those wishing to study abroad, as well as a growing number of multicultural workplaces in Hungary. Also, as seen in Chapter 4, the setting of the three studies can be described as increasingly multicultural, with 1,764 international students enrolled at the University of Pécs in 2011, compared with 671 in 2004 (PTE Statisztikák, 2004, 2011). For these reasons, the seminar aimed to provide the students with the opportunity to explore aspects of many cultures of the world, not only those of the UK or the US.

Another factor I considered was the opportunities available for fieldwork and independent learning, in addition to development in other learning contexts, such as the IC lecture. For instance, given the high number of international students at the university, it was possible to include a fieldwork assignment in the syllabus in which students would need to draw on their skills of discovery and interaction, and interact with somebody from a different country. On the other hand, some dimensions were excluded because they were unfeasible, such as one of the objectives for attitudes defined by Byram (1997): “readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence” (p. 58). Furthermore, as a result of the interview conducted with T3 in the ES, I had some idea of the topics explored in the introductory IC lecture, such as those related to *big C* culture, as well as cross-cultural semantics and pragmatics. Therefore, I planned to provide a few practical examples in connection with these topics, but did not include a detailed discussion of the theoretical background in the syllabus, since I knew this would be covered in the lecture.

The time available and the cognitive and affective development of the students were the next factors to be reflected on. As discussed in Chapter 2, ICC is a highly complex construct, and the development of many of its dimensions necessitates long-term exposure (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 67). In the case of this seminar, however, only one semester was available. I therefore found it important to draw the students’ attention to the significance of being conscious and reflective communicators, and develop in them a sense of responsibility

for their own intercultural learning, which I hoped would persist even after the end of the course. At the same time, as also seen in Chapter 2, ICC development requires engagement in such processes as comparing and contrasting, observing, reflecting and analysing. The degree to which the participating students would be able to perform these tasks was, again, not easily predictable, but I anticipated differences among them in this regard.

Based on all of the above, I set out to identify the ICC objectives that would be drawn on in the course. These were carefully selected and adapted from the 29 objectives outlined by Byram (1997, pp. 57-64) for the intercultural element of his model. They also served as a guide which I would consult when selecting and designing materials and activities. A list of these objectives is found in Table 13 below.

Table 13  
*ICC objectives drawn on in Seminar 1 and Seminar 2*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>The student...</b>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.</li> <li>2. Is willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones.</li> <li>3. Is interested in discovering other points of view in their own and other cultures.</li> </ol>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Knows about the national memory (significant people and events marking national identity) in their own and other countries.</li> <li>5. Knows about the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures.</li> <li>6. Knows about social distinctions (e.g. social class, profession) and their markers (e.g. clothing, language variety) in their own and other cultures.</li> <li>7. Knows about the processes and institutions of socialization (e.g. education systems, religious institutions) in their own and other cultures.</li> </ol>
<b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Can see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.</li> <li>9. Can identify ethnocentric perspectives, e.g. in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.</li> </ol>
<b>Skills of discovery and interaction</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Knows how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.</li> <li>11. Can use a combination of their knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions.</li> </ol>
<b>Critical cultural awareness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Can identify ideological perspectives and values, e.g. in a newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.</li> <li>13. Is aware of their own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence their views of other people's values.</li> </ol>

The final two considerations were about the ordering of these objectives, and assessment. However, these are two particularly problematic issues in intercultural teaching. According to Byram (1997), “in FLT, progression in learning is usually thought of as linear and cumulative, with each stage depending on preceding ones” (p. 75). Yet, as opposed to this, “each component of intercultural competence is inter-related with others, and with language competences in ICC. This excludes the possibility of presenting one before others, knowledge before skills for example” (p. 76). What this means to the scholar in terms of the ordering of objectives is that it is only possible to prioritise a frame, which, in turn, implies that not all decisions related to planning an IC course can be made in advance, and that consultation with the course participants is imperative.

This also poses important questions about an ICC threshold and assessment. Let me take the fifth objective, connected to the knowledge dimension, as a case in point: *the student knows about the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures*. What exactly constitutes knowledge of these conventions; that is, what specific conventions of communication and behaviour should the student know about? Apart from their own, how many and which other cultures should the student know about? Is it possible to identify different levels of this knowledge, for instance (1) the student has *no* knowledge about these conventions, (2) the student has *some* knowledge about these conventions and (3) the student has *extensive* knowledge about these conventions? If yes, how could these levels be described in sufficient detail for the purposes of assessment? Also, how would these levels fit in with other objectives and dimensions? For example, what can we say about the student’s ICC if he/she has *extensive* knowledge about these conventions (Objective 5, Level 3) and can, say, *in many cases* see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity (Objective 8, Level 3), but is *not* interested in discovering other points of view in their own and other cultures (Objective 3, Level 1) and is *not* willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones (Objective 2, Level 1)?

In fact, if we move on from the knowledge dimension to that of attitudes, these questions become even more complex. For instance, how would Objective 3: *the student is interested in discovering other points of view in their own and other cultures* be assessed? In a general description of how assessment can be applied to the five intercultural dimensions of ICC, Byram (1997) writes about this objective:



Criteria on which to judge learners' interest in other perspectives would need evidence of their not prioritising their own over other perspectives [...] this evidence would have to be action demonstrating preference, rather than a statement about preference [...] it would be important not to formulate preference in terms of evaluative comparison – 'the other's perspective is better than mine' – but to ensure that there is preference for an explanation which is a better fit to the perspective of the other. (p. 92)

In other words, performance assessment would be needed. Yet, how would one go about defining levels for this objective? Would the frequency of the student's action demonstrating preference for the other's perspective be a good indicator of different levels? If yes, would the absence of such evidence allow us to say with absolute certainty that the student is not interested in discovering other points of view?

A final important issue is the ethical dilemmas that arise in assessing ICC in general, and how this relates to the realities of assessment in this particular context: the students need to earn grades and the criteria for assessing course achievement is left to the tutor to decide on. Just to touch upon a few of the problems here: If the aim of the course is ICC development and a student puts considerable effort into his or her coursework but shows no signs of development at the end of the semester, does that student deserve a lower grade? If, say, Student 1's initial negative attitudes become slightly more positive and leaves the course with more extensive knowledge as well, does this student deserve a higher grade than Student 2, whose attitudes were very positive to begin with and remained unchanged, and also has more extensive knowledge?

As seen through the above examples, planning Seminar 1 as regards the sequencing of objectives and assessment was very challenging. I therefore decided upon the following:

- (1) Due to the limited amount of time available for the development of students' ICC, some objectives would only be treated superficially, whereas 'deep learning' would be aimed at in the case of others (Byram 1997, p. 90).
- (2) Instead of a linear progression from one objective to the next, a number of objectives would be revisited and 'deepened' throughout the course, in accordance with a spiral curriculum (p. 81).
- (3) Since the assessment of individual objectives is highly problematic, and since in this context the purpose of assessment is not formal certification, the emphasis would be on more holistic, formative assessment. This would include the portfolio approach and performance assessment, "in which knowledge and abilities are evaluated as they are used and evident in activities which might be an application of what has been learnt" (p. 105). This would entail a bottom-up approach, where evidence of a shift in the

students' ICC would be used to outline the kinds of intercultural learning that may occur in the seminar. The students' final grades would, to a large degree, be determined by their level of effort and participation.

In the next section I discuss the activities and assignments drawn on in Seminar 1, and outline the objectives of ICC development the assignments pertain to. Later on in this chapter I also give a detailed account of the ways in which the approach to assessment was changed for Seminar 2.

### 6.3.1.3 Activities and assignments

As previously stated, Seminar 1 was planned in accordance with the social constructivist perspective and with the integration of the three approaches to ICC development. This meant that I gathered and designed materials and activities that would require as well as motivate the students to compare and contrast, engage in discussions and debates, conduct their own investigation, critically analyse stories in textual and audio-visual form, reflect on their own experiences, question their assumptions, and others. Table 14, found on the next two pages, gives an overview of the topics, in-class activities and home assignments, as well as what objectives (see Table 13, O1-13, where O1 stands for Objective 1, etc.) each assignment relates to. In this section I also elaborate on some of these activities and assignments, in order to provide the reader with deeper insight into the processes of the course. Furthermore, sample course materials used in Seminar 1 are found in Appendix B, aiming to illustrate some types of activities and assignments the students completed.

Table 14

*Overview of the topics, in-class activities and home assignments in Seminar 1*

Topics	In-class activities	Home assignments and related objectives
<b>LESSON 1</b>		
<b>1. Introduction</b> Introductions; reasons why a course on IC is necessary	Filling in the background questionnaire  Writing about a pleasant and an unpleasant experience of intercultural contact	-
<b>2. Culture</b> Elements and features of culture	Pair work on the Iceberg model (AFS, 1984): the visible and invisible elements of culture	
<b>LESSON 2</b>		
<b>3. Cultural difference</b> Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) and Hall's (1959, 1966, 1976) dimensions of cultural difference  Facts about chosen countries  The concept of ethnocentrism	Completing a worksheet and critically reflecting on Hofstede's and Hall's model (adapted from Utley, 2004, p.63, 69)  Watching and discussing a short video revealing differences in cultural practices resulting in misunderstanding  Pair discussion of students' findings from Assignment 1, comparing and contrasting	<b>Assignment 1:</b> Reading the profile of a chosen country on <a href="http://www.kwintessential.co.uk">http://www.kwintessential.co.uk</a> and preparing notes for discussion  <b>O4, O5, O6, O7</b>
<b>4. Language, culture, identity</b> Personal and social identity; the role of socialisation  Social constructionist perspectives of multiple identities  The relationship of language and culture; linguistic relativity theory	Group discussion of students' findings from Assignment 2  Group debate on statements about language, culture and identity  Reading and reflecting on short quotes about language, culture and identity from Hoffman (1989, p. 106), Pavlenko (2005, p. 112) and Wierzbicka (1997, p. 119, 121)	<b>Assignment 2:</b> Observing Hungarians in everyday situations based on pre-specified criteria and recording observations in the related worksheet  <b>O2, O3, O5</b>
<b>LESSON 3</b>		
<b>5. Review</b> Integration of what has been learnt in connection with (1) the Iceberg model, (2) ethnocentrism, and (3) the relationship between language, culture and identity in the in-class activities	Critically analysing the story <i>Girl on the Bus</i> (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, p. 18)  Critically analysing the short film <i>3 Esküivő: Bernadett &amp; Sanju</i> (Gerő, László, & Nagy, 2009)  Pair discussion of questions related to Assignment 3	<b>Assignment 3:</b> Watching a presentation on <a href="http://www.ted.com">http://www.ted.com</a> entitled <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> by Adichie (2009) about stereotyping and the importance of cultural awareness, and completing the related worksheet  <b>O1, O2, O3, O10</b>
<b>6. Difference, otherness, stereotyping</b> Facts about India  Facts about Iran  Stereotypes, expectations, prejudice, discrimination	Class discussion of the topic of stereotypes  Critically analysing the story <i>Being Represented</i> (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, pp. 7-8)  Pair discussion of Assignment 4	<b>Assignment 4:</b> Writing about and reflecting on students' own experiences of intercultural encounters in a worksheet  <b>O8, O9, O13</b>
<b>LESSON 4</b>		
<b>7. IC: verbal, non-verbal, written communication</b> Communication styles English and Hungarian academic writing  Cultural differences in verbal, non-verbal and written communication	Class discussion as preparation for the interview assignment (Assignment 11)  Completing a worksheet on communication styles (adapted from Utley, 2004, p.39, 91)  Group and class discussion of Assignment 5  Class discussion: comparing and contrasting English and Hungarian academic writing  Quiz: reflecting on examples of cultural differences in (1) values, (2) communication styles and (3) non-verbal communication resulting in misunderstanding	<b>Assignment 5:</b> Analysing the communication in two job interviews found in extracts from Roberts (2009), and completing the related worksheet by making comparisons and finding explanations  <b>O5, O8</b>  <b>Assignment 6:</b> Thinking about what difficulties the interview assignment (i.e. Assignment 11) might pose and bringing a related question to class

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## LESSON 5

### 8. ICC

Key concepts: cross-cultural, intercultural, multicultural

Byram's (1997) model of ICC and Bennett's (1993) DMIS

### 9. Culture shock

Studying abroad

Culture shock and the U-curve hypothesis of adjustment

Group and class discussion of the quiz from the previous class

Completing a worksheet on Byram's (1997) and Bennett's (1993) model

Class discussion of (1) the benefits of studying abroad, (2) culture shock and (3) the stages of culture shock

Analysis and pair discussion of excerpts from a study-abroad student's diary (from Szentpáli Ujlaki, 2008)

Class discussion of a short news report (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, p. 48) as preparation for Assignment 9

**Assignment 7:** In pairs, discussing and reflecting on students' own experience involving stereotyping or a misunderstanding, and recording and transcribing the discussion

**O8, O9, O13**

**Assignment 8:** see Assignment 4

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## LESSON 6

### 10. Language, culture, power

Linguistic and cultural imperialism

In-groups and out-groups

Berry and Sam's (1997) acculturation framework: integration, assimilation, separation, marginalisation

Ideologies

Example: Banning of the burqa and niqab in France

Class discussion of Assignment 7

Class discussion as preparation for the interview assignment (Assignment 11) and the portfolio assignment (Assignment 12)

Completing a worksheet on the topic of English as an international language

Group debate about key trends related to language, culture and power

Group discussion of students' findings from Assignment 9

Completing a worksheet on the changes in students' own national culture and the in-groups and out-groups in their society

Class discussion of ideologies through the example of the Islamic scarf controversy in France

Pair work: identifying the ideological loading in short texts

**Assignment 9:** Critically analysing a news article that discusses a case of cultural conflict between groups of people

**O4, O7, O8, O9, O12**

**Assignment 10:** see Assignment 6

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## LESSON 7

### 11. Drawing conclusions

Review and conclusions about IC

### 12. Evaluating the course

Critically analysing the short film *3 Esküvő: Zsuzsa & Mubarak* (Gerő, Kis, & László, 2009) and integrating what we learnt during the semester

Pair discussion of students' findings from Assignment 11

Making adjustments to the portfolio

Filling in the questionnaire on students' views about the seminar and their own development, and signing up for the follow-up focus-group interview

**Assignment 11:** Interviewing someone from a different country about the education system or raising children in their country, recording the interview and reflecting on the findings in a paper

**O1, O2, O3, O7, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13**

**Assignment 12:** Compiling the portfolio

A number of activities required the students to reflect on their own experiences. One example to this was a writing task completed on the first lesson, in which they were asked to write about a pleasant and an unpleasant experience they had with somebody from a different culture. It was clarified that here culture should be understood as not only connected to nation-states. The questions guiding the students' writing elicited a detailed description of the

experience, as well as explanations for their own and their interlocutor's behaviour. I then read these written reflections and wrote additional questions and comments on the margin to encourage deeper reflection and, in some cases, application of what was learnt in the lessons. Depending on the experience the students wrote about, this provided an opportunity for the development of some of the following: their attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness.

Apart from activities involving reflection, there were some that required the students to compare and contrast, in the tradition of the facts-oriented approach. For instance, one of the first assignments the students completed was reading about a country of their choice on the website <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>, and preparing notes for discussion. This website contains information about a great number of countries, with sections such as *Culture and Society* and *Etiquette and Customs* for each one. In the classroom, the students were then asked to work in pairs and share, as well as compare and contrast what they had found, which was followed by a class discussion of their findings. With this research task I aimed for the development of the students' knowledge (O4, O5, O6 and O7), and also intended to introduce, in the class discussion, the practice of being critical with overgeneralisation.

As another example for activities involving comparison, excerpts from two job interviews (Roberts, 2009) were analysed, one with a British candidate and another with a Filipino candidate, revealing a contrast between their narrative style and their interviewers' reaction to it. This task was preceded by a discussion, on a previous lesson, of Hall's (1976) theory of high- and low-context cultures, which was integrated here. It served the purpose of developing the students' knowledge, in particular that of the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures (O5), as well as their skills of interpreting and relating, specifically the ability to see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity (O8).

Furthermore, many of the in-class activities and home assignments involved some form of analysis, such as that of stories taken from the textbook *Intercultural Communication* (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006). These stories illustrate situations in which people behave and use language in certain ways to express their cultural identity, or feel stereotyped and patronized by others who lack real understanding of their cultural background. The aim was for the students to deconstruct these texts on the lesson from a critical point of view, with an emphasis on such concepts as identity, stereotype, ethnocentrism and discourse. At the same time, it was expected that discussion of the stories would lead to them gaining more knowledge of social groups and their practices (O5, O6 and O7). An additional aim of the activity was to

make the students decentre and question their own presuppositions and evaluations of phenomena (O2 and O9).

Another instance of an activity requiring analysis was one that was built on two short films from the documentary film series *3 Esküivő: Bernadett & Sanju* (Gerő, László, & Nagy, 2009) and *Zsuzsa & Mubarak* (Gerő, Kis, & László, 2009). I included this activity because, as seen in the previous chapter, the student participants of the ES were keen on learning about IC through films. These two films in particular were chosen because they explore subject matters which were introduced in the classroom beforehand, through culture models and class discussions, such as (1) the Iceberg model of culture (AFS, 1984), (2) ethnocentrism, (3) how cultural practices that are familiar and taken for granted (e.g. marriage) may have different meanings to people with different cultural backgrounds, (4) the importance of ICC and (5) the causes and process of conflict between people with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, I expected these films to provide a great opportunity for the class to review these subject matters and gain a deeper understanding of them through a different medium – one that can represent complexity in a form which is nonetheless appealing and easily digestible. I anticipated that the analysis of these films – that of the characters' values, beliefs, discourse, communication and behaviours – would potentially contribute to the development of the students' attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness.

In addition, as a home assignment the students were asked to search for a news article discussing a case of cultural conflict between groups of people and critically analyse it with the help of some guiding questions in the accompanying worksheet. Prior to this, the class analysed a short news report (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, p. 48) together, with emphasis on gaining knowledge about the national memory, as well as the processes and institutions of socialization in their own and other cultures, while also exploring such concepts as dominant discourse, biased representation and loaded words. This assignment and the preparatory in-class activity that preceded it therefore aimed at the development of the students' knowledge (O4 and O7), skills of interpreting and relating (O8 and O9), and critical cultural awareness (O12).

Finally, since most student participants of the ES claimed they greatly enjoyed the task in which they interviewed somebody from a different country, I decided to include it in the syllabus as well. Like T1, I found it important to prepare the students for this, and so assigned preparatory tasks, and made time for group and class discussions about the assignment. An interview protocol was also discussed and made available to them, with a list of the interview questions related to the two topics the students could choose from as the focus of their interview: the education system in the interviewee's country, and raising children in the interviewee's

country. Both of these correspond to O7: knowledge about the processes and institutions of socialization in their own and other cultures. The students were also given the option to choose a topic of their own and negotiate the interview questions with me, but nobody opted for this. They were required to record the interview, write about it, and send me both the recording and their reflections. Their writing was guided by questions, asking them, among others, to elaborate on the similarities and differences between their own and their interviewee's national culture from the chosen aspect. I hoped that this assignment would, to some extent, develop the students' attitudes (O1, O2 and O3), knowledge (O7), skills of interpreting and relating (O9) and, given that the task involves interacting with somebody from a different culture, their skills of discovery and interaction (O10 and O11).

As can be seen from the activities presented here and others found in Table 14, the students completed many different types of tasks during the lessons and at home. These were consciously chosen and integrated the facts-oriented, the ethnographic and the critical approach to ICC development. This was seen as necessary due to the complexity of the construct – it was believed that the approach to its development should aim to accommodate this complexity. In addition to these, as discussed in the section outlining the classroom processes of Seminar 1, there were some important opportunities for ICC development which arose organically in the lessons, and were unplanned.

### 6.3.2 Participants

The participants of CS1 were sixteen BA students of English Studies (S1-S16): twelve female and four male, eleven Hungarian, two Latvian, two Polish and one Spanish student, all of whom were enrolled in my IC seminar in the first term of the 2011/2012 academic year. This and other information about them was gained from a background questionnaire, which was completed on the first lesson of the seminar. It also included questions about (1) the different nationalities and cultural backgrounds that characterise the participants' family members, (2) the frequency and length of their visits or stay abroad, as well as the countries they had been to, (3) their friends from abroad or from different cultures and (4) the languages they speak. The findings are presented here to give a general idea about the participants. Four students also volunteered to participate in the focus-group interview (two Hungarian, two Latvian – three female, one male student).

Most students reported speaking two or three foreign languages, with German being the second most common foreign language spoken by the participants after English. They typically

started learning English before the age of ten, and in a classroom environment, although six students learnt it in both a classroom and a natural environment. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, the majority rated their English proficiency at 4, others at 3 or above (e.g. 3.5).

The group was fairly mixed in terms of their intercultural background. Five students' families are all Hungarian, three could not say what nationalities or cultural backgrounds characterize their family members, and others have distant relatives or had ancestors from Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Sweden. Also, whereas five students said they had no friends from abroad or from different cultures, five others had many (four of them were Erasmus students). In addition, whereas the majority indicated that the longest time they had spent abroad was two weeks or less, the same five students who claimed they had many friends from abroad had also spent considerably longer time in other countries. For instance, one Hungarian participant had studied a year in Ecuador, another Hungarian student had worked for a year in Ireland, and a Polish student had spent three months in the USA.

### 6.3.3 Data collection methods and procedures

The data for CS1 were collected with the help of the following instruments:

- (1) A background questionnaire
- (2) The teacher's notes and reflections
- (3) A questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development
- (4) A follow-up focus-group interview with four students.

As discussed above, the first of these data sources, the background questionnaire (found in Appendix C), was designed to gather information about the students' language, cultural and intercultural background.

I also relied on the notes and reflections I wrote throughout the semester on a range of issues. Regrettably, these were very sporadic and did not follow any standardised format often characterising diary studies and research journals (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 156-162). They did not have a pre-defined focus either, but as the lessons progressed, they gradually developed into a collection of ideas for how the course could be designed differently in the future, for the purposes of what I believed would be more efficient learning, teaching and research. They therefore served as a valuable source in grasping the pedagogical implications of CS1, as well as implications for further research. At the same time, in some cases they provided additional



insight into certain behaviours and events in the classroom: for instance, how a student, group of students, or the whole class seemed particularly or less motivated by an in-class activity, the way in which a student seemed to prefer learning compared with others, another student's moment of epiphany, or how an unplanned, very significant opportunity for ICC development came about during a class discussion. Many of these are described in the *Classroom processes of Seminar 1* section below, which aims to provide a glimpse into the immediate context of CS1: the classroom.

As the third data source, a questionnaire (also found in Appendix C) was administered to the students in the final lesson of the semester. In developing the instrument I asked a senior researcher to review it, in an attempt to maximise its effectiveness. Its aim was twofold: it was used to gather information on the students' views about the seminar and its approach on the one hand, and about their development on the other. The questionnaire was in English, and consisted of three open-ended and three closed-ended items, which were somewhat similar to those included in the questionnaire of the ES. The former ones asked the students to list reasons why they liked and disliked the course and to say which activity or assignment they found most useful and why, whereas the latter ones required them to indicate on a 4-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they enjoyed the listed in-class activities, home assignments and topics.

The questionnaire was filled in by all sixteen participants during the last lesson of the course, which took place in the first term of the 2011/2012 academic year. As in the case of the ES, the students were informed about the aims of the research, the fact that anonymity would be ensured, and their basic right to withdraw and refuse to participate with no penalty, but none of the students opted out. They completed the questionnaire in approximately 30 minutes.

Finally, four students (two Hungarian, two Latvian; three female, one male student) from the group volunteered to participate in a follow-up focus-group interview, which was conducted a month after the course had finished. All nine questions (also found in Appendix C) here referred to the findings gained from the questionnaire. Some of them started with a short presentation of an important finding and then elicited the participants' position or opinion about it, e.g.: *Some students said that they didn't like learning about the theories and models. Is this true of you? Why/why not?* In other interview questions I presented quotes from the answers given to the open-ended items in the questionnaire and then asked the four students whether they agreed, e.g.: *One student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was "the audio assignment where we had to talk with each other and the interview with a foreigner because these improved our skills". Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?* As may be

clear from these examples, the aim was to get a deeper understanding of the results from the questionnaire.

The focus-group interview was carried out in English via Skype, since two participants were Latvian and had already returned to their home country. The interview presented some complications. For instance, one of the Hungarian participants was late and joined fifteen minutes after the others, which meant that there was a short disruption when the recording had to be stopped in order to add her to the discussion. Also, due to technical problems, it was difficult to make out what some of the students were saying at times, although this was not a persisting problem, and for the most part, the students' speech was clearly audible. The interview lasted approximately one hour, was amiable and the participants were very cooperative throughout. Given that some of the questions were long in that they included quotes from other students, I sent the file containing all of the questions to the participants at the beginning of the interview, so that they would have no difficulty understanding them.

As will be seen in the relevant section to follow, CS2 differed from the study discussed here, CS1, in many ways. One of the main differences was that in CS2 I relied on a greater variety of data sources in order to get a deeper understanding of the students' development, such as questionnaires, self-evaluation sheets, end-of lesson reflections and the students' written work completed during the semester. The need to do so was identified in CS1, where the design allowed me to explore the students' opinion about the educational approach and their own development, but did not allow for drawing parallels between their ICC at the beginning and at the end of the course. Nevertheless, the findings of CS1 are rich and valuable, perhaps all the more so because they include conclusions drawn as to how the students' intercultural learning could be better grasped with a different design. They therefore provide insights into my own development as the teacher-researcher, and at the same time yield a number of pedagogical implications.

#### 6.3.4 Data analysis methods and procedures

As mentioned above, the focus-group interview took place one month after the end of Seminar 1, which meant that the data collected in other ways were analysed first. The interview questions were then constructed with reference to the findings gained.

Just like in the case of the ES, I used descriptive statistics in analysing the students' answers given to the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. This meant obtaining frequency counts and calculating percentages for the values of each variable: the in-class

activities, the assignments, and the topics that were listed. On the other hand, the qualitative data from the open-ended items were analysed in an iterative fashion. In the initial coding phase, I first highlighted points that seemed important in the participants' responses. As the next step, I coded the text with mostly descriptive, low-inference codes, such as (1) *topics useful in everyday life*, (2) *intercultural learning* and (3) *issue with theories and models*. During the process in which I read and re-read, coded and re-coded the data, several pattern codes emerged. For instance, the descriptive codes mentioned above gradually developed into the following: (1) *Social constructivist approach: relevant topics*, (2) *ICC development: Knowledge; Awareness about the need for further development*, and (3) *Pedagogical implication: rethink the way models are presented and applied*. The data from the focus-group interview were collected and analysed later, but the methods and procedures of their analysis were very similar. For the sake of greater transparency, in Appendix D I provide examples to the coding of data in CS1: the ways in which two participants' answers to the open-ended questions, and the focus-group participants' answers to two interview questions were coded. Of course, these examples cannot fully represent the cyclical nature of data analysis, but they do provide some insight into how a smaller number of categories were generated.

## 6.4 Findings of Classroom Study 1

### 6.4.1 Research question 6: The social constructivist classroom

In order to answer RQ6 about the ways in which the social constructivist approach to ICC development may be appropriate in this context, I follow a number of steps. Firstly, in an attempt to provide the reader with a deeper, more contextualised understanding of the findings to follow, I discuss some of my general observations in relation to the class and various classroom processes, which are largely based on my own notes and reflections. I then outline the findings gained from the questionnaires and the focus-group interview about the students' general attitude to the course, as well as what they specifically liked and disliked about it. As the next step, I explore how these findings are related to their views about learning in the social constructivist classroom. Although the students were not asked explicitly about the educational approach, their comments about the activities, assignments, topics and the course in general are closely connected to many characteristic aspects of this approach (Menyhei, 2013). Finally, in

discussing the students' views, I also consider the conclusions that can be drawn about the ways in which the approach is appropriate, or, as will be seen, less so in some instances.

#### 6.4.1.1 Classroom processes of Seminar 1

The group of Seminar 1 originally consisted of eighteen students, thirteen Hungarian and five international students, but two Hungarian students dropped out halfway through the term as they did not complete their assignments, which was a prerequisite for passing the course. I was intent on keeping them in the class and negotiating new deadlines with them, partly because I found both of them a pleasure to work with, but, as one of them put it in a feedback note: *“I am a ‘Let’s do it later’ kind of person, and in the last moment sometimes I realise, that I can’t do it [the assignment] in the evening. At the next lesson I feel very embarrassed, that’s the reason I don’t speak that much. Of course I know it’s my fault – just to avoid misunderstanding.”*

Although it appears that these two students did not find the assignments motivating enough, the opposite seemed to be true of the majority. The lessons were generally characterised by a friendly, relaxed, at times refreshingly lively atmosphere, with spirited discussions related to the topics of some of the assignments. The classes in which, based on my observations, almost all students were actively engaged and energetic throughout were the ones where we explored the elements and features of culture with the help of the Iceberg model (AFS, 1984), and the subject matter of stereotypes with the support of Assignment 3: a TED talk the students watched on *The Danger of a Single Story* (Adichie, 2009). These topics brought forth numerous examples from the students from their own culture and personal experience. However, in examining and completing worksheets on (1) the models of Hofstede (1980/2001, 1991/2010) and Hall (1959, 1966, 1976) on dimensions of cultural difference, (2) those of Byram (1997) and Bennett (1993) on ICC and DMIS, and (3) the strong and weak version of the linguistic relativity theory, the students were recognisably less motivated, even uninterested. As will be seen, these observations were underlined by the students' comments, and suggest that, if models are indeed necessary to reflect on in such a seminar, the way in which they are presented needs to be reconsidered.

