DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Thesis booklet

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH CLASSES IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL:

A CASE STUDY

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1 Introduction

The increasing globalization and mobility over the past decades have led to extensive interaction among diverse languages and cultures. As the process of developing social and cultural contacts in multicultural contexts has been accelerating, the recognition of the necessity for integrating teaching culture and *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) into foreign language teaching and learning has been growing. It is now widely recognized in the literature that foreign language teaching must go beyond developing learners' linguistic competence and has to help learners become intercultural speakers through developing their ICC (Byram et al. 2002; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005; Usó- Juan, & Martínez- Flor, 2008). Likewise, given the importance of culture in foreign language teaching, many scholars express the belief that culture and language are inextricably connected, and the integration of culture in language teaching is needed (Alptekin, 2002; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1993).

The present exploratory and descriptive research, comprising eight interrelated studies and following a qualitative approach, was conducted in an international EMI school and two universities in Budapest, Hungary. The schoolteachers, students, and parents at the observed school were interviewed to explore and analyze how the school aims to develop its students' CDA and ICC. Additionally, English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes were observed to identify teachers' attitudes and practices regarding the development of CDA and ICC, as well as the students' responses to efforts to develop their cultural awareness and intercultural skills. The English curriculum, syllabuses, and teaching materials used at the observed school, as well as the official school documents, were thematically analyzed to obtain more information on culture teaching and intercultural skills development.

The program leaders and lecturers at two universities were also interviewed, and the curricula and culture-related/intercultural course syllabuses followed by the two universities were analyzed to gain an insight into whether teacher training programs develop pre-service teachers' CDA and ICC, and whether teachers makes use of the *attitudes, knowledge,* and *skills* they acquire during these programs in their future English classes.

The outcomes of all eight studies suggest that teacher training programs that include intercultural education play a vital role in teachers' attitudes towards (critical) culture teaching

and the development of students' CDA and ICC. English teacher training programs thus need to incorporate intercultural and/or culture-related courses, including a greater variety of non-English-speaking cultures and the controversial issues of *deep culture*, to raise critical cultural awareness and develop intercultural competency.

2   Background

Culture

The concept of culture has been described in various ways, although it is seen as a difficult term to define (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Useem et al., 1963). The present study deals with how culture is understood in language education, and how it is presented in language classes and teaching materials for effective communication. The definitions presented below thus serve as the pillars of the study, since they describe culture as the shared and learned attitudes, behaviors, values, beliefs, norms, customs, and practices of social groups. In relation to the concept explored in the present dissertation, the definitions also give emphasis to language as a tool by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next and learned, shared, and (re)presented.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) defines culture as:

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. 4)

Although her definition of culture is based on the shared behaviors, beliefs, values, etc., of a particular group, she also claims that culture is not inherited but rather acquired through the process of learning (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

The definition of culture given by Turner (1999) is also relevant with respect to the present study. He defines it as "a dynamic process which produces the behaviours, the practices, the institutions, and the meanings which constitute our social existence. Culture comprises the processes of making sense of our way of life" (p. 52). He also refers to the fact that, for cultural studies theorists, "language is the major mechanism through which culture produces and reproduces social meanings" (p. 52).

Language learning is no longer considered simply as learning to perform linguistic tasks. Instead, the ultimate goal is to communicate in another language, which includes having an understanding of the culture or cultures of that language. According to Liddicoat (2005), Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), and Sercu (2002), when people start to communicate in a second

or foreign language, they do not use linguistic codes and lexical knowledge only; they also perform the functions of that language in a cultural context that requires cultural knowledge just as much as a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Language learning thus needs to include the cultural dimension of the language to prevent students from becoming the "fluent fools" described by Bennett (1997, p. 16), who may speak a foreign language very well but who do not understand the meaning of the content of that language. However, culture cannot be integrated into the language learning context merely by providing a knowledge of the target culture or cultures. Language learning must also focus on attitudes, cultural skills and awareness, and relevant activities that raise learners' CDA and develop their ICC (Barrett et al., 2014; Knutson, 2006; Liddicoat, 2005; Soler & Jordà, 2007). The first step in developing CDA and ICC is to raise the learners' awareness of cultural differences and cultural diversity, as described in the following section.

