

Teachers' beliefs and students' experiences regarding intercultural communicative competence teaching and learning

Jana Beresova*, The Department of English Language and Literature, Trnava University, 91843, Slovakia.

Suggested Citation:

Beresova, J. (2016). Teachers' beliefs and students' experiences regarding intercultural communicative competence teaching and learning. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 6(4), 177-186.

Received June 16, 2016; revised September 10, 2016; accepted November 15, 2016;

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Assoc. Prof Dr. Ali Rahimi, Bangkok University, Thailand.

©2016 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

The article is based on the preliminary results of an ongoing research project that seeks to explore intercultural communicative competence of language teachers and university students. The article reports teachers' beliefs and students' experiences concerning intercultural communicative competence teaching and learning, gained by means of questionnaires. As Likert-type scales use fixed choice response formats and are designed to measure attitudes and opinions, they were used in the measurement of students' statements that were asked to be evaluated in a survey, carried out in three different periods (steps). Teachers' beliefs result from a long questionnaire, focused on data about how teachers perceive the cultural dimension of English language teaching and learning. The conclusions are based on data collected in a five-year study that need further investigation in the currently run project. Several recommendations for pre-service and in-service teacher training are commented on in the end.

Keywords: teaching English, learning English, acquiring target culture, intercultural communicative competence.

*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Jana Beresova**, The Department of English Language and Literature, Trnava University, 91843 Slovakia. *E-mail address:* jberes@truni.sk

1. Intercultural communicative competence

Since the inception of communicative approaches to language teaching in the 1970s, a primary goal of language teaching has shifted from mastery of a foreign language as a structure to using a target language effectively in communication. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe, 2001), communication calls upon the whole person, which means that language education should promote the learner's development enabling him/her to experience otherness through language and culture. Language teaching with an intercultural dimension enables learners to acquire linguistic competence (being able to formulate what they want to express in an appropriate, accurate and natural way) and intercultural competence (being able to interact with people from different cultural background and to ensure a shared understanding of people and by people of different social identities). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) define the aims of language teaching with an intercultural dimension as follows: "to give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience". The components of intercultural communicative competence, which enable language users to act in a target language in a linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way, comprise various aspects of knowledge of the target language world, skills concerning interpretation, discovery and interaction, and attitudes to relativize self and value others (Sercu, 2005).

According to van Ek (1988), language learning contributes to learners' general education, not only through developing their communicative skills, but also through their personal and social development as individuals. He presented a model of six competences: linguistic, socio-linguistic, pragmatic, strategic, socio-cultural and social. This model identifies a number of components or aspects of communicative and interactional ability, while socio-cultural and social competences need more analysis. Linguistic competence is limited when users of a target language interact socially. Byram (1997) proposes several factors in intercultural communication such as knowledge of self and others, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and/or interact and attitudes related to relativizing self and valuing others. He prefers phrases such as "beliefs, meanings and behaviours" (Byram, 1997) instead of reference to a "culture", focusing on interaction and linking to language through the expressions such as "shared meanings" emphasizing a view of language learning as learning the meanings of a specific social group on one side, and communication including non-verbal behaviour on the other side. Behaviour comprises other aspects such as conventions, taboos, apart from the others since language teachers should equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding any experience learners might encounter. Learners need to develop socio-cultural competence, to be able to decentre and take up the other's perspective on their own culture with the aim to resolve misunderstandings caused by either dysfunctional communication or behaviour.

Intercultural communicative competence in language teaching and learning enables learners to acquire knowledge about and understand a target country's culture, to respect the norms of a target country evaluating them in an unprejudiced way and to develop the disposition for engagement and interaction with others. Teaching target languages should focus on developing competence in intercultural communication through learning a target language and its relationship to the cultural practices that might influence interaction with the bearers of target culture. As far as skills and abilities development is concerned, language learners should develop skills and strategies related to both verbal and nonverbal communication and abilities of empathy, managing anxiety and adaptability. Byram (1997) emphasizes skills, knowledge and attitudes other than those which are primarily linguistic and defines them in terms of objectives. While attitudes include categories of curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own, knowledge objectives comprise knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in his/her interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction. The knowledge objectives are based on one country's inhabitants' perception of another country and how this perception might influence the interaction between individuals. Slovak learners of English might misinterpret the British obsession with privacy while the British might be surprised by how one might

share personal matters with strangers on the train in Slovakia. Skill objectives contain skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. A competent user of intercultural communication should identify and interpret explicit or implicit values of one's own and other cultures.

