Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning

Juan Carlos Araujo Portugal [a][1], Official School of Languages of Burgos, Spain https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9040-3625

Abstract

The importance of teaching both language and culture inseparably are widely acknowledged by both instructors and students. As a result, new concepts such as intercultural communicative competence have emerged. This means that this new skill has to be promoted and fostered so that students can develop it and interact with other people effectively in a more culturally diverse setting. This paper aims to analyse the role of this new competence in foreign language learning, which is characteristic of 21st-century citizens. The study, therefore, conducts a literature review. In this process, teachers, and to a lesser extent coursebook, play a paramount role. Even though all the agents involved in the teaching-learning process value its importance, there are some factors such as a lack of appropriate training on the part of teachers, inadequate content and materials contained mainly in coursebooks, and effective ways of assessment, which prevent the development of this new 21st-century skill.

Keywords: Awareness; culture; development; intercultural communicative competence; interculturality

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Juan Carlos Araujo Portugal, Official School of Languages of Burgos, Spain
  E-mail address: jcaraujo@educa.jcyl.es

1. Introduction

Throughout history, numerous peoples have been in contact due to different reasons such as trade, war conflicts, religion, culture, economic issues, the wish to establish or expand empires, etc (Becker, Rubin & Woessmann, 2021). As most of these peoples spoke different native languages, the only ways to communicate with one another were either to learn the foreign languages or to choose one language as a lingua franca that would enable them to understand one another.

Apart from this, everybody involved in language teaching and learning – instructors, learners, education authorities, among others has become more and more aware of the close relationship between language and culture. As Gholami and Ghasemi (2018, pp. 55) highlight, while echoing Byram (1988) and Ho (2009), both language and culture seem to be "interdependent to the extent that language cannot be taught and learned without reference to its cultural components". This relationship has been reflected in the concepts of Intercultural Awareness (Byram, 1991, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Lange & Paige, 2003), and Intercultural Competence, which is one of the components of communicative competence (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006).

Due to this importance, being proficient in a foreign language does not guarantee communicative effectiveness, as apart from linguistic elements, intercultural ones have a pivotal role in communication, and not being aware of the latter may lead to communication breakdowns or misunderstandings. This is why some authors coined new terms such as *linguaculture* (Friedrich, 1989) and *languaculture* (Risager, 2005) to highlight this interdependence. This interrelationship also seems to be reflected in students' performance, as the more cultural knowledge learners have, the better mastery of the language they are bound to attain (Yesil & Demiröz, 2017, pp. 89).

If this has always been true, it has become more important nowadays as it is easier to encounter other people both in your own country and abroad due to different factors such as globalisation, migration, faster means of transport, Information and Communication Technologies, work, studies, etc., which implies more "opportunities for intercultural encounters" (Gözgenç, 2019, pp. 13). Currently, English has been used as a lingua franca, which means that there are many more non-native speakers of English than native ones, or more speakers from the Outer and Expanding Circles than from the Inner Circle according to Kachru's (1985, 1986) model of World English. Most communication and cultural encounters through English are conducted by non-native speakers with different cultural identities among themselves (Davari, 2016; Kachru, Kachru & Nelson, 2001). As Thao and Tai (2017, pp. 630) put it, in the current globalised world, English "has been used as an international language for communication among people from different multilingual and multicultural backgrounds".

However, in many countries, e.g., Sweden (Strömbäck & Oldaeus, 2017) and Iran (Davari, 2016), just to mention some, it is still very common to teach English taking the model of the native speaker as a reference. Matsuda and Friedrich (2012) try to explain this phenomenon by saying that it is influenced by tradition, as it has been the way how English has always been taught, which implies that teachers are not familiar with new ways to teach it. Curriculum and coursebooks developers may also be considered responsible for this, as they have mainly regarded the native speaker model as the one that should be promoted (Monfared, Mozaheb, & Shahiditabar, 2016, p. 2).

Due to the current international status of English as a lingua franca for global communication, some authors such as Mckay (2002) support the idea that English has to be taught and learned in a completely different way from any other foreign language. This has been reflected in the coinage of the phrase English as an International Language (EIL) (Monfared, *et al.*, 2016, pp. 2) as opposed to English Language Teaching (ELT). This means that EIL aims to "prepare learners to use English to become part of the globalised world, which is linguistically and culturally varied" (Monfared *et al.*,

2016, pp. 2). Somehow related to this, it must not be ignored that this growth of English as a global language is affecting other languages negatively, particularly local, and regional languages, which may end up disappearing (Davari, 2016, pp. 56).

1.1. Purpose of study

In this new context, becoming interculturally communicative competent becomes a growing need to communicate successfully with people with different mother tongues and from different cultural backgrounds when they interact with one another through English. Therefore, this paper aims to analyse the role of new competence in language learning, which is characteristic of 21st-century citizens.

2. Method

This study begins by revising how important teaching both language and culture are considered in the new scenario. After that, the concept of intercultural communicative competence will be presented. Then, the role that teachers have in the development of this competence will be examined, together with how coursebooks and other teaching materials may help in this development. Finally, although not much has been researched into it, what is known as regards some students' attitudes towards this competence will be outlined.