I was also interested to discover some parallels with issues raised by the participants of the ES, as well as observations that ran counter to the findings of the ES. For instance, I was delighted to find that students' lack of willingness to communicate was generally not an issue in Seminar 1, which I believe may be due to a number of factors. Firstly, in grounding the course in the social constructivist approach, one of my aims was to establish an environment

where participants would not feel threatened when speaking, by way of, for example, asking the students to share their ideas in small groups first, before reporting back to the class. Secondly, as touched upon above, it seemed to be the case that the students were much more willing to communicate in the lessons when they could relate the topics to their own experience, which, again, is an important aspect of the educational approach. Finally, and perhaps most prominently, the fact that Hungarian as well as international students were present in the classroom proved to be a huge asset in terms of in-class participation. My observations were perfectly in line with T1's view that the presence of international students made using English much less artificial, and also brought fresh points of view to the discussions. Let me support these observations with an example from the classroom in Lesson 2, which is described in Table 15 on the next two pages.

Table 15

*Example of classroom processes in Seminar 1*

<b>Topic</b>	The three-hour-long lesson had two main topics: (1) <i>Cultural difference</i> and (2) <i>Language, culture, identity</i> . I planned to devote one and a half hours to each topic. The description here refers to the first part of the lesson, i.e. the discussion of the first topic.
<b>Aim</b>	The main aim of this part of the lesson was to explore cultural difference from various angles. I aimed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) to provide the students with a critical understanding of how cultural difference is perceived by two scholars: Hofstede (1980/2001, 1991/2010) and Hall (1959, 1966, 1976)</li> <li>(2) for the students to reflect on differences and similarities in terms of values, behaviours and cultural practices with the help of their findings from Assignment 1 and Assignment 2, which they completed for this lesson. In Assignment 1 the students were required to read the profile of a chosen country and prepare notes for discussion. As their second assignment, they were asked to observe Hungarians in everyday situations based on pre-specified criteria, and record their observations in the related worksheet.</li> <li>(3) for the students to understand the concept of ethnocentrism (i.e. our tendency to interpret and judge other cultures with reference to our own culture, which we understand to be the centre of everything, Samovar &amp; Porter, 2003, p. 11), for them to begin to realise their own ethnocentric perspectives, and decentre.</li> </ol>
<b>ICC objectives</b>	As may be clear from the aims, I intended to create opportunities for the development of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Attitudes – especially Objective 2: <i>The student is willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones,</i></li> <li>(2) Knowledge – especially Objective 5: <i>The student knows about the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures,</i></li> <li>(3) Skills of interpreting and relating – especially Objective 8: <i>The student can see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity,</i> and</li> <li>(4) Skills of discovery and interaction – especially Objective 10: <i>The student knows how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Participants</b>	Almost all students were present in this class. One exception was an international student, who was not present because he enrolled in the course later, after this lesson took place.

**PHASES**

<b>Phase 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) After a recap of topics explored in the previous lesson, in which I elicited what the Iceberg model (AFS, 1984) represented, I introduced the two new models with supporting outlines in the PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>(2) Following my presentation, the students completed a worksheet (found in Appendix B) in which they were required to match descriptions of and examples to the dimensions in these models with the name of the dimensions. They did not appear too interested in completing this task, but seemed to grasp the models better after the worksheet.</li> <li>(3) I then aimed to ‘personalise’ the models by eliciting guesses of where, for example Hofstede (1980/2001, 1991/2010) placed the students’ home countries as compared with other countries on the scales of his dimensions. At this point I found my planning insufficient, as I did not have the actual data to check the extent to which the students’ guesses were correct. I did remember that Hungary was described with a high <i>Masculinity</i> as well as <i>Uncertainty Avoidance Index</i>, but had no information on the international students’ home countries. I made note of this instance of insufficient planning for future reference. I realised that it would have been immensely helpful to have the data because the group’s interest in the models seemed to be piqued at this stage. Some students expressed incredulity in finding out about Hungary’s high <i>Masculinity Index</i>, whereas others agreed, which resulted in a spirited class discussion. On the other hand, many students found Hungary’s position on the <i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i> scale accurate, and even provided examples. I then directed the students’ attention to what these models were criticised for, e.g. their implication that culture is homogeneous.</li> </ol>
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**Phase 2**

- (1) As a warmer to the next phase of the lesson, in which the students discussed their findings from their assignments, we watched a funny, 1-minute-long video about differences in eating habits and the importance of knowing about these in order to avoid unpleasant situations. The class laughed and seemed to be energised by the video. This appeared to be important in setting the mood for the pair discussion to follow.
- (2) The students were free to choose their partner for this activity, which the majority did without difficulty and willingly, although one Hungarian student appeared reluctant to do so and displeased at having to work in pairs. Apart from this, the activity went well, all students were on task, and some of the pairs then reported back to the class about interesting facts they found out about the countries they chose to research. This class discussion was rather short though, as other pairs were less willing to share their findings. Although I was generally content with the level of engagement in this activity, I made note of my impression that perhaps a group discussion of Assignment 1 would be more fruitful in the future.
- (3) This phase ended with another short class discussion in which the practice of being critical with overgeneralisation was introduced, by eliciting from the students to what extent they believed their findings characterised people in the given country, and what other possible behaviours they thought were possible in the given society. This would then be one of the focus points of the next lesson.

**Phase 3**

- (1) The final phase of the lesson was the one which I was most pleased about. Here, the students formed groups and discussed their findings of Assignment 2 about Hungarians' behaviour. I made sure that an international student was included in each of the four groups. This turned out to be a very dynamic segment of the lesson, in which most groups were engaged in a lively, loud, free-flowing discussion – the kind that, in my own experience as a former student at this institute, was not at all typical of seminars. In reporting back about their group discussion to the whole class, one international student said, “*I like to surprise people!*” – referring to the reactions of her Hungarian group mates to her experience that many Hungarians are polite and ready to help when dealing with foreigners.
- (2) Following this class discussion about the students' insights gained, I pointed out that I had a chance to skim through their written observations for Assignment 2 and noticed that some students claimed Hungarians' behaviour was *normal* in certain situations. I asked what the class thought might have been meant by *normal*, which directed us to the topic of ethnocentrism. I elicited the meaning of the concept, which none of the students were quite sure of, and even confused with nationalism and racism. After I explained the meaning and the fact that it is natural to have ethnocentric perspectives, I had the impression that the students were still uncertain about how to grasp the concept.
- (3) In this moment I remembered Duff's (1993) analysis of the process of *felelés* in Hungarian classrooms, which she describes as “a kind of in-class recitation of the previous day's lesson” (2008, p. 161). I attempted to introduce the concept without giving too much away, yet in a way that would intrigue the international students. I did not share with the class the scholar's definition, but instead asked the Hungarian students whether they could try and explain to their international classmates what *felelés* was, which, given the pervasiveness of this practice in Hungarian classrooms I knew they were all very much familiar with. One Hungarian student started to explain with initial confidence, but soon realised that throughout his attempt to do so he was taking too much prior knowledge – necessary for a full understanding of the concept – for granted. Seeing that the international students were still confused, another Hungarian student took over, but did not manage to clarify what *felelés* meant any more effectively. This continued for some time: several Hungarian students attempted an explanation, cutting into this vigorous conversation, while the international students asked questions to better understand, including ones that made the whole class laugh, as the answers appeared painfully obvious to them. As the teacher, it was incredibly exciting to witness this process of how the students gradually grasped the depths of a seemingly simple, culturally distinctive practice, and how they slowly realised indeed how much they were taking for granted: their own ethnocentric perspectives. I believe this unplanned opportunity for ICC development was one of the most valuable ones in the term, and was successful in large part due to the fact that Hungarian and international students alike were enrolled in the course.

In this section I aimed to provide some insight into classroom processes with the help of my general observations and a more specific example from Lesson 2 in Seminar 1. The main purpose of this section was to contribute to thick description of the processes and outcomes of the seminar. In the next sections I report on the findings of the questionnaire study and the focus-group interview related to students' opinions about learning in the social constructivist classroom.

#### 6.4.1.2 What the students liked and disliked about Seminar 1

Based on the results gained from both the questionnaire and the focus-group interview, it can generally be stated that the students' attitude to the seminar was very positive. In their answers to the open-ended question asking for reasons why they liked the course, the words "*interesting*" and "*useful*" came up ten and seven times, respectively. Furthermore, it seems they were not used to participating in such classes, but associated the usefulness of the course with its methods and educational approach. Consider the following comments for example, made by the students during the interview (pseudonyms are used for the participants of the focus-group interview):

*Anna: "We communicate a lot and we should think all the time when this course happening – the lessons, and discuss, and yeah, it was really useful I think."*

*David: "I found it useful because it wasn't a normal kind of course: because there were methods, structures and many varying topics but mostly you could associate with your own normal life – so you could say you must have experience, some kind of event that you could relate to any of the topics given in the course. So yeah, it was useful, it opened some perspectives for me."*

As in the case of the ES, the findings of CS1 also reveal that these English majors enjoy learning if they are challenged and engaged in the learning process through meaningful activities. It also seems the students appreciated the opportunity to actively participate in lessons and express their opinions in discussions. This is evidenced by the number of times these features of the seminar were mentioned as positive: as seen in Table 16, which provides an overview of the aspects of the course referred to by the students as ones they liked, seven students said they liked the course because it was interactive, whereas five mentioned pair and group discussions and the opportunity to talk as benefits of the course. This finding is also underlined by their responses to the closed-ended questions: fourteen out of sixteen students marked 'Mostly true' or 'Absolutely true' to indicate the extent to which they enjoyed participating in class discussions, as well as in small group and pair discussions. Importantly,



as opposed to the student participants of the ES, these students did not refer to the lack of willingness to communicate as an issue in the lessons.

Table 16  
*Aspects of Seminar 1 mentioned by the students as ones they liked*

Mentioned positive aspect	Number of students mentioning this aspect
The course is interactive	7
Pair/group discussions; opportunity to talk	5
The topics	5
The assignments	5
The teacher's teaching style	4
The opportunity to learn (new things)	4
It improved my English	2
The presence of Erasmus students	2

Furthermore, five students claimed they liked the assignments, which they referred to as “*enjoyable*”, “*challenging*”, “*interesting*”, and as tools that made them “*rethink many things*”. The focus-group interview participants also talked about assignments in very positive terms:

Linda: “*I liked the home assignments, especially the interviews, because it were really funny to do because I have never had such an experience before that and it was fun.*”

David: “*I really liked it because they were challenge in a way, but not that hard to work on, so [...] they were good tasks to do, good assignments. But not those that you should sacrifice at least 4 or 6 hours of your day to finish it. It's just when you got the time to sit down, read it through, listen to it, watch the video or something, and then you could just write it down, really, and it could reflect your personality, it could reflect your perspectives, reflect your opinions, and that's why it was very free and variable for every student, I think that's why.*”

Anna: “*Probably that's why it's one thing which I called this subject really useful, because in other courses we shouldn't... we didn't have homeworks, or just little ones, or two times or three times, but not on every lesson, and this is really useful for that too [...] and that's why I improved my skills, even writing skills, everything.*”

It appears from these comments that these English majors appreciated assignments which were demanding but doable, indicating mastery motivation, and which made them think and “*could reflect your perspectives, reflect your opinions*”.

The results from the answers given to the closed-ended questions, summarised in Table 17, provide us with a better understanding of the students' opinion about each assignment. From this it becomes clear that the most popular assignments were (1) Assignment 1: reading a country profile and preparing notes, (2) Assignment 3: watching a presentation about stereotyping and the importance of cultural awareness, and completing the related worksheet, (3) Assignment 9: critically analysing a chosen news article discussing a case of cultural conflict, and (4) Assignment 11: interviewing someone from a different country and reflecting on the findings in a paper.

Table 17  
Percentage of ratings for assignments in CSI

I enjoyed the following assignments	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the topic	Total
<b>Assignment 1:</b> reading a country profile and preparing notes	-	18.75	12.5	68.75	-	100
<b>Assignment 2:</b> observing Hungarians in everyday situations and recording observations	18.75	18.75	37.5	25	-	100
<b>Assignment 3:</b> watching <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> , and completing the related worksheet	-	6.25	18.75	75	-	100
<b>Assignment 4:</b> writing about and reflecting on own experiences of intercultural encounters	12.5	25	50	6.25	6.25	100
<b>Assignment 5:</b> analysing the communication in two job interviews, and completing the related worksheet	12.5	25	37.5	25	-	100
<b>Assignment 7:</b> in pairs, discussing own experience involving stereotyping or a misunderstanding	-	56.25	37.5	-	6.25	100
<b>Assignment 9:</b> critically analysing a chosen news article discussing a case of cultural conflict	6.25	12.5	62.5	18.75	-	100
<b>Assignment 11:</b> interviewing someone from a different country and reflecting on the findings in a paper	6.25	12.5	37.5	43.75	-	100

Naturally, however, some negative aspects also surfaced in the students' comments, such as the following:

S14: *“I don’t really like to talk in class. I preffer the teacher teaching, and not all the time the students talking.”*

This expressive statement already points to the general finding that, from their comments about why they liked or disliked the course, implications can be drawn about the students’ attitude toward the social constructivist approach taken in Seminar 1.

In addition, several participants addressed difficulties they had experienced with the assignments, for a variety of reasons. For instance, some students explained that they found a few of the assignments too challenging, while others singled out Assignment 11, where they were required to interview someone from a different country, as difficult to complete. Consider the following comments, for example:

S16: *“I don’t like the recording of interviews, because it was difficult and I didn’t have any experience about it. Otherwise, it was hard to find a person for the interview.”*

David: *“They [the assignments] were great when I didn’t have to cooperate with someone else. I’m not really a cooperative person really. [...] So most assignments that were sole assignments were great, but when we have to team up, that’s a bit hard for me.”*

Linda: *“Maybe, I think the personal experiences... we should write some, and there are some students who are really young they live in smaller cities and they didn’t have any encounters with foreigners and I think that’s why they had some problem with that particular assignment.”*

As can be seen, S16’s difficulty is clearly related to the issue of learner autonomy, which will be touched upon later. Furthermore, it seems one of the focus-group interview participants did not like assignments where he had to cooperate with others, which, as was discussed, is a prominent facet of the social constructivist approach. Additionally, another participant claimed her classmates were not fond of Assignments 4 and 8 because they did not have enough experiences of intercultural contact to reflect on. Although I repeatedly emphasised in the lessons that an intercultural encounter is not necessarily one with foreigners, I found this point important to consider in the future.

Some of the theories discussed in the lessons – such as those of Hofstede (1980/2001, 1991/2010) and Hall (1959, 1966, 1976) on culture, or that of Byram (1997) and Bennett (1993) on ICC – were also unpopular: five students included theories among the three reasons why they did not like the course. As in the case of the home assignments, different students had quite different problems with the theories:

S5: *“I believe that it is useful, but I really don’t like theories.”*

S12: *“Theories and models were hard to integrate sometimes.”*

S13: *“We weren’t really pushed to learn all the theories.”*

In the focus-group interview I was interested to find out more about the students’ attitudes to theories and models, and therefore included a question about them. The responses here paint a colourful picture:

Anna: *“I just don’t like theories and models but I know that they are sometimes useful [...] but yeah, I better like things from the life, not one guy’s mind or something.”*

Eva: *“I guess for students it’s always about these things that they don’t like theories or models because you have to understand them, like they are not so easy.”*

David: *“Theories and models are [...] a bit more complex and students are really avoid complex things because they are students. [...] In my opinion some things [...] must be dry because if something is not dr... If everything is so exciting and so fun to learn, then no comparison. So you must have some dry parts and some fun and interesting parts. To have some comparison.”* [Other participants agree.]

Linda: *“I liked the models because it was... it were really easy to understand how it works. That’s why I think the models was great.”*

Anna: *“I think it was good that we shouldn’t learn them by our heart, but probably if we should then I would understand them more and deeply, and probably I would say it’s more useful, but I don’t know.”*

Linda: *“But then we should have a concrete knowledge about that stuff, like Hofstede and Hall.”*

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these comments. Firstly, although Linda claimed she liked the models, most of the other comments reveal the need to rethink the way theories and models are presented and applied in the lessons, which is a great example of valuable insight gained from learner feedback, and was also supported by my own notes and reflections as the teacher of the course. Secondly, some of the responses are very telling of the students’ beliefs about learning in general: (1) theories have to be memorised or learnt; (2) it is necessary to learn about “dry” topics in order to appreciate “exciting” ones. In addition, S13’s comment again leads us to a problem related to a central element of the social constructivist classroom, namely learner autonomy, which is discussed in greater depth in the next section.

Other aspects of the course which the students claimed they disliked are found in Table 18. Here it can be seen that, as opposed to the majority, two students specifically mentioned pair and group discussions as negative aspects of the seminar. Also, it seems the group was not happy about the fact that the lessons were taught in three-hour-long blocks every second week, instead of weekly, shorter lessons, and two participants were also displeased with the fact that they were required to complete their work by the given deadlines.

Table 18

*Aspects of Seminar 1 mentioned by the students as ones they disliked*

<b>Mentioned negative aspect</b>	<b>Number of students mentioning this aspect</b>
Various difficulties with the assignments	8
Various issues with the theories and models	5
The lessons were three hours long	5
Pair/group discussions	2
The deadlines	2

#### 6.4.1.3 The students' views about learning in the social constructivist classroom

As mentioned before, some of the students' comments express, although not explicitly, their views about learning in the social constructivist classroom. For instance, the finding that the students appreciated assignments that allowed them to "*rethink many things*" can lead us to believe that an important aspect of the constructivist classroom, namely learner reflection, is seen as appropriate in this particular context. At the same time, other features of the IC seminar that are characteristic of the constructivist approach, such as the emphasis on learner autonomy, have evidently caused problems for some students. For the sake of clarity, let me consider in the form of a list the positive and the negative aspects of learning in this type of classroom in this particular educational context, as seen from and underlined by the students' comments, some of which have already been mentioned in relation to Table 16 and 18.

The positive aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by the students' comments, were found to be:

##### (1) Interactive lessons; pair/group discussions and cooperation; student participation

S1: "*Good questions, so most of the students wanted to participate in the conversations.*"

S7: "[I liked the course because...] *We had discussions, another classes it is just like teacher speaking all the time.*"

S9: "*It was based on personal experiences, discussions, it was absolutely learner-centered.*"

S11: "*The conversations were open and we could free discuss some topics and express our opinion.*"

Anna: "*We communicate a lot and we should think all the time when this course happening – the lessons, and discuss, and yeah, it was really useful I think.*"

Linda: "*It makes the lesson so interactive and we have to communicate with each other and get know more each other, and this is a pretty good idea to make an assignment like that.*"

(2) Learning from other students

S7: *“Even difficult parts get cleared because teacher (or others) just explained it.”*

S15: *“It was interesting to hear other’s opinion about a given topic.”*

Anna: *“It’s connected with our experience, but it’s experience exchange with others [...], it’s interesting.”*

Anna: *“I would say that it’s really interesting to hear another experience and share with your self experience, and... I would like to hear more about Ecuador and that volunteer work in Ecuador... I don’t remember the girl’s name but she went there in our group. I think it’s really useful to hear her story about it.”*

(3) In-school learning related to out-of-school experiences; relevant topics; activities set in meaningful contexts

S9: *“I could use everything that I have learned in my personal stories, by my personal experiences.”*

S13: *“In this course the things we have learnt are really useful in everyday life. There were a lot of occasions when I told my friend ‘oh actually I’ve learnt about this in one of my classes and I think...’”*

David: *“I found it useful because it wasn’t a normal kind of course: because there were methods, structures and many varying topics but mostly you could associate with your own normal life – so you could say you must have experience, some kind of event that you could relate to any of the topics given in the course. So yeah, it was useful, it opened some perspectives for me.”*

(4) Zone of proximal development/Mastery motivation

S2: *“[I liked the course because...] It taught me; it made me work; I could handle it.”*

David: *“I really liked it because they were challenge in a way, but not that hard to work on, so [...] they were good tasks to do, good assignments. But not those that you should sacrifice at least 4 or 6 hours of your day to finish it.”*

(5) The importance of critical thinking, reflection, real-world problem-solving

S6: *“You had had to analyse something and think.”*

S9: *“I could analysed my stories and think about them in another way.”*

S11: *“There are several useful thoughts and information in this video and I often think about it, when I have only a ‘single story’ about somebody/something.”*

S13: *“It [the course] kept us working and thinking.”*

Linda: *“This sheet teach us to be more conscious and reflect on ourselves, and it’s a good point.”*

On the other hand, the negative aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by the students’ comments, were found to be:

(1) Interactive lessons; pair/group discussions and cooperation; student participation

S2: *“[I didn’t like the course because...] It was a ‘team-work’ oriented class.”*

S14: *“I don’t really like to talk in class. I preffer the teacher teaching, and not all the time the students talking.”*

David: *“They [the assignments] were great when I didn’t have to cooperate with someone else. I’m not really a cooperative person really. [...] So most assignments that were sole assignments were great, but when we have to team up, that’s a bit hard for me.”*

(2) Challenging assignments for every lesson

S6: *“To some home tasks I had to put a lot of efford, and sometimes it was difficult.”*

S7: *“Usually we don’t have homeworks, so... something unusual.”*

S12: *“Making interviews was a bit challenging.”*

S13: *“Some tasks I’ve found really hard to complete like the analysis of the news article or the job interview.”*

(3) Learner autonomy and initiative

S9: *“I could not find a person from abroad to do the interview.”*

S13: *“Sometimes I wasn’t sure about what was expected from me through the assignments. I wasn’t sure of what to concentrate on to complete my assignments in the right way.”*

S13: *“We weren’t really pushed to learn all the theories.”*

S16: *“I don’t like the recording of interviews, because it was difficult and I didn’t have any experience about it. Otherwise, it was hard to find a person for the interview.”*

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above. Firstly, it seems that whereas the majority of the participants were happy to get involved in discussions with their classmates during the lessons, there were some students who did not value this aspect of the constructivist classroom so much, as they favour *“the teacher teaching”*, which may be indicative of how they were socialised during their studies. However, based on my own observations as the teacher of the course, this second group consisted of very few students. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised to find that English majors’ lack of willingness to communicate in these IC courses – mentioned as a negative point by both the teacher and student participants of the ES – was much less of an issue in this seminar than I had previously expected.

Secondly, many of the students were appreciative of reflective tasks and assignments, especially if these were somehow related to their everyday lives, or out-of-school experiences. They liked activities that made them think, rather than memorise information, although some students did emphasise the need to learn *“dry”* topics, i.e. theories and models, and memorise them. It also became clear that the students were not used to completing assignments, as they were not required to do so in their other courses, but, for the most part, enjoyed doing them. For others, however, the assignments were too challenging, and perhaps beyond their *zone of*

*proximal development*. This is closely connected to my final point that, interestingly, quite a few of the problems that were raised by the students, regardless of whether they were to do with home assignments or theories and models, can be traced back to a lack of learner autonomy. This is most clearly seen in the fact that, although Hungarian and international students alike participated in the seminar, some students still had difficulties with finding an interviewee from another country for the interview assignment. One can only guess that the reason for this is simply that these students had not been required to act as autonomous learners during their primary, secondary, or even tertiary studies.

These findings offer insight into how such courses could be planned in this educational context in the future, in order to meet students' needs. We have seen that, on the whole, these English majors deemed the constructivist approach of the seminar fitting, and found the course useful precisely because of the methods associated with this approach. They appreciated interaction and relating classroom learning to real life – in other words, they intuitively applied the competence construct. That is what students seem to want: intrinsically motivating and challenging tasks so that they can feel that they can cope with them, and meaningful content relevant to their life experiences and future needs, as was envisaged.

At the same time, in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of the ways in which the social constructivist approach may be appropriate, as well as the extent to which the course had succeeded in reaching its aims, the students' ICC development also needs to be considered. This is the focus of the next section, which aims to provide answers to RQ7.

#### 6.4.2 Research question 7: The students' ICC development

As has been mentioned, the design of CS1 did not allow for a systematic examination of the changes that may have occurred in the time between the start and the end of Seminar 1 in terms of the students' ICC. This was largely due to the fact that the tasks they completed did not elicit sufficient information about their ICC at these two points. This prompted me to rethink the design for CS2, as will be seen in the relevant section. However, their comments given in the end-of-term questionnaire and the focus-group interview proved to be a valuable source for answering RQ7, in that they point to a variety of changes connected to the ICC objectives outlined in Table 13. In this section I therefore present the findings in a way that, wherever applicable, I set the students' comments against these objectives, namely those related to (1) attitudes, (2) knowledge, (3) skills of interpreting and relating (considered here together with critical cultural awareness, for reasons outlined later) and (4) skills of discovery and interaction.



In addition to changes in the intercultural dimension of the construct, some of the participants' self-evaluative reflections point to some kind of a shift in (5) the communicative aspects of their ICC, included as a fifth category here.

Let me first consider possible changes in the dimension of *attitudes*. The three objectives pertaining to this dimension are:

- (1) Objective 1: The student is interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.
- (2) Objective 2: The student is willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones.
- (3) Objective 3: The student is interested in discovering other points of view in their own and other cultures.

Although none of the students' comments start with "*I'm more interested in*", or "*I'm more willing to believe*", some evidence of their development toward these objectives can be found in their comments:

S2: "*It widened my view of the world and broadened my scale of acceptance.*"

S6: "*It made me more carefully in looking at cultures, people from other cultures. And I felt that it can really harm somebody, if you know and believe in one single story.*"

S9: "*I could use everything that I have learned in my personal stories, by my personal experiences. [...] And I could analysed my stories and think about them in an other way [...] I liked the homeworks because they made me rethink many things.*"

S11: "*I think there are several useful thoughts and information in this video and I often think about it, when I have only a 'single story' about somebody/something.*"

David: "*It made me change my attitude a bit, so after gaining some knowledge of how stereotypes work and how people should relate to each other I realized that in my own way, without even knowing, I was stereotyping some people and acting like a stereotype myself. So it broadened my mind a bit. So I'm a bit more, I don't know, diplomatic, or a bit more tolerant.*"

Of course, we cannot be absolutely certain whether a broadened "*scale of acceptance*" indeed means that this student is willing to believe that his/her own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones (Objective 2). Similarly, it is difficult to tell if S11's claim, "*I often think about it, when I have only a 'single story' about somebody/something*" is indicative of the student's interest in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures (Objective 1), or perhaps his/her interest in discovering other points of view (Objective 3). Nevertheless, all of the above comments suggest that some kind of change has occurred in these participants' attitudes.

As for the second dimension, that of *knowledge*, I will not outline the relevant individual objectives here (O4-O7, found in Table 13), as the students' comments showing development in this respect are less concretely related to individual objectives, and prompt a more holistic view of the change that has come about:

S7: "*I found out a lots of information about other countries.*"

S8: "*The interview was really useful. I might not find a lot of differences but I really find interesting differences. It was also intercultural communication to understand the other culture.*"

S13: "*We have learnt a lot from it not just about her and her country but also about ourselves and how much more we need to learn about Intercultural Communication.*"

S15: "*I got to know a lot about the interviewee's culture and habits.*"

David: "*When we have to choose a country and its culture and look it up on a site [...] and I was like... I knew Japan, so I'm going to choose Japan, they can't throw anything new to me, and I was surprised that I just knew a moderate knowledge of Japanese culture. So that topic, I think it was a real big header for me. I think most students would get a bit surprised that they know so little when they think they know so much.*"

These responses point to the fact that not only did these students get new information about other cultures – and perhaps their own – but some of them also realised along the way "*how much more we need to learn about Intercultural Communication*", or that "*they know so little when they think they know so much*". In other words, the reported development in the knowledge dimension is tied with heightened awareness about the depths of IC and the need for further development, which I believe is incredibly important.

The next dimension, *skills of interpreting and relating* is considered together with another dimension, *critical cultural awareness*, because the students' comments do not allow for definitive conclusions as to which of these two the change is connected to. The objectives of the *skills of interpreting and relating* dimension are:

- (1) Objective 8: The student can see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.
- (2) Objective 9: The student can identify ethnocentric perspectives, e.g. in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.

The objectives of the *critical cultural awareness* dimension, on the other hand, are:

- (1) Objective 12: The student can identify ideological perspectives and values, e.g. in a newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.