The purpose of this article is not to provide a definition of intercultural communicative competence but to refine the procedures which bring students closer to acquiring the language and culture of a target community to be able to communicate effectively with those whose language they learn. After a 10-year systematic study collecting rich quantitative and qualitative data through questionnaire surveys and follow-up interviews, Fantini (2014) summarizes that intercultural competence involves a complex of abilities that are developed through different life choices, life partners, lifestyles, values and jobs as a result of being exposed to a variety of experiences. Despite the fact that in real life more cultures influence individual's development, such as his/her family background, the home country's culture, a level of education achieved, encountering different cultures while travelling, meeting people from different settings, company's culture (if he/she works in any international and/or foreign company), etc., a primary goal of our research is to prepare students studying an English major to be able to share their knowledge, attitudes and skills with their primary or secondary school learners.

2. A partial study of an ongoing research project

Slovak universities immediately responded to the requests of the European Union articulated through several documents of the European Communities and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe, 2001) related to encourage the European policy concerning cultural awareness expected to be developed in learners through foreign language teaching by offering courses of intercultural communicative competence, and by introducing courses concerning cultural studies. Students studying an English major at Trnava University are expected to achieve knowledge concerning civilisation (Culture with capital C) in the bachelor degree of their higher education, courses referring to intercultural communicative competence in the first year of their master-degree programme and British and American cultural studies in the final year of their master-degree programme. This intended approach necessitated an investigation into the impact on learners.

Since 2015, Trnava University has been carrying out a study concerning quality of intercultural communicative competence of language teachers and their students within research project VEGA 1/0106/15– Theoretical research and empirical verification of the concept of intercultural communicative competence as part of the current conception concerning target languages teaching compatible with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) with two other universities (Comenius University in Bratislava and Constantine Philosopher University in Nitra).

This paper concerns a partial study based on collecting data related to English teachers' beliefs and university students' attitudes regarding intercultural communicative competence teaching. This investigation followed the first phase of research – a study referring to mapping foreign language textbooks and the methods and techniques specific for developing students' intercultural communicative competence. Most Slovak teachers of foreign languages prefer using textbooks published in target language countries such as English textbooks *Project*, *Inspiration* for primary schools and *face2face*, *Matrix*, *Life* for secondary schools, *Direkt* and *Themen aktuell* for German, *Quartier Libre* sets for French, *Embarque* and *Aventura* textbooks for different proficiency levels in Spanish, *Caffè Italia* for primary schools and *Amici d'Italia* for secondary-school learners learning Italian and *Времена* for Russian. Investigating the mentioned textbooks the project team discovered that all of these textbooks present target culture and language teachers miss any support for presenting their home culture as they have to translate home websites or any printed material in Slovak into languages they teach and prevalingly they do not feel confident enough to produce appropriate or accurate "home-made" materials and thus are in need of high quality materials that will make their work easier and more professional.

2.1. Teaching languages in Slovakia

Discussing intercultural communicative competence, it is necessary to mention the situation in the local context. Despite the official claims of the government in terms of support in teaching foreign languages, the reality is completely different. Since September 2011, English has become the first foreign language taught obligatory from the third form of primary education. The country did not have enough university graduates prepared for teaching English to young learners as most universities used to focus on preparing English teachers for lower or higher secondary education. These graduates were not trained to teach young or very young learners and it was necessary to introduce a national project, which was not welcomed very positively by the public and only 6 universities decided to implement it, including Trnava University, which has successfully contributed to filling a gap identified in the job market. These teachers have intensively been trained to help learners acquire intercultural communicative competence and many training hours were devoted to the perception of the cultural dimension of English language teaching and learning.