3. Results

3.1. Teaching both language and culture

There is a growing body of literature that provides evidence about how many language teachers have incorporated culture into their classes (e.g., Çankaya, 2018; Eryanam, 2008; Kanat-Mutluoğlu, 2016). As Brown (1980) asserts, a "language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language" (p. 165). Apart from making students culturally aware, this has resulted in improving students' performance in the target language, as well as increasing their motivation (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Kramsch, 1998; Mitchell & Myles, 2004), and it may even promote self-improvement (Byram, Esarte-Saries & Taylor, 1991).

Barany (2016, pp. 258) argues that foreign language learning consists of different components, one of which is cultural competence, i.e., "the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meanings of another country". As this author also points out, students do not just have to be knowledgeable about the grammar of the foreign language, but also have to be able to "use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways". Communicative language teaching brought about this change as opposed to previous teaching methods that tended to focus more on linguistic competence. Some years later, The Council of Europe, through the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFRL), expanded on this by attaching importance to such concepts as intercultural awareness, intercultural skills, intercultural dimension, etc. (Barany, 2016, p. 258).

However, the biggest problem faced in achieving this goal is to choose the best methodology to teach culture and to discern the best way to introduce culture in foreign language lessons (Çankaya, 2018, p. 35). In this regard, Young and Sachdev (2011, p. 93) hold that for many instructors teaching culture is content rather than a method/logy. Gray (2010) suggests that when teaching a language, apart from focusing on the linguistic component, there should also be an emphasis on activities that increase learners' cultural awareness.

The integration of culture into language learning by developing intercultural communicative competence attempts to help learners become intercultural speakers rather than native speakers, which is what previous methodologies aimed at. Thus, an intercultural speaker will be "one who can

effectively and appropriately mediate between the world of origin and the world of encountered difference". This will allow students to "establish and maintain relationships with individuals from a different culture while ... establishing one's self-identity" (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 83). As a result, cross-cultural tolerance, acceptance, respect, and understanding will also be promoted (Barany, 2016, p. 258). Intercultural awareness can be attained either through family, friends, etc., i.e., through primary socialisation, or in instructional contexts, i.e., via secondary socialisation, which in the case of foreign language learning is done through the teaching of both language and culture (Coperías, 2002, p. 94).

Yesil and Demiröz (2017) draw attention to the fact that it is really difficult to define the term culture, which has resulted in a large number of definitions, even though none of them seems to have proven satisfactory. As pointed out by Strömbäck and Oldaeus (2017, pp. 11), "culture is often compared with an iceberg, as approximately 90% of culture lies beneath the surface" following Hall's Iceberg Theory (1976). In this regard, Barany (2016 p. 261) specifies that culture involves external aspects "such as observable manners, habits, customs or rituals, and internal aspects as well, such as notions, attitudes, beliefs and conceptual systems held by people living in this culture" . López-Rocha (2016, pp. 106) considers that these internal aspects are to blame for culture shock and misunderstandings, which may even bring about stereotypes and prejudices. Dufva (1994) seems to support the inclusion of both the external and internal aspects of culture in the foreign language class, which will increase students' motivation for the foreign language at the same time.

3.2. Intercultural communicative competence

The precursor of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was communicative competence, which was introduced by Hymes in the 1970s and later developed by Canale and Swain (1980), as well as by Van Ek (1986). Thanks to communicative competence, communicative methodologies in foreign language teaching and learning were advocated (Byram, 1997). Despite the emphasis on communication, this methodological approach has not been able to prevent some misunderstandings when people communicate in a foreign language, due to cultural rather than linguistic problems (Barany, 2016; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995; Coperías, 2002). This meant that the cultural component had to be added to communicative competence, which will eventually result in ICC (Kanat-Mutluoğlu, 2016).

Byram (1997, pp. 22, as cited in Coperías, 2002, pp. 93) presents the following scenarios as regards intercultural communication:

a)   Between people of different languages and one of them is a native speaker of the language used.

b)   Between people who possess different native languages and from different countries, the language of communication is used as a lingua franca.

c)   Between people of the same country, but whose mother tongues are different, and one of them is a native speaker of the language they communicate in.

Even though Tran and Seepho (2016) regard ICC as one of the most important skills for 21st-century citizens to manage in multicultural communication contexts, they also highlight that many researchers and instructors are not still familiar with it in some contexts like Vietnam (Thao & Tie, 2017). However, once they are, they seem to immediately recognise that it will help learners understand other cultures better (Kazykhankyzy & Alagözlü, 2019, pp. 932). Gözgenç (2019, pp. 12) believes that ICC will become more and more relevant in the case of English due to its status as a lingua franca.

Thao and Tai (2017) believe that intercultural competence (IC) and ICC have to be differentiated. Byram (1997) asserts that as far as foreign language learners are concerned, the former refers to the "ability to interact in their language with people from another country and culture", whereas the latter is the "ability to interact with other people, but the interaction takes place between people from different cultures and countries in a foreign language" (Byram, 1997, pp. 71). In a similar vein, Tran and Seepho (2016) provide a quite similar definition of ICC, although they add the idea of interacting effectively and appropriately "with others from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (Thao & Tai, 2017, pp. 632).