Cultural Diversity Awareness

The term *cultural diversity awareness* is often used in the literature (Brown, 2004; Larke, 1990), yet no specific definition of it has been proposed. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with "cross-cultural awareness" (e.g., Dasli, 2011; Knutson, 2006;). The reason why many researchers prefer not to use the well-defined phrase *cross-cultural awareness* is perhaps because CDA has a more concrete meaning, focusing on the multifaceted nature of culture and cultural patterns, making it easier for readers to grasp than the more abstract *cross-cultural awareness*. Cross-cultural awareness is used by Kramsch (1998) as an approach in foreign language teaching to explore ways of understanding "the Other at the other side of the border by learning his/her national language" in the context of "two cultures or two languages" (p. 81). However, in her definition Damen (1987) highlights more than two cultures, including one's own:

> Cross-cultural awareness involves uncovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognising the givens of the native culture (p. 141).

The lack of an existing definition for the term CDA led the author to elaborate her own definition, in which the concept is related to learning about different cultures, including one's own, as a way of developing criticality in terms of *attitudes*, *knowledge and understanding*, and *skills*. In light of the above, the definition of CDA can be expanded to refer to the state of

being conscious of various different cultures as a result of acquiring and internalizing knowledge about aspects of one's own and different cultures, including visible, hidden, and controversial elements, therefore allowing people to compare their own culture with the culture of others in order to identify similarities and differences, helping them to gain criticality, openness, cognitive and affective flexibility, and acceptance. To be more precise, while people may not always understand or accept certain cultural norms of their own or others' cultures, they can accept the existence of cultural differences or the reasons for people's behaviors that possibly originate from their cultures.

For many researchers, the increase in diversity means that an awareness of cultural diversity among both teachers and students has become more important than ever (Acquah & Commins, 2015; Angelova & Zhao, 2014; Gay, 2013; Knutson, 2006; Larke, 1990). For this reason, the present study seeks to identify possible ways in which culture can be integrated into language learning and teaching in order to increase teachers' and students' CDA.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Bennett and Bennett (2004) define ICC as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 149). Similarly, students who have ICC are described by Byram (1997) as being "...able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (p. 71). Byram and Fleming (1998) also claim that an interculturally component person "has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly" (p. 9). As the definitions highlight, everyone needs the ability to communicate effectively with people from different countries in a foreign language in all kinds of cultural contexts. However, the present study focuses mainly on the development of ICC in the context of language learning.

According to Lázár (2007), many language teachers see ICC as an extension of communicative competence. Reid (2015) states that ICC is vital in English language education since it allows students to communicate effectively with people in the target language cultures. It also contributes to overcoming misunderstandings, discrimination, and prejudice among people from different cultural backgrounds. Barrett and his colleagues (2014) also highlight the importance of IC, since it makes it possible to understand other people's practices, beliefs, values, and discourses. Intercultural competence also involves the ability to communicate effectively in a multicultural context, including learning about and interpreting different cultures by relating them to one's own. Liddicoat (2004) claims that IC is needed in order to

use a language effectively. According to him, interculturally competent people have knowledge of, and skills related to, common cultural conventions in the target language. They have strategies for learning more about cultures, and a capacity to reflect on their own linguistic behaviors and those of the people with whom they interact. They are also aware of similarities between cultures and differences in language use.

Regarding the development of ICC in language learning, Byram (1997) identifies the components of ICC as *attitudes*, *knowledge*, *skills*, and *critical cultural awareness*, which he also described as political education, in addit In a similar way to Byram (1997), Barrett and his colleagues (2014) list the components of IC as *attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills*, and *actions.* ion to communicative competences in the foreign language to be acquired by the learners.

