DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Thesis booklet

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN

THE ENGLISH MAJOR PROGRAMMES AT A HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY:

A CASE STUDY

https://doi.org/10.15476/ELTE.2023.196

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Budapest, 2023

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Introduction

In foreign language teaching (FLT), there is a growing push to prepare learners for living in a multicultural world (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al., 2003; Menyhei, 2016). As such, the development of communicative competence should go hand-in-hand with the development of *intercultural competence* (IC). Otherwise, foreign language students will become *"fluent fools"* (Bennett, 1993, p. 16) who can speak the target language but are not knowledgeable in regard to relevant cultural contexts and meanings.

The incorporation of IC in language courses is aimed at promoting ethnorelative attitudes, questioning practices and preconceptions that are taken for granted, and acknowledging diversity around the world (Pinto, 2018). According to Byram (1997), the main goal of including IC in language classes is for language users to become intercultural speakers of the target language. The term "intercultural speakers" was introduced to describe interlocutors involved in intercultural interactions who are concerned with the "effective exchange of information and maintenance of human relationships" (Byram, 1997, p. 32). They are also depicted as language users who can interpret events from multiple perspectives, and are willing to learn about and interact with people from different cultures, and possess knowledge regarding the countries of their interlocutors as well as their own.

A number of studies have highlighted the need to include IC development in the training of in-service and pre-service language teachers (Byram et al., 2002; Eken, 2015; Gu, 2016; Han & Song, 2011; Kahraman, 2016; Lázár, 2011; Önalan, 2005; Pinto, 2018; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008; Willems, 2002). Lázár (2006) argued that "developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners need for successful intercultural communication should be first and foremost the task of the language teacher" (p. 220). Therefore, the inclusion of IC development in language courses is crucial for in-service and pre-service language teachers, as they are the ones who will teach future generations of foreign language speakers.

Despite the clear importance of teaching IC, courses with cultural and intercultural content are not always widely offered to students. For example, in his study on the Tunisian context Hermessi (2017) indicated that there was very limited cultural content in teachers' secondary school language books. Such materials may hinder both the development of learners' IC as well as the teachers' ability to implement IC development in their own courses. This study showcases an

educational system where IC is not included in teacher training programmes, and this shows how culture and IC development are not part of secondary education. It is likely that this lack of emphasis on the implementation of IC development is due to the fact that IC is not part of the teacher training curriculum at Tunisian universities, since the textbook designers are also EFL teachers. This then suggests that secondary school EFL teachers are not equipped to develop the IC of their students.

This research examines the practices for developing IC in English major programmes at a major Hungarian university with the goal of applying the findings in similar training settings that might be looking into how to develop their English (or other foreign language) major programmes by incorporating the development of IC. In her PhD thesis, Menyhei (2016) maintained that there was a growing interest in teaching and learning IC at Hungarian universities. Therefore, this research is conducted in the Hungarian context to describe and analyse how the IC of future English language professionals is developed in courses at BA, MA, and PhD levels and in the teacher training programme of a major Hungarian university. The second aim of the present research is to identify effective practices for developing the IC of future EFL professionals. To examine the issues raised, this study uses a qualitative case study approach to gain in-depth knowledge about cultural and intercultural courses.

Theoretical background

Culture

In the language learning context, Halverson (1985) points out that culture consists of 'capital C' culture, which encompasses geography and history among other components, and 'small c' culture, which includes the behaviours, values, and customs associated with a given culture. Halverson pointed out that teachers encounter confusion regarding which type of culture should be addressed in the classroom. Kramsch (2013) also acknowledges the role of culture in FLT, supporting Halverson's view regarding the insufficient attention placed on the inclusion of cultural content in FLT and the challenges in defining the concept of culture itself.

Spencer-Oatey (2008) defines culture by highlighting its complexity and its impact on people's behaviours:

> a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures
> and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but

do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (p. 3)

Even though there are similarities and regularities across groups, this definition underscores that people who belong to the same cultural group do not usually share the exact same beliefs or orientations toward life. This shows that "there is thus no absolute set of features that can provide a definitive basis for distinguishing one cultural group from another" (p. 4). Since this definition reveals that there is more to developing students' IC than teaching them a list of cultural facts (i.e., big C culture). For this reason, in this research, the definition proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2008) is used since it highlights the complexity of culture and its impact on people's behaviours.

Intercultural competence

Various terms are used in the literature to refer to the phenomenon of understanding different cultures, including one's own, and interacting successfully with people from different cultures. These include intercultural competence (IC) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC), among others. In 1997, Byram highlighted a subtle difference between IC and ICC, defining IC as "the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering" (p. 70). He adds that IC also includes "the individual's ability to interpret a translated document from another culture" (p. 71).

Byram further states the following:

> Someone with Intercultural Communicative Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. They are able to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins. Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately sociolinguistic and discourse competence and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations of the language. (p. 71)

Thus, IC encompasses the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions involved in effectively communicating with people from different cultures, whereas ICC is a more focused concept that includes the proficiency of the target language and the ability to be flexible and mediate in intercultural interactions.

Barrett and his colleagues (2014) defined IC as

a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others, to understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself; respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people; establish positive and constructive relationships with such people; understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural difference. (pp. 16–17)

According to them, IC comprises the following components: attitudes of tolerance, respect, openness to, and curiosity about people from other cultures, knowledge and understanding of one's and others' cultures, skills of multiperspectivity, discovery, interpretation, linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse skills. The last IC component, actions, reflects a seeking out of intercultural interactions and challenging attitudes that go against human rights (see Table 1). The present research uses the widely recognized understanding of the term IC proposed by Barrett and his colleagues (2014) to serve as the basis of this investigation. Furthermore, Barrett and his colleagues' definition of IC is used in this research as it stresses the element of actions, which is not included in other definitions and models in the field of intercultural communication. In light of the aims of the present investigation, this definition and model are also useful as they provide a clear set of criteria for examining the participants' IC.