The next issue concerns ELT courses at universities. In some universities, these courses are delivered by university teachers who have never taught in primary and secondary schools, so their classes are more theoretical rather than practical, based on sharing their own expectations grounded on current ELT theory. The revised National Educational Programme comprises a number of descriptors concerning intercultural communicative competence. The teachers of English who were not given any opportunity to be educated or trained how to teach it, predominantly do not understand that intercultural competence involves a complex of abilities and they teach only cultural facts pertaining to geography, history, arts, etc., those aspects that are usually called culture with a capital C and used to be taught in the academic courses called Civilisation. The second crucial point is referred to the approach of society as a whole to foreign language mastery. In contrast with other European countries, in which English might be heard regularly from any mass media, Slovakia prefers dubbing films, so learners of any languages are not exposed to authentic languages and the only exposure to a target language are classes of that language, fundamentally three times a week. This old-fashioned approach to languages limits the real use of foreign languages, either passively or actively. The requirements for passing the school-leaving examination in English are based on descriptors pertaining to a B1 level for those who attend secondary technical schools and vocational schools and B2 for those attending secondary-grammar schools as these students are traditionally expected to continue their studies at higher-education institutions. On the contrary, every secondary-school leaver applies for studying at any of higher-education institutions (either public or private), the number of which (in accordance with the declining demographic curve) enables all the students that achieved the school-leaving report or certificate to be admitted. While in other countries such as the Netherlands, or Scandinavian countries, in which university students are expected to be fluent users of English as some academic courses might be delivered in English, in Slovakia, students do not intensively continue in studying English and many of them, graduating from technical universities speak English worse than they did as secondary-school students.

2.2. The Slovak National Educational Programme

The issues related to intercultural communicative competence in the National Educational Programme are written for different proficiency levels, although there are not significant differences. As the respondents of our questionnaire were secondary-school leavers, we focused on the descriptors concerning their communicative language competence achieved during their secondary school studies. The general goals of learning English are based on the model of general competences and communicative language competences presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (ŠPÚ, 2013). The goals are formulated through an action-oriented approach – learners are to be engaged in communicative activities and acquiring communicative strategies while accomplishing communicative tasks. The goal of learning English is to enable students to effectively use general competences as well as communicative language competences to realise communicative intentions in both receptive and productive language activities

and strategies. Chapter 3 concerning competences deals with a number of competences the learners have acquired due to their previous experiences and which can be activated to accomplish educational tasks and activities in communicative situations in which they occur. Competences are sums of knowledge, skills and abilities that enable an individual to act (SPU, 2013).

The Slovak National Educational Programme states that the fundamental goal of language learning is to enable learners

- to solve everyday life situations in a foreign country and to help foreigners while being in his/her own country
- to share information and ideas with young people and adults who speak a target language and to exchange/mediate his/her own ideas and feelings
- to better understand the ways of living and thinking of other nations and their cultural heritage.

The important competences in creating and maintaining an interactive learning setting at schools are as follows:

- critical thinking, i. e., an ability to search for and select information using various skills and a critical approach
- creative thinking, i.e., an ability to find new ways of linking the facts in the problem-solving process
- pro-social thinking, i. e., the ability to analyse facts and problems concerning the needs of others and society as a whole.

General competences (SVP, 2005) include alongside with other descriptors the ones as follow:

- to be open to cultural and ethnical diversity
- to be aware of basic norms of behaviour and of common social conventions of the countries, in which the target language is spoken
- to identify basic cultural aspects of the selected countries of a target language and recognise the differences among them and similar cultural aspects of home country.

As far as the national educational programme is concerned, it emphasizes the factors that influence intercultural interaction. If it can be anticipated with whom one will interact, then knowledge of that person's world is useful. The selected countries of a target language are usually the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. In some questionnaires provided to teachers, English-speaking countries have been mentioned as teachers perceive their culture as Anglo-American culture. Teachers complained that they were not given enough opportunities to experience the culture of English-speaking countries as they were not obliged to spend a semester in those countries when they were university students (which is commonplace in many European countries where students study language majors). On the other hand, they understood that their task is to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge of their learners either sharing their experiences or discovering new things together with their students. The goals of language teaching involve problem-solving, recognising misunderstanding and resolving it adequately. The learners have to be prepared to judge various issues from different perspectives. Byram (1997) sees this approach as willingness to relativize one's own beliefs, values and behaviour. Knowledge is considered as knowledge about other people and how these other people are likely to perceive you.