Big C, Little c and Deep Culture

When discussing the teaching of culture in language education, it is essential to define aspects of culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) report that some language teachers associate culture with history, geography, literary works, or works of art. Lázár (2007) states that the subjects listed by these teachers, which are undoubtedly important, can be categorized under the umbrella term "big C culture" or "civilization" (p. 7). The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996) define big C culture as products such as politics, economics, history, literature, science, and the fine arts. Lázár (2007) argues that there are equally vital elements of culture that should have a place in language classrooms. According to her, "little c culture," as opposed to big C culture, includes less visible and tangible aspects of cultures. Elements of little c culture are listed by Xiao (2010) as lifestyles, holidays, values, and customs. Likewise, The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996) refer to little c culture as "housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all the patterns of behaviour" (p. 44). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) also add attitudes and behaviors to the elements of little c culture.

Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) describes *surface culture* as static and immediately visible. According to him, EFL textbooks often include the static and congratulatory themes of surface culture. He lists the topics of surface culture that are typically included in EFL textbooks as holidays, food, tourist attractions, and famous people. These elements, he argues, are insufficient to give students an understanding of the target culture, because they do not provide opportunities for dealing with sociocultural communication in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, he states that culture is not static but transformative, since it is constantly

changing in multiple ways in the process of global communication. He therefore argues that if cultures are considered and presented statically, as is the case in the EFL field, it leads to the creation of stereotypes, since communities do not share and follow the same cultural norms. Regarding the congratulatory theme of surface culture, Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) indicates that although culture is contentious rather than merely congratulatory, EFL education focuses on the positive characteristics of other cultures and emphasizes the most symbolic elements that define those cultural groups. As a result, students never learn the correct cultural behaviors of nations in all their conflictive sociocultural reality.

Deep culture, as described by Gómez Rodríguez (2015a), is intricate and almost invisible, and is associated with the sociocultural norms, lifestyles, values, and beliefs of a group of people or subcultures. According to him, forms of deep culture are very complex, because they are individual, multifaceted, and not necessarily fixed into cultural standards. However, he argues that students should be taught about the deep and complex elements of culture to help them adopt a critical attitude and to develop their ICC. He therefore concludes that culture teaching should include a critical approach, including elements of deep culture with contentious and controversial perspectives, to allow students to learn about sociocultural realities rather than static and congratulatory cultural elements.

3   Rationale and the Research Niche

The number of international schools worldwide has risen as a result of globalization and mobility. There is growing demand among both local (typically socioeconomically advantaged) families and globally mobile parents for international education that provides international diplomas and access to higher education in English, as reported by Hayden and Thompson (2008). International schools offer English-medium education, allowing students to become fluent in English and encouraging them to become responsible citizens and internationally competent individuals in the globalized world. These schools thus follow internationally recognized curricula, which give students access to universities worldwide, as highlighted by Hayden and his colleagues (2000). A variety of curricula are followed by international schools around the world, including the English national curriculum (primarily by British international schools), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), the Advanced Placement (AP) International Diploma, the French Baccalauréat Option Internationale, the European Baccalaureate, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP), the

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP), the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), and the Cambridge International Primary Program (CIPP) (Hayden et al., 2000). Although the curricula used in international schools attract parents and their children due to the advantages they are believed to offer, Hayden and his colleagues (2000) highlighted several issues the deserve investigation. One such issue is the teaching of content and skills to children from different linguistic, cultural, and national backgrounds. Another issue, which is also addressed in the present study, is related to how international schools keep their promises to develop CDA and ICC so as to prepare their students to become interculturally competent global citizens.

4   Aims and Research Questions

The aim of the present case study was primarily to explore the place of culture teaching and the development of ICC in the curriculum, teaching materials, and English classes in an English-medium instruction (EMI) international school in Budapest, Hungary. The study also investigated how pre-service teachers are trained at two state universities in Budapest in terms of the development of their intercultural skills and the transference of those skills into their private and professional life. The research was guided by two main research questions, and their sub-questions. To answer each sub-question, interview studies, classroom observations, and the analysis of school documents, English curricula, syllabuses, and teaching materials were conducted. The research was guided by two main research questions (RQs).