Table 1

A Summary of the Intercultural Competence Model by Barrett et al. (2014)

Intercultural Competence (IC)			
Attitudes	**Knowledge and Understanding**	**Skills**	**Actions**
- Respect for cultural diversity/multiplicity - Willingness to learn from and about people from different cultures - Willingness to question practices and behaviours that are taken for granted - Tolerance - Willingness to look for opportunities for	- Awareness of one's own and other people's prejudices and preconceptions - Awareness that people from different cultures have different verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating - Knowledge of the beliefs and practices of culturally different people	- Skills of multiperspectivity - Skills in learning new knowledge about other people's cultures - Skills in interpreting other cultures' practices and beliefs and relating them to one's own - Changing one's own thinking and adapting one's behaviour to new cultural environments	- Looking for opportunities to interact with people from different cultures - Collaborating with culturally diverse people - Discussing differences with people from different cultures, negotiating a mode of interaction - Challenging behaviours that are against human rights

intercultural interactions - Willingness to empathise with people from different cultures	- Understanding that one's language and cultural orientations have an impact on the way one perceives the world - Understanding the diversity of cultural groups	- Behaving appropriately and adapting one's behaviour to the culture in question - Skills to critically evaluate the cultures in question - Acquiring linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills; acquiring the skills needed to mediate in intercultural interactions – Skills of communicating with empathy – Acquiring the ability to understand and respond to other people's beliefs and values – Plurilingual skills – Mediating in intercultural exchanges	- Communicating appropriately, effectively, and respectfully with people from different cultures.

Teaching culture and IC in tertiary education to English major students

The relevance of IC is demonstrated by the Council of Europe's endeavour to encourage the development of IC at different educational levels. In its White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, published in 2008, the Council of Europe recognised the role of universities in the development of IC, stating that

> [t]he university is ideally defined precisely by its universality – its commitment to open-mindedness and openness to the world, founded on enlightenment values. The university thus has great potential to engender "intercultural intellectuals" who can play an active role in the public sphere. (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 31)

The document also places emphasis on the teaching of IC in the framework of teacher training, arguing that "education institutions should make full use of descriptors of key competences for intercultural communication in designing and implementing curricula and study programmes at all levels of education, including teacher training and adult education programmes" (Council of Europe, 2008. p. 43).

In a study examining IC implementation in English language courses, Holló and Lázár (1999) found that most EFL tutors did not integrate ICC in their teaching practice despite stressing its significance in helping students achieve successful intercultural interactions. The authors therefore proposed a number of intercultural activities that did not require extra time or effort but rather careful planning by the teachers. They argued that content-based language development courses that usually aim to develop students' English language skills also present an opportunity for the inclusion of intercultural content. This can be presented through supplementary materials used in addition to coursebooks, such as "worksheets, newspaper & magazine articles, handbooks, EFL books with a cultural focus and videos, etc" (para. 2). The authors also provided a detailed account of how to integrate specific intercultural activities, such as "role play, summarising, interpreting (hidden) meaning, formal and informal speaking and writing, discussions" (para. 3). They also recommended activities such as "socio-cultural comparison and personalisation" (para. 3) which can be effective in fostering students' knowledge of their own culture relative to others.

Research design and methods

This research utilizes an exploratory research design with qualitative methods. Its aim is to analyse how the IC of EFL-speaking English major students is developed at the BA and MA levels, as well as in the teacher training programme at a Hungarian university. Relevant courses from the institute's PhD programme in language education are also included. To reach this purpose, qualitative data were collected by "examining documents, observing behaviours, or interviewing participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 185). This research was guided by 5 questions as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

A Summary of the Research Questions and Research Methods

Research questions	Data sources/ methods of data collection	Methods of data analysis
1., How is intercultural competence development present in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university?	- Class observations - Course documents (course catalogue, course descriptions and syllabi) for analysis - Course materials to be analysed	Thematic analysis

2., What are the considerations behind the inclusion of intercultural competence development in the English major programmes at a Hungarian university?	- Interviews with the course tutors - Interviews with the programme leaders	Thematic analysis
3., How do the tutors involved in the intercultural competence development of English major students at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?	- Interviews with the course tutors	Thematic analysis
4., How do English major students participating in courses developing intercultural competence at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?	- Group interviews with the students	Thematic analysis
5., How does intercultural competence development in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university contribute to the professional competence of future English language professionals?	- Group interviews with the students - Interviews with the course tutors -Interviews with the programme leaders	Thematic analysis

The present research consists of five studies (i.e., Document analysis – Study 1; classroom observation – Study 2; materials analysis – Study 3; interviews with the tutors – Study 4; interviews with the programme leaders – Study 5; group interviews with the students– Study 6). A summary of studies with their purposes and the methods of data collection can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

A Summary of the Studies Conducted

	To answer	Purpose	Data sources/ Methods of data collection
Study 1	RQ1	- to investigate the way IC development is present in the different English major programmes	- Course documents (course catalogue, course descriptions and syllabi) for analysis
Study 2			- Class observations
Study 3			- Course materials to be analysed
Study 4	RQ2, RQ3, RQ5	- to identify the considerations behind the inclusion of IC development in the English major programmes	Interviews with 9 course tutors

		- to examine how tutors involved in IC development at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses - to gain knowledge about the influence of the inclusion of cultural and intercultural courses on the students' IC.	
Study 5	RQ2, RQ5	- to investigate the programme leaders' rationale for the implementation of cultural and IC courses in the English major programmes, - to examine the impact of the implementation of cultural and intercultural courses on students' IC from the perspectives of programme leaders.	Interviews with 12 programme leaders
Study 6	RQ4, RQ5	- to examine how the students in question view their courses which feature cultural and intercultural content, - to scrutinise the influence of cultural and intercultural courses on students' IC from the perspectives of the students.	11 Group interviews with the students

Results and discussion

Study 1 examined how the promotion of IC was present in courses offered by the different English major programmes based on the analysis of the course catalogue, course descriptions, and course syllabi. The findings of this study partially answered to RQ 1: How is intercultural competence development present in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university?

The findings suggest that at the time of the data collection the institute offered a relatively low percentage of the courses with explicit cultural and intercultural content. Since it is important to prepare students to live in a globalized world and interact effectively with people from various cultures, more emphasis should be placed on including cultural and intercultural content in the courses offered by the English language programmes.