2.2. Student questionnaires – data analysis

A study concerning students' ICC experiences is based on the analysis of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was submitted to students in the first year of their bachelor degree programme before they attended the British and American civilisation course (Step 0), then in the end of their first year of

the master-degree programme (completing the course of ICC – Step 1) and in the last year of their education (after completing the British and American cultural studies course – Step 2). This concept of our study was based on assumptions that textbooks used in both primary and secondary levels of education usually introduce a target culture and teachers focus on vocabulary and grammar rather than on developing cultural awareness. The idea of supporting ICC at university resulted from informal discussions with sophomores and formed the basis for our study. Despite the fact that the number of the respondents was different each term, we decided to work with 28 questionnaires that have been fully completed. In our analysis, the total number of 28 was divided into two equally distributed groups, comprising a group of 14 students who had taken part in all the planned procedures and 14 students who had attended the same courses, but not systematically, joining the others at different stages of their university education. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions in which the students were asked about their ICC from different points of view.

The questionnaire was based on the objectives presented in Byram's Chapter 3: Objectives for teaching, learning and assessment (Byram, 1997). The students were expected to provide answers in scales 1-5, in which 1 meant the least competent user and 5 represented the most competent user. Since the Likert Scale is an ordinal psychometric measurement of attitudes, beliefs and opinions, it seems to be the best measurement tool for our purposes. In each question, a respondent was expected to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement in a multiple choice type format with a statement presented. The reliability of the questionnaire was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,93$). The analysis was carried out by using ANCOVA, which is the analysis of covariance, in which a variable was the total scores from the questionnaire. Teaching procedures related to courses, gender and a variable concerning the information about a student's stay in an English-speaking country (yes/no) were category predictors. The length of studying English was a covariant, i.e. by this variable the analysis was cleared (if it has any influence, the results will be presented cleared, i. e after calculating this confounding variable).

The influence of single steps was significant ($F(2,77) = 8,81, P = 0,0003$). As it is shown in the graph below, the total score from the test in single steps was increasing. In Step 0 scores were significantly lower than those in Step 1 a Step 2 (Tukey post-hoc test, both p-values $< 0,001$). Step 1 was on the boundary of significance from Step 2 (Tukey $P = 0,067$). On the other hand, the number of years concerning learning English ($P = 0,19$), gender ($P = 0,23$) or being in an English-speaking country „Yes-No“ ($P = 0,89$) did not influence the test score significantly.

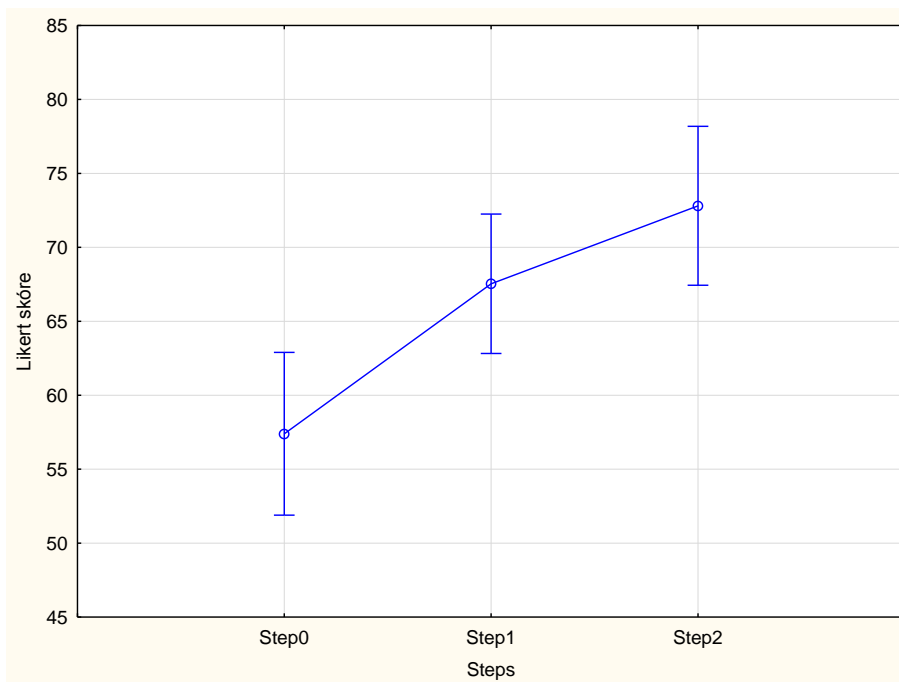


Figure 1. Total scores from the three-step procedures

The average scores achieved by 28 students after each step supports the previously mentioned conclusions. The achievements of students with standard errors in brackets are as follows: Step 0 – 54.50 (SE – 2.31), Step 1 – 66.07 (SE – 1.76) and Step 2 – 72.64 (1.97). Then, we decided to focus only on those students who have undergone all the steps systematically.