The concept of ICC was first introduced in 1983 by Baxter (1983), but it has been Byram who has developed it since the 1990s "from a foreign language education perspective" (Kazykhankyzy & Alagözlü, 2019, pp. 932). Gholami and Ghasemi (2018, pp. 56) assert that Byram's idea of ICC included linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and intercultural competence. As both Thao and Tai (2017, pp.632), as well as Barany (2016, pp. 271), point out Byram (1997) and Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) considered that ICC is, therefore, composed of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, which consist of five elements altogether. Barany (2016, pp. 271) defines and outlines their most important characteristics as follows:

a) Attitude, or *savoir apprendre*, refers to the ability to relativise oneself and to value others. It also includes "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 1997, pp. 91).

b) Knowledge of oneself and others or *savoirs*, which implies knowing the rules for individual and social interaction, and consists of learning about social groups and their practices, both in one's own culture and in the other culture.

c) Skills of interpreting and relating, or *savoir comprendre*, refers to someone's ability to interpret, explain, and relate events and documents from another culture to one's own.

d) Skills of discovery and interaction, or *savoir apprendre/faire*, which allow a person to acquire "new knowledge of culture and cultural practices, including the ability to use existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills in cross-cultural interactions" (Byram, 1997, pp. 98). They encompass a variety of communication forms, including verbal and non-verbal modes and the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies.

e) Critical cultural awareness, or *savoir s'engager*, refers to the ability to use perspectives, practices, and products in one's own culture and in other cultures to make evaluations. It is "the ability to evaluate, critically based on explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own country and other cultures and countries" (Byram *et al.*, 2002, pp. 12).

Thao and Tai (2017, pp. 633) argue that to develop ICC all these five elements must be combined and integrated appropriately. By developing ICC effectively, both teachers and students will increase their intercultural awareness, and thus minimise "communication breakdown, cultural shock, and conflict". Byram's (1997) model of ICC has been very influential in language teaching (Gholami & Ghasemi, 2018, pp. 56).

When it comes to ICC, one of the main problems is the way to develop it. Unlike other subject matter such as rules, which lend themselves to explanations and memorisation, ICC has to be developed and eventually acquired (Coperías, 2002). It seems that the first step to acquiring ICC is that students become interculturally aware (Barany, 2016). More specifically, Byram (1997) identifies three contexts in which ICC may be acquired, namely, in the classroom, through a longer or shorter stay in a country where the target language is spoken, and by learning it autonomously.

Another difficulty that Coperías (2002) identifies as regards ICC is how it can be assessed, as she considers traditional methods are not useful in this sense. Besides, this author also points out that

some aspects of a student's ICC such as attitudes are rather subjective and, therefore, difficult to be objectivised. Furthermore, students perceive ICC differently and develop it at a different pace (López-Rocha, 2016). Related to this, Byram (1997) wonders whether there is a starting point from which a person is supposed to possess ICC, and if so, whether different degrees of ICC can be established. In this regard, Coperías (2002, pp. 98) states that this aspect has been little researched and believes that it must be delved into so as "establish a reliable and useful gradation within ICC".

Despite these difficulties, there are specific ways to assess students' ICC. For example, Aguilar (2010) suggests using portfolios as an effective way to assess ICC throughout their learning process. On the other hand, Lussier *et al.* (2007) advocate for the use of a questionnaire to assess ICC. In this regard, Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013) designed the Intercultural Communicative Competence Questionnaire, which was also used by Kanat-Mutluoğlu (2016) for her research study. Scarino (2010) suggests open assessment which allows both students and teachers to discuss and record the former's development of ICC.

Expanding on this issue, Judit (2013) draws attention to two main types of research studies aiming at assessing ICC, namely, those that analyse international students who develop their ICC in a foreign country, and those that do so in the classroom. As for the tools used to assess ICC, this author differentiates between those employed by students to self-assess it (mainly through self-reports), and those used by observers to establish students' ICC. Kazykhankyzy and Alagözlü (2019, p. 933) also mention another instrument, namely, the Intercultural Sensitivity scale that was developed by Chen and Starosta (2000).

3.3. The role of teachers in the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence

Some authors such as Müller (1995) and Mughan (1999) state that some teachers are against the incorporation of intercultural or cultural elements into foreign language teaching. Some instructors may even see culture as a problem or a hindrance, rather than an aid that will help them set the context for their teaching, and motivate their students at the same time (Young & Sachdev, 2011, pp. 83).

Some researchers like Borg (2006) and Kramsch, Cain, and Murphy-Lejeune (1996) seem to imply that some non-native language teachers do not feel confident to teach the target language culture, which is particularly relevant in the case of English as there are more non-native teachers than native ones. However, Young and Sachdev (2011) state that the participants in their research study considered that good teachers of English are usually interculturally communicative competent. This is also supported by Yesil and Demiröz (2017, pp. 90), who added that "ELT teachers should be equipped with the cultural background information about the communicative patterns of the target language".