Based on Barrett and his colleagues' (2014) model of IC, the courses in question aimed to broaden students' knowledge about specific cultures and their understanding of the beliefs, practices, and values of those cultures as they learned, for example, about American values or the cultural products of Australian Aborigines. The results also suggest that by learning about British stereotypes, students could develop intercultural attitudes of challenging their stereotypes. Furthermore, other courses aimed to develop students' intercultural communication skills. It is worth mentioning that not all courses explicitly presented the aspects of IC that they aimed to address.

The examination of the syllabi of the courses examined showed that the tutors used certain themes to make the aims of the courses more concrete. The analysis of the detailed descriptions showed that the tutors were very much aware of what they wanted to achieve in the courses as well as how they wanted to achieve it. The results suggested that the courses had very specific aims which were achieved by focusing on different facets of culture. It was found that courses in each programme had a different focus regarding the development of the students' IC. Courses in the BA programme that were examined in this research presented an introduction to IC by familiarizing students with English-speaking culture(s). In the second phase, which is the MA programme, it was hoped that students who attended the course "Skills for intercultural communication" could develop an understanding of the impact of culture on communication and question their own communicative behaviours by learning about intercultural communication in business settings. The course entitled "Intercultural communication studies: Concepts, theories and research" aims to have a positive impact on fostering students' theoretical knowledge about IC as well as their verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures. The courses examined in the doctoral programme explored research approaches for investigating IC in different contexts. Based on the themes presented in the course syllabi, the course "EFL for intercultural competence" in the teacher training programme aimed to provide pre-service teachers with knowledge on how to include aspects of IC in their teaching practice. The results also suggested an aim to improve future teachers' knowledge about the target culture(s). For example, by learning about British stereotypes students were encouraged to challenge their own assumptions. Even though the scope of each programme is different, the course tutors took the students' IC development into consideration.

Study 2 (i.e., the classroom observations) provided answers to RQ1: How is intercultural competence development present in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university?

The findings showed that the intercultural content of the observed courses centred around English-speaking cultures such as the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia. The topics included myths, the colonization of Australia, British stereotypes, British and American beliefs, verbal communication, values of English-speaking cultures, and multiculturalism in Australia and how it is viewed by Australians, among many others. It was found that the courses aimed to develop students' IC by comparing their own cultures and the target cultures. In some courses, the tutor focused on the students' home culture by asking them, for example, to create presentations about their country of origin. As a result, students were able to learn about unfamiliar cultures and discover similarities between their own culture and others, thus developing their cultural knowledge. This also gave students the chance to challenge and question their existing stereotypes.

The activities were mainly group and pair activities which took place in face-to-face courses that stimulated cooperation among the students. Some activities were aimed at helping students experience cultural diversity, which can contribute to enhancing their interpretive skills and attitudes of acceptance. Another activity that encouraged students to ask questions was reflecting on their intercultural misunderstandings. This likely helped students to reflect on their behaviour, question their taken-for-granted actions, and understand other's points of view. Role-plays were also used in most of the observed courses which appeared to be engaging as well as enjoyable to the students. Such activities seemed to foster students' ability to adopt the perspectives of others. In addition, role plays were used in one of the observed courses to examine and challenge behaviours that violate human rights. This aimed to raise the students' awareness of racism in their own country as well as others. In the courses in the teacher training programme, the teacher trainees were required to take part in peer teaching sessions and design activities in the form of role plays and presentations. However, these student presentations covered only the surface level of culture, for example by describing social classes in Britain without explaining their significance; such activities did not offer students an opportunity to develop their intercultural skills, actions, or knowledge of the underlying values. Although the students' IC did not seem to have been fostered in such cases, these experiences may have proved useful as they encouraged students to include aspects of culture and IC into their teaching practice. The role plays provided students with an

opportunity to experience other cultures. It was also found that during role plays, students at times asked how they should behave in certain settings, which suggested the development of students' awareness of acceptable behaviours in specific situations.

Furthermore, **study 3** presented answers RQ 1 through the analysis of course materials. The results suggest that the tutors used a variety of course materials, including course books, articles, documentaries, videos, books and book chapters, and literature. The topics and themes that were discussed in these materials were in line with the course aims in the case of most of the courses. For instance, the readings about different American values appeared to develop students' knowledge of this aspect of American culture, which could help them challenge their stereotypes and show a greater understanding of characteristic American behaviours. Furthermore, internalizing different sets of values can promote acceptance and openness to diversity, which is an important part of IC. In most courses, aspects of big C and small c culture were included in the readings, and consequently in the classroom. The readings dealt with a variety of cultures, including both English-speaking cultures such as Great Britain and non-English speaking contexts such as Central Europe. It is crucial for English language graduates to possess diverse cultural knowledge, as many of them will proceed to work in international settings, whether teaching in international schools or working in international companies. Therefore, acquiring at least some knowledge about different countries can lead to more successful intercultural interactions. The development of students' knowledge can potentially increase their openness to and curiosity about other cultures, while also making them more tolerant to ambiguous situations. Moreover, students' intercultural skills seemed to be promoted through the development of their intercultural knowledge. For example, the students learned about the different cultural dimensions and their impact on cultural practices and behaviours. This understanding could lead to the development of skills such as cognitive flexibility, multiperspectivity and interpreting cultural practices.

In other courses, the readings encouraged future English language teachers to integrate IC into their teaching practice in accordance with the aims of the course. The results also showed that in the doctoral courses the students' knowledge of how to include IC in language courses was enhanced through exposure to a number of articles that addressed this issue. This can be argued to be particularly important for doctoral students considering their potential future capacities as researchers and lecturers sharing knowledge and educating on the topic of IC. The students also

developed their knowledge of cultural diversity: students read about different national and ethnic contexts which could potentially lead to greater openness to learning about other people and cultures.

Study 4 contributed to answering three research questions (i.e., RQ 2, RQ 3, RQ 5) from the perspectives of the course tutors. RQ 2: What are the considerations behind the inclusion of intercultural competence development in the English major programmes at a Hungarian university?

The findings of this study present the tutors' reasons for including IC development in their English language courses. The course aims reflected the tutors' views about the importance of promoting students' IC. Specifically, these aims were to develop students' knowledge about the target cultures (i.e., British culture, American culture, and Australian culture) and their own cultures, their intercultural skills, and the actions component of IC suggested by Barrett and his colleagues (2014). One tutor wanted to help students create their own voice instead of imitating native speakers, which is important for successful intercultural interactions. Another aim that was mentioned was the creation of opportunities for students to interact with different cultures, which aligns with the actions component proposed by Barrett and his colleagues (2014). These aims suggest that the tutors found it crucial for students to look beyond culture at the surface level. Furthermore, the tutors wanted students to develop the capacity to question the stereotypes that they hold and develop an awareness of cultural diversity through discussing different cultures. Moreover, courses in the teacher training programme aimed to boost teacher trainees' skills in implementing IC development in their future courses.