- (2) Objective 13: The student is aware of their own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence their views of other people's values

The following comments are indicative of a shift in either one, or both of these dimensions:

S2: *"I realized I should view happenings in the world from an own perspective instead of just reading the news."*

S13: *"This way we really could see the conflict and it was easier to decide what were the problems."*

S14: *"It is a very sensitive topic in Hungary, and some people were saying some things that were not really true. In class, we went deeper and we proved why those things were not true. What is useful here is that people now (me included) will think before talking. Just to think it's a good achievement."*

Linda: *"This sheet teach us to be more conscious and reflect on ourselves, and it's a good point."*

As can be seen, based on the participants' comments alone we cannot determine whether the students searching for their "own perspective" (S2), going "deeper" (S14), or learning how to "be more conscious and reflect on ourselves" (Linda) is indicative of one, the other, or both of the dimensions in question. For instance, S13's point – that the class could really see the conflict depicted in a film we watched in class, and could also identify the problems – may be a reference to development connected to Objective 8, 9, or even 12.

The students' responses linked to the final intercultural dimension, that of *skills of discovery and interaction*, present a more complex picture. Let me first outline the related ICC objectives:

- (1) Objective 10: The student knows how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.
- (2) Objective 11: The student can use a combination of their knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions.

The comments that are associated with this dimension are:

S3: *"The audio assignment where we had to talk with each other and the interview with a foreigner because these improved our skills."*

S8: *"For me it's important to know how to behave or how to understand other people, from different cultures. This class gave me opportunity to learn more about it."*

S12: *"It was good to learn about [...] how to approach a future encounter with someone from a different culture."*

Linda: [in referring to the fact that she liked the interview assignment] *“We get consequences how to be more competent, how to be more winner in a situation.”*

Anna: *“When I interviewed that Iran guy there was a lot of things which was hard to understand for me – but I should make that kind of attitude that it’s OK for me, or: okay, I’m interested, I’m listening, and I don’t say any bad thing about what he is doing, or what he’s like, or something. That I should improve this... yeah, this communication with foreigners...”*

David: *“After some research and the interview I realized that Japanese people are not strict, they are really party guys, or party faces.”*

David: *“It’s true that we could see what is the problem, and we could easily decide what could be solved like that, but in that situation we would be still dead dumb I think [...] I would make the same mistakes I think.”*

It is clear that whereas some of these comments signal change in the students skills of discovery and interaction, others refer to a lack of change, or illustrate a shift that is not necessarily in line with the objectives. For instance, S3 plainly referred to improved skills – although it is not evident whether the student meant intercultural or communication skills, or perhaps both – and S8 and S12 pointed out that it was good to *“learn more about”* how to interact with people from a different culture. On the other hand, Anna expressed uncertainty about the ways to discover new knowledge in relation to aspects of the other culture that are *“hard to understand”*. Furthermore, David’s overgeneralising statement points to a lack of change in connection with Objective 10, and he also referred to lacking the tools to act and communicate appropriately in an intercultural situation which involves a misunderstanding or conflict. These comments therefore clearly reveal the need for further development in terms of the students’ skills of discovery and interaction.

Finally, a number of participants emphasised that they experienced some kind of a shift in the communicative aspects of their ICC. As has been discussed, Byram (1997, p. 48) defines the communicative part of his model as including three competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Although we cannot be absolutely sure which of the three competences are referred to in students’ comments below, it is nonetheless important to see that a change in this regard was also mentioned:

S5: *“In this course I could really improve my English language skills (of course, in the beginning it was quite hard for me, but now it’s better).”*

S13: *“We had the opportunity to talk and improve our talking skills.”*

Anna: *“First thing is English skills... for me first it was quite hard to understand, but afterwards in the endings it was really good and I felt that I get better, and yeah, one part of it was this course which helped me.”*

Anna: *“that’s why I improved my skills, even writing skills, everything.”*

Eva: *“For me it was useful because my communication skills now they are better than before.”*

It is clear from all of the above that, according to the majority of the participants, some kind of development in their ICC indeed occurred during the semester (Menyhei, 2014). Whereas some participants mentioned becoming more tolerant, self-reflective or conscious by having experienced surprise or certain realizations during the term, others referred to the abundance of cultural facts they learnt, and still others expressed they became more competent communicators in the foreign language. However, there is also evidence that some aspects of the students’ ICC did not develop as much as others, which is perhaps unsurprising, given the fact that the construct in question is highly complex, as has been repeatedly emphasised, while the time frame for its development was relatively short. Of course, based on these comments alone we cannot draw definitive conclusions about the extent to which the course reached its aims; neither do we have a profound understanding of the ICC development paths of individual students – these issues were explored in CS2. Nevertheless, they do provide a greater understanding of “insider perspective” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38) on this development.

### 6.4.3 Conclusions drawn from Classroom Study 1

The findings of CS1 paint a complex picture and yield numerous conclusions – not only about intercultural learning and teaching, but also about researching this subject matter. In this section I briefly outline these conclusions, all of which I drew on in planning Seminar 2.

The educational approach taken seemed to be appropriate in many ways. Firstly, most participants enjoyed discussions and learning from their classmates during these discussions. Willingness to communicate was not an issue, especially when the students found the topics directly relatable to their own experiences. The presence of Hungarian as well as international students in the class was found hugely beneficial in this respect. Secondly, the participants deemed the course interesting as well as useful, and, although not asked explicitly about their development, referred to various forms of intercultural learning that came about, including greater awareness of how much more needs to be learnt. For the most part, they enjoyed the assignments because these made them learn, think and become more conscious communicators, and also because they were challenging but doable. However, it became clear that the approach was rather unusual for many of them: it seems they were not used to learning in such a classroom, which caused problems for some of the students. For instance, a few of them were not thrilled about having to cooperate with others, or being treated as autonomous learners,

responsible for their own development. Nevertheless, on the whole I found the approach suitable, and decided on following it in Seminar 2 as well.

Other conclusions pertain to the ways in which several aspects of the course could be changed for the purpose of greater effectiveness. The most obvious example, based on the findings, is the presentation and application of the theories and models. The students' comments and my own observations point to the fact that, if these were to be discussed in future seminars, it would be crucial to better contextualise them. As a case in point, the data about individual countries' scores underlying Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) theory would help to personalise the model, and make it more interesting. I found that quite a few activities would need to be done differently, and a number of assignments would need to be changed, or even removed from the syllabus. For instance, Assignment 4 and 8, in which the students recorded and reflected on their own intercultural encounters, did not appeal to them. As it turned out, this might have been because the students understood IC as communication between members of different nations, and some of them did not have much to write about since they did not have enough experience of such intercultural contact.

Finally, I learnt a great deal during the semester about researching ICC development. I arrived at the conclusion that the development of this construct in the classroom was without a doubt complex, messy, non-linear, and much more difficult to document than I had anticipated. In more practical terms, I realised that, if it was indeed possible to follow individual students' ICC development paths in such short time, this would necessitate a fair number of changes to the design. Firstly, the students would need to complete an ICC self-evaluation sheet in one of the first lessons, and reflect on any changes in relation to it at the end of the term. Secondly, since this would require that they have a profound understanding of the construct at the beginning of the term, the ICC objectives would need to be discussed very early on in the semester. Of course, several measures would need to be taken to ensure that the students indeed fully grasped the model and were able to think about their own ICC with its help. Thirdly, the analysis of the course participants' written work completed during the term may allow for links between (1) their views about their learning and (2) what their work reflects about their learning. Finally, eliciting end-of-lesson reflections from the students about what they have learnt and found useful in the lessons might prove immensely helpful in documenting any shifts to their ICC that may occur.

As is evident, the findings of CS1 provided a lot of food for thought. The educational approach was found appropriate, but at the same time, various changes were seen as necessary

for more effective learning, teaching and research in CS2. These are discussed in greater detail in the next sections.

## 6.5 Method of Classroom Study 2

### 6.5.1 Changes to the course design

The design of the second examined course (Seminar 2) was similar to that of Seminar 1 in many ways, but a variety of changes were also implemented. In this section I indicate points of similarity and outline some of the changes made, as well as the rationale behind them.

Firstly, unlike Seminar 1, which was built up of three-hour-long blocks every second week, Seminar 2 consisted of eleven lessons held weekly and lasting an hour and a half each. This change was seen as necessary because (1) in their answers to the question eliciting reasons why they did not like the course, many participants of CS1 indicated that they would have preferred weekly, shorter lessons, and (2) as the teacher of Seminar 1 I also made note of the fact that more frequent, shorter lessons would have been less tiring for the students and for myself.

The general aim and approach of the course remained unchanged. The considerations in (1) the sequencing of objectives and (2) the assessment of course achievement were also the same, as were the ICC objectives themselves. In addition, in Seminar 2 I drew on many of the topics, activities and assignments of Seminar 1. For a detailed description of all of these aspects of the course design, please refer to Section 6.3.1, and for sample course materials used in Seminar 2, see Appendix E.

However, new topics, activities and assignments were also introduced, and the order and manner of implementing some others were changed, as seen in Table 19 on pages 161-162. For instance, for reasons discussed in the previous section, fewer models and theories were included, but those that remained were better contextualised and integrated: we referred back to them whenever it was appropriate and useful to relate them to other topics, activities and assignments. There was a much stronger emphasis on Byram's (1997) model of ICC, and the need for the students to fully understand and be able to apply it, as this was required for their self-evaluation.

Also, as seen above, some participants of CS1 experienced difficulties with the assignments in which they were required to analyse their own intercultural encounters, whereas others like S9, were appreciative of it: "*I could analysed my stories and think about them in an other way*". I therefore decided to include only one such activity, which was based on the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (AIE, Council of Europe, 2009). This tool, published by the Council of Europe, takes Byram's (1997) model as its underpinning. It



encourages critical reflection on one's own experiences of intercultural contact with the help of a series of questions, such as: *Why have you chosen this experience [to write about in the AIE]? How do you see your own thoughts, feelings and actions now? Did the experience change you? How?* In its introduction, this resource provides the following definition of an intercultural encounter:

An intercultural encounter can be an experience you had with someone from a different country, but it can also be an experience with someone from another cultural background in your country. It might be, for example, someone you met from another region, someone who speaks a different language, someone from a different religion or from a different ethnic group. (2009, p. 3)

I also emphasised this when presenting the tool to the students, and gave some more concrete examples, relying on the encounters described in written form by the students who participated in the previous seminar. However, regrettably, the AIE was adapted, but not validated for use with these English majors. Consequently, as will be elaborated on later, a number of students in Seminar 2 misunderstood certain parts of it, as well as its definition of intercultural encounters, and had trouble completing it.

Furthermore, some changes were made to the syllabus in a way that would help the group revisit important subject matters and thus allow for deep learning. For example, in order to explore the topic of *our expectations of people from countries we know little about* in Lesson 5, I planned an activity in which the students would be required to critically analyse parts of the Iranian film *A Separation* (Farhadi, 2011). This film depicts a personal and cultural conflict between people who have the same nationality, but different social and religious backgrounds – in other words, it shows national culture as heterogeneous. It also provides a glimpse into the daily lives, beliefs and values of the characters. As preparation for this activity, I planned to elicit any previous knowledge about this country, and add further cultural information that would be necessary for a critical analysis. Here, I also intended to introduce the different types of headgear worn by Muslim women and their cultural complexities, with the help of pictures. In short, Lesson 5 aimed for the development of many aspects of the students' ICC, but especially those related to:

- (1) Objective 6: The student knows about social distinctions (e.g. social class, profession) and their markers (e.g. clothing, language variety) in their own and other cultures,
- (2) Objective 7: The student knows about the processes and institutions of socialization (e.g. education systems, religious institutions) in their own and other cultures, and

- (3) Objective 8: The student can see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.

These forms of intercultural learning which I anticipated would come about in Lesson 5 would then be drawn on in later lessons, like Lesson 7. The main aim of Lesson 7 was to help the students identify different ideological perspectives and values, which pertains to Objective 12. For this I planned to present parts of videos in class in which several people – including Nicolas Sarkozy, Barack Obama, as well as people interviewed on the streets of Paris – express their views about the banning of the burqa and niqab in France. I intentionally chose this case of cultural conflict because I expected that the topics explored in Lesson 5 would provide a firm basis for deeper analysis in Lesson 7. In turn, I expected that the subject matters discussed in Lesson 7 would provide a similarly firm basis to help the students complete their assignment for Lesson 9, in which they were required to critically analyse a news article that discusses a case of cultural conflict between groups of people. My observations and experience of teaching Seminar 1 helped me to plan Seminar 2 with numerous such links in the syllabus, and I hoped that these would contribute to deeper intercultural learning.

Table 19

*Overview of the topics, in-class activities and home assignments in Seminar 2*

Topics	In-class activities	Home assignments and related objectives
<b>LESSON 1: Introduction</b> Introductions; reasons why a course on IC is necessary Multiple identities; Personal and social identity; the role of socialisation	Filling in the background questionnaire Writing about an experience of intercultural contact, based on the <i>Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters</i> (Council of Europe, 2009) Class discussion of multiple identities Mingle activity: student introductions	-
<b>LESSON 2: Culture and cultural difference</b> Elements and features of culture Facts about chosen countries The concept of ethnocentrism	Group discussion of students' findings from Assignment 1, comparing and contrasting Pair work on the Iceberg model (AFS, 1984): the visible and invisible elements of culture Watching and discussing a short video revealing differences in cultural practices resulting in misunderstanding	<b>Assignment 1:</b> Reading the profile of a chosen country on <a href="http://www.kwintessential.co.uk">http://www.kwintessential.co.uk</a> and preparing notes for discussion <b>O4, O5, O6, O7</b>
<b>LESSON 3: ICC</b> Key concepts: cross-cultural, intercultural, multicultural Byram's (1997) model of ICC A personal example for why ICC needs to be developed	Pair discussion of the characteristics of an interculturally competent person Completing a worksheet on Byram's (1997) model Pair discussion of Assignment 2 Class discussion as preparation for the interview assignment (Assignment 6-7)	<b>Assignment 2:</b> Answering questions related to four scenarios (adapted from INCA Project, 2004): (1) Studying abroad, (2) Helping exchange students in the students' home country, (3) Working in a restaurant abroad, (4) Living with a family abroad <b>No related objectives</b> (The assignment was a source for assessing aspects of the students' ICC)
<b>LESSON 4: National culture</b> Review of Byram's (1997) model of ICC and the concept of ethnocentrism The concept of overgeneralisation	Completing the self-evaluation sheet Group discussion of and critical reflection on students' findings from Assignment 3	<b>Assignment 3:</b> Reading information about Hungarian culture on <a href="http://www.filolog.com">http://www.filolog.com</a> , writing notes about points the students agree and disagree with, supporting notes with reasons and examples <b>O5, O6, O8, O10, O13</b>
<b>LESSON 5: Our views of people from other cultures: Expectations</b> Facts about Iran Our expectations of people from countries we know little about	Group discussion of any previous knowledge about Iran Critically analysing parts of the film <i>A Separation</i> (Farhadi, 2011) Group and class discussion as preparation for the interview assignment (Assignment 6-7)	<b>Assignment 4:</b> Watching a presentation on <a href="http://www.ted.com">http://www.ted.com</a> entitled <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> by Adichie (2009) about stereotyping and the importance of cultural awareness, and completing the related worksheet <b>O1, O2, O3, O10</b>
<b>LESSON 6: Our views of people from other cultures: Heterogeneous societies</b> Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) dimensions of cultural difference Stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination Review and integration of what has been learnt in connection with (1) ethnocentrism, (2) expectations and stereotypes, (3) heterogeneous societies and (4) Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) model in the in-class activities	Completing a worksheet and critically reflecting on Hofstede's model (adapted from Utley, 2004, p.63) Comparing and reflecting on the position of selected countries on the scales of Hofstede's (1980/2001, 1991/2010) dimensions Pair and class discussion of Assignment 4 and the topic of stereotypes Critically analysing the story <i>Being Represented</i> (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, pp. 7-8) Completing a worksheet on the changes in students' own national culture Class discussion as preparation for the interview assignment (Assignment 6-7)	<b>Assignment 5:</b> Reflecting on and answering the teacher's notes and questions related to the students' background questionnaire and <i>Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters</i> (Council of Europe, 2009) <b>O1-O10, O12, O13</b> – depending on the encounter reported on

<p><b>LESSON 7: Our ideological perspectives</b></p> <p>Types of ideology</p> <p>Example 1: Education and ideology</p> <p>Example 2: Banning of the burqa and niqab in France</p>	<p>Brainstorming types of ideology</p> <p>Pair work on the topic of Education and ideology</p> <p>Watching videos and identifying different ideological perspectives on the banning of the burqa and niqab in France</p>	<p><b>Assignment 6:</b> Interviewing someone from a different country about the education system in their country, recording and transcribing the interview</p> <p><b>O1, O2, O3, O7, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13</b></p>
<p><b>LESSON 8: Discussion of your findings; Language, culture, power</b></p> <p>Students' findings from the interview assignment (Assignment 6-7)</p> <p>Review of the topic of ideologies</p> <p>Linguistic and cultural imperialism</p>	<p>Group/Pair discussion: comparing and contrasting students' findings from Assignment 6-7</p> <p>Pair work: identifying the ideological loading in short texts</p> <p>Class discussion of a short news report (from Holliday, Hyde, &amp; Kullman, 2006, p. 48) as preparation for Assignment 8</p> <p>Completing a worksheet on the topic of English as an international language</p>	<p><b>Assignment 7:</b> Reflecting on the findings of the interview in a paper</p> <p><b>O1, O2, O3, O7, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13</b></p>
<p><b>LESSON 9: IC: Misunderstanding and conflict</b></p> <p><b>IC: verbal, non-verbal, written communication 1.</b></p> <p>In-groups and out-groups</p> <p>Social constructionist perspectives of multiple identities</p> <p>The relationship of language and culture; linguistic relativity theory</p> <p>Hall's (1959, 1966, 1976) dimensions of cultural difference</p> <p>Communication styles</p>	<p>Group discussion of students' findings from Assignment 8; Presenting one news article and the group's analysis of it to the class</p> <p>Completing a worksheet on the in-groups and out-groups in the students' society</p> <p>Reading and reflecting on short quotes about language, culture and identity from Hoffman (1989, p. 106), Pavlenko (2005, p. 112) and Wierzbicka (1997, p. 119, 121)</p> <p>Group debate on statements about language, culture and identity</p>	<p><b>Assignment 8:</b> Critically analysing a news article that discusses a case of cultural conflict between groups of people</p> <p><b>O4, O7, O8, O9, O12</b></p> <p><b>Assignment 9:</b> Analysing the communication in two job interviews found in extracts from Roberts (2009), and completing the related worksheet by making comparisons and finding explanations</p> <p><b>O5, O8</b></p>
<p><b>LESSON 10: IC: verbal, non-verbal, written communication 2.</b></p> <p><b>Culture shock, adaptation, multicultural societies</b></p> <p>Review of Byram's (1997) model of ICC (as preparation for Assignment 11) and Hall's (1959, 1966, 1976) dimensions of cultural difference</p> <p>Cultural differences in verbal, non-verbal and written communication</p> <p>Studying abroad</p> <p>Culture shock and the U-curve hypothesis of adjustment</p>	<p>Class discussion as preparation for the final assignment (Assignment 11)</p> <p>Group and class discussion of Assignment 9</p> <p>Pair work: identifying the cause of misunderstanding in examples of cultural differences in (1) communication styles and (2) non-verbal communication</p> <p>Class discussion of (1) the benefits of studying abroad, (2) culture shock and (3) the stages of culture shock</p> <p>Analysis and pair discussion of excerpts from a study-abroad student's diary (from Szentpáli Ujlaki, 2008)</p>	<p><b>Assignment 10:</b> Compiling the portfolio</p>
<p><b>LESSON 11: Drawing conclusions; Evaluating the course</b></p> <p>Berry and Sam's (1997) acculturation framework: integration, assimilation, separation, marginalisation</p> <p>Review and conclusions about IC</p>	<p>Group debate about key trends related to language, culture and power</p> <p>Filling in the questionnaire on students' views about the seminar and their own development</p>	<p><b>Assignment 11:</b> Reflecting on own ICC development in a paper</p>

## 6.5.2 Participants

CS2 involved twelve BA students of English Studies (St1-St12): five female and seven male students, all of whom were Hungarian and participated in Seminar 2 in the first term of the 2013/2014 academic year. The two youngest participants were 18 years old, whereas the oldest was 29, and all the other students were aged between 19 and 22. Based on their responses given to the questions in the background questionnaire, it can be stated that most students shared many similarities in terms of their language and intercultural background, but there were a few participants who differed greatly from the others in this respect.

The majority reported speaking two foreign languages: typically English and German. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, most students rated their English proficiency between 3 and 4, although one student marked 2 and two other participants marked between 4 and 5. Their ratings for the other foreign languages they spoke were typically low, but St8's French, St11's Japanese and St12's German proficiency was rated at 3. Seven students started learning English before the age of ten and five after, and nine students learnt it in a classroom environment, whereas three learnt it in both a classroom and a natural environment.

Most participants' families are all Hungarian, with St3 indicating Slavic roots in his family, St4 writing about a Russian great-grandfather, and St5 claiming his mother's family had lived in Transylvania for a long time. Also, six students said they had no friends from abroad, or had friends they did not keep in touch with. As opposed to this, St3 wrote he had more than twenty-six friends altogether from Turkey, the US, the UK and Bulgaria, St9 had four or five online friends from abroad, St11 also had online friends in addition to Japanese friends from university, and St12's best friend was German. Finally, nine participants indicated that their longest stay in a foreign country was one or two weeks or less, and of these nine, three had been abroad once or twice. By contrast, St12 had spent between 2 weeks and a month in Germany visiting her friend, St8 lived in Thailand for a year, and St3 had been in a great variety of countries for longer periods of time – for instance in Turkey as a student and at another time as a volunteer.

### 6.5.3 Data collection methods and procedures

In collecting data I drew on the following sources in CS2:

- (1) A background questionnaire
- (2) A self-evaluation sheet on the students' ICC
- (3) The students' end-of-lesson reflections
- (4) The teacher's notes and reflections
- (5) The students' written assignments and in-class work
- (6) The students' portfolio
- (7) A questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development.

As in the case of CS1, the background questionnaire was used to gain some understanding of the students' language, cultural and intercultural background. Its format was found suitable and therefore was not changed for CS2. The participants were asked to fill in this questionnaire on Lesson 1.

The self-evaluation sheet (found in Appendix F) was designed to collect information on the students' ICC at the beginning of the term. The instrument, which was reviewed by two other researchers, consisted of thirteen items, each of which was connected to one of the objectives of the course. For instance, the first three items pertained to the dimension of *Attitudes* and were related to Objective 1, 2 and 3, respectively, where the statement in item 1 was: *I'm interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.* The respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = not at all true; 5 = absolutely true) the extent to which these statements were true of them, by circling the number that best described their position, and then write examples to support their answer. The self-evaluation sheet was completed by the students on Lesson 4. I originally planned to administer it on Lesson 3, which was devoted to exploring the concept of ICC and Byram's (1997) model, and included a pair discussion of the characteristics of an intercultural competent person as well as discussions and activities related to the model. However, some students were absent that day, so I introduced it on the subsequent lesson. This was done following a comprehensive review of the model and important concepts like *ethnocentric perspectives*. I told the students that the sheet was an important tool in helping them think about their own ICC, that it would also be drawn on later in the course, and asked them to let me know if there were any expressions or points they were not sure of. At this point I did not tell them, however, that the information gathered may be used for research purposes if they consent to this, because of the possible

negative effects this might have on the research (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 114). I considered the ethical issues involved in this decision, and concluded that the students would be informed about the research at the end of the course, at which point, in presenting the consent forms, I would make it very clear that participation was voluntary. The participants filled in the self-evaluation sheet in approximately 30 minutes.

I also relied on the students' end-of lesson reflections, completed at the end of each lesson in about four minutes, in which they were asked to reflect on and write about the following points: (1) *What you found useful in today's class and why*, (2) *What you liked in today's class and why*, (3) *What you didn't like in today's class and why*, (4) *What you learned in today's class that was new to you*. I anticipated that their answers given to question (2) and (3) would allow for insight into their views about the course and the approach, and those given to question (1) and (4) would provide me with information about their ICC development. For these purposes I needed the students to include their names on their reflection sheets, so I found it important to emphasise that their comments should reflect their true opinions, and that answers such as *I did not learn anything new today* were also acceptable. Of course, I still accounted for what Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 114) call the *halo effect*, that is the factor that the students may give responses they think are expected of them. Nevertheless, I considered these reflections as valuable sources of data, and hoped that I would be able to compare the information obtained from the students in this way with other triangulated data.

In addition, my own notes and reflections about various classroom processes were drawn on. These were not written after every lesson, but were somewhat more structured than those in CS1. For instance, I made note of (1) which activities seemed to work well and which did not, including possible explanations, (2) various aspects of interaction in the classroom – e.g. how the students reacted to and behaved during pair and group discussions and mingle activities, (3) observations about individual students – e.g. a topic a certain student appeared particularly interested in, and (4) practical ideas for future reference – e.g. the need to use name tags for a certain activity. In an attempt to offer insight into the instructional context, I describe some of these in the *Classroom processes of Seminar 2* section below.

Furthermore, I relied on the students' written assignments (Assignment 1-9) as well as their AIE (Council of Europe, 2009), which was completed in class. I believed I would find some information about the participants' ICC in analysing these, but I expected that they might present a rather messy picture and certainly an incomplete one. These sources of data were used with the aim of establishing possible links between (1) what the students wrote about their own learning and (2) what their work reflected about their learning.

As one of their final assignments, the students were asked to compile a portfolio (Assignment 10) including those four home assignments, in-class notes or in-class worksheets that they thought best reflected their ICC development. They were then required to write a paper for their portfolio (Assignment 11), and explain in what ways their selected work reflected their development. The task sheet for this assignment (found in Appendix E) clarified that they should use their self-evaluation sheet and draw parallels between their ICC then, i.e. what they wrote about it at the beginning of the term, and ‘now’ – at the end of the course. I drew on these portfolios as important sources for the purpose of answering RQ7.

Finally, as in the case of CS1, the participants of CS2 also completed a questionnaire (found in Appendix F) on the last lesson. This instrument differed from that used in CS1 in some ways. It included four open-ended and three closed-ended items. The former ones elicited reasons why the students liked and disliked the course, and required them to specify what they thought was the most and least useful activity or assignment and why. The closed-ended items asked them to indicate on a 4-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they found the listed in-class activities and home assignments useful, and the listed ways of learning enjoyable. All twelve participants filled in the questionnaire, which took them approximately 30 minutes. As mentioned before, I informed the group about the background, purpose and procedures of the research on the same lesson, and made sure everybody was aware of their right to withdraw with no penalty. This information was included in the consent form (also found in Appendix F), which all students who were present signed. One student, who was not present, was sent the consent form and the questionnaire via email, but I did not receive an answer. I therefore concluded that the student did not wish to participate, and did not include him in the study. Many participants checked the box at the bottom of the consent form, indicating that they would like to receive information about the findings of the study. I will therefore send these students the link to my thesis once it is uploaded.

#### 6.5.4 Data analysis methods and procedures

The processes of data analysis in CS2 were very similar to those in CS1. Descriptive statistics were used to gain a bird’s-eye view on the basic features of (1) the students’ ratings in their self-evaluation sheets and (2) their answers to the closed-ended questions in the final questionnaire. The analysis of the qualitative data was also characterised by similar steps to those taken in CS1. After highlighting relevant parts in (1) the examples in the participants’ self-evaluation sheets, (2) their end-of-lesson reflections, (3) their written assignments and in-



class work, (4) their portfolio, and (5) the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, I proceeded to code the data descriptively. These then gave way to pattern codes. For example, data that were coded under the tags *contradiction*, *misinterpretation*, or *distorted conclusion drawn* in the students' coursework were eventually grouped under the more overarching *ability to think critically* code. Some codes, like *effort?* and *due to missed classes?* remained as questions and, naturally, the most prevalent codes were those pertaining to individual ICC dimensions, such as *attitudes* and *knowledge*, for instance. The steps taken from the initial coding phase to categorisation and re-categorisation were repeated several times.

Furthermore, I set up a separate profile for each student in which I put together the data available on their ICC and other related variables. This was done with the aim of gaining a thorough understanding of the participants' ICC trajectories, and identifying interesting cases. Case studies investigate separate entities as they function in context, and are "centered on description, inference, and interpretation" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p.162). They are seen as potentially fruitful in "making sense of a particularly problematic research area" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 155), and providing thick description (Duff, 2008, p. 43). For these reasons, I selected three cases to describe in greater detail: that of (1) Mark, whose case was identified as typical, (2) Nora, whose case showed some commonalities with other group members, but was mostly atypical, and (3) Daniel, whose case was seen as unique. In this thesis pseudonyms are used in describing these cases. The reader will find examples to the coding of data from these three students' coursework in Appendix G.

## 6.6 Findings of Classroom Study 2

### 6.6.1 Research question 6: The social constructivist classroom

In discussing the findings related to RQ6, I first describe a number of aspects of the class and classroom processes in Seminar 2, and reflect on some of the differences I observed compared with Seminar 1. This description is based principally on the notes and reflections I wrote during the semester. Subsequently, I outline what the students liked and disliked about the course, relying on the findings gained from their responses in the final questionnaire and the end-of-lesson reflections. Following the same steps as in CS1, I then discuss what these reflect about the participants' attitudes toward learning in the social constructivist classroom.