RQ 1, *"How are the students' cultural diversity awareness (CDA) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) developed in English language classes at an English-medium instruction (EMI) international school in Budapest?",* generated five sub-questions.

RQ 1.1, "*What are the English language teachers' attitudes concerning the development of their students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school?*", investigated teachers' attitudes towards different cultures and the development of their students' CDA and ICC. This was investigated in **Study 1**, which comprised interviews with English teachers working at the observed school.

The goal of **RQ 1.2**, *"What are the English language teachers' practices concerning the development of their students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school?"* was to explore teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to the development of CDA and ICC, including the students' related attitudes and behaviors towards one another and the teachers, which were also the subject of **RQ 1.5. Study 2**, a classroom observation study, was carried

out to answer these sub-questions.

RQ 1.3, "*How do the teaching materials aid the development of the students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school?",* explored what kind of culture teaching took place and how ICC components were facilitated in the teaching materials used in the middle and upper primary classes at the school under investigation (year groups 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10; children aged between 9 and 15). To answer this sub-question, **Study 3**, a teaching materials analysis, was conducted.

RQ 1.4, *"How does the development of the students' CDA and ICC appear in the relevant school documents at the observed EMI international school?"* involved the examination of the school's documents, including the school's official documents, websites, English curriculum, and syllabuses. **Study 4**, a document analysis, was carried out to explore how culture teaching and the development of ICC are presented in the relevant documents.

To answer **RQ 1.5**, *"What elements of ICC and CDA do the students demonstrate in response to the development of ICC and CDA in their English language classes at the observed EMI international school?",* **Study 5 and Study 6** — interview studies with students and parents — were conducted. **Study 2**, the classroom observation study, also contributed to the investigation of the students' responses/reactions to the development of CDA and ICC.

RQ 2, *"What potential does English language teacher training have in developing trainee teachers' ICC and CDA?"* was designed to explore if and how teacher training programs at universities in Budapest contribute to the development of CDA and ICC. For this, **Study 7**, an interview study with the program leaders and lecturers of the teacher training programs, and **Study 8**, an analysis of documents, including the curricula and syllabuses followed at the universities, were conducted. This study was deemed necessary to complement the school-based study in order to see the possibilities of preparing language teachers to be able to go beyond teaching purely language and integrate language and culture teaching in their practices.

5   Research Design and Methods

The exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive case study described in this dissertation follows a qualitative approach using verbal data, the flexibility and emergent nature of which allow the researcher to proceed with an open mind, discovering new details and openings without establishing a preconceived hypothesis, as stated by Dörnyei (2007). This flexibility even allows for the development, alteration, or clarification of the research questions during the investigation, as is the case in the present study. Moreover, the emergent nature and

flexibility of the qualitative approach make it possible to expand the research in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon.

The data were collected in the course of one-on-one interviews, group interviews, classroom observations, and document analyses, followed by qualitative research. The research was carried out in an EMI international school that follows the British National Curriculum (the national curriculum for England) and syllabuses and uses teaching materials compatible with this curriculum. The participants were schoolteachers working at the observed school, students, and parents, who were purposively and randomly chosen for the study. In addition, program leaders and lecturers involved in teacher training programs at two universities in Budapest were invited to contribute to the research as participants. The official school documents, including the curriculum, syllabuses, and teaching materials used in the school under investigation, were analyzed, as were the curricula and syllabuses of the teacher training programs at the observed universities.

Table 5-1 presents the research questions, data sources, and methods of data collection and analysis, including the number of studies organized, depending on the research questions.