Study 4 also provided answers to RQ 3: How do the tutors involved in the intercultural competence development of English major students at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?

The results of the interviews with the tutors indicated that they valued the development of their students' IC. This was further confirmed by their classroom practices, which reflected their commitment to incorporating the promotion of IC in their courses. It was found that the tutors included cultural and intercultural aspects in their lessons; for example, in their courses, many tutors integrated aspects of both small c culture and big C culture (i.e., the cultures of English-speaking countries and students' countries, stereotypes, and intercultural experience). Furthermore, in many courses students' home cultures were compared to British or American culture, which

seemed to raise their awareness of cultural multiplicity. Students at this level of education were expected to be able to discuss underlying cultural values. This seemed to help them understand that the way people behave in a given culture can be explained by hidden variables. By gaining a better understanding of the underlying values and meanings that shape behaviors and actions, students could become more tolerant to unexpected behaviors.

The tutors used various materials to implement IC development in their lessons, including textbooks and videos. The use of supplementary materials such as authentic items from the target culture(s) reflected the positive views of the tutors towards contributing to the IC development of the students in their courses. For instance, many tutors utilized cultural products from the target culture, such as poems and plays written by Australian Aboriginals. These materials could contribute to the development of students' knowledge about the target culture, and in this specific example it gave students the opportunity to understand Australian history from the perspectives of Australian Aborigines.

The activities used by the course tutors included role-plays, discussions, and debates through which they explored issues related to the target culture(s). These interactive tasks seemed to help the students understand other cultural perspectives, which consequently could encourage them to become more open and show more acceptance of different behaviours through experiencing behaviours other than their own. Among these activities, the course tutors had their students share an object or photo representing their culture to the class in order to facilitate discussion and understanding of different cultures. According to Barrett and his colleagues' (2014) model, this particular activity could promote various aspects of IC. These include 1.) developing awareness of one's own culture through deciding on a culturally characteristic item, 2.) enhancing other students' knowledge about unfamiliar cultures and 3.) encouraging discussion on cultural differences and similarities.

This study also provided answers to RQ 5: How does intercultural competence development in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university contribute to the professional competence of future English language professionals?

The results showed that the inclusion of different aspects of IC through the various activities and materials chosen by the tutors could lead to the promotion of students' intercultural attitudes, such as openness and the willingness to challenge their existing stereotypes through learning about the

underlying values that shape behaviours. On many occasions, the intercultural clashes that students shared encouraged them to think about their own and others' behaviour and explain intercultural situations objectively. Moreover, through learning about these incidents other students appeared to develop the skills needed to behave appropriately and effectively with people from a given culture by listening carefully and attempting to determine the root of the misunderstanding. This intercultural content enhanced students' knowledge of cultural diversity, which had the potential to promote their intercultural multiperspectivity as well as their skills in interpreting cultural practices. Furthermore, the tutors emphasised that drawing cultural comparisons could increase the students' knowledge of various cultures. This was not limited to English-speaking cultures, but also the cultures of the students such as Japan, Albania, Turkey, as well as other cultures. The integration of these aspects of IC development was particularly significant in English major programmes for a number of reasons. Many of those who graduate the programme in question will be English language and culture tutors, and will have the opportunity to include culture and IC in their classes. Others may go on to work for corporations, which in today's world are oftentimes characterized by internationalism, meaning that workers in these companies will likely have to communicate in a multicultural setting.

Study 5 provided answers to RQ 2: What are the considerations behind the inclusion of intercultural competence development in the English major programmes at a Hungarian university?

The semi-structured interviews with the programme leaders indicated that they all articulated the importance of promoting IC in the English major programmes. They acknowledged the need to include intercultural content in the programme courses to develop students' IC (e.g., tolerance, openness, and skills of negotiating) and facilitate interaction between people from different cultures. They also referred to the international atmosphere on campus and helping students to have successful intercultural interactions. Highlighting the reasons above showed that the programme leaders were aware of the importance of IC. It was also found that the university supported culture and intercultural courses. This was best seen on the website of the Department of English Language Pedagogy of the university in question, a statement was written to ensure that employees in this department respected others regardless of their cultural background. This was also reflected in the growing number of international students applying to this university. Furthermore, many courses with cultural and intercultural content were taught at different levels, namely the teacher training

programme and at BA, MA, and PhD levels. It can be concluded that those interviewed believed that having interculturally competent graduates was valuable in general.

This study also contributed to answer RQ 5: How does intercultural competence development in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university contribute to the professional competence of future English language professionals?

The interviews with the programme leaders showed that the inclusion of courses with cultural and intercultural content raised pre-service tutors' knowledge on how to integrate interculturality into their own future courses. This was supported by a programme leader who observed how this knowledge was manifested in the students' teaching practice. Other programme leaders expressed their hopes that the integration of interculturality into the different programmes would contribute to the development of students' IC. As the development of IC is a long process, it was difficult to determine the impact that the programmes efforts had on the students, and one programme could not develop all aspects of IC. Therefore, the findings suggested that their aim was to raise students' understanding of cultural diversity and multiperspectivity. They also sought to enhance students' critical evaluation capacities in order for them to acquire further intercultural skills. In addition, they referred to the development of students' intercultural attitudes, including openness and tolerance. It was stated that these aspects were addressed explicitly in some English programmes, specifically in those courses which contained intercultural content. Since these facets of culture were addressed explicitly, it could be assumed that students experienced development in regard to these aspects.

The objective of **Study 6** provided answers in regard to RQ 4: How do English major students participating in courses developing intercultural competence at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?