### 6.6.1.1 Classroom processes of Seminar 2

Initially there were fifteen students enrolled in the course, but, just like in the previous seminar, two students left in the middle of the term as they had trouble completing the weekly assignments. I discussed this problem with the students and aimed to negotiate a plan for making up for missed coursework, but this did not prove successful. Also, as mentioned before, one of the students who participated in the seminar did not respond to my request sent via email to take part in the study, and was therefore not included. Furthermore St1, St8 and St10 did the coursework as was required of them, but missed several lessons, and St6 was thirty minutes late to some of the lessons due to a clash with another course. In addition, Seminar 2 was originally planned to include twelve lessons, but due to illness, one of the lessons was cancelled. In order to make up for this, the following three occasions (Lesson 9-11) were longer by half an hour each. This decision was made after negotiation with the students. These are everyday issues in regular university courses, but should all be viewed as possibly affecting the research to some extent, and were therefore considered when interpreting the results.

Although the general mood in the lessons of Seminar 2 can be described as relaxed and amiable, based on my observations it was often missing the spirit that characterised the previous seminar. The students' lack of willingness to communicate was still not found to be an issue on the whole, and some lessons included lively discussions, but it was a noticeably more quiet class. I believe there were a number of possible reasons behind this. Firstly, it seemed that there were quite a few people in the group who were anxious about their second language competence, which, as will be seen, is underlined by their comments. Secondly, the students in Seminar 2 appeared to have much fewer experiences of intercultural contact than their peers in Seminar 1, and volunteered less frequently to share their own examples in relation to the topics. This is not very surprising given that in this term there were no international students in the class. Unfortunately, in the case of some participants, completing the AIE (Council of Europe, 2009) in Lesson 1 may also have contributed to frustration about this lack of experiences with foreign people. As previously touched upon, this tool was not validated for use with Hungarian English majors and was seen as causing uneasiness for some. However, in my view the most important reason remained to be that there were only Hungarian students in the group. It was argued in outlining the classroom processes of Seminar 1 that the presence of international students itself gave meaning to numerous activities, and brought very different frames of reference, as well as a sense of excitement to the classroom. I believe it was these factors that would have supported greater engagement in Seminar 2. Table 20 includes an example from

the classroom in Lesson 2, with the help of which I aim to illustrate some of these points, and also provide a contextualised understanding of the findings to be presented.

Table 20  
*Example of classroom processes in Seminar 2*

<b>Topic</b>	<i>Culture and cultural difference</i>
<b>Aim</b>	<p>The main aim of the lesson was to explore several features of culture and cultural difference. I aimed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) for the students to reflect on differences and similarities in terms of values, behaviours and cultural practices with the help of their findings from Assignment 1, which they completed for this lesson. In this assignment they were required to read the profile of a chosen country and prepare notes for discussion.</li> <li>2) for the students to explore different ways of looking at culture and its features, and begin to recognise the complexities involved in IC</li> <li>3) for the students to understand the concept of ethnocentrism (i.e. our tendency to interpret and judge other cultures with reference to our own culture, which we understand to be the centre of everything, Samovar &amp; Porter, 2003, p. 11), for them to begin to realise their own ethnocentric perspectives, and decentre.</li> </ol>
<b>ICC objectives</b>	<p>As may be clear from the aims, I intended to create opportunities for the development of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Attitudes – especially Objective 2: <i>The student is willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones,</i></li> <li>2) Knowledge – especially Objective 5: <i>The student knows about the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures,</i></li> <li>3) Skills of interpreting and relating – especially Objective 8: <i>The student can see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity, and</i></li> <li>4) Skills of discovery and interaction – especially Objective 10: <i>The student knows how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Participants</b>	Almost all students were present in this class. One exception was St8, who was not present because he enrolled in the course later, after this lesson took place.
<b>PHASES</b>	
<b>Phase 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Following a quick introduction about the aims of the lesson, I asked the students to work in groups (the desks were organised in a way that they were already sitting in groups of three or four) and share their findings from Assignment 1 about their chosen country. I asked them to reflect on each other's findings, and compare and contrast wherever appropriate. The group discussions started slowly and the students spoke in a low voice at first, but they gradually seemed to warm up to the task and enjoy it. Several students then told the class what they had found surprising or strange from their own and their partners' findings, but this did not result in a free-flowing class discussion, i.e. others did not chime in and comment further on these reflections. Nevertheless, I concluded that this activity worked much better in groups than in pairs (which was the way it was done in Seminar 1).</li> <li>2) A short class discussion followed about the practice of being critical with overgeneralisation. As in Seminar 1, I asked the students to think about the extent to which the findings were characteristic of people in the given country. The whole group seemed to understand my point, but again, this did not lead to further meaningful discussion.</li> </ol>

**Phase 2**

- 1) As a warmer to the next phase of the lesson, the class brainstormed elements of culture such as “arts” and “values”, and was then presented the Iceberg model of culture (AFS, 1984), with the help of an illustration on a PowerPoint slide. The model was introduced as one way of understanding culture, which the students seemed interested in.
- 2) They were then required to work in pairs or small groups and decide which of the listed features of culture belonged to the visible and the invisible part of the iceberg and why; again, with the help of an image on a slide. The students were focused and appeared to enjoy completing the task, although one small group – that including St2, St4 and St9 needed assistance as they had difficulties with it. In the class discussion of this activity the majority were engaged and even St1 and St2, who appeared anxious and shy in the first lesson, added their comments. However, I had the impression that many of the students would be ready for, and appreciative of more complex tasks, which I made note of and considered when planning subsequent lessons. As the next step, I elicited the relevance of this model to the aims of our seminar, i.e. that intercultural learning can partly be seen as becoming more aware of the mentioned aspects in one’s own and other cultures. The next phase was then a follow-up to this thought.

**Phase 3**

- 1) This phase of the lesson was devoted to exploring the concept of ethnocentrism, which I introduced with a series of examples. In order to check whether the students grasped the concept and/or deepen their understanding of it, I asked them to try and describe the process of *felelés*, which we clarified was a pervasive practice in our educational culture, but not so much in many others. In Seminar 1 I observed that this task was immensely valuable in terms of the students’ intercultural learning. Although in that course its success was largely due to the presence of international as well as Hungarian students in the class, I hoped that it would result in some form of learning in Seminar 2 as well.
- 2) At first the students appeared perplexed at why they were required to describe the process, but then some proceeded to do so. Just like in Seminar 1, they realised that the task was not as easy as they had imagined, and that their explanations were incomplete in that they included too much information that was taken for granted. They came to realise this as I was asking questions related to this information, eliciting more comprehensive descriptions. However, it was my impression that the majority did not grasp the point of this discussion. As opposed to the participants of Seminar 1, the students in this class did not have a genuine reason to explain the concept of *felelés*; there were no international students to explain it to.

**Phase 4**

- 1) As a cooler, the group watched a 1-minute-long video about differences in eating habits and the importance of knowing about these in order to avoid unpleasant situations. We discussed what happened in the video and why, and one student briefly described a similar situation he had been in, which the class was interested to hear.
- 2) In the last four minutes or so, the students wrote down their end-of-lesson reflections with the help of the guiding questions on a slide. None of them wrote about anything they did not like about the lesson (which was one of the questions). This may have been because they were required to include their name on these reflections and this was only the second lesson. I present some of the reflections here. Many of these will be elaborated on in later sections.

St3: *“I found the explanation of culture with the help of the iceberg model useful. It made us think and realize why visible elements are what they are.”*

St3: *“I liked the group work – it’s something we’re not used to but certainly something we should be more familiar with.”*

St5: *“I learned that if I ever go to Japan, I should leave some food on the plate if I eat.”* [The example was about a Chinese man, not a Japanese one.]

St7: *“We spoke about different countries and I had a chance to collect more knowledge of other cultures.”*

St11: *“I liked the video in the end of the lesson because it was funny and interesting.”*

St12: *“I found useful that we speak a lot and not just writing all the time.”*

### 6.6.1.2 What the students liked and disliked about Seminar 2

The findings from the students' answers in the final questionnaire and their end-of-lesson reflections show that they had very positive attitudes to the seminar. Like their peers participating in Seminar 1, these students also found the course “*interesting*”, “*enjoyable*”, and “*useful*” – adjectives that were used by almost all the participants. The following comments reflect this positive opinion well (Please note that in reporting these findings, I refer to the respondents of the questionnaire study as R1, R2, and so on, since the questionnaire was filled in on an anonymous basis. In other cases, i.e. when relying on data from other sources, I refer to them as St1, St2, etc.):

R4: “*I think it was useful for me, I learned a lot of new things and facts.*”

R7: “*I think that it was really useful, not only for my studies, but even for my way of living my life.*”

R9: “*It was the most enjoyable course for me in the semester because it was really dynamic and interesting.*”

St2: “*I can finally understand why are we have this kind of lessons and it is way better than all the other ones.*”

Let me first present in Table 21 and Table 22 the results gained from the open-ended questions enquiring into the reasons why the students liked and disliked the seminar. The aspects mentioned in these tables are then elaborated on, and supplemented by the students' comments from other sources, such as other questions in the questionnaire and the end-of-lesson reflections.

Table 21  
*Aspects of Seminar 2 mentioned by the students as ones they liked*

<b>Mentioned positive aspect</b>	<b>Number of references to this aspect</b>
Learnt new things, developed	14
The assignments	4
No tests or exams	4
The teacher's teaching style	4
Well-structured lessons, PowerPoint presentations, videos	4
Discussions, group work	2
Not stressful	2

Table 22

*Aspects of Seminar 2 mentioned by the students as ones they disliked*

<b>Mentioned negative aspect</b>	<b>Number of references to this aspect</b>
Various problems with the assignments	4
Rarely/sometimes boring	2
The models	1
No time to talk in groups	1
Speaking too much about Eastern countries	1
The lessons started too late	1
The deadlines	1

Firstly, in their answers to the open-ended question about why they liked the course, there was a staggering number of references to learning new things, developing and being made to think. This was also the case in the students' end-of-lesson reflections, and supports the findings of CS1 that the students enjoy learning if they feel that they are engaged by the activities and topics. Consider the following examples:

R1: *"Learnt new, useful info about successful communication."*

R2: *"In every class there was a few of new information which were explained clearly by the teacher."*

R3: *"The course sometimes made me to think about my way of thinking."*

R6: *"I got to know new things about other countries."*

R10: *"I learned a lot of new things and [...] I am sure that these things will help me in the future."*

R12: *"I learned about culture shock."*

St1: *"I liked the 'test' [i.e. the self-evaluation form] where I had to rate myself and write examples, because I didn't really think about these questions before, and it helps to get to know myself better I think."*

St3: *"[I found useful] learning about Byram's model. It made me think about ICC and helped to understand some of the questions that came up in my mind."*

St10: *"I liked today's class too because it's interesting and we have to think a lot."*

Apart from referring to their learning, the students gave a variety of other reasons why they liked the course, as seen in Table 21. For instance, some were happy that there were no exams, whereas others praised the teacher's teaching style, the structure of the lessons, the PowerPoint presentations and the visual supplementary materials used. Most of these also

surfaced in their end-of-lesson reflections. Still others said they appreciated the positive atmosphere and that the classes were not stressful:

R7: *“I never had a bad or stressful experience in classes, so I liked it really much.”*

R8: *“[I liked the course because] It was not stressful.”*

St2: *“I like the method of teaching that there is no force on telling our opinion.”*

St6: *“[I liked] the atmosphere, it was nice and friendly.”*

Looking at Table 21, it is striking that only two participants referred to discussions and group work as aspects of the course they liked, and no students mentioned the personal or practical examples drawn on. This is surprising since the former was one of the most frequently cited reasons why the students in CS1 liked Seminar 1, and the latter was praised by the participants of the ES. However, comments from the end-of-lesson reflections demonstrate that Table 21 does not reflect a complete picture, and these aspects were, in fact, appreciated:

St3: *“I liked the group work – it’s something we’re not used to but certainly something we should be more familiar with.”*

St6: *“I found the group discussions useful because we could share our opinions with each other and reflect on the topics more effectively.”*

St11: *“I found sharing each other’s viewpoints and experiences useful.”*

St12: *“I liked the teamwork again. It’s great that we can share our assignments due to the fact that we can learn from each other.”*

St3: *“I found reading about specific examples useful in today’s class.”*

St4: *“The personal story was the best example.”*

St5: *“The text that we received, that showed me the importance of stereotypes through an example. I liked this text.”*

St7: *“I liked the personal stories.”*

In addition, just like in the case of CS1, some students mentioned various positive points about the assignments: that they resulted in learning, were “*fun*”, “*easy*”, or “*hard but [...] very exciting*”. On the other hand, other students experienced different problems in connection with them. Let me give some examples to both of these viewpoints:

R5: *“Home assignments gave us an opportunity to reflect on what we’ve learned and develop our skills.”*

R7: *“A really good point is that there wasn’t any tests, and the assignments were fun.”*

R8: *“Comparitably easy assignments and fair deadlines.”*

R10: *“I liked the videos, the assignments. The assignments were sometimes hard but they were very exciting and not boring.”*

R2: *“I didn’t like some of the assignments.”*

R3: *“Some of the home assignment could have been a bit longer and more complex I think.”*

R4: *“I didn’t like that sometimes I had to take a lot of time at home doing the assignments.”*

R11: *“Just the two job interviews wasn’t useful and I didn’t like that either.”*

These comments already reflect the huge individual differences that characterised the group, which is a topic I discuss in greater depth later. For example, R8 found the assignments easy and R3 would have preferred longer, more complex tasks, whereas R10 saw them as difficult and R4 spent a lot of time on them. Table 23, found on the next page, provides us with further understanding of which assignments the participants found useful or less so. From this it becomes clear that what was most well-liked by the students of Seminar 1, the video about *The Danger of a Single Story* (Adichie, 2009), was also deemed one of the most useful assignments by the students in Seminar 2. Furthermore, it is evident that these students did not think that completing the AIE (Council of Europe, 2009) was very beneficial for their learning. These are supported by two other sources: my own observations, and some of the answers to the open-ended questions about the most and least useful assignments:

R8: *“[The most useful assignment was] the Single story because it was pleasure to do, it consumed a few minutes, and still easy to recall.”*

R9: *“I really liked the single story assignment because it helped me reflect on overgeneralisation and how it can be rude toward the person.”*

R1: *“[The least useful assignment was] the autobiography. I already knew everything about that intercultural experience I described, so it was nothing new to me.”*

R8: *“[The least useful assignment was] Autobiography because it was hard to understand and therefore it consumed a lot of time.”*



Table 23  
Percentage of ratings for assignments in CS2

I found the following assignments useful	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the topic	Total
<b>Assignment 1:</b> reading a country profile and preparing notes	-	-	41.66	58.33	-	100
<b>Assignment 2:</b> completing a worksheet on four scenarios	8.33	16.66	50	8.33	16.66	100
<b>Assignment 3:</b> reading and reflecting on information about Hungarian culture	-	25	33.33	41.66	-	100
<b>Assignment 4:</b> watching <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> , and completing the related worksheet	-	8.33	8.33	75	8.33	100
<b>Assignment 5:</b> completing the <i>Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (Council of Europe, 2009)</i>	25	41.66	25	8.33	-	100
<b>Assignment 6-7:</b> interviewing someone from a different country and reflecting on the findings in a paper	-	25	25	50	-	100
<b>Assignment 8:</b> critically analysing a chosen news article discussing a case of cultural conflict	8.33	8.33	41.66	41.66	-	100
<b>Assignment 9:</b> analysing the communication in two job interviews, and completing the related worksheet	8.33	16.66	25	41.66	8.33	100
<b>Assignment 10-11:</b> compiling the portfolio and reflecting on own ICC development	-	-	50	50	-	100

Apart from various problems with the assignments, as can be seen in Table 22, two students also claimed they did not like the course because it was “rarely” or “sometimes boring”, one student found some of the models “a bit far-fetched” and thought “we didn’t have time to talk in groups”, and others were not happy with the deadlines and the starting time of the lessons. Also, consider the following comment:

R6: “We spoke a lot about the eastern countries, less about others. It would have been better to learn more about European countries, because we live in Europe, I can see more chance that I will go to a European country than e.g. an Asian.”

Although during the term we focused on numerous countries – including, but not limited to the students’ chosen countries in Assignment 1, Nigeria in connection with Assignment 4, Germany

and Holland related to Assignment 8, and the UK and the US during a variety of activities – it is true that in some lessons there was a greater emphasis on Asian countries. The reason behind this, as outlined in Section 6.5.1, was my aim to create possibilities for deep learning – for instance if we explored cultural facts about a lesser known country for the sake of one activity, I found it worthwhile to draw on this newly gained knowledge for the sake of a different activity, and deeper intercultural learning. However, I considered R6’s comment helpful for future reference.

Finally, although this point did not surface among the findings of the questionnaire study, it is still important to mention that in their end-of-lesson reflections, a number of students expressed that they were not thrilled about completing the self-evaluation sheet:

St2: *“I didn’t like the long writing thingy with the numbers and examples.”*

St4: *“The lots of writing and thinking on lots of acceptable answers were tiring in mentally.”*

St6: *“We haven’t learned anything because we filled that sheet. [...] I don’t like to compose long answers when filling in a survey, so I didn’t like this part of the lesson.”*

St7: *“I didn’t really liked the writing task because sometimes I can’t express myself well at writing.”*

St8: *“Maybe I didn’t like the writing part, I think it could have been a homework or something so we would have more chance to talk.”*

It seems that this sheet was found too long and tiring, a tool that reduced talk time in class and required that the students *“compose long answers”*. In fact, there were very few students who viewed it as a useful instrument, and only one student stated that it made him think:

St1: *“I liked the ‘test’ where I had to rate myself and write examples, because I didn’t really think about these questions before, and it helps to get to know myself better I think.”*

### 6.6.1.3 The students’ views about learning in the social constructivist classroom

Once more, we can see that the students’ comments reveal a lot about their attitudes toward the social constructivist approach taken in the seminar. Although in this regard there are countless similarities with the findings of CS1, if we look at the data closely, some important differences can also be discerned. I first present in the form of a list certain aspects of the approach and some relevant examples from the participants’ comments, most of which have already been cited. I then outline the main points of difference with the results of CS1.

The positive aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by the students' comments, were found to be:

(1) Interactive lessons; pair/group discussions and cooperation; student participation

R10: *"We had to speak in English not just sitting and looking at the board."*

St3: *"I liked the group work – it's something we're not used to but certainly something we should be more familiar with."*

St12: *"I found useful that we speak a lot and not just writing all the time."*

(2) Learning from other students

St6: *"I found the group discussions useful because we could share our opinions with each other and reflect on the topics more effectively."*

St11: *"I found sharing each other's viewpoints and experiences useful."*

St12: *"I liked the teamwork again. It's great that we can share our assignments due to the fact that we can learn from each other."*

(3) In-school learning related to out-of-school experiences; relevant topics; activities set in meaningful contexts

R7: *"I think that it was really useful, not only for my studies, but even for my way of living my life."*

R10: *"I learned a lot of new things and [...] I am sure that these things will help me in the future."*

St4: *"The whole topic was useful because I have learn many things to won't cause conflicts and being trouble in the future when I'll talk a foreigner."*

(4) The importance of critical thinking, reflection, real-world problem-solving

R3: *"The course sometimes made me to think about my way of thinking."*

R5: *"Home assignments gave us an opportunity to reflect on what we've learned and develop our skills."*

St10: *"I liked today's class too because it's interesting and we have to think a lot."*

On the other hand, the negative aspects of the social constructivist classroom, as supported by the students' comments, were found to be:

(1) Assignments too challenging or not challenging enough

R3: *"Some of the home assignment could have been a bit longer and more complex I think."*

R4: *"I didn't like that sometimes I had to take a lot of time at home doing the assignments."*

## (2) Learner autonomy and initiative

R7: “[The least useful assignment was] *analysing a news article, because it’s not the most important thing here I think, and it was quite hard for me to find an acceptable one.*”

It appears that these findings are in line with those of CS1 in that the majority appreciated the opportunity to use English in class, pair and group discussions, instead of “*just sitting and looking at the board*”. They enjoyed learning from their peers, and valued the relevance of the topics to their future lives. However, these students’ comments did not indicate mastery motivation; in fact, whereas the assignments were found too demanding by some, others’ responses point to the fact that they were not challenged by them.

Also, several positive references were made about having to think and reflect on certain issues during the term, as in CS1. At the same time, the findings from one of the closed-ended questions are very telling of the students’ attitudes to critical reflection tasks. Here, they were asked about the extent to which they enjoyed the listed ways of learning. As clear from Table 24 on the next page, all ways of learning on the list which involve critical reflection – whether on the information collected, on the students’ own experiences, or own development – were largely unpopular compared with other ways of learning. This is an important finding not only in relation to RQ6, but also pertaining to the topic of the following sections: the participants’ ICC development.

Finally, in CS1, a number of students’ responses indicated that learner autonomy was an issue. In contrast to this, in the questionnaire of CS2 only one participant commented on a problem which can be viewed as somewhat connected to this issue. However, as the following sections reveal, the students’ lack of autonomy and initiative was found to be prevalent in Seminar 2 as well.

Table 24  
*Percentage of ratings for ways of learning in CS2*

I enjoyed the following ways of learning	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the topic	Total
Participating in group/pair activities and discussions	-	8.33	50	41.66	-	100
Participating in class discussions	-	8.33	66.66	25	-	100
Listening to the teacher	-	8.33	16.66	75	-	100
Collecting information on my own by browsing the web	-	16.66	33.33	50	-	100
Collecting information on my own by interviewing someone	-	41.66	33.33	25	-	100
Critically reflecting on the information I collected	8.33	41.66	25	25	-	100
Analysing people's communication, behaviours, values and cultural practices in texts	-	8.33	66.66	25	-	100
Analysing people's communication, behaviours, values and cultural practices in videos	8.33	-	41.66	50	-	100
Discussing real intercultural experiences (my own/other students'/the teacher's)	-	-	41.66	58.33	-	100
Critically reflecting on my own experiences	-	33.33	41.66	16.66	8.33	100
Critically reflecting on my own development	-	16.66	66.66	16.66	-	100

### 6.6.2 Research question 7: The students' ICC development

This section is devoted to exploring development and difference: the various ways in which the students' ICC developed during the term and the many individual difference variables that were found to be closely related to their ICC. For instance, as will be seen, Dombi's (2013) finding that "ICC cannot be understood without examining students' affective profiles" (p. 222) is underlined in this study as well. I first outline the emerging patterns with reference to the whole class. Then, in order to offer deeper insight into these development paths and the individual difference variables connected to them, I examine three cases: (1) Mark's ICC trajectory, which was seen as typical in several ways, (2) Nora's development, which was typical in some ways

but atypical in most ways, and (3) Daniel's case, which was unique in most ways. Above all, the issues addressed in this section represent the highly complex nature of ICC and ICC development, and the countless challenges involved in researching them.

#### 6.6.2.1 Differences in the students' ICC profiles

As was discussed in the *Participants* section, many students in CS2 shared similarities in terms of their language and intercultural background, but some exceptions were also found. Most notably, nine out of twelve participants' longest stay abroad had been one or two weeks or less, whereas St3 (hereafter referred to as Daniel, since his case is among those described in detail later), who was also considerably older than his classmates, had lived a few months in some foreign countries, years in others. This difference is just a precursor to the numerous others linked to the students' 'initial' ICC profiles. Here I present the findings gained from the students' ICC self-evaluation sheet, completed at the beginning of the term, to determine what exactly these differences are.

Table 25, found on the next page, shows how the students rated themselves on the individual ICC dimensions. What is immediately noticeable here is that their ratings for the three 'attitudes' dimensions and the second 'critical cultural awareness' dimension are very high. This means that, according to their self-evaluation, the majority started the course with positive attitudes toward people from other cultures, and with awareness about their own perspectives and values. It is also clear that many participants believed they could see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity (related to the first 'skills of interpreting and relating' dimension), and thought they could identify ideological perspectives and values (related to the first 'critical cultural awareness' dimension). However, they were less sure about (1) their other skills, especially their skills of interaction with people from a different culture, and (2) their knowledge, particularly about the conventions of communication and behaviour in their own and other cultures.

Table 25

*Percentage of ratings for the ICC dimensions in students' self-evaluation*

Descriptions for ICC dimensions	1 Not at all true	2	3	4	5 Absolutely true	Total
<b>Attitudes 1:</b> I'm interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.	-	-	16.66	33.33	50	100
<b>Attitudes 2:</b> I'm willing to believe that my own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones.	-	-	25	8.33	66.66	100
<b>Attitudes 3:</b> I'm interested in discovering other points of view in my own and other cultures.	-	8.33	8.33	33.33	50	100
<b>Knowledge 1:</b> I know about the national memory (significant people and events marking national identity) in my own and other countries.	16.66	16.66	41.66	25	-	100
<b>Knowledge 2:</b> I know about the conventions of communication and behaviour in my own and other cultures.	-	41.66	41.66	16.66	-	100
<b>Knowledge 3:</b> I know about social distinctions (e.g. social class, profession) and their markers (e.g. clothing, language variety) in my own and other cultures.	-	16.66	41.66	16.66	25	100
<b>Knowledge 4:</b> I know about the processes and institutions of socialization (e.g. education systems, religious institutions) in my own and other cultures.	-	16.66	66.66	16.66	-	100
<b>Skills of interpreting and relating 1:</b> I see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.	-	-	16.66	58.33	25	100
<b>Skills of interpreting and relating 2:</b> I can identify ethnocentric perspectives in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	-	8.33	33.33	25	25	91.66
<b>Skills of discovery and interaction 1:</b> I know how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.	-	8.33	33.33	33.33	25	100
<b>Skills of discovery and interaction 2:</b> I can use a combination of my knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions.	8.33	-	58.33	16.66	16.66	100
<b>Critical cultural awareness 1:</b> I can identify ideological perspectives and values in a newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	-	-	33.33	50	16.66	100
<b>Critical cultural awareness 2:</b> I am aware of my own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence my views of other people's values.	-	8.33	-	41.66	50	100

In addition to rating themselves on these thirteen dimensions, the participants were also required to support their rating with examples. I anticipated that this might be difficult, which was indeed the case. Whereas a few students provided examples from their own experience, others included very general statements, or left the section blank. Let me illustrate this with St6's as opposed to St9's response in relation to *Attitudes 3: I'm interested in discovering other points of view in my own and other cultures.*

St6: *"I like to read about philosophies of other cultures. I would like to find out more about the family-centric behaviour in Asian societies."* (Rating: 5)

St9: *"I think it is useful to take a look at things from different POVs first."* (Rating: 5)

Also, in some cases the examples were not closely related to the given ICC dimension, and did not support the rating. For instance, in their examples for *Skills of interpreting and relating 1: I see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity*, St10 and S12 did not comment on really seeing the process of and reasons behind such misunderstandings:

St10: *"We have different values, behaviours and beliefs so I think we should accept each other how we are. I mean of course you have your own opinion about situations but we should understand there are different people."* (Rating: 4)

St12: *"I don't like misunderstandings. I always clean the situation with my partners, I don't want to hurt anybody."* (Rating: 3)

In other cases the provided examples made it absolutely clear that the dimension was misunderstood. This was especially true for *Skills of interpreting and relating 2: I can identify ethnocentric perspectives in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme*, where I believe some students did not have a full grasp of the concept of ethnocentrism, even though I attempted to clarify this concept on previous lessons as well as right before the self-evaluation form was completed. The following are indicative of this misunderstanding:

Daniel: *"I probably could, e.g. when I read articles written by politicians of the far right party 'Jobbik'."* (Rating: 4)

St4: *"Maybe I can identify but I don't accept or agree with that perspective. For example there is the Amish lifestyle which is absurd in the 21st century."* (Rating: 3)

General statements, unrelated examples and misunderstandings aside, the main finding from the students' supporting examples was that differences in terms of their ICC could be identified from their self-evaluation. Let me provide evidence for this in the form of a list, which is followed by the discussion of these findings.