Table 5-1

Research Questions, Data Sources, and Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis

Research Questions	Data Sources and Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Data Analysis
1. How are the students' CDA and ICC developed in English language classes at the EMI international school in Budapest?	A case study guided by research questions 1.1 – 1.5	
1.1 What are the English language teachers' attitudes concerning the development of their students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school? 1.2 What are the English language teachers' practices concerning the development of their students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school?	**Study 1:** - Interviews with English language teachers **Study 2:** - Class observations (classroom observations focusing on the teachers' attitudes and practices and the students' reactions to the teaching)	● Thematic analysis of the interviews ● Thematic analysis of the thick descriptive field notes of the classroom observations
1.3 How do the teaching materials used for teaching English aid the development of the students' CDA and ICC at the observed EMI international school?	**Study 3:** - Teaching materials analysis	● Thematic analysis of the teaching materials
1.4 How does the development of the students' CDA and ICC appear in the relevant school documents at the observed EMI international school?	**Study 4:** -Analysis of official school documents (mission statement, public information on the school website, curriculum, syllabuses of English classes)	● Thematic analysis of the thick description of the teaching context ● Thematic analysis of the document analysis
1.5 What elements of CDA and ICC do the students demonstrate in response to the development of ICC and CDA in their English language classes at the observed EMI international school?	**Study 5:** - Group interviews with the students **Study 6:** - Interviews with parents **Study 2:** - Classroom observations	● Thematic analysis of the interviews with students and parents
2 What potential does English language teacher training have in developing trainee teachers' ICC and CDA?	**Study 7:** - Interviews with teacher trainers **Study 8:** - Analysis of the curricula and syllabuses of relevant teacher training courses	● Thematic analysis of the interviews ● Thematic analysis of the documents

In addition to the table showing the research questions, data sources, and data collection and analysis methods, a flow chart visualizing the interrelationships among the eight studies conducted to investigate students' development of CDA and ICC at an EMI international school

in Budapest is presented below. Double arrows indicate an interrelationship between studies, while single arrows show a unilateral contribution.