The findings showed that the respondents expressed varying views about the courses through the mixed feedback that they provided in the interviews. In terms of features, the fact that the tutors relied on pair and group work was viewed positively by the students. This made them more willing to participate in class and express their opinions. They also referred to the tutor's knowledge about the target culture, which they believed could positively influence their own knowledge. They also enjoyed having native English speakers as their tutors, which seemed to help them better compare the cultures in question and discover similarities and differences between cultures. In addition, they

remarked positively on the use of authentic materials such as drawings in the course "Australian Aboriginal issues". Materials such as these were used to complement the main readings and aimed to raise the interviewees' knowledge about products from the target culture. It could be assumed that such activities made the participants more curious to learn about cultural products as they have been previously unfamiliar with them. The international atmosphere of many of the classrooms was also identified as a positive feature of some of the courses. This could help respondents develop their intercultural attitudes, specifically their tolerance and acceptance of those from other cultures through learning about and from their culturally diverse classmates. However, some courses were criticized for having negative features, such as a lack of discussion and in-depth analysis, which according to the respondents did not improve their IC as they were not able to examine the underlying values and beliefs associated with a given figure or a practice.

Many of the respondents expressed a preference to learn about debatable topics such as the refugee situation in Australia. Due to the documentaries the interviewees seemed to develop empathy by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by refugees or Australian Natives. Topics such as active listening and cultural dimensions were valued. By listening actively to their interlocutors, students can focus on the perspectives of others. In addition, discussing cultural dimensions appears to foster students' awareness of the impact of values on people's cultural practices. The interviewees also enjoyed topics related to big C culture which could promote their knowledge about the target culture.

The participants showed less interest in learning about the literature and art of the target culture. However, these topics were often relevant to the given course and aimed to develop the interviewees' knowledge about the target culture, such as the poems written by Australian Aborigines. They also showed negative attitudes towards learning newly created words from the Oxford dictionary. Although the respondents did not enjoy this activity, as English language students, it potentially played an important role in developing their English language vocabulary. In addition, the development of the students' linguistic competence could facilitate their communication with British people.

The interviewees expressed their views about the class activities. One activity they appreciated was the use of videos: watching videos featuring cultural and intercultural content appeared to develop the participants' intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills. For example,

by watching documentaries about Indigenous Australians, the interviewees could familiarize themselves with the difficulties Aborigines experienced, which could develop their empathy. They also enjoyed debates and role-plays, which had the potential to cultivate their empathy and enhance their willingness to express their perspectives. In addition, they highlighted that simulating intercultural clashes had a positive influence on their IC development, encouraging them to question behaviours which may be taken for granted and withholding their prejudgments. The participants were also fond of the presentations about their own cultures that they were assigned, as well as the activity which required them to bring an object to class which represents their culture. These types of activities were able to raise their awareness about their own culture and introduce them to other cultures that might be unfamiliar to them.

Although interviewees' views towards watching videos were positive overall, a few of them complained about the lack of subtitles, citing their unfamiliarity with British or Australian accents. Including subtitles could improve the development of their English language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge, which is a part of IC development. Another activity that the participants criticised was the language activities included in their activity handout sheet, which they considered irrelevant considering that the overall aim of the course was to foster their knowledge about British culture. However, promoting the students' linguistic competence is important as it can improve their abilities to communicate with the target culture. Some interviewees also criticised the presentations delivered by their classmates, claiming that they were over-reliant on surface-level facts and lacked deeper analysis of cultural issues. As such, this activity did not sufficiently engage the respondents' critical evaluation skills or develop their knowledge. Furthermore, although one interviewee complained about activities which featured comparisons between different cultures, such activities appeared to develop students' awareness of cultural diversity and encourage them to challenge their stereotypes.

The respondents expressed mixed views about the materials used in the courses. Documentaries were identified by the interviewees as useful materials. For example, documentaries about indigenous people which presented and discussed real life events could raise their awareness about the target people and facilitate the development of their empathy towards native people. Generally speaking, the participants had positive attitudes towards audio-visual materials as they presented a more engaging alternative to reading texts. Nevertheless, they also

appreciated certain readings which they believed to be relevant. The participants also endorsed the books used in the courses "American culture" and "Skills for intercultural communication" due to their simple and reader-friendly language which encouraged them to engage with the texts. Nonetheless, reading texts of varying difficulty is a skill that is important for students to practice, as many important cultural concepts are presented and explained in books.

Study 6 also answered RQ 5: How does intercultural competence development in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university contribute to the professional competence of future English language professionals?

This study examined the impact that the observed courses had on the development of the students' IC from the students' own perspectives. The students explained the ways in which the courses featuring culture and intercultural content were beneficial to them. All the respondents highlighted beneficial effects that the courses had on the development of their knowledge about their own culture and the cultures of others. They also gained insight into the differences and similarities between cultures, including their own. In regard to the intercultural attitudes of the interviewees, the results showed that the courses appeared to have a positive impact on the students' intercultural attitudes. Many of the interviewees believed that the courses they attended increased the extent to which they respect different cultures, value cultural diversity, and show tolerance; such developments can occur through learning about the underlying values that shape people's behaviours and also by being exposed to different perspectives and experiences in the classroom. As some of the courses examined the sources of stereotypes, the interviewees were also encouraged to question the practices and behaviours that might have been taken for granted. The tutors appeared to develop their students' intercultural skills, including the ability to critically evaluating cultures, by encouraging them to ask questions and practice active and careful listening. The development of such skills is of great importance to successful intercultural interaction between members of any culture.

Conclusion

Summary of the findings

The first aim of this research was to describe and analyse how the IC of English major students is developed in courses at the BA, MA, and PhD levels as well as in the teacher training

programme of a Hungarian university, while the second aim was to identify good practices for developing the IC of future EFL professionals to be used in other contexts.

RQ 1: How is intercultural competence development present in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university?

This research question was answered with the help of three studies: the document analysis of the course descriptions and syllabi, the analysis of teaching materials (i.e., those provided by the tutors as well as student presentations), and the classroom observations of 14 courses in the different programmes.

The findings indicated that the percentage of courses in the programmes which included cultural and intercultural content was relatively low. Considering the importance of intercultural communication in the globalized world, more emphasis should be placed on incorporating cultural and intercultural content into the English language programmes to provide students with the skills they need to engage in successful interactions with those from different cultures. The analysis of the course catalogue showed that there were a number of courses that aimed to foster the students' knowledge about specific cultures. For example, some courses included information about American values and Aboriginals' cultural products, while others sought to develop students' intercultural attitudes through teaching them about British stereotypes and encouraging them to challenge their own preconceptions. Other courses aimed at enhancing particular intercultural skills. It was found that the course syllabi of the courses examined presented the topics and approaches which would be used to achieve the given aims. The results also suggested that a few of the course descriptions contained an anti-discrimination statement, which reflected the cultural approaches taken by several of the tutors to promote respect for people of different cultures.