According to López-Rocha (2016, pp. 106), when facing the challenge of helping students develop ICC, teachers have two main options. The first one is to provide students with general information hoping that they will develop their intercultural skills, or to promote the necessary conditions so that students can develop these skills to communicate effectively in intercultural exchanges. Byram and Risager (1997, p. 58) see a language teacher as a "professional mediator between foreign language and culture". In this regard, Thao, and Tai (2017, pp. 637) consider that teachers are the ones who guide students in their process of development of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that Byram (1997) described as typical components of ICC. More specifically, Yesil and Demiröz (2017) suggest that through this guiding process, teachers should instill good attitudes towards the foreign language culture. Besides, these authors also highlight that teacher should try to strike a balance between the foreign language and the native culture by understanding both of them appropriately.

It seems that teachers have different views on ICC, which are not always reflected in their teaching practices in their classes. Most of them seem to acknowledge the importance of interculturality, and consider that this is something that both competent teachers and learners must possess. However, when it comes to their teaching practice, ICC does not seem to be present (Sercu, 2005; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Young and Sachdev (2011) also point out that teachers have not been instructed in effective ways to implement intercultural approaches to language learning or to assess this new competence accurately. Besides, Young and Sachdev (2011), as well as Thu (2010), argue that instructors can find no support for this goal in the coursebooks that they use, the syllabi that they have to follow or cover, the assessment methods they have to employ. Besides, they also have time constraints, etc.

However, Atay, Kurt, Çamlibel, Ersin, and Kaslioglu (2009) maintain that the more teachers know about ICC, and the more competent they are in it, the more willing they will be to start teaching culture in their classes. In this sense, Çankaya (2018) maintains that it is important to know teachers' views on teaching culture, as this will affect its implementation. This is what Yesil and Demiröz (2017) attempt to do in their research study by interviewing seven language teachers who work at a Turkish state university. Most of these teachers believed that an eclectic approach should be adopted when it comes to teaching culture and, therefore, ICC.

Young and Sachdev (2011) also state that the teachers in their research study consider that their students do not have a real interest in ICC, even though they have no solid evidence of it. However, the most important reasons for not implementing ICC seem to be inappropriate teacher training and a lack of knowledge about ICC (Tran & Seepho, 2015; Young and Sachdev, 2011). This is why Tran and Duong (2015) suggest organising training programs (both pre-service and in-service), workshops, and seminars on ICC to make teachers aware of how important ICC is and to become familiar with the most appropriate methods to implement it in their lessons.

Even though the participants in their research study considered that ICC was something desirable for their students to attain, Young and Sachdev (2011) doubted that Byram's (1997) model could be applied, as critical cultural awareness, or *savoir s'engager*, would involve discussing issues that may prove controversial. However, many of the participants in their research study seem to believe that ICC should be part of EFL courses, especially if they are learner centered.

Given the importance of ICC, English teachers should employ a variety of teaching methods and methodologies to foster and develop their students' ICC (Thao & Tai, 2017). For example, the instructors in Yesil and Demiröz's (2017) research study tried to employ innovative methods that promoted the implementation and development of ICC. These authors also point out that the right kind of activities may persuade students to continue finding out more about the foreign language culture as well as to increase their interest in it while reducing prejudices and stereotypes.

3.4. Coursebooks and materials to develop intercultural communicative competence

Gholami and Ghasemi (2018), Gözgenç (2019), and Kafanillah (2017) highlight the important role of coursebooks in language courses, which means that they should incorporate both target language culture and intercultural items. However, some teachers, like the participants in Yesil and Demiröz's (2017) research study, did not see them as a reliable teaching tool when it comes to teaching culture. They preferred realia and other suitable material for this purpose. More specifically, Young and Sachdev (2011, pp. 91) state that this cultural content normally centers on external elements of the target language culture such as "geography, education systems, food and drink, festivals and other, perhaps superficial, aspects of cultural manifestation".

However, these authors highlight that an ICC model would require focusing on the internal aspects of culture. The participants in their research study supported this emphasis on the external

aspects of culture covered by the coursebooks that they used in their lessons, which means that they either had to compliment them or use other materials instead, mainly realia (Young & Sachdev, 2011, pp. 92).

McKay (2012) argues that the materials to teach English have not been developed much, which implies that they tend to favour a native-speaker norm approach. However, as English has become a lingua franca, the predominance of native-speaker norms in ELT has been questioned, which in the field of teaching materials has been translated in the inclusion of students' local culture, particularly in coursebooks, and especially in Asian countries, which are somehow hostile to the overriding influence that western culture is exerting worldwide (Gholami & Ghasemi, 2018, pp. 58). This is why Monfared, Mozaheb, and Shahiditabar (2016, pp. 1) suggest that ideal ELT materials should be "glocal", i.e., consist of a mixture of both local and international cultures, which seems to be supported by most of the teachers participating in their research study. As foreign language learners are exposed to various kinds of international cultures, coursebooks should ideally include intercultural content that promotes ICC (Gözgenç, 2019, pp. 13).