Figure 5-1

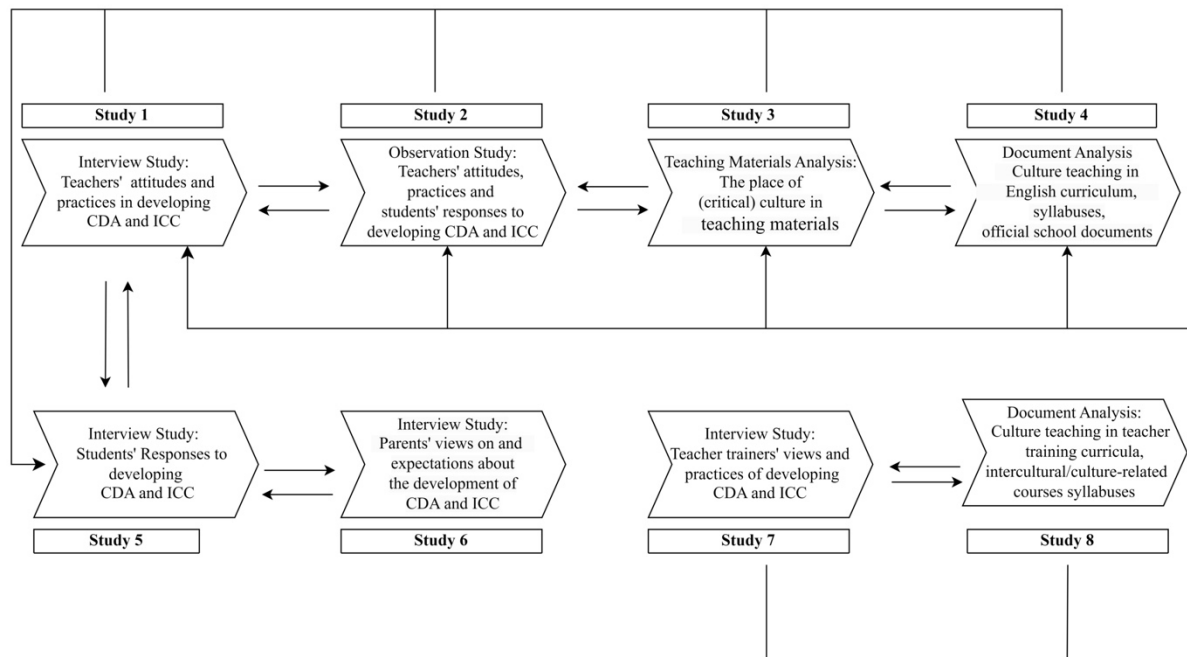*Interrelationships among the Studies*

Figure 1 shows that the findings of Study 1 (interviews with the schoolteachers) necessitated conducting Study 2 (observation study) to observe the participating teachers' English classes in terms of obtaining profound insights into how their responses in the interview study correspond to their attitudes towards and practices in developing the students' CDA and ICC. Similarly, the outcomes of Study 2 resulted in a lack of *deep culture* teaching required an analysis of how the English curricula, syllabuses, official school documents, and teaching materials contribute to the teachers' culture teaching practices (Studies 3 and 4). The teachers' analyzed attitudes and practices, and the place of culture identified in the teaching materials and school documents entailed investigating how the participant students react to the CDA and ICC development and what their parents think about raising cultural awareness and developing intercultural skills. Therefore, Studies 5 and 6 were needed to be carried out. Analyses of Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 revealed that English teacher training programs with intercultural education play a vital role in developing teachers' intercultural competency skills and transferring *attitudes*, *knowledge*, and *skills* acquired in the programs to their practices. Consequently, Studies 7 and 8 inquired how the English teacher training programs guide the

pre-service teachers to be interculturally competent and help them develop their future students' cultural awareness and intercultural skills.

6   Overall Conclusions

The aim of the current dissertation was to explore and describe the development of students' CDA and ICC at an EMI international school in Budapest that follows the British National Curriculum and uses the related syllabuses and teaching materials. The dissertation also aimed to investigate potential CDA and ICC development in teacher training programs at two universities in Budapest. A qualitative research approach was followed to conduct eight studies based on interviews, classroom observation, and teaching materials analysis. The schoolteachers working at the observed school were interviewed and their classes were observed to investigate their attitudes and practices in relation to the development of CDA and ICC (Study 1 and Study 2).

The findings of Studies 1 and 2 reveal that the participating teachers perceive culture as a multifaceted concept encompassing all aspects of culture (*big C, little c,* and *deep culture*). They regard culture as an integral part of language classes, and their practice in their English classes includes culture-related actives. However, the identified and analyzed activities are primarily superficial, knowledge-based, limited to the target culture (English-speaking countries), and lack the controversial issues of *deep culture.* As the analysis of Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated, teachers have a positive attitude towards culture teaching and developing their students' intercultural skills; however, their cultural activities are rather implicit, since language development takes precedence over culture learning objectives for them. Moreover, they know little about critical culture teaching and/or are hesitant to talk about sensitive topics belonging to *deep culture.* Studies 1 and 2 therefore suggest that teacher training programs that incorporate intercultural education are needed to raise teachers' critical cultural awareness, develop their intercultural competency skills, and help them transfer the *knowledge, attitudes,* and *skills* gained on the programs in relation to intercultural competency to their future classes.

The goal of Studies 3 and 4 was to investigate the kind of culture that is taught, and how, including how the aim of ICC development is incorporated into the English curriculum, syllabuses, teaching materials, and official school documents. As demonstrated by the outcomes of Studies 3 and 4, culture occupies a prominent place in the analyzed documents. All aspects of culture and ICC components are explicitly facilitated, although they are limited primarily to English-speaking countries. More importantly, elements of *deep culture* gradually appear in the documents, depending on the year groups, taking into consideration the students'

cognitive maturity and language proficiency level. Studies 3 and 4 thus reveal the gap between what is included in the English curriculum, syllabuses, teaching materials, and official school documents in terms of the development of CDA and ICC, and what teachers do in practice in their English classes. The analysis of Studies 3 and 4 also points to the need to select the curriculum best suited to the school population (non-native speakers of English in the current research) and to train teachers to conduct the culture teaching activities in the teaching materials.