It was found that the observed courses with cultural and intercultural content had different foci in terms of the promotion of the students' IC. The BA courses that were examined in this research could be considered as an introductory phase during which students' awareness about cultural diversity is raised and the cultures of English-speaking countries are highlighted. The courses examined in the MA programme, as exemplified by the course "Skills for intercultural communication", helped students realise the importance of IC in corporate settings and contributed to the development of the skills needed to help ensure for successful intercultural interactions. Moreover, the course "Intercultural communication studies: Concepts, theories and research"

appeared to have a positive impact on developing students' theoretical knowledge about IC and about verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures. The focus of the courses examined in the doctoral programme was somewhat different, as it seemed to be more aimed at developing students' skills and knowledge as researchers in the field of intercultural communication through the readings they were assigned. In the teacher training programme, the focus of the courses examined was placed on American or British culture. Furthermore, based on the themes presented in the course syllabi, the course "EFL for intercultural competence" aimed to provide pre-service teachers with knowledge of how to implement aspects of IC into their teaching practice. Although the scope of each programme is different, the course tutors took the students' IC development into consideration.

The course observations (Study 2) found that the intercultural content in all of the observed courses focused mainly on English-speaking cultures, which was obvious as the courses were part of English major programmes. The course sought to promote students' knowledge about aspects related to big C and small c culture by learning about the values of English-speaking cultures, perceptions of multiculturalism and immigration, and the practices and cultural products of different cultural contexts among many other topics. The results also suggested that in most of the courses the students were encouraged to compare the cultural products, values, and behaviours that they learned about in connection with the target cultures with their own home cultures. This could encourage them to potentially challenge their stereotypes and develop skills of multiperspectivity through enhancing the scope of their intercultural knowledge.

The results suggested that the topics covered were diverse, touching on a number of areas of culture (i.e., history, politics, climate, literature, soap operas, TV, values, and customs, among many others). Despite their wide spectrum, all of the topics could potentially contribute by providing students with insights into different facets of culture and interculturality. Reviewing these cultural aspects served to develop students' knowledge of the ethnic diversity in the US, promote their intercultural skills, and familiarise them with aspects of Australian culture, among many other outcomes. These aims were established in order to develop specific elements of IC which could come together to form the students' overall IC.

The courses were characterised by pair and group activities which encouraged students to interact with one another and discuss the topics raised during the courses. This interaction provided

an environment in which students could deepen their understanding of relevant issues. Verbalising their ideas through group interaction was also instrumental in helping them to consolidate the ideas presented in the course. Several of the courses observed featured students from different cultures. This diverse setting gave students the opportunity to experience cultural diversity and develop intercultural attitudes such as acceptance of and respect for others. Many tutors relied on role-plays which – as an activity requiring active and committed participation – could be useful in promoting students' IC. This activity contributed to the development of their ability to adopt the perspectives of others and understand different points of view. An activity that was specifically used in the few courses with cultural and intercultural content in the teacher training programme was peer teaching. These sessions could be considered crucial for pre-service teachers as they provided them with knowledge on how to incorporate culture and interculturality into their future courses. During these sessions the students were tasked with teaching each other, with many of them utilising motivating activities such as role plays aimed at developing intercultural awareness. Consequently, the peer teaching sessions presented pre-service teachers with an opportunity to learn how to implement and create activities and materials which can be used to promote IC development. The doctoral courses were characterised by group discussions which covered different aspects of IC research. Participants in these courses found such discussions to be particularly useful for their own research. The topics in the doctoral courses varied, including both theoretical and empirical readings. This helped to familiarise students with the theoretical aspects of IC, but also to learn how to examine its elements as a researcher, as many of them were investigating culture-related topics for their dissertations.

The findings of the materials analysis (Study 3) showed that the courses included a variety of materials to support the development of students' IC such as documentaries, book chapters, course books, and videos. It was found that the materials contributed to the development of various aspects of IC, such as learning about the values of the English-speaking cultures. The teaching materials also encouraged students to learn to challenge their stereotypes, which could help them develop a greater sense of understanding when interacting with people from different cultures. Furthermore, the results suggested that other cultures besides English speaking-cultures, such as European cultures were presented and described in the materials. This was of great importance to the students, many of whom are likely considering pursuing careers in international contexts. In the teacher training programme, some of the readings equipped trainees with knowledge on how

to implement interculturality in their future language courses through examining the activities and materials that could be used in the classroom to develop students' IC. The results also showed that the doctoral courses enhanced students' knowledge of how to incorporate IC into language courses; this is notably important for doctoral students who may go on work as researchers or lecturers in the field of IC. This also revealed how language and culture can be integrated regardless of the major focus of a course.

RQ 2: What are the considerations behind the inclusion of intercultural competence development in the English major programmes at a Hungarian university?

The above research question was addressed through the interviews conducted with course tutors and programme leaders (Studies 4 and 5, respectively). The results of the semi-structured interviews with the course tutors (Study 4) pinpointed their reasons for integrating IC content in their courses. The tutors aimed to develop their students' intercultural attitudes, such as openness and appreciation of cultural diversity. Furthermore, they sought to enhance students' awareness about their own culture as well as about English-speaking culture(s). In addition to improving students' intercultural skills to ensure successful intercultural interaction, tutors also made efforts to create opportunities in which students could interact with those from other cultures. The tutors also highlighted the importance of incorporating IC development in the English language programmes as a means to help students become intercultural speakers, as suggested by (Byram, 1997). The implementation of IC content in some courses in the teacher training programme aimed at boosting the teacher trainees' skills in regard to the implementation of IC development in their future courses. These aims reflected the tutor's beliefs on the importance of looking beyond the surface level of culture. Furthermore, they showed their commitment to empowering their students to question their stereotypes and develop an awareness of cultural diversity through discussing various aspects of different cultures.