Tran and Seepho (2015) believe that a variety of activities that incorporate culture in the EFL classes will help increase students' ICC levels. López-Rocha (2016) recommends examining already existing activities or designing new ones that seem liable to achieving the objectives that teachers expect their students to attain as regards ICC. As a way to start, this author suggests revising the way culture is incorporated into language teaching by the CEFRL. Byram *et al.* (2002) point out that the CEFRL urges teachers to encourage students to be curious and exploratory to develop their ICC.

In their research study, Yesil and Demiröz (2017) try to select the appropriate teaching materials for ICC, after analysing them thoroughly once they have considered their students' profiles and needs, as otherwise, students would not be willing to participate in the activities proposed. However, Batunan (2016) considers that quite often teachers adopt coursebooks without really evaluating them appropriately, or without considering that most coursebooks do not include cultural content that students may find engaging (Widdowson, 2005), which quite often seems to be presented in a stereotyped way (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 92). Related to this, Gözgenç (2019) advises analysing coursebooks from different perspectives, including cultural and intercultural aspects.

Besides, Young and Sachdev (2011) consider that teachers do not make the most of coursebooks as regards intercultural exploration. Çankaya (2018) believes that with appropriate training, teachers would use coursebooks more effectively as regards ICC. According to Young and Sachdev (2011), the participant teachers in their research study stressed how updated the materials they were using were, rather than whether they were appropriate to develop ICC.

However, when coursebooks are analysed, some facts become evident. First of all, coursebooks tend to avoid topics that may be controversial from a socio-political or sociocultural point of view (Young & Sachdev, 2011, pp. 92). In this way, a positive image of the target language culture may be presented (Lang, 2011). Apart from this, these authors point out that the inclusion of intercultural communication seems to be more characteristic of business English coursebooks than of those employed in general English courses.

Some researchers have delved into the cultural content that some coursebooks or methods include, which Gözgenç (2019) considers crucial. In this regard, Çankaya (2018) refers to some research studies that focus on the Turkish context, to what extent culture has been integrated into them, and whether there is a balance between national, international, and target language culture. Similarly, Gholami and Ghasemi (2018) refer to other worldwide research studies on this issue such as Méndez García's (2005) in the Spanish context; Lee's (2009) in Korea; Aliakbari (2004), Khansir and Mahammadifard's (2015), as well as Majdzadeh's (2002), in the Iranian setting.

As mentioned above, eastern countries seem more inclined to focus mainly on local or national culture as a sign of resistance to western culture, which may be perceived as invasive. However, other textbooks seem to ignore local culture altogether, and only focus on British/American culture, and international culture. As Çankaya (2018, pp. 47) notes, "textbooks do not pay equal importance towards cultural elements, including target, source, and international cultures". In this respect, Gholami and Ghasemi (2018, pp. 66) advocate for a more balanced angle in coursebooks as regards intercultural content, which presents both positive and negative elements of culture. This is why Strömbäck and Oldaeus (2017, pp. 18) suggest that teachers should create their materials rather than rely on inadequate coursebooks as far as intercultural content is concerned.

3.5. Examples of students' attitudes towards intercultural communicative competence

Important as intercultural communicative competence is regarded, little is known about students' opinions about it and on being taught about culture in general (Davari, 2016, pp. 46). But when asked about their perception of culture in their language learning process, they seem to consider it necessary (Çankaya, 2018). However, as Young and Sachdev (2011) highlight, asking students about their opinion on ICC does not seem to be a common practice.

As regards the way teachers see how interested their students are in culture, Young and Sachdev (2011), as well as Çankaya (2018), suggest that they seem to be quite keen on it. However, these authors point out that, despite their interest, if students do not express their need for ICC, this is not implemented in class. On the other hand, Yesil and Demiröz (2017, pp. 89) state that, despite teachers' efforts to integrate cultural elements into their teaching practice, some students do not pay attention to these aspects. Besides, these authors highlight that sometimes students are unwilling to carry out culture-related activities or tasks, especially if learners are not familiar with them.

It is also worth mentioning that students from eastern countries seem to prefer coursebooks that do not include an overwhelming majority of facts about western culture, as stated by Kafanilla (2017, pp. 6). These students would appreciate the inclusion of culture-related information about people's everyday life and the real use of language to communicate effectively with other people and develop relationships with them (Çankaya, 2018, pp. 45). As stated by Barany (2016), teachers should try to "enable learners to communicate effectively with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a diverse and multicultural world" (p. 275), and by not incorporating intercultural components into their teaching practice, they are not performing their duties satisfactorily. Similarly, Canagarjah (2017) highlights that the students in his research study were more engaged if the coursebooks presented their contents in local settings instead of in the target language contexts. However, Davari (2016) states just the opposite as regards Iranian students' opinion on the quality of coursebooks. They considered those coursebooks developed in foreign countries better than the ones created in their own country, which typically include more local cultural content.

4. Conclusions

According to what has been seen in this paper, most researchers, teachers, and policymakers acknowledge the importance and need to incorporate intercultural content into language courses, and thus implement and develop ICC. This is especially true in the case of English courses due to the status of the lingua franca of this language. This is something extremely positive, as it is the first step needed to promote the development of ICC. However, it seems that this development is far from being achieved worldwide in most cases.