As there were not many data (N = 14) and other factors manifested as insignificant in the previous analysis, we have compared single steps of the respondents who have undergone every step regardless other factors (gender, the number of learning English, being to an English-speaking country) using ANOVA with repeated measures (the analysis of variance with repeated measures). Dependent variables were three steps. The result was highly significant ($F(2, 26) = 33,158, < 0,001$). The graph shows that average values of the tests after each single step were increasing. A Tukey post-hoc test confirmed that there was a significant difference between each step, minimally on the surface of significance $p < 0,05$.

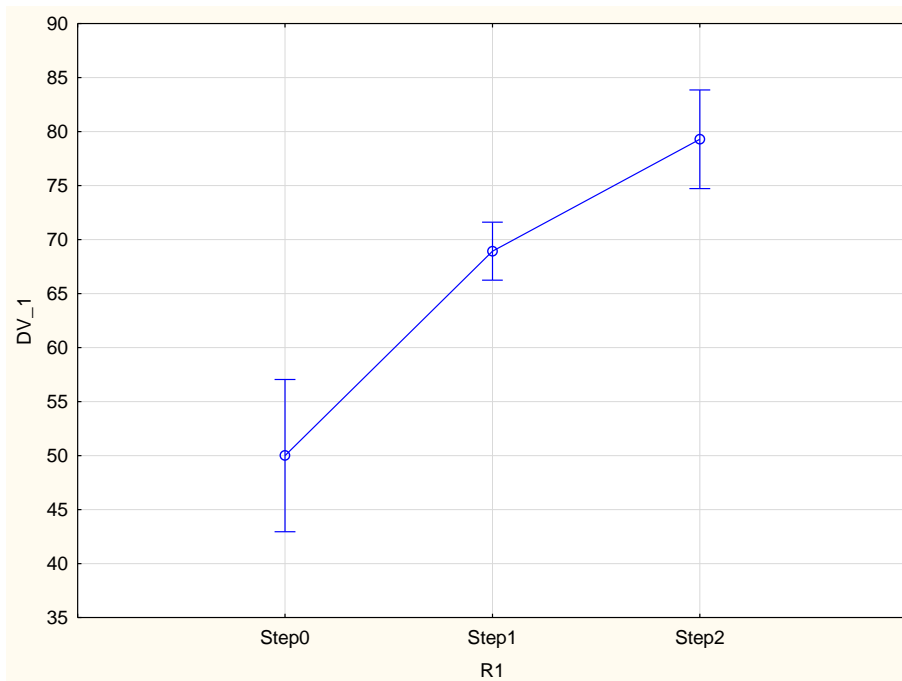


Figure 2. Total scores of selected students taken after each of three-step procedures

The average scores achieved by these 14 students after each step were even higher than those achieved by a total number of students who participated in our research. The achievements of the students with standard errors in brackets are as follows: Step 0 – 50.00 (SE – 3.26), Step 1 – 68.92 (SE – 1.24) and Step 2 – 79.28 (2.11). Then, we decided to focus only on those students who have undergone all the steps systematically. This comparison supports our assumptions that focusing on learners and taking systematic steps result in better achievements.

The students' answers were most positive to the questions regarding their use of standard language, both receptively and productively. Most positively stated answers concerned linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. They were a little bit sceptical while being asked about their awareness of social interaction in an English-speaking country and of identification of references within and across cultures and eliciting their significance and connotations. They did not feel enough aware of their own ideological perspectives and values and could not evaluate documents or events with explicit reference to them. They were not enough aware of potential conflict between their own and other ideologies and were less able to identify areas of misunderstanding in an interaction and mediate between conflicting interpretation of phenomena.