- (1) Differences in *Attitudes 1: I'm interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures:*

Nora: "I often talk to my friends from other countries (via the Internet) and ask them about how their day was. Sometimes I get live report of their days, since while it's evening here, there is morning for the other person, and they write to me while going to school or something. It's really interesting to hear about what they do." (Rating: 5)

St12: "I had some international handball matches and I spoke with foreigners about their lifestyle, culture. I had last year a friend (also handball player) and she is from Germany and I talked her about school and her last handball teams. I was really interested in this." (Rating: 5)

St8: "I'm interested about other people's lives but it's not my main point for a day." (Rating: 4)

Mark: "I had known a Japanese guy and I was really interested in his experiences but I don't really think that I'm interested in the most of them." (Rating: 3)

St4: "I don't like to chat with every foreigners because if the first expression is not acceptable for me and I'll just want to quit from the situation, when the communication partner(s) and me can speak a lot it will be new experience." (Rating: 3)

- (2) Differences in *Attitudes 2: I'm willing to believe that my own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones:*

Daniel: "As we grow older and (hopefully) become somewhat wiser most of us realise that people of other cultures have other values that may be just as good as our own ones." (Rating: 5)

Nora: "I don't think my values and beliefs are that fixed yet in many cases and on many topics of life." (Rating: 5)

St4: "Not exactly. If I can, I'll criticise the other person beliefs and I'll try to explain my views. I rarely agree with the others because what they say, it can be possible." (Rating: 3)

St8: "I do believe that, but if I have an opinion about something it's really hard to change it." (Rating: 3)

- (3) Differences in *Skills of discovery and interaction 2: I can use a combination of my knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions:*

St10: "I already talked with a few foreign people but I had never any misunderstanding." (Rating: 5)

Nora: "I try to think in a sort of 'Japanese' way when talking to Japanese people. I can do it since I watch a lot of films and series about Japanese daily life and so on. However, I still can make mistakes this way and be misunderstood." (Rating: 4)

St8: “*If you can speak English near fluently you’re half way there, so I’m gonna mark three.*” (Rating: 3)

Daniel: “*This takes time and patience.*” (Rating: 3)

St1: “*I’m sure that I would be able to speak with anyone from other cultures in English of course, but I wouldn’t be that self-confident as I am in my mother-tongue.*” (Rating: 3)

St4: “*I’m not sure in my knowledge, perhaps I have misunderstood what he/she said, I’m afraid of using foreign language a bit because of grammatical mistakes.*” (Rating: 3)

Mark: “*I haven’t got any bad examples for this but I think it’s because of my lack of interaction with people from different culture.*” (Rating: 3)

St5: “*I have not much useful experience.*” (Rating: 1)

These are just some examples from three of the thirteen dimensions, but they already reveal very important points about the participants’ ICC, as well as other variables. Firstly, although the data in Table 25 suggest that the majority had positive attitudes at the beginning of the semester, the students’ supporting examples show major differences in this regard. Whereas Nora and St12 claimed they were interested in finding out more about people’s experiences of daily life in other cultures, and provided relevant examples, this was not St8’s “*main point for a day*”, and Mark stated he was not interested in most cultures. Furthermore, Nora and Daniel both indicated that they were willing to believe that their own values, beliefs and behaviours were not the only possible and naturally correct ones. Daniel, aged 29 at the time of the study, referred to age and experience as significant factors in this regard, and Nora, aged 22, explained that her values and beliefs were not “*that fixed yet*”. St8, on the other hand, aged 21, claimed the exact opposite: “*if I have an opinion about something it’s really hard to change it*”.

As is evident, the students’ examples for the second ‘skills of discovery and interaction’ dimension paint an even more complex picture. Daniel, who had considerably more experience of intercultural contact than any of his classmates, expressed his belief that the ability to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions “*takes time and patience*”, and rated himself at 3. St10, whose answers in the background questionnaire indicate she had some experience of intercultural contact, rated herself at 5 since she “*had never any misunderstanding*”. This points to differences in the students’ awareness about the complexities involved in IC. At the same time, St1’s and St4’s responses reveal that anxiety and perceived foreign language competence should be factored into our understanding of these English majors’ ICC, which was also found by Dombi (2013). Finally, Mark and St5 referred to their lack of experience in interacting with people from different cultures. Although many others did not explicitly point this out, the information from their background

questionnaires shows this was also true of other students, which was probably a reason why they had trouble supporting some of their ratings with examples in their self-evaluation sheet.

#### 6.6.2.2 Related individual differences

In the previous section there was already some indication that the students' ICC profiles cannot be fully grasped by looking at only their experience of intercultural contact, and their attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness. In fact, quite a few individual difference variables were identified as important – not only with regard to the participants' ICC profiles at the outset, but also in connection with their ICC development during the course of the semester. Several patterns emerged pertaining to the following such additional variables: (1) age, (2) motivation, (3) attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning, (4) anxiety, (5) perceived foreign language competence, (5) learner autonomy and (6) ability to think and self-reflect critically. In this section I examine the possible influence of these, based on data from all sources used in CS2, from the students' self-evaluation sheets to their portfolios.

Firstly, as seen above, some participants briefly mentioned or implied in their self-evaluation sheets that age is an important factor in relation to their ICC. For instance, St9 referred to experiencing that his world view is changing as he is getting older. Based on the data collected in CS2 we cannot draw conclusions about the specific ways in which age might affect intercultural learning, but in my discussion about the students' development later on, I will return to this variable and its possible connection with another variable: the ability to think and self-reflect critically.

Secondly, motivation surfaced as a factor related to the students' ICC. Consider the following comments:

Daniel: *“What motivated me? The quest into the unknown. To discover what we could only see on TV or read about. To do something my parents didn't have a chance to do.”*

Nora: *“I became interested in their culture because of their music. I saw a Japanese band in a Hungarian magazine about 6 years ago and I thought that they looked so different that I wanted to know more about Japanese people and their music. Later on I started to listen to more music, different bands, I also started watching movies and series which made me sort of fall in love with the language itself. That's where I decided that I want to learn it, so I started studying by myself in 2008 and continued with professional help from 2010 to this date. I'm currently learning hard to take a language exam in December. [...] I became friends with Japanese university students last year in Pécs. We met a lot of times, I also invited them to my house for lunch and we talked a lot about Hungarian and Japanese culture. We still keep in touch; I'm planning to go to Japan next year to meet them again (since they're back to Japan by now).”*

As will be discussed in greater detail, Daniel and Nora were two students whose ICC was found to be strong compared with that of others in the class, and it appears that integrative and intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, pp. 68-80) may have played a part in this. The connections are more salient in Nora's example: she was interested in several aspects of Japanese culture, which motivated her to engage with it more deeply in a variety of ways, which in turn made her "*sort of fall in love with the language itself*": she therefore decided to learn it. This enabled her to get acquainted with members of the target culture, with whom she "*talked a lot about Hungarian and Japanese culture*", possibly contributing to even more positive attitudes, greater knowledge, enhanced intercultural skills and critical cultural awareness. All of this may have affected her intercultural learning in multiple ways during the term.

The students' attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning were also found important. Again, it is difficult to gauge the exact ways in which these attitudes influenced development. Moreover, like other variables, these are dynamic, which means they may have taken several different directions throughout the semester. Some differences were identified between the participants in this regard:

Mark [written after Lesson 3]: "*I can finally understand why are we have this kind of lessons and it is way better than all the other ones.*"

Mark [written after Lesson 10]: "[I found useful] *thing about culture shock. It's really useful to know what and why we are feel in a different environment.*"

Mark [written in his paper for the portfolio]: "*First of all i would like to thank you for the lessons because it was the best course i had so far. It was unique and not as stressful as the other ones.*"

St4 [written after Lesson 2]: "*I'm interested in this theme, I would like to know better the other countries [...] the seminar ended too early, the time just flied away.*"

St4 [written after Lesson 10]: "*I didn't like the boring stuff today.*"

St5: [written after Lesson 3]: "*I found the knowledge that I got from the presentation [...] useful, because it will probably help me.*"

St5: [written after Lesson 6]: "*I didn't like that I was tired already, so it was a bit boring.*"

St12 [written after Lesson 2]: "*It is very important to get to know the cultures. We can learn from this lesson a lot and it will be very useful in the future.*"

St12 [written after Lesson 9]: "*To my mind there is always something which is new to me and I happy about it because I am learn new things.*"

In reflecting on an actual intercultural encounter with Japanese students, Nora also described the role of other variables:

Nora: “[My thoughts before the encounter were] *that I won’t be able to talk to them. I was really scared of that because not only am I shy, but I also thought I didn’t have enough proficiency in Japanese [...] I was anxious at first and often did things I wasn’t supposed to. But I think I had to do those things to realize what mistakes I shouldn’t make next time.*”

In fact, reference to anxiety and perceived foreign language competence occurred many times, often together, in the students’ self-evaluation sheets, end-of-lesson reflections and coursework. For instance, St4 and St6 referred to these factors in connection with imagined situations of intercultural contact:

St4: *“I’m not sure in my knowledge, perhaps I have misunderstood what he/she said, I’m afraid of using foreign language a bit because of grammatical mistakes.”*

St6: *“I fear most of all that I would do something rude without even knowing it.”*

Several other students commented on how anxious they felt in completing Assignment 6: interviewing someone from a different country:

Mark: *“I have to say that i never did anything like this before, so this whole interview thing was a hard challenge for me. Not just because it was a new experience but i’m a shy person so asking a person to help me in this was very challenging [...] I was very nervous when we started but in the end i felt good about succeed this task.”*

St4: *“It was a bit weird to me, I was a bit stressful [...] I’m a beginner to speak in a foreign language, I usually make mistakes in the grammar but I’m trying to speak correctly, in this task I would be better and did the interview with more like and on that situation I would say other things but I guess, I’ve done my best form.”*

St9: *“At first I felt a bit nervous about this interview, because I had to find someone from a different culture.”*

St12: *“Honestly I scared. I was really nervous during the interview. For example I forgot the questions and to my mind I made a lot of grammatical mistakes. So all in all I was really really nervous because this was my first interview.”*

Apart from evidence from the students’ reflections on this task, there was another strong indication of the interview assignment inducing anxiety: St1, St5, St7 and St8 conducted scripted interviews, with interviewees who were clearly not from the countries the students claimed they came from. For instance, St1’s interview was scripted, read out loud, and involved a participant who, based on her accent as audible in the recording, was Hungarian. In his written assignment on the interview, however, St1 presented her as Austrian. When asked about this in private, the student seemed embarrassed and reluctant to explain the reasons behind this, so, as in the case of other students who conducted scripted interviews, I did not pressure him further. Therefore I could only speculate that these students were anxious about this task and perhaps about seeking out and communicating with foreign peers. I did not think it plausible that their

main or only reason was to avoid having to do all the work involved in the assignment, since it was evident in most cases that they had put a lot of effort into writing their scripts for the interviews.

At the same time, other students who were anxious about this assignment, like Mark or St4 – as seen from their remarks above, eventually managed to do it, and several lessons included preparation for the interview, with a thorough explanation of the assignment, examples shown to the class, as well as a close examination of the interview protocol, the process of conducting an interview, and its pitfalls. For extra support, students were asked to discuss in groups their questions and doubts, and share their ideas about potential interviewees. One form of preparation which was not drawn on was a mock interview in pairs – in hindsight, this might have proved immensely helpful. Two of the four students were not present on some of the lessons providing such support.

The scripted interviews certainly presented me with an ethical dilemma in terms of assessment. I decided to discuss the issue with the students in private, ask them about their reasons, and tell them that they would not fail the course, but encourage them to conduct a new, unscripted interview, this time with a person from a different culture, in order to get a higher grade. Although during our talk all of these students seemed prepared to do so, eventually none of them submitted a new assignment. This example again represents the complexities of developing and researching ICC: it is very difficult to tell to what extent this issue was connected to the student's anxiety or other variables, such as the number of missed classes, attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning, effort, learner autonomy, or perhaps a combination of these.

This is the case with the next example as well, which I cite here as linked to learner autonomy, another individual difference variable which was found relevant. In Assignment 8, the students were required to critically analyse a chosen news article discussing a case of cultural conflict between groups of people. In the two lessons prior to this assignment, we analysed (1) videos in which people express their views on the banning of the burqa and niqab in France, and (2) a short, biased news report (from Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2006, p. 48) in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These activities were drawn on with the aim of developing aspects of the students' ICC and giving them sufficient support for the assignment. Interestingly, St1, St6, St8 and St9 then analysed articles which addressed one of these two issues. As St8 put it:

St8: *“This article is about the one we discussed in lesson because I tried but I just couldn’t find a fresh article about a conflict which clearly involved two different cultures.”*

Again, lack of learner autonomy is just one of the many possible reasons why these students submitted assignments in which eventually they did not need to think critically, since similar analyses were already performed in the lessons.

This leads us to the final aspect in which the members of Seminar 2 differed greatly, and which was also seen as associated with their ICC development: the ability to think and self-reflect critically. The students’ coursework was filled with examples that I found relevant in this respect, but here I present only a few of these in the form of a list and short explanations.

(1) Contradictions in the students’ assignments

In Assignment 2 St1 explained he thought Americans were not as direct as Hungarians, whereas in Assignment 3 he expressed the exact opposite.

St1: *“People in the USA [...] are I think not that direct with other people as in Hungary.”*

St1: *“[Hungarians are almost always less direct than Americans and depend on nuances of meaning in many cases...] – I agree with this point.”*

(2) Distorted conclusions drawn due to misinterpretation

During the interview which he conducted with a Spanish Erasmus student, Mark’s interviewee said the following:

*“A few students receive high grant. It’s not fair because there are some other students who are really hard students, hard workers, they don’t receive anything and on the other hand there are other kinds of students and maybe they are not perfect student or maybe they don’t even pass many of their exams but they still receive this money from the government, so makes no sense. So in that case I think some other countries are better organised”.*

Mark misinterpreted this and drew a distorted conclusion:

Mark: *“The stereotype that Spanish people are lazy it’s seems like partly true because he mentioned that people getting money from the government for study are lazy and don’t attend to lessons so it’s partly true in a way.”*

(3) Lack of critical understanding of issues discussed in the lessons in great detail

Although St8 opted for the analysis of an article for Assignment 8 which describes the same conflict we examined together in the lessons, his analysis still showed a lack of critical understanding. The writer of his chosen article makes the mistake of comparing Sarkozy’s approach to the burqa with Obama’s approach to the hijab, which St8 failed to take note of. Also, as elaborated on in the lessons, approached from many angles, and

supported by pictures, the hijab is very different from the burqa – it is not a “full body and face covering” dress as St8 claimed.

St8: *“There are two main reasons behind this conflict. One is a moral reason and the other is a religious one. The first says that women shouldn’t have to hide behind these full body and face covering dresses (hijabs) because it decreases her moral equality and the other says that we should respect the religion of these women and accept those who wear them.”*

(4) Differences in the students’ ability to self-reflect critically in their portfolio

The students’ task in Assignment 11 was to (1) include four home assignments, in-class notes or in-class worksheets that best reflected their ICC development in a portfolio, (2) explain in a paper in what ways their selected work reflected their development, and (3) use their self-evaluation sheet to draw parallels between their ICC at the beginning and the end of the term. This information about the requirements was summarised in a task sheet (found in Appendix E). Some participants, like St12, wrote about four home assignments without relating them to their development or self-evaluation sheet. Others, like St7, referred to positive change in specific ICC dimensions, but their elaboration suggested otherwise. Still others, like St9, reflected critically on their development (in St9’s case, this prompted the student to give himself a lower rating in some dimensions than at the beginning of the term).

St12: *“I would like to choose the analysing a new article, too. It was hard to find a new article, but I found one. After I heard other’s article, I thought that my article wasn’t nice, but I was happy to share my article with others.”*

St7: *“In my self-evaluation sheet at the beginning of the term I gave myself a 3 for knowing ‘about the social distinction and their markets in my own and other cultures’. This part of my ICC improved because of the information I collected on France [...] My sister was in Paris and she told me that the French seemed friendly and cheerful, so I thought that are open to strangers as well but I learned because of this assignment that the French people are more like a Swedish or a Finnish people.”*

St9: *“In the beginning of the course I purported that in the Skills of discovery and interaction – I can use a combination of my knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring, understanding and avoiding dysfunctions I chose the number 5. I do not know how to behave in certain cultures, so I would have some dysfunctions which could lead to predicaments. For example there was that TV commercial when the Englishman was in a restaurant with Chinese men or the American teacher reprimanding the Native American pupil (because the pupil was not looking in the teacher’s eyes).”*

A few members of Seminar 2 could critically reflect on videos, texts and their own ICC, which will be underlined by some of the findings presented in the next section, but as may be evident



from the examples here, the majority were not ready for such tasks: these were not in their zone of proximal development. Unfortunately, data were not gathered on these students' past educational experiences. Therefore, I can only speculate that this was due to the fact that they were not used to self-reflective activities and ones that required critical analysis, and one semester was not sufficient time to induce change in this regard. At the same time, these types of activities are crucial for meaningful intercultural learning.

In summary, all of the above individual differences may have affected the participants' ICC and ICC development in one way or another, and may have interacted with one another, as well as with other variables not mentioned in this section. For instance, I did not draw on a test measuring the students' proficiency in English, but it is very much possible that this factor had some effect on their learning. It is also possible that the way I taught and researched the course resulted in some participants changing their behaviour, although no indication was found of this. Moreover, all of the above variables may have changed in different directions several times during the term. Although they were discussed separately, some connections were also revealed, and the possibility of other connections addressed. This already demonstrates that ICC as well as ICC development could be approached as complex dynamic systems. According to Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), complex systems are usually characterised by a large number of components "which connect and interact in different and changing ways" (p. 26). Furthermore, "in dynamic systems we usually cannot find straightforward linear cause-effect relationships where increased input leads to a proportionate increase in the output [...] This is because the system's behavioural outcome depends on the overall constellation of the system components" (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 82). As seen in this section, ICC and its development are indeed composites of a large number of elements which are connected in a multi-layered manner, and which in themselves are subject to change.

#### 6.6.2.3 Differences in the students' development: Three case studies

The main focus of the previous sections was on some of the differences among the participants of CS1; now let me add another focus: that of change. My aim in teaching Seminar 2 was to facilitate intercultural learning in and out of the classroom, and my aim in researching it was to track this learning as closely as possible. However, in teaching the seminar as well as in analysing the abundance of data I came to the realisation that (1) the kind of ICC development I was aiming for was in fact very difficult to achieve in one course and in one term, and (2) this development was also rather difficult to document. Let me illustrate this with two examples.

Firstly, in their end-of-lesson reflections, portfolios and final questionnaires a large number of participants referred to development in their knowledge about other cultures as well as their own. Consider these comments, for instance:

Mark: *“I learned a lot about different countries and aspects of being alone in a different culture.”*

Daniel: *“[I learned about] the use of understatements and the elements of language.”*

St4: *“[I learned that] the educational systems are very different like ours.”*

St6: *“I have learnt about the reasons why English became a lingua franca and how this effects people all around the world.”*

St6: *“I believe that I learnt more about both cultures; yes, even my own culture. The comparisons were surprising for me in a way that I have not thought about certain aspects of cultures until that assignment.”*

R1: *“I got to know more about another culture and my interviewee’s opinion on Hungary’s education system was also interesting.”*

R6: *“I got to know new things about other countries.”*

R12: *“I know more about cultures and IC.”*

Given that the findings from the students’ self-evaluation sheet, filled in at the start of the course, revealed the lowest ratings for the ‘knowledge’ dimensions, this can be seen as a very positive outcome. However, the course did not include a test or any other more objective form of assessing the students’ newly gained knowledge, and many participants may have written what they thought was expected of them.

The second example is related to the attitudes of two participants: St4 and St10. St4’s reflections at the beginning of the term included the following:

St4: *“I don’t like to chat with every foreigners because if the first expression is not acceptable for me and I’ll just want to quit from the situation, when the communication partner(s) and me can speak a lot it will be new experience.”*

St4: *“I think speak or talk with a foreigner is always a challenge.”*

In his end-of-lesson reflections and his portfolio, written later on, some support for a positive change can be identified:

St4: *“The whole topic was useful because I have learn many things to won’t cause conflicts and being trouble in the future when I’ll talk a foreigner.”*

St4: *“My interviewee was very helpful, and what she said, is influenced me in some way, I can feel something has changed under this semester. There are lots of Erasmus students in Hungary, in Pecs, so I can’t avoid them [...] There is a fight inside me, which must be controlled, in intercultural situations. I must be more (I want to be) open-minded to other people, and this course woke me up.”*

However, does his claim “*I must be more (I want to be) open-minded to other people*” because he “*can’t avoid*” international students truly reflect a development in his attitudes? The available data on St4’s intercultural learning is simply not sufficient to give a meaningful answer to this question. As opposed to this, St10 referred to very positive attitudes at the start of the course and rated herself at 5. In her portfolio, however, she explained:

St10: “*I don’t know many things about Arabic people but it’s more than enough.*”

Should this be interpreted as a negative change in her attitudes, as a contradiction with her self-evaluation, or as a comment with no real significance, since she only expressed such attitudes toward “*Arabic people*”, and not ‘people from other cultures’ in general?

In short, my assessment of the students’ ICC in their work on the one hand and their evaluation of their own development on the other (1) correspond or (2) clash in a few cases. Yet in the majority of cases, there is not enough evidence for valid conclusions to be drawn about change. Also, if we continue the train of thought introduced in the previous section about complex dynamic systems, it is very likely that if change did indeed occur, it was non-linear. This makes its documentation even more challenging. In the following section I explore in greater depth many of the issues previously touched upon about differences and development, through the examples of three participants: Mark, Nora and Daniel.

#### 6.6.2.3.1 Mark

At the time of the study, Mark was 20 years old. In his background questionnaire he indicated that he had been abroad 3-5 times for short periods (1-2 weeks), each time to Italy, and that he had no friends from other countries or cultures, like many of his classmates. Apart from English, which he started learning at the age of twelve (self-rated proficiency: 4), he claimed he also spoke Italian (self-rated proficiency: 1). He described himself as calm, shy, good-hearted, “*a couch potato kind of person so I rather stay at home than going out*”. He was not very active in class discussions – although he did sometimes volunteer his reflections – but a little more so in group and pair discussions and activities. He appeared particularly engaged by the lesson in which we explored the importance of ICC (Lesson 3), especially by my personal example, which he commented on in the class discussion. After the lesson, he wrote in his reflections: “*I can finally understand why are we have this kind of lessons and it is way better than all the other ones*”. Based on his comments in the end-of-lesson reflections, he had very positive attitudes to the course. He did not miss any lessons.

There were several interesting points about his self-evaluation. For instance, he rated himself at 3 for the first ‘attitudes’ dimension, and stated: *“I had known a Japanese guy and I was really interested in his experiences but I don’t really think that I’m interested in the most of them”*. He also rated himself rather low on the ‘knowledge’ dimensions, but high on the ‘skills of interpreting and relating’ dimensions:

Skills of interpreting and relating 1: I see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity: *“When we watched that video of an Asian restaurant I knew what was the reason of misunderstand and I think I could find the solution of other problems too.”* (Rating: 4)

Skills of interpreting and relating 2: I can identify ethnocentric perspectives in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme: *“I can identify them although I don’t really read newspapers or watch television.”* (Rating: 5)

He again referred to not reading newspapers and watching television in describing his critical cultural awareness, and to his lack of intercultural experiences in describing his skills of discovery and interaction: *“I haven’t got any bad examples for this but I think it’s because of my lack of interaction with people from different culture”*.

Furthermore, it was striking that Mark alluded to the stressfulness of other courses, as well as being nervous and shy in situations of uncertainty numerous times during the semester:

*“I like the method of teaching that there is no force on telling our opinion.”*

*“I wouldn’t [study abroad if I had the chance] because I feel like nervous when I’m in a place where I never been.”*

*“I have to say that i never did anything like this before, so this whole interview thing was a hard challenge for me. Not just because it was a new experience but i’m a shy person so asking a person to help me in this was very challenging [...] I was very nervous when we started but in the end i felt good about succeed this task.”*

*“First of all i would like to thank you for the lessons because it was the best course i had so far. It was unique and not as stressful as the other ones.”*

The main reason why Mark’s case was seen as typical and representative of many of his classmates was that he had difficulties with tasks that involved somewhat deeper reflection and critical analysis. This was already observable at the beginning of the term. For instance, in his first assignment (reading the profile of a chosen country and preparing notes for discussion), Mark chose to research Japan. Here he pointed out that some facts he found were surprising to him. On the other hand, although some of his notes demonstrated reflection, others were not closely related to the information and included very broad, general statements, For instance, the information ‘Gift-giving is highly ritualistic and meaningful’ – i.e. in Japan – was followed by the comment *“People today care less about gifts, and only buy for birthdays, or when something*

wrong happened and want to compensate or make it fade away with it. I think gifts can increase happiness of the person who gets it. 'It is better to give than to receive.'”

However, it was his paper about the interview he conducted with a student from a different country that showed this most clearly. Consider some examples of his reflections related to his findings in this assignment, summarised in Table 26. These clearly demonstrate that despite the high rating he gave himself for his skills of interpreting and relating at the start of the course, he was simply not ready to integrate what was learnt during the lessons.

Table 26  
Examples of Mark's reflections on his findings in Assignment 7

	The interviewee's comment	Mark's reflections on the comment	Discussion
<b>Example 1</b>	<i>“Some lessons in Hungary are even better because the classes are more reduced, are smaller.”</i>	<i>“A positive thing about their education [in Spain] is that [...] there always a lot of people which was easier for him to deal with. [...]On the other hand if there are more people then they are more stressed to ask a question of the teacher if something is not clear.”</i>	Mark's interpretation of the comment reflects the exact opposite of what the interviewee had actually said. Also, the interviewee did not refer to being more stressed in a larger class – this was Mark's remark, which may be indicative of his own anxiety.
<b>Example 2</b>	The interviewee explained that because in Spain there is no distinction between seminars and lectures, he did not realize that attending seminars was mandatory in Hungary. This resulted in a problem in one of his seminars:  <i>“The teacher told me that [...] I had to think about any way to [...] do something for those missed lessons and I had never thought that this could happen in a university, you know. I don't know, like attending to the teacher's office in case that I missed some lessons to explain her the reasons and everything because Spain is not that compulsory at least in my university [...] So that was a bit strange with this teacher because I couldn't understand it that much”.</i>	<i>“The teacher's in Hungary are stricter than in Spain”</i>	Mark cut the discussion short with a largely overgeneralizing statement which was only loosely related to what was said. This despite our numerous discussions in the lessons prior to the interview assignment about (1) the reasons why we overgeneralise, (2) consciously testing generalisations, and (3) ethnocentrism, and also despite a comment of his in an earlier end-of-lesson reflection:  <i>“[I found useful] talking about generalizations and the truth behind them.”</i>
<b>Example 3</b>	<i>“A few students receive high grant. It's not fair because there are some other students who are really hard students, hard workers, they don't receive anything and on the other hand there are other kinds of students and maybe they are not perfect student or maybe they don't even pass many of their exams but they still receive this money from the government, so makes no sense. So in that case I think some other countries are better organized.”</i>	<i>“The stereotype that Spanish people are lazy it's seems like partly true because he mentioned that people getting money from the government for study are lazy and don't attend to lessons so it's partly true in a way.”</i>	Mark misinterpreted what was said by the interviewee, and drew a hugely distorted conclusion.

Furthermore, in his end-of-lesson reflections, Mark wrote the following about his learning:

*“I learned a lot about different countries and aspects of being alone in a different culture.”*

*“I learned what is intercultural communication is builded up from.”*

*“[I found useful] getting information of a different culture. Because it is important for us to know more about the world we live in.”*

*“[I learned about] the culture of Iran.”*

*“[I learned about] Hungary’s states compared to UK according to Hofstede’s model.”*

*“[I found useful] talking about other’s interview and see opinion of people from other country.”*

*“[I learned about] the history of the English language and the importance of it.”*

*“[I learned about] religious conflicts in other parts of the world.”*

*“[I found useful] talking about in and out groups in Hungary.”*

*“[I found useful] thing about culture shock. It’s really useful to know what and why we are feel in a different environment.”*

These comments imply that the lessons proved useful for this student, and that different forms of intercultural learning indeed took place. However, his reflections on his development in the final assignment for the portfolio (outlined in Table 27 on the next page) again point to the fact that this process is much more complex than suggested by the above short statements about the student’s learning. Here Mark referred to forms of development that were in large part unsupported by his actual coursework, while the possibility remains that other types of learning did in fact occur, but were not reflected on by the participant.