Even though teachers agree on its importance, most of them do not feel appropriately trained or confident enough to teach and foster it. Therefore, suitable pre-service and in-service training would

be required in this regard. Besides, instructors do not perceive that they are helped to teach and develop it as most coursebooks are not a good teaching aid in this sense, as they do not promote the acquisition of ICC. They are either too focused on the target language or conversely on local traditions – especially in eastern countries – and neither situation is conducive to this development. Besides, the activities designed for this purpose are not always appropriate or appealing to students. The same could be said about the cultural elements incorporated into coursebooks, which tend to focus on external rather than on internal aspects of culture. As already seen, the latter seems to be more suitable for the acquisition of ICC. Moreover, assessing students' initial level of ICC, and how it develops throughout students' learning process, is a difficult task.

As well as this, students do not seem to be taken into consideration as regards the development of ICC, as they are rarely asked about how important they consider ICC to be as part of their learning process. As a result, they do not normally demand the inclusion of cultural components that may foster ICC, and teachers do not usually incorporate them since they do not feel forced to do so. If teachers do not feel under an obligation to incorporate intercultural elements into their classes, they will not fulfil their role of guides and mediators in this process, so that students eventually attain ICC. However, teachers must be intercultural communicative competent themselves. Otherwise, they will find it impossible to help their students attain ICC.

Finally, it seems that ICC may prove an effective way to challenge or reject stereotypes about other cultures. However, as already mentioned, currently most teachers do not see themselves equipped with the necessary skills to develop their students' ICC. This is why the following measures, which have already been mentioned, that may help improve this situation:

a) Teachers should be trained effectively.
b) The intercultural language teaching model should be applied in training processes on ICC.
c) Different kinds of activities, materials, and content should be used to include culture in EFL practice, and adopt an international approach rather than a target language or national one (Gözgenç, 2019).
d) Devising effective ways to assess ICC.

References

Aguilar, M. J. (2010). Intercultural Communicative Competence as a Tool for Autonomous Learning. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses 61*, 87-98. https://riull.ull.es/xmlui/handle/915/13368

Aliakbari, M. (2004). The place of culture in the Iranian ELT textbooks in the high school level. *The Linguistic Journal*, *1*, 1-14. https://www.academia.edu/download/50826701/Aliakbari.pdf

Atay, D., Kurt, G., Çamlibel, Z., Ersin, P., & Kaslioglu, Ö. (2009). The role of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching. *Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education (INUJFE)*, *10*(3), 123-135. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/inuefd/issue/8704/108680

Barany, L. K. (2016). Language awareness, intercultural awareness, and communicative language teaching: Towards language education. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (IJHCS)*, *2*(4), 257-282. https://www.academia.edu/download/77604280/194.pdf

Batunan, F. (2016). *Raising Students' Intercultural Awareness in ELT Classroom of 2013 Curriculum: teachers' perspectives* (Doctoral dissertation, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FBS-UKSW). https://repository.uksw.edu/bitstream/123456789/9537/2/T1_112012132_Full%20text.pdf

Baxter, J. (1983). ESL for intercultural competence: An approach to intercultural communication training. In D. Landis & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training: Vol. 11. Issues in training methodology* (pp. 290-322). New York: Pergamon Press.

Araujo Portugal, J. C. (2021). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching. 11*(4), 243-256. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v11i4.6006

Becker, S. O., Rubin, J., & Woessmann, L. (2021). Religion in economic history: A survey. The Handbook of Historical Economics, 585-639. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128158746000290

Borg, S. (2006). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, *10*(1), 3-31. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1362168806lr182oa

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Regents. https://shahroodut.ac.ir/fa/download.php?id=1111148853

Byram, M. (1988). Foreign language education and cultural studies. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *1*(1), 15-31. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07908318809525025

Byram, M. (1991). Teaching culture and language: towards an integrated model. In D. Buttjes & M. S. Byram (Eds.), *Mediating languages and cultures: Towards an intercultural theory of foreign language education* (pp. 17-32). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://tinyurl.com/2p8tvn82

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://books.google.com/books/about/Teaching_and_Assessing_Intercultural_Com.html?id=0vfq8JJWhTsC

Byram, M., & Morgan, C. (1994). *Teaching-and-learning language-and-culture.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., & Risager, K. (1999). *Language teachers, politics, and cultures*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Esarte-Saries, V., & Taylor, S. (1991). *Cultural Studies and Language Learning: A Research Report.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1562524/1/Starkey_InterculturalDimensionByram.pdf

Canagarajah, A. S. (1993). Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *27*(4), 601-626. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2307/3587398

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, *1*(1), 1-47. http://www.uefap.com/tefsp/bibliog/canale_swain.pdf

Çankaya, P. (2018). Exploring the opinions of lecturers and preparatory students about culture in their language classrooms. *Humanitas-Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, *6*(11), 33-51. https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=695864

Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, *6*(2), 5-35. https://www.academia.edu/download/31937006/Celce-Murcia_1995.pdf