2.4. The analysis of teachers' questionnaires

To get a picture of the processes in English classes, we addressed English teachers at both levels of education (primary and secondary). Even though the first phenomena related to intercultural communicative competence are presented by primary school teachers of English and we were very much enthusiastic about their beliefs, only five of them volunteered to participate in our study. The reasons were different, but most of them classified their approaches to teaching more practical rather than theoretical and explained that many activities introduced in their classes are based on their experience and intuition rather than on their theoretical knowledge. The questionnaire topics and questions were based on the questionnaire used in the project concerning an international investigation regarding the intercultural competence of foreign language teachers (Sercu, Bandura, Castro, Davcheva, Laskaridou, Lundgren, U. del C. Mendez Garcia & Ryan, 2005).

The questionnaire used in our study consisted of 24 items comprising both close-ended and open-ended questions. The whole questionnaire comprised 12 pages and 20 secondary school teachers voluntarily answered all of them, being quite precise and systematic. Most of them highly evaluated their familiarity with the country, culture and people primarily associated with English. While more experienced teachers claimed to introduce culture teaching activities often, younger teachers admitted that they never ask their students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign country, neither have they invited a person originating from the foreign country to his/her classroom nor asked their students to describe an aspect of their own culture in English. The majority of them prepare their own materials as they are not satisfied with coverage of topics in the textbooks they need to teach in consistence with the national educational programme. Some teachers commented on the fact that textbooks are usually written in a certain cultural place and at certain time, so they need to add new and current cultural events. The most variable answers were given to the question concerning the distribution of teaching time over language teaching and culture teaching. The question was closed-ended and teachers were offered six options: 1) 100% language teaching – 0% culture teaching, 2) 80% language teaching – 20% culture teaching, 3) 60% language teaching – 40% culture teaching, 4) 40% language teaching – 60% culture teaching, 5) 20% language teaching – 80% culture teaching and 6) 100% integration of language-and-culture teaching. The following table shows that there was not consistency with any variable, either the number of years of teaching practice or kind of education a respondent's school offers.

Table 1. Distribution of teaching time over language teaching and culture teaching

Teachers/ Schools	Years of teaching	100% LT – 0% CT	80% LT – 20% CT	60% LT – 40% CT	40% LT – 60% CT	20% LT – 80% CT	100% L-C- teaching
Primary	0 – 5	-	3	-	-	-	-
Primary	6 – 16	-	-	1	-	-	-
Primary	17 – 30	-	-	-	1	-	-
Secondary	0 – 5	-	6	2	-	-	-
Secondary	6 – 16	-	5	2	-	-	-
Secondary	17 – 30	-	6	2	2	-	-

Despite the fact that none of the teachers focus on just language teaching, most teachers (66.6%) distribute their teaching time predominantly over language teaching (80%). In answering open-ended item E, several teachers (32%) expressed their wish to devote more time to culture teaching, but complained about a lack a time as they are expected to treat a lot of new language and practise communicative language skills. According to teachers' replies to the previously mentioned item, speaking and writing activities are considered time-consuming, however necessary. Describing their students' perceptions of and ideas regarding the English-speaking countries and people usually associated with English, teachers mentioned that students stick to stereotypes, portrayed by the media and films. Within the context of intercultural education, many teachers (45%) use video materials to help them achieve cultural competence in a particular culture. On the contrary, teachers (29%) specified that the textbooks

they used contain quite a lot of articles presenting culture, life, traditions, beliefs and values, however they admitted that many times they use them for developing students' communicative language skills.

While perceiving the objectives of foreign language education, teachers focus on assisting students to acquire a level of proficiency that will enable them to use English for practical purposes and to read literary works in English, and enthusing their students for learning foreign languages. Culture learning objectives emphasised by respondents refer to developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures, providing information about daily life and routines and providing information about shared values and beliefs. As it was frequently stated in the questionnaires, teachers help their students raise awareness of being intercultural communicators as it will enable them to develop their ability to interact successfully across cultures.