Table 27

Examples of Mark's reflections on his own development in his paper for the portfolio

Development mentioned	Mark's reflections on this development	Discussion
Development in <b>Attitudes 1</b> as a result of Assignment 1: Collecting information on a chosen country	<p><i>"One of the most important thing is to be interested in other cultures."</i></p> <p><i>"On the way i see it when i did this exercise my intercultural competence skill raised because previously i thought that i knew a lot of things about japan, but i found thing's i've never heard of. And because i'm interested in their culture i read all the informations that page could provide for me."</i></p> <p><i>"And of course after the course in which we talked about our findings i got interested in other cultures like Jamaican culture too."</i></p>	<p>At the beginning of the term, Mark claimed: <i>"I had known a Japanese guy and I was really interested in his experiences but I don't really think that I'm interested in the most of them"</i>. In Assignment 1 he also chose to research Japan. It is difficult to say whether there was indeed a change in his attitudes (i.e. becoming 'more interested'), although he said: <i>"i got interested in other cultures like Jamaican culture too."</i></p> <p>Mark did not explicitly refer to any of the 'knowledge' dimensions here, but his comments suggest he found new information on Japan.</p>
Development in <b>Attitudes 3</b> and <b>Knowledge 4</b> as a result of Assignment 5: Interview	<p><i>"The next important development of my skills was by doing the interview with an erasmus student and sharing that experience with other's."</i></p> <p><i>"Previously i've mentioned the importance of being interested in other cultures, the second important thing is to be interested in talking with people from different cultural background about their experiences and point's of view's."</i></p> <p><i>"With that kind of experience i'm more free to ask from erasmus student's for example. And know i know more about the system of his country."</i></p>	<p>Mark's claim that he knows more about his interviewee's country because of this assignment was unsupported by his written reflections on the interview, as seen above.</p> <p>He highlighted the importance of being interested in other cultures here, but did not actually state he became interested. Instead, he wrote: <i>"i'm more free to ask from erasmus student's"</i>.</p>
Development in <b>Critical cultural awareness</b> and <b>Attitudes 2</b> as a result of Assignment 8: Analysing a news article	<p><i>"We should be able to look on the other side of the coin too."</i></p> <p><i>"I could identify an ideological perspective that is not talked about much in the public. Identifying and understanding different perspectives like religious perspectives is a very important intercultural competence skill i think."</i></p>	<p>The student again emphasised the significance of these dimensions of one's ICC: <i>"we should be able"</i>; <i>"very important"</i>.</p> <p>His claim that this assignment resulted in development was not confirmed by his written analysis of the article. In fact, this analysis was very short and involved no examination of the reasons behind the conflict and the values represented.</p>
Development not referred to explicitly; <b>Skills of discovery and interaction 2</b> mentioned in connection with an in-class worksheet about in- and out-groups in our society	<p><i>"The In-group vs out-group assignment. It was a really interesting one because it's probably the most outstanding problems if it is a problem at all."</i></p> <p><i>"I mentioned that the problem could be that people like to be with the people of the same nationality or even ethnicity. Which is i think a good example for the skills of discovery and interaction [...] because if i can see that people from a different group than me talking with each other than i know that they are more likely to talk with each other than an 'unknown' person so i wont start interact with them avoiding dysfunctions."</i></p>	<p>Although Mark did not refer to development in this case, it provides insight into his understanding of and view on some aspects of IC and ICC: <i>"a good example for the skills of discovery and interaction"</i> is being aware that some people prefer to interact with members of their own group, and therefore <i>"i wont start interact with them avoiding dysfunctions"</i>.</p>

Mark's case is a good example to numerous issues explored earlier. It seems very likely that his ICC and ICC development were greatly influenced by his anxiety and the fact that he was not yet ready for tasks that necessitated critical reflection and analysis. This, in turn, may have been due to his age. His case also illustrates the difficulty of drawing conclusions about the students' learning based on insufficient evidence. Whereas some of his claims of

improvement were found to be unconfirmed, others could not be substantiated or refuted by the available data, and it is very much possible that still other forms of development took place, but evidence of this simply did not surface in the data.

#### 6.6.2.3.2 Nora

Nora was older than most of the other participants in CS2: at the time of the study she was 22. From her background questionnaire I came to know that she had hardly ever been abroad and for short periods (i.e. 0-2 times; 1-2 weeks). She started learning English at the age of 9, and rated her proficiency at 3-4. She also indicated that she spoke Japanese (self-rated proficiency: 3). Just like many of her classmates, she described herself as “*very shy at first*”, but as opposed to the majority, Nora had a lot of friends from abroad, specifically from the US, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Brazil, Chile and Germany. She pointed out, “*I mostly met them on the Internet. We started talking because we like the same things: same music, same bands, same movies etc. I keep in touch with them almost daily [...] We often talk in group chats.*” In addition to her online friends, she claimed,

*“I became friends with Japanese university students last year in Pécs. We met a lot of times, I also invited them to my house for lunch and we talked a lot about Hungarian and Japanese culture. We still keep in touch; I’m planning to go to Japan next year to meet them again (since they’re back to Japan by now).”*

As seen in the section discussing some of the individual differences in the classroom, several of Nora’s comments reveal her motivation to learn Japanese and engage with the culture, which might also have influenced her ICC and its development in Seminar 2. She also appeared to have positive attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning during the term. She was usually very engaged in group and pair discussions, but much less so in class discussions – she rarely volunteered to share her reflections with the whole class. However, on one or two occasions she initiated class discussions with relevant questions. She missed two lessons (Lesson 3 and 5).

In her self-evaluation sheet Nora rated her attitudes high, but wrote the following about the third ‘attitudes’ dimension: “*It’s true I’m interested [in discovering other points of view], but maybe only for that very time while they tell me about, but after the talk, discussion, I usually just forget about what they said, which I kind of dislike about myself*” (Rating: 3). Like Mark and many other participants, she rated herself low on the ‘knowledge’ dimensions and fairly high on the ‘skills of interpreting and relating’ dimensions. In terms of her skills of discovery



and interaction she explained, *“I try to think in a sort of ‘Japanese’ way when talking to Japanese people. I can do it since I watch a lot of films and series about Japanese daily life and so on. However, I still can make mistakes this way and be misunderstood”*. Finally, in elaborating on her critical cultural awareness, which she rated at 3 and 2 for the two respective dimensions, she pointed out that her perspectives can be easily changed, *“which can either be a good or a bad thing, I haven’t found out which one it is”*.

Similarly to her classmates, Nora also referred to her anxiety multiple times in relation to various imagined or actual intercultural interactions she had had, which, in some cases she connected with her perceived low foreign language competence in Japanese. Unlike her classmates, however, she also elaborated on how she managed to overcome this and learn from these situations. For instance, in her AIE (Council of Europe, 2009), she described one such encounter in which she was a guide to a group of Japanese high school students in Budapest:

Nora: *“[My thoughts before the encounter were] that I won’t be able to talk to them. I was really scared of that because not only am I shy, but I also thought I didn’t have enough proficiency in Japanese [...] I was anxious at first and often did things I wasn’t supposed to. But I think I had to do those things to realize what mistakes I shouldn’t make next time. I was sometimes ‘copying’ them, wanting to be like them. I think I should have acted differently at those moments.”*

*“The way they held their teacups [...] I didn’t know if I should do it the same way they do or in my own way. [In answering my related question: What do you think about this now?] I think I should have just acted normally and do the things I do the way I do them.”*

*“It [the encounter] surprised me in a sense that I realised I can communicate in this language, it also pleased me because I found friends here I had a really great time with. And it changed me because I had more courage talking to people from a different culture after this encounter.”*

This reflective account already signals that Nora differed from most of the other students not only in terms of age, experience in intercultural interactions and motivation, but also in her capacity for critical thinking and self-reflection. To follow the example I drew on in Mark’s case, and thus make way for comparisons, let me illustrate this with the help of her first assignment, in which she collected information about India. What is striking here is that she employed a range of techniques to engage in different ways with the information she found. For instance, she compared and related with Hungary and Japan (*“This one somehow applies to us, Hungarians, too”*; *“This is something like in Japan, they have several taboos, too”*) and in some cases supported these comparisons – for example with a Hungarian proverb. At the same time she expressed that she found some of the information surprising and interesting, and related these to her own practices. Furthermore, relying on her previous knowledge, she

supported some of the points and questioned others: *“I cannot really imagine how these factors influence greetings there. I saw a documentary about a Japanese man visiting the country [...] he greeted everyone as ‘namaste’ [...] I thought that was a general way to greet a person”*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, she also expressed interest in finding out more, and asked questions: *“I wonder if there is a country where they don’t do it this way (probably there is.)”*; *“I wonder what would happen if someone ate using their left hand”*; *“Would they insist on giving you more food if you finished it all completely even if you were actually satisfied?”*

So what can be said about Nora’s development during the semester? In Table 28, which is found on the next page and includes examples of her reflections on her own learning throughout the term, I summarise some of the findings in relation to this question, and a few of her end-of-lesson reflections listed below may also provide answers, albeit incomplete ones:

*“[I found useful] talking a lot about how everyone has a single story about certain countries because it makes us realize that this, in fact, is not something that makes us stupid or anything.”*

*“[I liked] the story of Parisa, how she felt when her colleagues thought in that certain way of her, because I could realize how insulting this could be.”*

*“[I liked] lots of examples to each type of ideologies.”*

*“[I learned] that this huge debate on what Islamic women should wear in certain European countries this big of a fuss.”*

*“I could reflect on why English is a lingua franca and I realized the power situation behind it.”*

*“[I found useful] that we talked a lot about the way people communicate in other countries/cultures.”*

*“[I liked that] we went back and had to re-think about things we learned and covered in earlier classes.”*

*“[I learned] all the new words and phrases.”*

*“[I liked] the culture shock part. I’m really interested in it! And I want to experience it one day. Probably soon enough.”*

Table 28

Examples of Nora's reflections on her own development in her paper for the portfolio

Development mentioned	Nora's reflections on this development	Discussion
Development in <b>Attitudes 3</b> (would change her rating from 3 to 5) as a result of the in-class discussions and the assignments	<p><i>"During the classes, we learned a lot about other cultures and also had a lot of in-class talk, from which I still remember a lot and I was really interested in all."</i></p> <p><i>"I finally realized that I'm interested in discovering other points of view in my own and other cultures as well during all the in-class talks and the assignments. For example, in the interview assignment, I was really interested in everything my interviewee said, but in the Single Story assignment, the two points of view were really interesting as well."</i></p>	<p>This may be a case of either (1) development or (2) simply a realisation that a higher rating is more appropriate.</p> <p>Some of Nora's end-of-lesson reflections which support this claim of hers are:</p> <p><i>"I found sharing each other's viewpoints and experiences useful because they're always interesting, I mean to know about such things."</i></p> <p><i>"[I found useful] talking about Hungarian stereotypes and listen to others' way of thinking."</i></p>
Development in <b>Knowledge 2</b> as a result of Assignment 5: AIE (Council of Europe, 2009)	<p><i>"[The AIE] helped me to find out more about conventions of communication and behavior in my own and other cultures. I realized the differences between my own and Japanese culture, even though I was already kind of aware of these, but the conduction of this assignment helped me to realize more including my own and their behavior in different situations be it eating habits or just simply introducing each other and different communication forms."</i></p>	<p>As in Mark's case, it is difficult to confirm this statement of Nora's about her learning. Her reflections in the AIE conveyed that she was already very much aware of these differences, as she also points out.</p>
Development in <b>Knowledge</b> as a result of Assignment 1: Collecting information on a chosen country, and other activities	<p><i>"[Assignment 1] helped me to get more knowledge about their culture, and the site you showed us is a great source if we ever wanted to get more knowledge about any culture."</i></p> <p><i>"But during the semester, we found out that, for example, making an interview, or just simply talking to other people no matter whether they're from another culture or from the same culture, we can have an insight into their culture or even their way of thinking. All of these are very important encounters, and very important sources, however, if you want to test them, you need to know more people from that culture."</i></p>	<p>As discussed above, Nora's reflections on her findings about India were detailed and involved critical engagement with the information she collected. This substantiates her claim about her development.</p>
Development in <b>Critical cultural awareness 2</b> as a result of the assignments and activities	<p><i>"Not only the assignments I chose to include in this portfolio, but all the classes altogether helped me to be more aware of my own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence my views on other people's values. I know I should stand by my own values, but not in a very drastic way, I should listen to others' values, and not judge them for it, but in exchange, I want them not to judge me either."</i></p>	<p>In her self-evaluation sheet completed at the beginning of the term, Nora wrote:</p> <p><i>"I don't think my values and beliefs are that fixed yet in many cases and on many topics of life."</i></p> <p><i>"My perspectives can be changed [...] which can either be a good or a bad thing, I haven't found out which one it is."</i></p> <p>However, apart from these comments, there is no other data on the student's critical cultural awareness, which makes it impossible to support her claim.</p>

Nora's case can be seen as typical in some ways, but unique in most ways. As was seen, like many participants of CS2, she had not spent months or years in other countries and described herself as shy and anxious in certain situations. Also, like some others, she displayed positive attitudes to learning in the classroom. However, she was a little older than most of her

classmates, had more experience in intercultural interactions due, at least partly, to her motivation, and also differed from others in terms of her readiness for complex tasks requiring critical thinking. The available data on her intercultural learning do not allow for far-reaching conclusions, but some of her claims of development can be supported to a certain extent. It seems that she benefitted from the course in a number of ways, and it also appears that the reason behind this was that she was ready to integrate what was learnt.

#### 6.6.2.3.3 Daniel

Daniel's case was unique. He was somewhat 'out of place' in this group in that he was much older than his classmates (aged 29 at the time of the study) and had been abroad many times for long periods, unlike any other participant of CS2. He had spent six months in Ankara working as a volunteer reporter at a youth office in addition to a study-abroad semester in Turkey, worked during a few summers in the US as well as two years in England, and participated in a youth project in Greece. He reported having many friends from other countries. In writing about his time spent abroad, he explained: "*What motivated me? The quest into the unknown. To discover what we could only see on TV or read about. To do something my parents didn't have a chance to do.*" He started learning English at the age of ten (self-rated proficiency: 4-5), and also spoke some German (self-rated proficiency: 1) and Turkish (self-rated proficiency: 2). He was fairly active in class, group and pair discussions and activities, and seemed to enjoy our classes. He missed one lesson (Lesson 7).

He rated his attitudes high in his self-evaluation sheet, and claimed, "*As we grow older and (hopefully) become somewhat wiser most of us realise that people of other cultures have other values that may be just as good as our own ones*" (Rating: 5). His ratings for the 'knowledge' dimensions were higher than other students'. Also, what was interesting about Daniel's self-evaluation was that, in describing his competence, he often did not write in the first person singular. For instance, in elaborating on his skills of interpreting and relating, he stated, "*You often have to know others' culture, customs and conventions when you interact with them*" (Rating: 4). He did not provide examples for some of the dimensions, and gave himself a lower rating than other participants with considerably less intercultural experience for his skills of discovery and interaction. As he pointed out, learning to engage in meaningful interaction with people from other cultures without any dysfunctions "*takes time and patience*".

Daniel's different approach to learning in this course was noticeable right from the beginning. For example, whereas some students were eager to prove how much new

information they had found in completing Assignment 1, he chose to “*share some things*” from the section about Turkey – a country he had spent a lot of time in – and wrote his reflections from the point of view of someone who knows the culture inside out: “*I first found this habit strange but I've come to see how important tea and tea drinking are in Turkish culture. If you don't like tea without lemon, [...] ask for sliced lemon from the waiter or the host. They may find it funny but they will understand your preference*”. As another case in point, his comments made during the term included no reference to anxiety; in fact, he described his experience of conducting the interview for Assignment 6 in the following way: “*We first chatted for a short while about how he got to Pécs after which we started our interview during which I felt relaxed as we had an amiable environment and I was interested to listen to what he had to say*”. In addition, compare the *Conclusions* section from St4’s and Daniel’s paper about their findings from the interviews they conducted:

St4: “*To sum my job what I accomplished, I don't understand what is my business here, but I'll try to do it. [...] What kind of references you think, I cannot imagine them.*”

Daniel: “*I have managed to interview a person and get a little insight of a foreigner's way of thinking who comes from a culture which is so different to ours. I was able to draw some conclusions as to how and why he saw certain things in Hungarian culture peculiar, but I believe that a deeper and more thorough study would be needed for a broader and more accurate understanding.*”

All assignments that required critical reflection were completed with apparent ease by Daniel. There was only one instance, in connection with the interview assignment, where he did not critically reflect on an interesting comment made by the interviewee about how he saw respect for teachers in Hungary. Based on his observation that in Hungary medical students often address their professors by their first name, the interviewee claimed: “*People here do not really respect the teacher*”. This is a very noticeable example of viewing foreign cultural practices through the lens of one’s own culture – a topic we had discussed in great detail in the lessons before the interview assignment.

In order to offer some insight into Daniel’s ICC trajectory, I provide some of his end-of-lesson reflections below, and, as in the case of Mark and Nora, the table detailing his reflections about his development (Table 29, page 205).

“*I found the explanation of culture with the help of the iceberg model useful. It made us think and realize why visible elements are what they are.*”

“*[I found useful] learning about Byram's model. It made me think about ICC and helped to understand some of the questions that came up in my mind.*”

“[I found useful:] *Group work. Listening to others as to what they found interesting about Hungarians’ culture and attitudes.*”

“[I found useful] *filling in the questionnaire as it helped to put theory into practice since it made us think.*”

“*I learned a few things about others’ perspectives.*”

“*I learned new information about Iran and Persian culture.*”

“*I found reading about Parisa’s story useful because we could relate this practical story with theory.*”

“[I liked the] *refreshing thoughts about stereotypes.*”

“[I learned about the] *Hofstede’s model.*”

“[I found useful] *the cultural info we collected during class.*”

“*I learned about ideology, how that can influence others’ perception. I also learned about the negative sides of biased presentation.*”

“[I found useful] *comparing different aspects of various cultures.*”

“[I liked that] *we touched upon a whole series of topics and we discussed them with practical examples.*”

“[I learned about] *the use of understatements and the elements of language.*”

Table 29

*Examples of Daniel's reflections on his own development in his paper for the portfolio*

Development mentioned	Daniel's reflections on this development	Discussion
Development in <b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b> as a result of Assignment 4: <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i>	<i>"I was able to see why such stories can be harmful or evoke negative feelings for certain people. We have to understand that generalization and stereotypes can lead to such misunderstandings. I now understand that these single stories can have a lot of truth in them, but the problem with them is that they keep us from seeing the whole, complex picture."</i>	Daniel's skills of interpreting and relating appeared strong throughout the semester.
Development in <b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b> as a result of an in-class worksheet, stories, and the student's own notes about differences in non-verbal behaviour	<i>"With the help of these stories, I was able to develop my skills of interpreting and relating. The examples highlighted cultural errors which can be identified and avoided in future situations."</i>	However, his claims of development are difficult to support since there are no other data on these particular mentioned aspects.
ICC dimension and development not referred to explicitly; Assignment 3: Reflecting on information about Hungarian culture mentioned	<i>"The first task I chose is my notes on Hungarian culture. One of the points I picked from that website is Hungarians' attitude to the new and unknown. Later, as we learned about Hofstede's model, I was able to see that this example points out the fact that Hungarians have a high avoidance index as we tend to avoid anything that is uncertain. I am interested to know how others see Hungarians and this collection of data was a great way to learn more about my own culture. With the help of such information, my knowledge about my own culture can get richer."</i>	The student did not indicate explicitly development in an individual ICC dimension. Instead, he pointed out – without using the first person singular – that reflecting on aspects of Hungarian culture in Assignment 3 was <i>"a great way to learn more about my own culture"</i> and that his knowledge <i>"can get richer"</i> this way.  At the same time, Daniel demonstrated through this example that he could relate this assignment with a model we learnt about in class, and also expressed that he was interested in how Hungarians are seen by others.
ICC dimension and development not referred to explicitly; Assignment 8: Analysing a news article mentioned	<i>"Another task I picked is my analysis of the news article which is about Black Pete and the controversy around that custom in Holland. That event shows us what problems can occur as a result of immigration which may be escalating in other areas as well in Europe soon. I believe I am able to interpret the problem in this situation but I don't know how to resolve that issue. My suggestion would be to conform to local society and their customs as the classic saying goes: 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'"</i>	Again, the student did not refer to any development in relation to the mentioned assignment, but stated he was able to interpret the problem described in the article he chose.

Daniel's case also highlights the challenges of researching ICC development in the classroom, such as gauging the students' learning based on evidence from merely one semester. The data show that the student was fond of tasks that made him think and helped him relate theory with practice, and that he displayed signs of strong ICC throughout. These data do not allow us to conclude, however, that his ICC had changed in any substantial way. My belief – which, again, cannot be corroborated by the available information, but which is simply the teacher's opinion – is that Daniel was not truly challenged by this course.

His case was atypical in several respects. He differed from most others in terms of almost all the individual difference variables addressed in the previous section. Most notably, he had no difficulty with critical analysis, comparing and contrasting, interpreting and relating, and perhaps could have been engaged in more complex tasks, which raises the issue of a greater focus on differentiated instruction in future IC courses.

### 6.6.3 Conclusions drawn from Classroom Study 2

This section aims to summarise the findings of CS2, which above all demonstrate just how multi-layered the subject matter really is. Firstly, many of the findings gained from CS1 were confirmed by this study. The participants deemed the educational approach “*unique*” and unusual, the course interesting and useful. They appreciated discussions and the fact that they could learn from others, and found the topics relevant to their lives. They were mostly willing to communicate in the classroom, but it was seen that if international students had also been present, this would possibly have resulted in greater participation and more opportunities for learning. However, there were differences in how the assignments were perceived: too challenging or not challenging enough.

Secondly, given that in CS2 I relied on a greater variety of data sources, and therefore collected and analysed substantially more data on the students’ ICC development, the findings paint a considerably more complex picture in this regard than did those of CS1. The most important elements of this picture were found to be the individual differences that may have affected the students’ ICC and intercultural learning, namely their (1) experience of intercultural contact, (2) age, (3) motivation, (4) attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning, (5) anxiety, (6) perceived foreign language competence, (7) learner autonomy and (8) ability to think and self-reflect critically. As was argued and shown through examples from the class as a whole, as well as individual cases, these elements are all interlinked in intricate ways, and may change independently: they form a complex dynamic system. This means that different constellations of these variables may result in very different learning outcomes. In attempting to map these outcomes, however, I was faced with the realities of researching and developing ICC.

I learnt that there can indeed be a great disparity between (1) what the teacher expects will happen during a course, i.e. gradual learning in a step-by-step fashion in accordance with the objectives and sequencing in the syllabus, and (2) classroom realities, i.e. messy, non-linear development influenced by countless factors, such as the students’ age, attitudes to the course,



past experiences, or simply time constraints. It became clear that one semester is not enough time to induce significant change as regards such a complex construct: all IC courses, as well as other courses in the BA in English Studies curriculum should work toward the same goals. It also became clear that change was most probably non-linear and difficult to track, especially in such short time. Many participants referred to various forms of intercultural learning, and, as supported by a few examples, it is possible that some learnt a great deal. It is also possible that others may apply what was done and covered in the lessons years later. At the same time, it was found that what was learnt was not in the zone of proximal development of most of these English majors, and that this was in large part connected with their ability to think and self-reflect critically. If contextual factors are considered, this is not surprising: a number of students pointed out that they liked, but were not used to the constructivist approach, and this may mean that during their studies they were normally not required to act as critical thinkers and autonomous learners.

## Final conclusions

When I first set out to plan the research presented in this thesis and surveyed the literature on culture, IC, competence, ICC, as well as its development and assessment, I soon became aware that I chose to study a subject matter which is highly complex. To begin with, as seen in Chapters 1 through 3, core concepts, such as culture and IC, are difficult to grasp in themselves since they are understood in very different ways by researchers and theorists from different disciplines (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Moreover, there are ample examples of inconsistent terminology and conceptual confusion in the field (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). This is especially true in the case of ICC conceptualisations. What I found to be a useful starting point in trying to grasp this construct is the perspective of cognitive psychology on competence in general. As seen in Chapter 1, three dimensions of the goals of education can be distinguished: (1) the disciplinary/content-based dimension, (2) the internal/psychological dimension and (3) the social and cultural/application dimension, and the concept of competence can be understood as integrating the three (Csapó, 2010). This view embeds ICC in the larger learning framework, and also points to its multifaceted nature.

The fact that this construct is multifaceted became most apparent to me as I reviewed some of the most prominent ICC frameworks in the field. I found that according to many theorists, ICC has a cognitive, behavioural and affective dimension (Arasaratnam, 2009; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2007; Gudykunst, 2004; INCA Project, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 1999). However, different frameworks emphasise very different ICC elements, even those that share this tripartite form of representation. Some ICC models disregard the interactional element (e.g. Bennett, 1993) or the role of the foreign language in intercultural interaction (e.g. Gudykunst, 2004), others pay less attention to the attitudes and knowledge dimensions (e.g. Ruben, 1976), and still others downplay the possible effects of anxiety (e.g. Byram, 1997). Apart from Byram's model, in which critical cultural awareness is placed at the centre, these generally do not include critical thinking and self-reflection as key factors. The findings of this thesis reveal that these elements are in fact crucial in ICC and its development.

In surveying the literature I also found ICC assessment a rather problematic issue. Many of the reviewed assessment tools, such as the AIC (Fantini, 2007) or the INCA tools (INCA Project, 2004), demonstrate a lack of conceptual rigour, where the boundaries between ICC dimensions, on the one hand, and between ICC and other variables, on the other, are blurred. This is unsurprising given that this competence, by definition, is a complex ability construct, made up of elements that interact in many ways, and influenced by numerous other variables.

The assessment of intercultural learning also posed a number of questions. The trickiest one seemed to be how different levels for individual ICC dimensions could be identified along a scale and how these levels would fit in with those set up for other dimensions. Furthermore, Stocks and Trevitt's (2008) open questions about portfolio assessment remained open in this study: "in terms of portfolios as a valid approach to assessment, issues of authenticity become central – how does one judge whether the portfolio represents an authentic experience, or simply an effort to play the assessment 'game'?" (Abstract, para. 2).

Although I realised most of these complexities involved in my focus of research fairly early on, I embarked on teaching and researching the IC seminars with the conviction that I would be able to detect change over a semester and by the end of the course. Like many teachers, I believed that teaching would result in learning, and that this learning would be observable. The findings of the exploratory study, which was carried out before I planned my own course, and which involved three teachers and sixteen students, painted a promising picture in this regard. They revealed that the students were keen on their IC courses and found them useful. They especially appreciated films and authentic examples of IC from the teachers' and their classmates' experience, as well as tasks that required them to do their own research. They enjoyed participating in discussions and conducting interviews. Nevertheless, some difficulties also surfaced, such as ones related to assessment, as well as the students' lack of willingness to communicate in the lessons – despite their claim that they liked discussions. In addition, two teachers elaborated on other challenges of intercultural teaching: they referred to difficulties in deciding about the appropriate aims and methods of IC courses.

What many of the above findings and the literature on ICC development have in common is their indication that the social constructivist approach may be an appropriate choice. The social constructivist classroom is characterised by less direct instruction, and more investigative tasks, as well as ones that encourage collaboration, dialogue, learning from peers, and critical thinking. It is imperative that tasks are set in meaningful contexts, and learner autonomy is of key importance. I decided to follow this approach and enquire into the ways in which it was appropriate in my own course.

In Phase 2 of the research, I conducted a classroom study in Seminar 1. In an attempt to answer RQ6 and RQ7, I relied on two questionnaires, my own notes and reflections and a follow-up focus-group interview. The findings showed that most elements of the social constructivist classroom were greatly appreciated and were seen as unusual by the participants. They explained that Seminar 1 was very different from their other courses. Interestingly, their lack of willingness to communicate was not a problem, which is possibly due to the fact that

(1) they found the topics relevant to their own lives and future, and (2) international and Hungarian students alike were enrolled. The majority enjoyed collaborative tasks and learning from others, and were fond of most assignments, which they claimed made them think and motivated them. They deemed the seminar interesting and useful, and referred to several ways in which their ICC had developed. Set against the thirteen course objectives adapted from Byram (1997), these comments indicate development in attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating/critical cultural awareness and skills of discovery and interaction, although evidence of no improvement in this latter dimension was also found. Importantly, some mentioned greater awareness of how much more needs to be learnt. At the same time, a few students reported that cooperating with peers caused difficulties for them, others argued they preferred “*the teacher teaching, and not all the time the students talking*”, and still others found it challenging to adjust to an approach that looked on them as autonomous learners. In addition, conclusions could be drawn about how activities and assignments could be rethought for Seminar 2, and also about the ways in which the design could be changed to allow for a more systematic documentation of the students’ ICC development trajectories.

These conclusions were carefully considered in Phase 3, in which I carried out the second classroom study in Seminar 2. As discussed, this seminar differed from the previous one in many respects – most noticeably in that only Hungarian students were enrolled, which resulted in a fairly different classroom environment and possibly different intercultural learning. The research questions remained the same, but the range of data collection methods was broadened: apart from the questionnaires and my notes and reflections, I also drew on the students’ end-of-lesson reflections, self-evaluation sheets, written assignments and in-class work, and portfolios. This provided me with an abundance of data at the end of the term, which were to be analysed qualitatively. I coded and re-coded the data numerous times, and set up profiles for the student participants in order to get a better grasp of their individual ICC development paths, and identify interesting cases. As for RQ6, the findings confirmed most of those in the first classroom study. Once more it was revealed that the students were not used to such an educational approach, but had very positive attitudes to it. However, their answers in the questionnaire also show that they were not thrilled about having to complete tasks that required critical thinking and self-reflection. This finding is closely connected to those pertaining to RQ7.

It was found that these English majors’ ‘initial’ ICC profiles were rather varied. The majority rated their attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating and critical cultural awareness high, and their knowledge and skills of discovery and interaction low. Yet the numerical data

were seen to offer an incomplete picture about the students' competence. For instance, Daniel, who had a wide range of experiences in intercultural interaction, rated his skills of interaction lower than others who had considerably fewer experiences, indicating differences in the students' awareness about the complexities of IC. Also, the answers to the open-ended question in the self-evaluation sheet yielded inferences about dissimilarities in individual dimensions. For example, many claimed they were very interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures, whereas others, like Mark, stated, "*I don't really think that I'm interested in the most of them*".