Chen, G.-M., & Starosta, W. (2000). The development and validation of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. *Human Communication, 3*(1), 2-14. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED447525

Coperías, A. M. J. (2002). Intercultural communicative competence: A step beyond communicative competence. *ELIA, 3,* 85-102. https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/33990

Davari, H. (2016). What do learners perceive? A sociolinguistic survey on Iranian English language learners' attitudes on mainstream ELT versus critical ELT. *Journal of Modern Languages*, *26*(1), 41-70. http://adum.um.edu.my/index.php/JML/article/view/2737

Dufva, H. (1994). Language awareness and cultural awareness for language learners. *Hungarologische Beiträge*, *2*, 19-32. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291354017_Language_awareness_and_cultural_awareness_for_language_learners

Eryaman, M. Y. (2008). *Teaching as practical philosophy*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

Araujo Portugal, J. C. (2021). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching. 11*(4), 243-256. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v11i4.6006

Friedrich, P. (1989). Language, ideology, and political economy. *American Anthropologist*, *91*(2), 295-312. https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1525/aa.1989.91.2.02a00010

Gholami P., P., & Ghasemi, A. A. (2018). An intercultural analysis of English language textbooks in Iran: The case of English Prospect Series. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *12*(1), 55-70. https://jyx2.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/57725

Gözgenç, G. S. (2019). Acquiring intercultural communicative competence from coursebooks: An analysis of reading activities in the coursebook "Speakout". *International Journal of Educational Spectrum*, *1*(1), 12-24. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ijesacademic/issue/46914/588148

Gray, J. (2010). *The construction of English: Culture, consumerism, and promotion in the ELT global coursebook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9780230222588

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture.* New York: Anchor.

Ho, S. T. K. (2009). Addressing culture in EFL classrooms: The challenge of shifting from a traditional to an intercultural stance. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *6*(1), 63-76. https://www.researchgate.net/file.PostFileLoader.html?id=57ebd80396b7e4becc06143a&assetKey=AS%3A411304524304384%401475074048764

Judit, D. (2013). *A mixed-method study on English major's intercultural communicative competence* (Doctoral dissertation). Available at: http://pea.lib.pte.hu/bitstream/handle/pea/242/dombi-judit-phd-2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realm: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://www.sciepub.com/reference/70882

Kachru, B. B. (1986). *The alchemy of English: The spread functions and models of non-native Englishes*. Oxford: Pergamon. https://tinyurl.com/3n4tj63r

Kachru, B. B., Kachru, Y., & Nelson, C. L. (2001). World Englishes. In A. Buns & C. Coffin (Eds.), *Analyzing English in a global context* (pp. 9-25). London: Routledge.

Kafanillah, D. (2017). The target culture of EFL textbook "Bahasa Inggris Kelas XI". *RETAIN*, *5*(3). Available at: https://jurnalmahasiswa.unesa.ac.id/index.php/retain/article/view/20377.

Kanat-Mutluoğlu, A. (2016). The influence of ideal L2 self, academic self-concept, and intercultural communicative competence on willingness to communicate in a foreign language. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *2*(2), 27-46. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ejal/article/461012

Kazykhankyzy, L., & Alagözlü, N. (2019). Developing and Validating a Scale to Measure Turkish and Kazakhstani ELT Pre-Service Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence. *International Journal of Instruction*, *12*(1), 931-946. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1201250

Khansir, A. A., & Mahammadifard, E. (2015). An evaluation of Prospect book (Prospect 1). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*(3), 485-492. http://www.academypublication.com/issues2/tpls/vol05/03/05.pdf

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED371633

Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1127430

Kramsch, C., Cain, A., & Murphy-Lejeune, E. (1996). Why should language teachers teach culture? *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *9*(1), 99-107. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07908319609525221

Lang, K. (2011). *Perspectives on intercultural competence. A textbook analysis and empirical study of teachers' and students' attitudes*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Freie University, Berlin. https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/14008/Appendix.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

Lange, D., & Paige, R. (2003). *Culture as the core: Perspectives in second language education*. Greenwich: Information Age. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED476745

Araujo Portugal, J. C. (2021). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching. 11*(4), 243-256. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v11i4.6006

Lee, K.-Y. (2009). Treating culture: what 11 high school EFL conversation textbooks in South Korea do. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 8*(1), 76-96. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ847287

López-Rocha, S. (2016). Intercultural communicative competence: creating awareness and promoting skills in the language classroom. In C. Goria, O. Speicher, & S. Stollhans (Eds.), *Innovative language teaching and learning at university: enhancing participation and collaboration* (pp. 105-111). Dublin: Research-publishing.net. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565040

Lussier, D., Kostova, S. C., Golubina, K., Ivanus, D., Skopinskaja, L., Retamar, R. G., & Wiesinger, S. (2007). Guidelines for the assessment of intercultural communicative competence. In I. Lazar, M. Huber-Kriegler, D. Lussier, G. S Matei, & C. Peck (Eds.)*, Developing and accessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators* (pp. 23-39). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. https://anyflip.com/vgscz/oopd/basic/51-100

Majdzadeh, M. (2002). *Disconnection between language and culture: A case study of Iranian English textbooks*. (Unpublished MA thesis). King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED474691

Matsuda, A., & Friedrich, P. (2012). Selecting an instructional variety for an EIL curriculum. *Principles and Practices of Teaching English as an International Language*, *25*, 17-28. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.21832/9781847697042/pdf#page=27

Mckay, S. (2002). *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McKay, S. L. (2012). Teaching materials for English as an international language. *Principles and Practices of Teaching English as an International Language*, *3*(9), 70-83.