The results of the interviews with the programme leaders (Study 5) showcased an emphasis on the incorporation of IC development in the English major programmes, which they indicated would enhance students' tolerance of uncertainty and openness towards interaction with people from other cultures. Other reasons mentioned for the implementation of IC in English language courses was the creation of an international atmosphere on campus and the promotion of students' successful intercultural interactions.

RQ 3: How do the tutors involved in the intercultural competence development of English major students at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?

The findings of the interviews with the course tutors (Study 4) suggest that the course tutors valued the promotion of students' IC. This was best reflected in the course objectives that were intentionally designed with the development of IC in mind. The course aims included aspects of IC such as stereotypes, literature, politics, internal diversity among cultures, and communication in English-speaking cultures.

It was also found that the tutors relied on different types of media for their teaching materials to develop IC in their courses, including readings and videos. Videos were included as tutors noticed that students were notably disinterested in reading books and articles and that the use of diverse materials was welcomed. The use of videos enabled students to better focus on the course content and consequently learn more. Other supplementary materials such as authentic cultural products from the target culture(s) were used which reflected the positive views of the tutors toward contributing to the development of the students' IC in their courses. In one of the courses, the tutor included poems written by indigenous people. The use of such materials appeared to promote the students' awareness about the history and language of the given culture. The course tutors used activities such as debates, discussions, and role-plays to promote students' IC, which potentially cultivated students' attitudes of openness and encouraged them to show their acceptance to other perspectives. The students were also asked to bring a picture or an object to class which represented their own culture and explain its relevance. This activity developed students' knowledge about their own culture and others. The mentioned activities and the supplementary materials that were used showed that the tutors attached great importance to the development of the students' IC in their courses.

RQ 4: How do English major students participating in courses developing intercultural competence at a Hungarian university view the value of their courses?

The findings of the group interviews with the students (Study 6) showed that the interviewees had mixed attitudes towards the examined courses. A number of positive aspects were mentioned, such as the knowledge provided by the course tutor that raised their awareness of some

of the racist expressions that the students had previously used unintentionally. They also praised the use of cultural products which seemed to develop their knowledge of the target cultures. Another positive feature that was mentioned by the participants was having a native speaker of English as their tutor. This reportedly helped them compare different cultures and question practices which students may have taken for granted. However, there were some courses that the students criticised due to their lack of insightful analysis of the underlying values influencing the behaviours or practices discussed in class.

The results indicated that many respondents valued topics concerning related to refugees or Indigenous people, which could help them to empathise with the given target culture and understand different perspectives of particular social issues. Other topics which were mentioned in a positive light included active listening and cultural dimensions. By listening actively to their interlocutors, students can focus on the perspectives of others. Furthermore, some respondents criticised vocabulary development exercises, stating that the courses should be focused solely on cultural topics. However, it should be noted that the development of the students' English vocabulary could facilitate their communication with native English speakers.

In relation to the activities used in the classroom, one activity that received positive feedback from the participants was role-plays. Role-plays were an effective way to encourage empathy among students. They also enjoyed simulating intercultural clashes as it helped them reflect on their behaviour and develop their interpreting skills. They also identified watching videos, even for homework, as one of their favourite classroom activities, finding them to be more engaging than other materials. Based on their knowledge of these sentiments, the tutors included videos both in class and as homework. These videos were especially beneficial if they included cultural or intercultural content. For example, by watching documentaries about Native Australians, the students could better understand the difficulties they experienced, which could enhance their sense of empathy.

One group of interviewed students were critical of the presentations delivered by their classmates, which they claimed simply included facts which could be gathered from Wikipedia. The respondents were not satisfied with the final product, claiming that critical evaluation skills and knowledge were not developed. It was also found that the interviewees held mixed views about the materials used in class. They agreed that they found the documentaries to be interesting; these

could be particularly useful when talking about historical events as the films could develop students' knowledge about the history of a given culture and enhance their willingness to empathise with the target culture.

Overall, the students provided positive feedback about their courses with cultural and intercultural content, and all of them articulated the importance of learning about different cultures. For example, the students in the teacher training programme expressed their intention to pursue careers as teachers of English language and culture. They highlighted that it was important to develop their IC in order to be able to include aspects of interculturality in their future courses. Other students acknowledged the role that being interculturally competent plays in successful intercultural interactions. The significance of IC was also reflected in the materials and activities that they suggested, such as role-plays and watching videos from the target culture. This showed an appreciation for cooperation and an awareness of the important impact that the use of cultural products has on the development of attitudes towards and knowledge of IC.

RQ 5: How does intercultural competence development in the English major programmes of a Hungarian university contribute to the professional competence of future English language professionals?

This research question is addressed using the findings of the interview studies with the course tutors and the programme leaders (Studies 4 and 5, respectively) as well as the group interviews with the students (Study 6). The interviews with the tutors indicated that the aspects of IC incorporated in the topics, materials, and activities included in their courses contributed to the development of students' IC. For instance, the tutors expressed their aims to promote critical attitudes among students (i.e., questioning their stereotypes and acceptance of other cultures) through learning about the underlying values that shape people's behaviours. In addition, the tutors asked students to share intercultural clashes that they had experienced in the past, an activity which encouraged them to think about their own and others' behaviour in order to explain the situation objectively. Students could learn valuable lessons by listening to and examining the experiences of their peers, such as how to behave in certain situations or what skills are needed to engage in a successful interaction. Intercultural content such as the example above have the potential to promote intercultural multiperspectivity and skills in interpreting others' practices. Another activity type that could promote students' IC was comparing different cultures. This activity was

used to enhance students' knowledge of their own cultures and those of others. In the courses of the teacher training programme, the tutors aimed to help the future teachers learn approaches for the incorporation of IC aspects in their future English language courses. The peer teaching sessions and the information presented regarding aspects of British and American culture contributed to the achievement of that aim. Instead of working in secondary schools, students from the culture-related courses of other programmes will likely work at international companies after graduating, and this career path was considered in their courses. For example, in some courses students were introduced to the conduct that would be expected at a multicultural international corporation.