The self-evaluation sheets, like most other sources of data, pointed to the relevance of numerous individual difference variables to the students' ICC and intercultural learning. These were their (1) experience of intercultural contact, (2) age, (3) motivation, (4) attitudes to the course and to intercultural learning, (5) anxiety, (6) perceived foreign language competence, (7) learner autonomy and (8) ability to think and self-reflect critically. Furthermore, the possibility that various other variables influenced learning and behaviour in the classroom was considered. What was found interesting about these individual differences and the students' ICC was that they were possibly connected in intricate ways as well as dynamically changing (Dörnyei, 2014, Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). ICC development, if any, was therefore probably non-linear. This, however, was one of the reasons why development paths were very difficult to track. Other reasons included the following:

- (1) Most of the data were collected on a self-report basis. The students misunderstood some tasks, had difficulties with critically reflecting on their learning, and when describing their development, they may have written what they thought was expected of them. Also, in some cases it was difficult to identify which ICC dimensions the students' reflections about development were related to.
- (2) An incredible amount of data was at my disposal. However, those that were not collected on a self-report basis, and yielded direct assessment – like some of the students' assignments and in-class work – contained insufficient evidence of change. This might have been anticipated, since the course only lasted one semester, with 16.5 contact hours in total.

Just like the participants of Seminar 1, all the students in Seminar 2 referred to a number of different ways in which their ICC had developed. In some cases, like Mark's, some of these claims were refuted by their actual work during the semester. In other cases, like Nora's, support for these claims were found. In most other cases, however, change could not be identified for

the abovementioned reasons. This showed me that despite all my efforts and expectations, inducing change in such a short time and documenting this change was an incredible challenge.

## Limitations and future directions

There are a number of limitations to the research discussed in this thesis. Firstly, all three studies involved small numbers of participants, which means that the findings cannot be generalised to the larger populations of Hungarian English majors and instructors. Nevertheless, following Dörnyei's (2007) view that "even if the particulars of a study do not generalize, the main ideas and the process observed might" (p. 59), I took measures to ensure that readers would be able to determine the extent of transferability. For instance, I provided thick description, made sure multiple voices were heard, and referred to patterns characterising the classes in general in addition to those reflecting individual attitudes, beliefs and ways of learning. I identified interesting cases and presented the findings in connection with them in rich detail.

Secondly, the data collection instruments, such as the students' self-evaluation sheets, assignments and in-class written tasks were not validated. Many of these were reviewed by other researchers in order to maximise their effectiveness (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 96). However, this was not done in the case of the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Council of Europe, 2009), which, as seen in Chapter 6, therefore resulted in difficulties and confusion.

Furthermore, I had a dual role in the two classroom studies in that I was both the teacher and the researcher. I attempted to account for this limitation to some extent by clarifying in Chapter 4 the advantages and drawbacks of this form of participant research, and by outlining how my background knowledge, perspectives and biases may have affected the research. Nevertheless, in future studies investigating intercultural learning and teaching in the classroom the separation of these roles may prove immensely helpful. For example, an outside observer's findings about what goes on in an IC seminar may provide new and different insight into the connections between classroom processes and students' learning.

The findings also yield countless pedagogical implications related to the micro level of the IC classroom, the meso level of the institution, and the macro level of the larger educational context. Firstly, with reference to implications for micro level practices, it is clear that all activities in an IC classroom need to be contextualised for the students to find them meaningful and relevant. This means that ample authentic examples should be provided when introducing models and theories, as well as in tasks that require the students to reflect on their own experiences, which I have learnt 'the hard way' in teaching both seminars. Secondly, as underlined by the findings of the exploratory study, discussion between teachers on the one hand and teachers and students on the other may prove immensely beneficial for pinpointing

appropriate aims and methods for IC courses. Thirdly, for valuable intercultural learning to take place, the development of English majors' critical thinking skills is indispensable. However, one course and one term is simply not sufficient for such an endeavour. If it is agreed that one of the most important responsibilities of higher education is to develop students' ability to think and self-reflect critically (Barnett, 1997), which I believe it is, then all courses should systematically incorporate critical thinking and self-reflective activities in their syllabi for real change to come about.

Finally, the social constructivist approach evidently has a lot to offer in intercultural learning and teaching. At the same time, it seems that its application goes against usual educational forms characterising the larger context. As seen in Chapter 1, broadly speaking, learner-centred approaches that emphasise cooperation, autonomy and critical thinking exist more at the level of the curriculum than in actual foreign language classrooms (Medgyes & Nikolov, 2010; Nikolov, Ottó & Öveges, 2009). As seen in the comments made by the participants of the two classroom studies, on the other hand, this is true of not only public education, but also higher education in the context where I conducted my research, which means that the approach I chose to follow is looked upon as novel and unusual in this context. In describing models for change and innovation as situated in social and cultural contexts, Kennedy (2013) outlines how "mismatches between an innovation and the socio-cultural and educational context in which it is to be introduced" (p. 13) can occur. For instance, in an educational system mostly characterised by (1) structural approaches, (2) teacher control and (3) aims for 'knowing that', a transformative endeavour of (1) task-based approaches, (2) collaborative learning and (3) aims for 'knowing why' produces a mismatch. This mismatch may affect the students' learning in negative ways. What is clear is that the development of ICC, this complex ability construct, necessitates such an approach, but not only at the micro level of the individual classroom, but also at the meso and macro levels.



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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Data collection instruments of the Exploratory Study

#### Teachers' interview questions

1. What are the main topics covered on your Introduction to *Intercultural Communication* seminar/lecture? How and why did you choose or keep these in your syllabus? How did these change throughout the years?
2. What textbook and/or other educational material do you rely on? How and why did you choose or keep these in your syllabus? How did these change throughout the years?
3. What oral and written tasks are students required to do in class and as home assignment? How and why did you choose or keep these in your syllabus? How did these change throughout the years?
4. On what tasks can you integrate students' English linguistic development and intercultural content?
5. What is students' attitude like? How does it change throughout the semester? What interests them and what doesn't? How did you change the syllabus in light of this?
6. What are the requirements for your course? How do you assess?
7. What benefits could you mention in relation to the course?
8. What difficulties could you mention in relation to the course?
9. In your view what should be changed in order to improve the course?
10. Please describe a task/topic/material that works well, according to your experience. Why does it work well? How do you know that it does?
11. Please describe a task/topic/material that doesn't work well, according to your experience. Why doesn't it work well? How do you know that it doesn't?
12. Apart from the issues we have already discussed, what other topics do you find important?

Students' questionnaire

Questionnaire on *Introduction to Intercultural Communication*  
Seminar and Lecture

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below about the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar and lecture you have completed. Please note that this questionnaire is anonymous; therefore it would be greatly appreciated if you could state your honest opinion.

1. I attended the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar held by:

1 – [T4's name]

2 – [T2's name]

3 – [T1's name]

2. 3 reasons why I liked the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* SEMINAR:

1

2

3

3. 3 reasons why I didn't like the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* SEMINAR:

1

2

3



4. Please indicate how much you enjoyed learning about the following topics by putting an X in the box that best describes your position:

I enjoyed learning about the following topics:	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the topic
1) features of culture					
2) features of language					
3) features of exotic cultures					
4) ethnocentrism					
5) stereotyping					
6) otherization					
7) cultural identity					
8) cultural barriers in intercultural communication					
9) linguistic barriers in intercultural communication					
10) cultural differences in beliefs and values					
11) cultural differences in habits					
12) cultural differences in verbal communication					
13) cultural differences in non-verbal communication					
14) cultural differences in politeness strategies					
15) other: .....					

5. Please indicate how much you enjoyed the following tasks by putting an X in the box that best describes your position:

I enjoyed the following tasks:	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the task
1) reading articles					
2) reading about cultural issues in the textbook <i>Mirrors and Windows</i>					
3) completing <i>Language Work</i> tasks in the textbook <i>Mirrors and Windows</i>					
4) writing essays					
5) observing how people behave and communicate					
6) interviewing someone from a different culture					
7) giving a presentation					
8) participating in class discussions					
9) participating in small group/pair discussions					
10) watching films					
11) discussing pictures					
12) other: .....					

6. **3 reasons why I liked the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* LECTURE:**

1

2

3

7. **3 reasons why I didn't like the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* LECTURE:**

1

2

3

8. **Give 3 examples of when and how you have been able to apply the knowledge gained from the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar and/or lecture:**

1

2

3

**Thank you for your participation.**

# Appendix B

## Sample course materials in Seminar 1

### Worksheet on Hofstede's and Hall's model (adapted from Utley, 2004, p.63, 69)

#### Hofstede's and Hall's model

Match the dimensions in Hofstede's model with their descriptions.

1 Power Distance Index (PDI)	a The degree to which people can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take risks</li><li>• accept conflict and stress</li><li>• work without rules.</li></ul>
2 Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)	b The degree to which people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have a short- or long-term view of their work</li><li>• accept convention</li><li>• persevere with a job</li><li>• spend or invest.</li></ul>
3 Individualism/Collectivism (IDV)	c The acceptance of the unequal distribution of power – the degree to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• employees are independent</li><li>• structures are hierarchical</li><li>• bosses are accessible</li><li>• people have rights or privileges</li><li>• progress is by evolution or by revolution.</li></ul>
4 Masculinity/Femininity (MAS)	d The degree to which people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work in groups or alone</li><li>• relate to their task or to their colleagues.</li></ul>
5 Long-Term Orientation (LTO)	e The degree to which people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• believe in consensus</li><li>• put work at the centre of their lives</li><li>• expect managers to use intuition.</li></ul>

Which styles from Hall's model do you think are represented in these extracts?

**A**  
I'm afraid I can't fit a meeting in today. This morning it's my weekly team meeting. Then I've planned two hours' work on the budget. I could see you tomorrow at 11 o'clock, between a visitor who leaves at 10.45 and a scheduled lunch appointment.

**B**  
*Do come to the point. I need to get back with a decision by four o'clock.*

**C**  
In the circumstances it would seem to be inappropriate to attribute more than a general description of those characteristics we will be seeking in our new employee.

**D**  
Don't worry about the timing. Just come when you're ready. I have a few things going on at the moment, but I'm sure we can always squeeze in a discussion of your problem.

(adapted from Utley, 2004, p. 63, 69)

### Example A1.1.1 Being represented

Parisa had been coming to international conventions on food processing for several years. She had made several good friends, especially from among the Europeans; but there was a gnawing problem which always came back unresolved. She was the only person at the convention who came from Iran; and no matter how friendly and sincere, she knew that her European colleagues saw her in a particular way which just wasn't her at all. It was from their passing comments, their casual, unguarded turns of phrase, in which they seemed to show surprise when she was creative, assertive or articulate, as though she *ought* to be somehow unable to be good at all the things she did. One of her colleagues did not actually say 'well done!' but certainly implied it in her tone of voice. She also felt isolated as the only person from her particular background at these conventions. There was nobody else to represent who she was. It also hurt her when someone said that she was 'Westernized' and 'not a real Iranian'. This seemed like a no-win situation. If her behaviour was 'recognized', she was not real; and if she was considered 'real', she wasn't supposed to behave like that.

Then something happened which both confirmed her fears and gave her support. She invited three of her colleagues to see one of the films which was showing as part of a festival of Iranian films at the local university. They came willingly – very interested – and then to another one. When she asked one of her colleagues what she found so fascinating, her colleague replied that she was particularly impressed by the female characters who portrayed such strong women. Indeed, one of them played a major executive role in a film crew. She hired and fired people and drove around in a jeep. Her colleague said that she had no idea such women existed in Iran, and that she always thought Muslim women were supposed to be subservient. Parisa was also pleased because the women in the film were certainly what her colleagues would consider 'real' Iranians in that they wore the hejab [Islamic head covering], and the woman who drove the jeep wore the black hejab and long coat that she imagined fitted the 'stereotype'.

Shortly after this, another Iranian arrived at the convention. He was educated, worldly, urbane, well-dressed and also extremely articulate. This was no more or less that *she* would expect of an Iranian man; but she was pleased because here was further evidence for her other colleagues of the sort of people she belonged to. Moreover, it was very clear that he had tremendous respect for her as an equal, an academic and a professional. Parisa wondered though if they considered *him* a 'real Iranian'. After all, he wore a tie and didn't have a beard.

(from Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2006, pp. 7-8)

Assignment 3: *The Danger of a Single Story* (Adichie, 2009)

**Note:** On TED (the website where the presentation is available), you have the possibility to watch presentations with subtitles. You can choose the language of the subtitles right under the video. English is recommended!

The presenter shares many examples of having a single story about the other. Relying on one of these examples, explain (in about 250 words) what she means by:

1. the single story
2. its roots
3. its consequences.

## Assignment 5: Analysing two job interviews (transcripts of interviews found in Roberts, 2009)

### Task and guide to reading the job interviews

Before analysing the scripts of the two job interviews, read the following guide.

**Background:** A British company interviewed people for a manual delivery post. You will read the script of two interviews: one conducted with a Filipino candidate, Luis, and one conducted with a British candidate, Duncan. Whereas Luis failed, Duncan was successful and got the job.

**Main issues:** This exercise addresses two issues. The first one is about how people with different cultural backgrounds construct their speech. The second one is about business culture and what communicative styles it accepts or appreciates.

**Task:** Read the script of the two job interviews. Here is a key to what the different symbols found in the scripts mean:

I	interviewer
C	candidate
(.)	short pause
(2)	longer pause in seconds
[ ]	overlapping speech
-	cut off word or self-interruption
= =	latching turns
(word)	possible speech but not entirely clear
(xxxx)	unclear word/words or anonymised names
[dc]	slow speech
{ }	indicates the stretch of talk over which a particular feature is evident
(( ))	non-verbal communication or action

Analyse the **candidates'** and the **interviewers'** way of speaking in the two cases and answer the following questions (in about 250 words):

1. What are the differences between the speech in the first interview and the second interview?
2. Why is the second candidate more successful?
3. What could have been improved in the first interview so that the first candidate would also have been successful?



# Appendix C

## Data collection instruments of Classroom Study 1

### Background questionnaire: *My intercultural background*

1. What different nationalities/cultural backgrounds characterize your family members?
2. How many times have you been abroad?
3. Which countries have you been to?
4. How long did your longest stay abroad last?
5. Do you have any friends from abroad or from different cultures from yours? If yes, how many and of what background?
6. Please fill in the following table about the languages you speak (including your mother tongue).

Language	Way of learning it (put 1 for classroom context, 2 for natural context, or 3 for both)	The age at which you started learning it	How you would rate your proficiency on a scale of 1-5 (1= very low; 5= very high proficiency)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

## Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development

### Feedback Sheet

Please take 20 minutes to answer the questions below about the course. Note that this feedback sheet is anonymous; therefore, it would be greatly appreciated if you could state your honest opinion.

1. Please indicate how much you enjoyed the following in-class activities by ticking the box that best describes your position:

I enjoyed the following activities:	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the activity
1) task on Iceberg model					
2) worksheet: Hofstede's and Hall's model					
3) reading about the relationship between language, culture and identity					
4) deconstructing story about schoolgirls on the bus					
5) watching the film <i>3 weddings: Bernadett and Sanju</i>					
6) deconstructing story about Parisa					
7) worksheet: communication styles					
8) quiz: examples of cultural problems/misunderstandings					
9) task on Byram's model					
10) task on Bennett's model					
11) reading a study-abroad diary on stages of culture shock					
12) worksheet: English as an international language					
13) worksheet: in-group vs. out-group					
14) watching the film <i>3 weddings: Zsuzsa and Mubarak</i>					
15) participating in class discussions					
16) participating in small group/pair discussions					

2. Please indicate how much you enjoyed the following home assignments by ticking the box that best describes your position:

I enjoyed the following assignments:	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember the assignment
1) reading a country profile and preparing notes					
2) observing Hungarians in everyday situations + worksheet					
3) watching <i>The danger of a single story</i> + worksheet					
4) worksheet: My intercultural encounters					
5) analysing extracts from 2 job interviews + worksheet					
6) recording your answer to question about stereotyping/ a misunderstanding					
7) analysing a news article + worksheet					
8) interviewing someone from a different country + essay					

3. What was the most useful in-class activity/home assignment for you? Why?

**4. Please indicate how much you enjoyed learning about the following topics by ticking the box that best describes your position:**

<b>I enjoyed learning about the following topics:</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Not really true</b>	<b>Mostly true</b>	<b>Absolutely true</b>	<b>I don't remember the topic</b>
1) features of culture					
2) the Iceberg model					
3) Hofstede's model					
4) Hall's model					
5) cultural differences in verbal communication					
6) cultural differences in non-verbal communication					
7) cultural differences in habits					
8) cultural identity					
9) the relationship between language, culture and identity					
10) ethnocentrism					
11) cultural differences in beliefs and values					
12) stereotyping					
13) communication styles					
14) features of English written discourse					
15) the difference between cross-, inter- and multicultural					
16) intercultural communicative competence					
17) culture shock					
18) power and English as an international language					
19) language, culture and power (key trends)					
20) in-group and out-group					
21) integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization					
22) ideologies					
23) otherizing language					

5.

**3 reasons why I liked the course:**

1

2

3

6.

**3 reasons why I didn't like the course:**

1

2

3

**Thank you for your participation.**

## Focus-group interview questions

1. On our final lesson I asked all students to fill out a feedback sheet about the seminar. On the feedback sheet some students said that they liked that the course is useful. Is this true of you? Why/why not?
2. Some students said that they didn't like learning about the theories and models. Is this true of you? Why/why not?
3. Some students said that they liked the home assignments, whereas others had problems with them. Which is true of you and why?
4. One student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was:  
*“the audio assignment where we had to talk with each other and the interview with a foreigner because these improved our skills”*.  
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
5. Another student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was:  
*“my intercultural encounters because I could use everything that I have learned in my personal stories [...] And I could analysed my stories and think about them in an other way”*.  
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
6. Do you think that topics that are more concrete and can be connected to personal experience are more enjoyable? Why/why not? Can you give an example?
7. One student said that the most useful in-class activity for him/her was:  
*“the videos we have watched about the weddings because this way we really could see the conflict and it was easier to decide what were the problems”*.  
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
8. Another student said that the most useful in-class activity for him/her was:  
*“the day we talk about gypsies in Hungary [...] What is useful here is that people now (me included) will think before talking.”*  
Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?
9. Apart from the issues we have already discussed, what other topics do you find important?

# Appendix D

## Sample coding of data in Classroom Study 1

**Key**

Highlighted parts of the student's comments - initial coding

Comments on the right margin - descriptive codes

**Comments on the right margin in bold** - pattern codes

### Coding S12's answers to the open-ended questions

**What was the most useful in-class activity/home assignment for you? Why?**

*Watching the video 'The danger of a single story' was very interesting. It was moving to hear someone speak about stereotypes and cultural differences in such way, and I agreed with the woman on almost all topics.*

Assignment 3:  
INTERESTING, moving

**3 reasons why I liked the course:**

1 *There was a good mood on this course during the semester.*

2 *It was good to learn about intercultural problems and stereotypes; learning how to approach a future encounter with someone from a different culture.*

3 *It was good to have Erasmus students on this course.*

intercultural learning  
**ICC development: Skills of discovery and interaction?**

presence of Erasmus students

**3 reasons why I didn't like the course:**

1 *Sometimes it was difficult to concentrate for 3 hours.*

2 *Making interviews was a bit challenging.*

3 *Theories and models were hard to integrate sometimes.*

the lessons were three hours long:  
too long

difficulty with Assignment 11  
**Soc. constr. approach: assignment too challenging**

issue with theories and models - 'hard to integrate'  
**Pedagogical implication: rethink the way models are presented and applied**

## Coding S13's answers to the open-ended questions

### What was the most useful in-class activity/home assignment for you? Why?

*Very useful in-class activities were the videos we have watched about the weddings because this way we really could see the conflict and it was easier to decide what were the problems.*

*The most useful home assignment was 'The danger of a single story' task. It was very interesting we have learnt a lot from it not just about her and her country but also about ourselves and how much more we need to learn about Intercultural Communication.*

intercultural learning?

**ICC development: Skills of interpreting and relating/Critical cultural awareness?**

Assignment 3: INTERESTING  
intercultural learning

**ICC development: Knowledge; Awareness about the need for further development**

### 3 reasons why I liked the course:

1 *I liked the course because we had the opportunity to talk and improve our talking skills.*

2 *In this course the things we have learnt are really useful in everyday life. There were a lot of occasions when I told my friend 'oh actually I've learnt about this in one of my classes and I think...'*

3 *It was a very interactive course, it kept us working and thinking.*

improved communication skills?

**ICC development: Communicative aspects**

topics USEFUL in everyday life

**Soc. constr. approach: relevant topics**

interactive

kept the student working and thinking

**Soc. constr. approach: importance of critical thinking**

### 3 reasons why I didn't like the course:

1 *Sometimes I wasn't sure about what was expected from me through the assignments. I wasn't sure of what to concentrate on to complete my assignments in the right way.*

2 *Some tasks I've found really hard to complete like the analysis of the news article or the job interview.*

3 *We weren't really pushed to learn all the theories but probably it's just me who needs a kick in the butt to finish things.*

was not sure about expectations

**Soc. constr. approach: learner autonomy and initiative**

difficulty with Assignment 5 and 9

**Soc. constr. approach: assignments too challenging**

issue with theories and models: not pushed to learn them

**Belief: theories need to be learnt**

**Soc. constr. approach: learner autonomy and initiative**

**Pedagogical implication: rethink the way models are presented and applied**



Coding answers to question 3 and 4 in the focus-group interview

**Some students said that they liked the home assignments, whereas others had problems with them. Which is true of you and why?**

**Anna [speaking at the same time as Linda]:** For me, I... oh.

**Linda:** Oh. Uhh, oh...

**Anna:** Speak, [Linda].

**Linda:** I liked the home assignments, especially the interviews, because it were really funny to do because I have never had such an experience before that and it was fun. And... so I will... So what's the question...

**Interviewer:** ... The others?

**David:** Well, for me... Oh, sorry. For me it was great. So I really liked it because they were challenge in a way, but not that hard to work on, so as a lazy guy I am I could easily do it just a little bit before the deadline, I think one or two hour before. So I just brushed it together, just tape it together, staple it, send it, it's cool. And that's why I really liked it. So... they had a real challenge so they were good tasks to do, good assignments. But not those that you should sacrifice at last 4 or 6 hours of your day to finish it. It's just when you got the time to sit down, read it through, listen to it, watch the video or something, and then you could just write it down, really, and it could reflect your personality, it could reflect your perspectives, reflect your opinions, and that's why it was very free and variable for every student, I think that's why.

**Anna:** Yeah, I totally agree with you. And yeah, it was really useful and that's why... probably that's why it's one thing which I called this subject really useful, because in other courses we shouldn't... we didn't have homeworks, or just little ones, or two times or three times, but not on every lesson, and this is really useful for that too.

**Interviewer:** You mean that it made you work, and that's why?

**Anna:** Yes, yes, and that's why I improved my skills, even writing skills, everything.

Assignments: challenging but not that hard, could reflect your personality, perspectives, opinions  
**Soc. constr. approach: ZPD, motivation**

not used to completing assignments, but appreciating them

improved writing skills

**Interviewer:** Okay, great. Any problems with the assignments though?

**Anna:** I don't remember, no.

**Eva:** Well, [difficult to understand] I am really lazy to do something, but about... in this time it was okay. Even for me.

**David:** Well, they were great when I didn't have to cooperate with someone else. I'm not really a cooperative person really. So when I have to talk about a topic with someone in an assignment I was like, 'Okay, I will do it sometime'. But I couldn't contact my partner, and then came a problem, and the interview was also a bit of pain in the neck because my friend wasn't... friend was really busy, so he wasn't free at the time, and he was late for the meeting, and et cetera, et cetera. So most assignments that were sole assignments were great, but when we have to team up, that's a bit hard for me.

difficulty with Assignment 11: the need to cooperate  
Soc. constr. approach: cooperation  
- 'hard for me'

**Interviewer:** Mhm. Okay, [Linda] what about you, any problems?

**Linda:** Maybe, I think the personal experiences... we should write some, and there are some students who are really young they live in smaller cities and they didn't have any encounters with foreigners and I think that's why they had some problem with that particular assignment concerning to the stereotypes and others. For example... I can't say now an example.

difficulty with Assignment 4 and 8:  
not enough intercultural encounters

**Interviewer:** Okay, no problem. Are you one of those students?

**Linda:** Please could you tell me once more...

**Interviewer:** Sorry?

**Linda:** Can you repeat it... please?

**Interviewer:** Oh, sure. You told me that there were some students who found this difficult... Are you one of those students?

**Linda:** No, because I had some. Just this is my personal experience with my group mates.

**Interviewer:** I see, okay.

**Linda:** My problem was sometimes the too long-term lesson. The 3 hour. And... but I think the 3 weddings and the Single story was a really fascinating subject on the course. And about the models I think we should have more concrete infor... not information. Knowledge about that so this is... at the next courses I think the students... I'm trying to find the word...

the lessons were three hours long: too long

**Interviewer:** ... They should be made to learn them?

**Linda:** Yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Interviewer:** Aha, okay, do you think that a test would help?

**Linda:** Yeah, for example, yeah.

**David:** Oh God, no. [everyone laughs]

**Linda:** But then we should have a concrete knowledge about that stuff, like Hofstede and Hall.

issues with theories and models: should have more concrete knowledge about them  
**Pedagogical implication: rethink the way models are presented and applied**

**One student said that the most useful home assignment for him/her was “the audio assignment where we had to talk with each other and the interview with a foreigner because these improved our skills”. Do you agree with this student? Why/why not?**

**Linda:** I absolutely agree because it makes the lesson so interactive and we have to communicate with each other and get know more each other, and this is a pretty good idea to make an assignment like that.

interactive

**Anna:** For me how I already said that the interviews was the most interesting and I can feel my... that I get better in that, so yes, it's really useful.

Assignment 11: INTERESTING improvement/learning

**Eva:** Well, it was useful, but it wasn't so easy for me, because afterwards you have to write and listen, and again and again write down every word, so yeah, but it was useful, yeah.

**Anna:** It took a lot of time to write them down, but yeah, it was interesting.

Assignment 11: transcribing took a lot of time

**David:** Well, I already mentioned that I have bit of problem with cooperative works, but I can agree. So if someone wants to just try to talk a bit better, get more used to talking up to foreigners or talking in a different language than their own, then I think it's agreeable that it is a very good and very useful way of practising. Practise makes perfect... but there is no perfect.

Assignment 11: useful way of practising using the language

**Interviewer:** Mhm, great. Do you think... Do you agree with this last statement: "because it improved our skills"? Do you refer to skills when you say that you can get used to talking to foreigners this way?

**David:** Well, yes. The usage of language improves in any way. Even in talking to yourself, even to talking to others... So if you use the language in any way then it improves your skills.

**Interviewer:** Great, others?

**Anna:** I would say that not just the language skills, but even... when I interviewed that Iran guy there was a lot of things which was hard to understand for me – but I should make that kind of attitude that it's okay for me, or: okay, I'm interested, I'm listening, and I don't say any bad thing about what he is doing, or what he's like, or something. That I should improve this... yeah, this communication with foreigners, that's like different...

improvement/learning?  
SHOULD improve communication with foreigners/(Attitudes)  
ICC development: Attitudes?  
Awareness? No development in Skills of discovery and interaction - 'hard to understand for me'

**David:** Ah! Like social skills?

**Anna:** Yes, but I mean that... I don't know the word in English. That I can accept different people...

**Interviewer:** Is it attitudes?

**Anna:** Yeah, yeah...

**David:** Tolerate?

**Anna:** ... that they have different experience or different way of life.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so something related to attitudes maybe... Aha, and [Linda]?

**Linda:** I can only agree with the previous.

**Interviewer:** Aha, so not the skills part.

**Linda:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Aha, can you explain?

**Linda:** Uhm... uhm... They... No, I can't explain. [everyone laughs]

## Appendix E

### Sample course materials in Seminar 2

#### Worksheet on Byram's model and course objectives

TASK: Write down which of the 5 intercultural dimensions in Byram's model corresponds to each of these learning outcomes, as in the example.

Learning outcome	Dimension
<i>Example:</i> The learner is interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.	<i>attitudes</i>
1. The learner is willing to believe that his/her own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones.	
2. The learner knows about social distinctions (e.g. social class, profession) and their markers (e.g. clothing, language variety) in his/her own and other cultures.	
3. The learner knows about the processes and institutions of socialization (e.g. education systems, religious institutions) in his/her own and other cultures.	
4. The learner sees how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.	
5. The learner knows about the national memory (significant people and events marking national identity) in his/her own and other countries.	
6. The learner can identify ethnocentric perspectives in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	
7. The learner knows how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.	
8. The learner is interested in discovering other points of view in his/her own and other cultures.	
9. The learner knows about the conventions of communication and behaviour in his/her own and other cultures.	
10. The learner can identify ideological perspectives and values in a newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	
11. The learner can use a combination of his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions.	
12. The learner is aware of his/her own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence his/her views of other people's values.	

## Task sheet for interview assignment

### Part 1

#### What is your project about?

Your task is to conduct an interview with someone from a different country about his/her educational experiences. Your interviewee should be of any age between 18 and 90 and should be someone who is comfortable with using English during the interview.