Méndez García, M. C. (2005). International and intercultural issues in English teaching textbooks: The case of Spain. *Intercultural Education*, *16*(1), 57-68. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14636310500061831

Mirzaei A., & Forouzandeh, F. (2013). Relationship between intercultural communicative competence and L2-learning motivation of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, *42,* 300-318. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17475759.2013.816867

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second language learning theories* (2nd Ed.). London: Arnold. https://www.scirp.org/(S(351jmbntvnsjt1aadkposzje))/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferenceID=765533

Monfared, A., Mozaheb, M. A., & Shahiditabar, M. (2016). Where the difference lies: Teachers' perceptions toward cultural content of ELT books in three circles of world Englishes. *Cogent Education*, *3*(1). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2331186X.2015.1125334

Mughan, T. (1999). Intercultural competence for foreign languages students in higher education. *Language Learning Journal*, *20*(1), 59-65. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09571739985200281

Müller, B. D. (1995). An Intercultural Theory of Teaching German as a Foreign Language. In A. Aarup Jensen *et al.* (Eds.), *Intercultural Competence*, *Volume II: The Adult Learner* (pp. 59-76). Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.

Risager, K. (2005). Languaculture as a key concept in language and culture teaching. In B. Preisler, A. Fabricius, H. Haberland, S. Kjærbeck, & K. Risager (Eds.), *The Consequences of Mobility: Linguistic and Sociocultural Contact Zones* (pp. 185-196). Roskilde: Roskilde Universitet. https://rucforsk.ruc.dk/ws/files/37440173/Risager.pdf

Scarino, A. (2010). Assessing intercultural capability in learning languages: a renewed understanding of language, culture, learning, and the nature of assessment. *The Modern Language Journal, 94*(2), 324-329. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40856136

Sercu, L. (2005). *Foreign language teachers and intercultural competence: An international investigation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.21832/9781853598456/html

Araujo Portugal, J. C. (2021). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching. 11*(4), 243-256. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v11i4.6006

Strömbäck, L., & Oldaeus, L. (2017). *A Native Speaker Norm Approach vs. an Intercultural Approach in the English K-3 Classroom in Sweden*. Unpublished degree project. Malmö: University of Malmö. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1495378

Thao, Q. T., & Tai, P.T. (2017). The importance of intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching and learning. In *TESOL Conference Proceedings, Innovation and creativity in teaching and learning foreign languages* (pp. 629-641). Hochiminh City Open University: Publishing House of Economics.

Thu, T. H. (2010). *Teaching Culture in the EFL/ESL classroom.* Paper presented at The Los Angeles Regional California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Fullerton, California, September 11th, 2010. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED511819

Tran, T. Q., & Duong, T. M. (2015). Intercultural language teaching: Rethinking the objectives of English language education in the Vietnamese context. *English for Specific Purposes World*, *46*. https://scholar.archive.org/work/ylgbsas7arfsdcvtti25b22tya/access/wayback/http://esp-world.info/Articles_46/Thao%20Q%20TRAN%20-%20Tham%20M%20DUONG.pdf

Tran, T. Q., & Seepho, S. (2015). An instruction design model for intercultural language teaching: a proposed model. *Humanising Language Teaching, 17*(1). https://tinyurl.com/ycku7df3

Tran, T. Q., & Seepho, S. (2016). Intercultural language education: EFL learners' perceptions toward intercultural language communicative teaching. *Philippine ESL Journal*, *16*, 46-64. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jsel/article/view/73301

Usó-Juan, E., & Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). Approaches to language learning and teaching: towards acquiring communicative competence through the four skills. In E. Usó-Juan & A. Martínez-Flor (Eds.), *Current trends in the development and teaching of the four language skills* (pp. 3-26). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110197778/pdf#page=19

Van Ek, J. (1986). *Objectives for Foreign Language Learning. Volume II: Levels*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=SVtlqyqlsdUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA69&dq=Van+Ek,+J.+(1986).+Objectives+for+Foreign+Language+Learning.+Volume+II:+Levels.+Strasbourg:+Council+of+Europe+Publishing.&ots=YwcgrqDfIv&sig=jWdQoYE4f8kB_aIFGblvUjXDvQk

Widdowson, H. G. (2005). *Teaching English as a Global Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yesil, S., & Demiröz, H. (2017). An Exploration of English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching and Its Effects on Students' Motivation. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, *13*(1), 79-95. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1132079

Young, T. J., & Sachdev, I. (2011). Intercultural communicative competence: Exploring English language teachers' beliefs and practices. *Language Awareness*, *20*(2), 81-98. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09658416.2010.540328