The findings of the interviews with the programme leaders (Study 5) suggests that the inclusion of courses with cultural and intercultural content raised pre-service tutors' knowledge of how to integrate interculturality in their future courses. One programme leader witnessed how some pre-service tutors were already incorporating aspects of IC into their teaching practice. Moreover, they also expressed their hopes that the integration of IC development in the English programmes would produce interculturally competent graduates. It is difficult to determine just how interculturally competent students are after they finish the programme, as there are many factors beyond the university context that can contribute to or hinder the development of students' IC. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that the programme leaders aspired to raise students' understanding of cultural diversity and multiperspectivity. They also aimed to develop students' critical evaluation skills and also sought to enhance intercultural attitudes such as openness and tolerance in students. It was stated that these aspects were addressed explicitly in some English programmes, especially in the courses which were centred on intercultural content. Since such content was explicitly included, it could be assumed that emphasis was placed on the development of these intercultural aspects.

The findings of the group interviews with the students (Study 6) reflected the positive impact that the content from the observed courses had on the development of students' IC. All the respondents said that their knowledge about their own and other cultures developed as a result of the courses they attended. Regarding their intercultural attitudes, the courses that the interviewees enrolled in potentially helped cultivate their respect for different cultures, value cultural diversity, and show greater tolerance in unfamiliar situations through learning about the role of culture in shaping people's behaviours. The intercultural skills of the students appeared to develop as a result

of the knowledge gained from their courses; for example, they learned about the significance of asking questions as well as active and careful listening to ensure successful intercultural interaction.

Quality assurance and limitations

A number of limitations should be highlighted in connection to this research. The present research utilised an exploratory research design and qualitative methodology, meaning that the results cannot and should not be generalised. Regardless, measures were taken to ensure the transferability of the results. One such measure was triangulation, which made use of the many different perspectives considered in the research. As such, the data collected from the course tutors, students, and programme leaders were presented and compared alongside the observations and readings to further explain the findings. Furthermore, in the process of data analysis, the categories created when working with the verbal data were checked by a doctoral candidate to ensure reliability. The credibility of the studies was also ensured through member checking. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees to verify and review what they said during the interview.

The current research was limited to courses which featured cultural and intercultural content. It was planned to examine how interculturality is presented in content-based language development courses. However, this was not possible due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic situation on teaching; due to the stressful situation surrounding the pandemic, tutors who were not teaching culture-related subjects were hesitant to allow classroom observations. Examining such courses would have yielded rich data regarding the tutors' motivation to integrate IC into their courses, as the main focus of these courses is usually not on developing students' IC.

Another limitation related to the Covid-19 pandemic was its effect on the learning and teaching process in Hungary, and thus on the present research. The modality of these courses changed from face-to-face classes to lessons via online platforms, which meant that not all courses were synchronous. As a result, the observation of such courses was not possible. This resulted in the lack of the student perspectives for some courses as well, since they refused to participate in this research.

Another limitation does not concern the effectiveness of the research methods or the transferability of the results, but rather relates to the integration of IC development into different courses. The 16 courses considered in this dissertation only represent a small minority of the courses that the institute in question provides. On average, around 430 courses are offered in a

given semester. While there are a few more courses that could have been included in this research but were not due to the lack of time, it is clear that the development of students' IC is not the first priority of this institute. Although they are not a model institution in this regard, they are in the process of building up and improving the integration of IC development into a number of courses at all levels, from BA to PhD programmes. As this research found, these efforts have yielded promising results, and the need for the inclusion of IC at this institution is now well established as confirmed by the interviews with the programme leaders. With this in mind, the limitation that IC development represents a small part of the institution's activities, serves as evidence that it is feasible to initiate this innovation on a small scale and gradually expand it to higher levels and in more courses.

Implications of the research

The results of the present research yield considerable implications related to English language pedagogy in terms of effective teaching activities, critical thinking, inclusive teaching, learner autonomy, and transferability of practices to other institutions. Firstly, this research identified some of the effective teaching activities used by the interviewed tutors and valued by the students which have the potential to foster students' IC. These include watching documentaries about indigenous people, participating in debates and role plays, and sharing experiences of intercultural clashes. Teachers are not limited to the activities examined but can also create other impactful tasks beyond the scope of this dissertation which can be used in different cultural contexts. Secondly, as shown by the results, some of the courses with cultural and intercultural content encouraged critical thinking by encouraging students to reflect on the source of their stereotypes and challenge their own preconceptions. Consequently, students appeared to develop the capacity to withhold prejudgements and examine cultural differences objectively. Thirdly, this research could foster inclusive teaching by encouraging the promotion of IC to initiate changes in the courses of the various English language programmes in order to answer the needs of students from different cultural backgrounds. As revealed in this research, inclusive education can enhance students' empathy and cultivate a greater understanding of other cultures. By acknowledging and appreciating cultural diversity and using some of the practices described in this dissertation, tutors and educational managers in other contexts can create learning environments that are inclusive and offer students opportunities to understand and value linguistic and cultural differences instead of simply imitating native speakers. The findings of this research showed that the implementation of

IC development in English language courses could foster learner autonomy. For instance, due to the lack of time and the diverse issues and topics to be discussed in the class, it was impossible for all of the tutors to cover all of the relevant topics. Nonetheless, the interviewees in one course showed greater independence and seemed to further their knowledge and skills beyond the bounds of the course. Finally, several results of the research can be transferable to other educational settings, and many of the practices described in this dissertation may be used for designing foreign language university training programmes at different levels with an emphasis on developing the students' IC.

Suggestions for future research

Considering the limitations mentioned above, a later study could assess how IC development is integrated into content-based language development courses. This could prove to be a fruitful area of research into how course tutors perceive the implementation of IC development in their courses. In addition, since students in the teacher training programme underlined the importance of integrating IC into their teaching practice, further and more detailed information about how IC development is included in methodology courses could yield rich data regarding the impact of IC promotion in the teacher training programme. This could be carried out using classroom observations and interviews with the course tutors and students.

A few courses were held online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was found that course tutors did not use the same platforms to teach their students. One tutor used a non-synchronous platform, while other tutors preferred synchronous ones. This shows that courses featuring cultural and intercultural content can be taught online. A further study could examine the effectiveness of using online platforms to develop students' IC.

A follow-up tracer study to investigate how the students observed in this research go on to use the IC that they developed in their courses would also provide useful insight. The results of such research could be used to improve the course contents used in the programme as well as the teaching methods and approaches used in the courses that aim to develop students' IC.

A list of the publications connected to the topic of the dissertation

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