3. Conclusion

As we mentioned before, this article briefly presents the partial results of one of our studies covered by project VEGA 1/0106/15 concerning the concept of intercultural communicative competence as part of the current conception of target language teaching in Slovakia. Based on our examination of English textbooks used in Slovak primary and secondary schools, we assumed that most teachers would focus on Anglo-Saxon culture rather than on developing intercultural communicative competence. This assumption resulted from an informal plenary discussion at our department when many students supported our conjectures that some teachers still prefer teaching grammar and vocabulary at the expense of developing communicative competences, including intercultural communicative competence. Having observed 30 English classes, we are convinced that it is necessary to support cultural awareness in general and prepare student teachers to be able to develop intercultural communicative competence of their learners to enable them to become effective communicators in English. For this reason, the definition of intercultural communicative competence as "the degree to which you effectively adapt your verbal and non-verbal messages to the appropriate cultural context" (Neuliep, 2015) fits our assumptions concerning the starting point of our research.

The student questionnaire revealed that systematic education based on clearly stated objectives might support cultural awareness raising and development of intercultural communicative competence. Using ANOVA, the quantitative measurements comprising the analysis of 28 students responses clearly confirmed that students acquired more and more knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for developing their intercultural communicative competence. Students' questionnaire comprised one open task concerning their definition of intercultural communicative competence. Students expressed their views using the expressions such as understanding another nation's lifestyle, thinking, beliefs, attitudes, verbal and non-verbal communication, behaviour of target language users, their conventions, their culturally-induced connotations, etc. While discussing the achieved results, students expressed their concerns of not being able to acquire all the phenomena covered by intercultural communicative competence. Discussing this problem intensively, they themselves made a logical conclusion that university education is only an opening of some previously closed gates and improving any competence requires a systematic approach to life-long education.

The teacher questionnaire was aimed at opening their minds and supporting an active approach to teaching English. However, the overall impression is that in actual teaching practice, teachers focus more on the enhancement of students' familiarity with the culture of English-speaking countries rather than the full attainment of intercultural communicative competence and its cognitive, attitudinal and skills components. What seems to be very positive is the fact that teachers in Slovakia regard intercultural communicative competence as understanding how Slovakia's own cultural values affect the way Slovak learners of English perceive themselves and others, and are willing to provide students with skill-building framework to increase understanding of the complexities of language and intercultural communication. Diverse international settings naturally occur primarily at secondary schools, engaged in our study, as teachers of different languages such as German, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian share cultural values, norms and beliefs of other target language communities that help overcome cultural stereotyping and misconceptions. These teachers intensively train their students to become motivated

to communicate, knowledgeable about how to communicate, and skilled in communicating, and thus to become interculturally competent communicators, sensitive to the expectations of the context in which communication occurs.

In Slovakia, teaching foreign languages is based on a multi-layered syllabus and many textbooks offer a survey of knowledge, skills and attitudes language learners are expected to achieve while using a particular textbook with a variety of materials, prevalingly either written or provided by teachers. However, English textbooks used in Slovakia are written by native speakers and published by reputed publishers whose goal is to prepare international textbooks that can be used in different countries. What local language teachers usually miss are pieces of information related to local culture as being able to talk about home culture seems to be a primary goal of communicative approaches, based on real-life situations. Once language learners are addressed to share their perception of the world, beliefs and attitudes to social events the first ideas are based on their home culture as it is their first experience with real-life issues. It seems to be advantageous if textbooks are written by local writers and native-speaking textbook writers together as all the aspects of intercultural communicative competence are developed gradually and simultaneously through the perception of the world in which home culture is in coexistence with target culture.

References

- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing The Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching*. Stratsbourg: Council of Europe, Language Division.
- Fantini, A.E. (2014). Multiple strategies for assessing intercultural communicative competence. In J. Jackson (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*. Abingdone: Routledge. pp. 390-405.
- Neuliep, J.W. (2015). *Intercultural communication. A contextual approach*. (6th ed.). Thousands of Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Sercu, L. (2005). *Teaching Foreign Languages in an Intercultural World*. In L E. Sercu, E. Bandura, P. Castro, L. Davcheva, C. Laskaridou, U.
- Sercu, L., Bandura, E., Castro, P., Davcheva, L., Laskaridou, C., Lundgren, U. del C. Mendez Garcia, M., & Ryan, P.. (Eds.). *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Statny pedagogicky ustav (2013). *Statny vzdelavaci program – Anglicky jazyk*. Bratislava: SPU.