The interview should be conducted in person or via Skype (not email) and in English. It should take about 10 minutes. Record the interview electronically, then, transcribe your questions and the answers word for word. Each turn should be in a new line. Put *Me* for you, and *Interviewee* for the person answering your questions.

Once you have the transcribed interview, write about it in a paper along the lines given in the second part of this task sheet. Send me the paper (together with the transcribed interview) and the related audio file by 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Here is your interview protocol in English. Please follow these steps closely.

#### Interview protocol (what you need to say and ask)

I'd like to conduct a short interview with you on your educational experiences. The interview will help me do an assignment in my university studies. It will take about 10 minutes. This is not a test, there are no correct answers. I'm interested in your stories and in what you think. I will not use your name, but a pseudonym. At the end of the interview I'll ask some short questions about you.

- **First:** What are the positive points of education in your own country compared with education in other countries?
- **Second:** What are the negative points of education in your own country compared with education in other countries?
- **Third:** Please tell me a story about an experience you had when you were taught by a teacher from a different culture.
  - Please tell me how this experience has changed you. In other words, what did you learn from this experience?
- **Fourth:** Please tell me a story about an experience you had when you were learning together with one or more students from a different culture.
  - Please tell me how this experience has changed you. In other words, what did you learn from this experience?

*If your participant cannot think of an experience, move on to the next point. If anyone wonders what you mean by "different culture", ask them what they think it means. All answers are fine. Your role is to accept what they say and to encourage them to say more.*

At the very end of the interview please fill in the following data:

Gender: female or male

Age (in years):

Profession (now):

First language:

Other languages and proficiency level in them (beginner, intermediate, advanced):

Frequency of meeting people from other cultures:

## Part 2

### How to structure your short reflective paper about the interview?

Here is a draft of what the text should include in what sequence. All sections must be included in your paper and discussed in a few paragraphs. Feel free to use this file to fill in the texts under each heading.

### How long should it be?

The length should be about 700-800 words (about 3 pages), plus Appendix (which includes the transcribed interview).

#### Title of essay (give essay a catchy title)

Author:

Programme: BA in English Studies

Academic year: 2013/2014

#### Participant

Characterize your interviewee based on what you know from his/her answers to the last few questions and from previous contact with him/her, if any.

#### Conducting the interview

Give a short narrative account of when, where and how you conducted the interview and what you thought/how you felt during the interview.

#### Research questions

What positive points of education in his/her country did the interviewee describe?

What negative points of education in his/her country did the interviewee describe?

What experience with a teacher did the interviewee give an account of?

What experience with a student did the interviewee give an account of?

What did the interviewee learn from his/her experiences?

#### Findings

Answer your research questions one by one based on the data you collected.

#### Discussion

Critically analyse your findings and relate them to at least two points discussed during the course so far.

#### Conclusions

Sum up what you accomplished in one paragraph.

#### References

Add one or two references you used.

#### Appendix

Add the transcribed interview.



## Assignment 8: Analysing a news article

Watch the news/browse the web for a recent news article discussing a case of cultural conflict between groups of people. Critically analyse the news article in about **300 words**. (The PowerPoint presentation from 7<sup>th</sup> November may help you).

Write about these points:

- 1) Where is the article from? (Add webpage or TV channel, date and time of news programme.)
- 2) What conflict does it describe?
- 3) **In your opinion, what are the possible reasons behind the conflict?**
- 4) **What beliefs/values/ideologies are represented?**

## Task sheet for *My Portfolio of ICC Development*

### Part 1

#### What is your task?

Your task is to compile your *Portfolio of ICC Development* by including those **four** home assignments, in-class notes or in-class worksheets that best reflect your **intercultural communicative competence (ICC) development**.

You should then write (in about **500-600 words**) about why you have chosen to include them; in other words, **in what ways** they reflect your development. You should use your **self-evaluation sheet** (completed at the beginning of the semester) and draw parallels between what you wrote about your ICC then, and what you think about it now – at the end of the course.

#### List of home assignments, in-class notes and in-class worksheets

Here is a list of what you can choose to include in your portfolio:

1. My Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters
2. Notes on the culture of a chosen country (from [www.kwintessential.co.uk](http://www.kwintessential.co.uk))
3. A list of elements of culture in general (group work)
4. Worksheet on four scenarios
5. Worksheet on Byram's ICC model
6. Notes on Hungarian culture (from [www.filolog.com](http://www.filolog.com))
7. Worksheet on Hofstede's model
8. Worksheet on the video *The Danger of a Single Story*
9. Notes on parts of the film *A Separation*
10. Notes on Parisa's story
11. Notes on videos about the burqa ban in France
12. Interview with somebody from a different country, reflective paper, and notes on comparing and contrasting your interviewees' answers in groups
13. Worksheet on English as an international language
14. Analysis of a news article
15. Analysis of two job interviews
16. Worksheet on in-groups and out-groups
17. Notes on quotations about language, culture and identity
18. Notes on differences in nonverbal behaviour

## Part 2

Write about the four chosen assignments, notes or worksheets here.

My Portfolio of ICC Development

# Appendix F

## Consent form; Data collection instruments of Classroom Study 2

### Consent to Participate in Research

#### English Majors' Intercultural Communicative Competence Development

**Researcher:** Menyhei Zsófia

**E-mail:** menyhei@yahoo.com

#### Background and Purpose of the Research

You are kindly asked to participate in a research study on English majors' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) development. The purpose of this study is to find out more about (1) students' ICC development and (2) students' attitude to the *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* seminar and the educational approach it takes.

#### Procedures

In the study I will use information collected from your work in the semester and your feedback sheets. All of the information collected will be confidential: I will not use your name, but a pseudonym.

#### Your participation

Participating in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your grade. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me at the above email address.

#### Student's consent

I have read and understand the information provided in this Informed Consent Form. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature

---

Researcher

---

Signature

I would like to receive information about the findings of this study to the following e-mail address:

---

I volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview

### Self-evaluation form

Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 the extent to which these statements are true of you, by circling the number that best describes your position (1 = not at all true; 5 = absolutely true). Then write examples to support your answer.

	STATEMENTS	SCALE (1 = not at all true; 5 = absolutely true)	EXAMPLES
A T T I T U D E S	1. I'm interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures.	1 2 3 4 5	
	2. I'm willing to believe that my own values, beliefs and behaviours are not the only possible and naturally correct ones.	1 2 3 4 5	
	3. I'm interested in discovering other points of view in my own and other cultures.	1 2 3 4 5	

K N O W L E D G E	4. I know about the national memory (significant people and events marking national identity) in my own and other countries.	1 2 3 4 5	
	5. I know about the conventions of communication and behaviour in my own and other cultures.	1 2 3 4 5	
	6. I know about social distinctions (e.g. social class, profession) and their markers (e.g. clothing, language variety) in my own and other cultures.	1 2 3 4 5	
	7. I know about the processes and institutions of socialization (e.g. education systems, religious institutions) in my own and other cultures.	1 2 3 4 5	

S K I L L S  of interpreting and relating	8. I see how and why people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by somebody with a different cultural identity.	1 2 3 4 5	
	9. I can identify ethnocentric perspectives in a biased newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	1 2 3 4 5	
S K I L L S  of discovery and interaction	10. I know how to get new knowledge about other cultures and then test generalizations.	1 2 3 4 5	
	11. I can use a combination of my knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions.	1 2 3 4 5	

C R I T I C A L  C U L T U R A L  A W A R E N E S	12. I can identify ideological perspectives and values in a newspaper/magazine article or TV programme.	1 2 3 4 5	
	13. I am aware of my own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence my views of other people's values.	1 2 3 4 5	



Questionnaire on the students' views about the seminar and their own development

## Feedback Sheet

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below about the course. Note that this feedback sheet is anonymous; therefore, it would be greatly appreciated if you could state your honest opinion.

**1 . Please indicate to what extent you found the following in-class activities useful for your ICC development by ticking the box that best describes your position:**

<b>I found the following activities useful:</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Not really true</b>	<b>Mostly true</b>	<b>Absolutely true</b>	<b>I don't remember the activity</b>
1) class discussion: social and personal identity					
2) group discussion: the culture of a chosen country					
3) group discussion and activity: elements of culture and the Iceberg model					
4) video: difference in British and Chinese practices					
5) class discussion and worksheet: Byram's ICC model					
6) ICC self-evaluation sheet					
7) group discussion: Hungarian culture					
8) video and class discussion: parts of the film <i>A Separation</i> ; differences in values and cultural practices in Iran					
9) class discussion and worksheet: Hofstede's model					
10) pair discussion: cultural stereotypes and the danger of a single story					
11) analysing Parisa's story					
12) class discussion: ideology					
13) video and group discussion: opinions and ideologies behind the burqa ban in France					
14) class discussion and worksheet: power and English as an international language					

<b>I found the following activities useful:</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Not really true</b>	<b>Mostly true</b>	<b>Absolutely true</b>	<b>I don't remember the activity</b>
15) group discussion: comparing your findings from the interview with someone from a different country					
16) group discussion: analysing cultural conflicts presented in news articles					
17) class discussion and worksheet: in-groups and out-groups in Hungary					
18) reading and class discussion: language, culture and identity; the linguistic relativity theory					
19) class discussion: Hall's model					
20) class discussion: comparing a successful and an unsuccessful job interview					
21) reading and class discussion: cultural differences in nonverbal behaviour					
22) reading a study-abroad diary and class discussion: studying abroad and the stages of culture shock					

**2. Please indicate to what extent you found the following home assignments useful for your ICC development by ticking the box that best describes your position:**

<b>I found the following assignments useful:</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Not really true</b>	<b>Mostly true</b>	<b>Absolutely true</b>	<b>I don't remember the assignment</b>
1) reading a country profile + notes (at <a href="http://www.kwintessential.co.uk">www.kwintessential.co.uk</a> )					
2) worksheet: Four Scenarios					
3) reading about Hungarian culture + notes (at <a href="http://www.filolog.com">www.filolog.com</a> )					
4) watching <i>The danger of a single story</i> + worksheet					
5) completing your <i>Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters</i>					
6) interviewing someone from a different country + reflective paper					
7) analysing a news article + worksheet					
8) analysing extracts from 2 job interviews + worksheet					
9) compiling your portfolio and reflecting on your ICC development					

3. What was the most useful in-class activity/home assignment for you? Why?

4. What was the least useful in-class activity/home assignment for you? Why?

5. Please indicate how much you enjoyed the following ways of learning in this seminar by ticking the box that best describes your position:

I enjoyed the following ways of learning:	Not at all true	Not really true	Mostly true	Absolutely true	I don't remember this way of learning
1) participating in group/pair activities and discussions					
2) participating in class discussions					
3) listening to the teacher					
4) collecting information on my own by browsing the web					
5) collecting information on my own by interviewing someone					
6) critically reflecting on the information I collected					
7) analysing people's communication, behaviours, values and cultural practices in texts					
8) analysing people's communication, behaviours, values and cultural practices in videos					
9) discussing real intercultural experiences (my own/other students'/the teacher's)					
10) critically reflecting on my own experiences					
11) critically reflecting on my own development					

6.

**3 reasons why I liked the course:**

1

2

3

7.

**3 reasons why I didn't like the course:**

1

2

3

**Thank you for your participation.**

# Appendix G

## Sample coding of data in Classroom Study 2

<p>Key</p> <p>Highlighted parts of the student's comments - initial coding</p> <p>Comments on the right margin - descriptive codes</p> <p>Comments on the right margin in bold - pattern codes</p>
--

### Coding Mark's Assignment 1

#### Meeting Etiquette

**Greetings in Japan are very formal and ritualized.** -> Sounds strange but i like it.

'strange'

**While foreigners are expected to shake hands, the traditional form of greeting is the bow. How far you bow depends upon your relationship to the other person as well as the situation. The deeper you bow, the more respect you show.**-> i like it, a bit more impersonal, but that's my style

Student talks from the stance of own culture  
**Attitudes**

#### Gift Giving Etiquette

**Gift-giving is highly ritualistic and meaningful.** -> People today care less about gifts, and only buy for birthdays, or when something wrong happened and want to compensate or make it fade away with it. I think gifts can increase happiness of the person who gets it. "It is better to give than to receive."

Reflection not closely related to information - broad, general statement  
**Ability to think critically**

**The gift need not be expensive**-> But it's pretty hard to choose a gift that fits for a japanese person due to the traditions.

For example:

Do not give lilies, camellias or lotus blossom or any white flowers-> symbols of funeral, and death

Do not give potted plants-> encourage sickness, but bonsai tree is acceptable

**Gifts are not opened when received**-> You dont see the reaction, of seeing what is inside but what he/she feels of getting the present it self. Because the most important that you give something and not what you give.

## Arrival for a dinner

**Remove your shoes before entering and put on the slippers left at the doorway.**-> They are keen on hygiene, which is understandable. And they use to put their shoes pointing on the way they want to go in the house.

**Arrive on time or no more than 5 minutes late if invited for dinner->**

Japanese are proud people and they keen on respect. If you late, than you dont respect their time.

Comment indicates some reflection

**If you must go to the toilet, put on the toilet slippers and remove them when you are finished.**-> Again they are keen on hygiene, but its sounds absurd a bit... but every nations have at least one habit's that make no or not so much sense.

'absurd'

## Table protocol

First you have to wait to be told where to sit. The honoured guest or the eldest person will be seated in the center of the table and furthest from the door. Honour guest or eldest person will begin eating. Do not pierce the food or point your chopsticks on someone and do not cross it on the table when you put it down. They dont like to talk at the table, they rather savour their food. Although they have alot of silly things that you have to got a view on, they use to snurp the soup which is strange.

'strange'

## Tolerance for foreigners

Japanese are tolerant with foreigners, they wont expect you to speak or read Japanese or be conversant with their strict cultural nuances and protocol. They are helpful but a bit embarrassed of their lack of english skills.

## My Portfolio of ICC Development

First of all i would like to thank you for the lessons because it was the best course i had so far. It was unique and not as stressful as the other ones.

I would like to start with the „Notes on the culture of a chosen country” because one of the most important thing is to be interested in other cultures. On the way i see it when i did this exercise my intercultural competence skill raised because previously i tought that i knew a lot of things about japan, but i found thing's i've never heard of. And because i'm interested in their culture i read all the informations that page could provide for me and i think my previous 3 on the first statements of Attitudes: „I'm interested in finding out more about people's experiences of daily life in other cultures” is developed. And of course after the course in which we talked about our findings i got interested in other cultures like Jamaican culture too.

The next important development of my skills was by doing the interview with an erasmus student and sharing that experience with other's. Previously i've mentioned the importance of being interested in other cultures, the second important thing is to be interrested in talking with people from different cultural background about their experiences and point's of view's. On the way i see it it developed my Attitude (3rd one) and Knowledge(7th one) because with that kind of experience i'm more free to ask from erasmus student's for example. And know i know more about the system of his country.

The third one that i've choose is the analysis of a new's article because we should be able to look on the other side of the coin too and i think it increased my critical cultural awareness and attitudes skills too because i could identify an ideological perspective that is not talked about much in the public. Indentifying and understanding different perspectives like

Soc. constr. approach: unique

Anxiety

'Important' to be interested

Knowledge - not explicitly referred to as having developed

'I'm interested'

Reference to **developed Attitudes**

'I got interested'

'Important' to be interested

Reference to **developed Attitudes**  
**Elaboration not closely related to this dimension ('I'm more free to ask')**

Reference to **developed Knowledge**  
**Unsupported by his interview assignment**

'We should be able to'

Reference to **developed Critical cultural awareness and Attitudes**  
**Both unsupported by his assignment**



religious perspectives is a very important intercultural competence skill i think.

'Very important'

The last assignment that i choose is the In-group vs out-group assignment. It was a really interesting one because it's probably the most outstanding problems if it is a problem at all. I mentioned that the problem could be that people like to be with the people of the same nationality or even ethnicity. Which is i think a good example for the skills of discovery and interaction (11th one) „i can use a combination of my knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with people from a different culture while ensuring understanding and avoiding dysfunctions” because if i can see that people from a different group than me talking with each other than i know that they are more likely to talk with each other than an „unknown” person so i wont start interact with them avoiding dysfunctions.

Mention of **Skills of discovery and interaction - not explicitly referred to as having developed**

The student's understanding of and view on some aspects of IC and ICC

My chosen country: **India**

**Meeting Etiquette**

❖ *Religion, education and social class all influence greetings in India.*

Obviously, most of the Indian people are highly religious, but I cannot really imagine how these factors influence greetings there. I saw a documentary about a Japanese man visiting the country, he did not speak Hindi or any other languages that Indians use (he was not really proficient in English either), but he greeted everyone as “namaste”, he also put his hands together as if he was praying. I thought that was a general way to greet a person.

Questioning by relying on prior knowledge  
Ability to think critically,  
Knowledge

❖ *This is a hierarchical culture, so greet the eldest or most senior person first.*

I think this more or less applies to Hungarian customs as well, since I would always greet the eldest of a group first. I wonder if there is a country where they don't do it this way (probably there is.)

Comparing and relating with Hungarian culture/own practices  
Skills of interpreting and relating,  
Ability to think critically

❖ *When leaving a group, each person must be bid farewell individually.*

This part surprised me at first, because it must be a burden to say goodbye to each person individually especially if there is a sizeable group of people. But in the end I realized that it is not even that surprising, I think it is really a really respectful way to bid one's farewell.

Asking a question  
Attitudes

'surprised me'

❖ *Shaking hands is common, especially in the large cities among the more educated who are accustomed to dealing with westerners.*

When checking out the Do's and Don'ts of India, I first read that you should not initiate this gesture, you should always wait for the other person to extend their hand.

❖ *Men may shake hands with other men and women may shake hands with other women; however there are seldom handshakes between men and women because of religious beliefs. If you are uncertain, wait for them to extend their hand.*

The influence of religion is showing here again; since it is a whole different culture, it is understandable.

**Gift Giving Etiquette**

❖ *It is not the value of the gift, but the sincerity with which it is given, that is important to the recipient.*

This one somehow applies to us, Hungarians, too, in my opinion. Or at least it is supposed to be this way here, too. We even have the following proverb: “ajándék lónak ne nézd a fogát”.

Comparing and relating with Hungarian culture, supported by a proverb  
**Skills of interpreting and relating, Ability to think critically**

❖ *If invited to an Indian's home for a meal, it is not necessary to bring a gift, although one will not be turned down.*

I think it would be difficult for someone who came from a different culture where it is expected that when one is invited for a meal to someone else's home they should bring a gift not to bring a gift. But at least if you forget it or you do not have time, it should not make you feel uncomfortable since they do not expect you to bring anything in the first place.

❖ *Do not give frangipani or white flowers as they are used at funerals.*

This is something like in Japan, they have several taboos, too, when it comes to funerals. Of course in these great religious cultures, funerals have special rituals, it is obvious that if there is, for example, a type of flower that is only used in that situation it should not be used in any other.

Comparing and relating with Japanese culture  
**Skills of interpreting and relating, Ability to think critically, Knowledge**

❖ *Yellow, green and red are lucky colours, so try to use them to wrap gifts.*

When I read this fact, I thought of whether we, Hungarians, have these so-called “lucky colours”, too. Again, let me mention the documentary in which the Japanese man visited India and he went on a short cruise on River Ganges; he lit a few candles that were put into flowers and let them float on the surface of the river (it is a ritual to honor the diseased and it is called “diya”), and these flowers were usually yellow and red with some leaves which are obviously green.

Asking a question about own culture  
**Attitudes, Knowledge**

**Knowledge**

❖ *A gift from a man should be said to come from both he and his wife/mother/sister or some other female relative.*

It is the religious influence again, I think. Women are represented by their male relatives.

Trying to find explanations  
**Ability to think critically**

❖ *Hindus should not be given gifts made of leather.*

This might be because of their respect for cows, which are known to be sacred animals to the Hindi.

Trying to find explanations  
**Ability to think critically, Knowledge**

❖ *Muslims should not be given gifts made of pigskin or alcoholic products.*

The tabooing of pigskin in Muslimism is another religious influence.

Terms referring to language and religious people (Hindi and Hindu) mixed  
**Knowledge**

❖ *Gifts are not opened when received.*

To be honest, I usually do not open present right away either, this is the only thing I thought of after reading this fact.

### Dining Etiquette

❖ *Indians entertain in their homes, restaurants, private clubs, or other public venues, depending upon the occasion and circumstances.*

I think this is more or less the same for us, Hungarians, too.

❖ *Although Indians are not always punctual themselves, they expect foreigners to arrive close to the appointed time.*

I think everyone expects the other to arrive close to the appointed time, and especially if it is about foreigners.

❖ *Take off your shoes before entering the house.*

I think this is an Asian rule. Shoes in the house are not allowed in most Asian cultures, most of them because of religious influence.

❖ *Dress modestly and conservatively.*

Of course, when one goes to India, it would be strange to dress in a too flashy way; as much as I saw from the documentary I've been mentioning here, Indians themselves do not dress in a flashy way, women, of course, do wear bright colors, but their bodies are properly covered.

❖ *Politely turn down the first offer of tea, coffee, or snacks. You will be asked again and again. Saying no to the first invitation is part of the protocol.*

It sounds strange to me at first, but I could get used to this, I think. I would turn down any first offer here, too, if I knew there would be more offers following.

❖ *Hindus do not eat beef and many are vegetarians.*

Of course, this is again because of their sacred animal, the cow. They eat a lot of curry instead.

❖ *Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.*

Religion again. I think it is really amazing that they restrain themselves from drinking alcohol because of their religion.

❖ *Lamb, chicken, and fish are the most commonly served main courses for non-vegetarian meals as they avoid the meat restrictions of the religious groups.*

Comparing and relating with Hungarian culture  
Skills of interpreting and relating,  
Ability to think critically

Student talks from the stance of own culture  
Attitudes

Knowledge

'strange'

Knowledge

'amazing'

It is nice that even though most of the religious people have to and do avoid beef and pork, they still think of the ones who are non-vegetarian.

### Table manners

❖ *Much Indian food is eaten with the fingers.*

That sounds comfortable. I saw they eat curry with this special bread, “naan”.

❖ *Wait to be told where to sit.*

At least you do not have to ask, and you hopefully will not be shoed away from the place you sat down by yourself.

❖ *Always use your right hand to eat, whether you are using utensils or your fingers.*

I wonder what would happen if someone ate using their left hand.

❖ *Leaving a small amount of food on your plate indicates that you are satisfied. Finishing all your food means that you are still hungry.*

This is an interesting fact, I think. Would they insist on giving you more food if you finished it all completely even if you were actually satisfied?

Asking a question  
Attitudes

'interesting'

Asking a question  
Attitudes

## My Portfolio of ICC Development

In the beginning of the semester, in the 'Attitudes' section of the self-evaluation sheet, I answered the third question with a three, but now I think I would choose a five. During the classes, we learned a lot about other cultures and also had a lot of in-class talk, from which I still remember a lot and I was really interested in all. I thought I would be ignorant, but the truth is, I finally realized that I'm interested in discovering other points of view in my own and other cultures as well during all the in-class talks and the assignments. For example, in the interview assignment, I was really interested in everything my interviewee said, but in the Single Story assignment, the two points of view were really interesting as well.

I included My Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters assignment because it helped me to find out more about conventions of communication and behavior in my own and other cultures. I realized the differences between my own and Japanese culture, even though I was already kind of aware of these, but the conduction of this assignment helped me to realize more including my own and their behavior in different situations be it eating habits or just simply introducing each other and different communication forms.

When conducting my assignment about a chosen country in the beginning of the semester, I chose India and making this assignment, helped me to get more knowledge about their culture, and the site you showed us is a great source if we ever wanted to get more knowledge about any culture. But during the semester, we found out that, for example, making an interview, or just simply talking to other people no matter whether they're from another culture or from the same culture, we can have an insight into their culture or even their way of thinking. All of these are very important encounters, and very

Reference to **developed Attitudes**/recognising the appropriateness of a higher rating for Attitudes?

Knowledge - not explicitly referred to as having developed

Soc. constr. approach

'I was really interested'

'realised that I'm interested'

'I was really interested'

Supported by end-of-lesson reflections

Reference to **developed Knowledge**

Her claim that she was already aware is supported by her AIE

Reference to **developed Knowledge**  
Supported by her assignment

important sources, however, if you want to test them, you need to know more people from that culture.

In the last part of the self-evaluation sheet, even though, I answered with a 'two' to the 13<sup>th</sup> statement, I'm sure it also improved during the semester. Not only the assignments I chose to include in this portfolio, but all the classes altogether helped me to be more aware of my own ideological perspectives and values, and how these influence my views on other people's values. I know I should stand by my own values, but not in a very drastic way, I should listen to others' values, and not judge them for it, but in exchange, I want them not to judge me either.

Attempt to demonstrate/Demonstrating **Skills of discovery and interaction?** - not explicitly referred to as having developed

Reference to **developed Critical cultural awareness**

## Coding Daniel's Assignment 1

This was the first time I've visited the Kwintessential website and found it really interesting and fun to read as I checked a couple countries.

For our class tomorrow, I chose to share some things from the section for Turkey.

I'd like to share some of my notes on the 'Etiquette and Customs' section below.

### Meeting & Greeting

When greeting elderly people, they are respected by kissing their right hand then placing the forehead onto the hand. ---> This custom is absolutely unknown in our culture and a stranger would not understand at all what's happening and why in such cases. If you see such a greeting and want immediate explanation, ask a friend, otherwise wait a bit and check online later. Or, of course, remember this section from Kwintessential.

### Gift Giving Etiquette

Turks are Muslims but some of them do drink alcohol. While giving alcohol as a gift is totally normal and accepted in Hungarian culture, before you give alcohol to anyone in Turkey, you have to be 100% sure that they drink. Otherwise you may face an awkward situation. ---> In most situations, therefore, it's just simply easier to plan to give something unique from your home country, or maybe local pastries, sweets or home ornaments. I've also faced this situation and learned that the best thing is to give chocolate or jam from Hungary.

### Dining Etiquette

At the end of a meal, whether you are at a restaurant or someone's home, there's no escape from drinking black tea or sometimes coffee.

Attitudes

Writing from the POV of someone who knows the culture well  
**Taking the position of the expert**

Comparing and relating with Hungarian culture  
**Skills of interpreting and relating, Ability to think critically**

Student gives useful tips  
**Taking the position of the expert**

Knowledge

Comparing and relating with Hungarian culture  
**Skills of interpreting and relating, Ability to think critically**

Student gives useful tips, refers to own experience  
**Taking the position of the expert**



Black tea by itself tastes rather bitter and they never put lemon in it. I first found this habit strange but I've come to see how important tea and tea drinking are in Turkish culture. If you don't like tea without lemon, just simply try to drink one glass with a few cube sugars or ask for sliced lemon from the waiter or the host. They may find it funny but they will understand your preference.

That's all I thought to share about this section. I hope you'll find it acceptable.

Student refers to own experience  
**Knowledge**

Student gives useful tips  
**Taking the position of the expert**

Writing from the POV of someone who knows the culture well  
**Taking the position of the expert**

## My Portfolio of ICC Development

The first task I chose is my notes on Hungarian culture. One of the points I picked from that website is Hungarians' attitude to the new and unknown. Later, as we learned about Hofstede's model, I was able to see that this example points out the fact that Hungarians have a high avoidance index as we tend to avoid anything that is uncertain. I am interested to know how others see Hungarians and this collection of data was a great way to learn more about my own culture. With the help of such information, my knowledge about my own culture can get richer.

The second task I picked is about the dangers of a single story. I was able to develop my skill of interpreting and relating through the video we had to watch on TED. That video, along with Parisa's story that we read in class, highlighted the dangers of single stories. In other words, I was able to see why such stories can be harmful or evoke negative feelings for certain people. We have to understand that generalization and stereotypes can lead to such misunderstandings. I now understand that these single stories can have a lot of truth in them, but the problem with them is that they keep us from seeing the whole, complex picture as you indicated in your comment.

Another task I picked is my analysis of the news article which is about Black Pete and the controversy around that custom in Holland. That event shows us what problems can occur as a result of immigration which may be escalating in other areas as well in Europe soon. I believe I am able to interpret the problem in this situation but I don't know how to resolve that issue. My suggestion would be to conform to local society and their customs as the classic saying goes: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Finally, I picked my notes on differences in non-verbal behavior. With the help of these stories, I was able to develop my skills of interpreting and relating. The examples highlighted cultural errors which can be identified and avoided in future situations.

Attempt to demonstrate/Demonstrating the ability to relate the assignment with a model we learnt about in class - **Ability to think critically**

**Attitudes - not explicitly referred to as having developed**

'a great way to learn more'

'my knowledge [...] can get richer'  
**Knowledge - not explicitly referred to as having developed**

Reference to **developed Skills of interpreting and relating**

'we have to understand'

'I now understand'

Attempt to demonstrate/Demonstrating **Knowledge? - not explicitly referred to as having developed**

'I am able to interpret the problem'  
**Skills of interpreting and relating - not explicitly referred to as having developed**

Reference to **developed Skills of interpreting and relating**

'can be identified and avoided'