To obtain an in-depth understanding of how students studying at the observed school respond to efforts to develop their CDA and ICC, interviews were conducted with students and their parents (Study 5 and Study 6). Study 2, which comprised of interviews conducted to examine the teachers' attitudes and practices, also contributed to the observation of the students' responses and reactions to culture teaching and ICC development.

The responses given by the participating students and their parents show that the multicultural setting of the observed school contributes to the students' cultural awareness and intercultural competency development. However, this contribution is rather implicit and accidental, which gives rise to stereotypes and bias, as reflected in the participants' analyzed responses. As Studies 5 and 6 indicate, the students are interested in critical culture learning, and their parents support the inclusion of controversial issues of *deep culture*, despite the teachers' hesitations. This suggests miscommunication between the school and the parents in terms of understanding and fulfilling expectations. The findings of Studies 5 and 6 suggest the importance of explicit intercultural education, including Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) at schools, to equip students with the *attitudes, knowledge, and skills* that will enable them to value diversity, defend their democratic rights and fulfil their responsibilities, suspend disbelief and judgment, and champion human rights, regardless of people's cultural affiliations. This finding can also be linked to teacher training programs in terms of the inclusion of intercultural education, EDC, and HRE at schools.

Finally, Studies 7 and 8 investigated how the teacher training programs at two universities in Budapest potentially include the development of CDA and ICC. Program leaders and teacher trainers working at two state universities were interviewed, and the curricula and syllabuses they follow were thematically analyzed.
The analysis of Studies 7 and 8 summarized the importance of English teacher training programs the include intercultural education, as highlighted in all eight studies conducted in the framework of the current research. According to the findings of Studies 7 and 8, culture-related courses and, more importantly, individual intercultural courses, play a crucial role in

developing pre-service teachers' *attitudes towards, knowledge of, and skills in* CDA and ICC and helping them put these skills into practice when they start teaching.

In conclusion, it can justifiably be said that the identified and described activities, including all aspects of culture and ICC components at both the observed school and the two investigated universities, can be used for the development of students' and pre-service teachers' language and cultural awareness in other English language contexts. Importantly, as one of the innovative findings of the present research, the analyzed critical culture teaching activities, containing elements of *deep culture*, are transferable to formal and informal educational settings as a way to develop the critical ICC skills needed for effective communication in the globalized world.

Figure 2 shows the interrelationships among the studies, including the findings of the analyses.

Figure 6-1

The interrelationships among the studies and the findings of the analysis

Study 1: Teachers' Attitudes and Practices

Positive attitudes towards culture teaching
Little/lack of knowledge of critical culture teaching/ hesitations about controversial issues of deep culture

Study 2:Classroom Observation

Implicit , superficial, knowledge-based culture teaching

Study 3: Teaching Materials Analysis

Enriched and transferable culture-related and critical culture teaching activities primarily based on English-speaking cultures

Study 4: Curriculum, Syllabuses, Official School Documents

Explicit culture-teaching limited to English-speaking countries
Included teaching controversial issues of deep culture

Study 5: Students' Responses to the Development of CDA and ICC

Learned aspects of culture and developed
some ICC components through a multicultural setting of the school implicitly

Study 6: Parents' Views on the Development of CDA and ICC

Support (critical) culture teaching and developing ICC skills
Dissatisfied with culture teaching at the school

Study 7: Teacher Trainers' Attitudes and Practices

Exemplified and transferable activities developing pre-service teachers' intercultural skills

Study 8: Curriculum and Syllabuses Analysis- Teacher Training Programs

Enriched culture-related courses, including intercultural education
Needs for individual intercultural courses

Implications of the Research

Implications for the Development of CDA and ICC in the Framework of Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language

The identified and listed CDA and ICC activities are potentially transferable, since although the school follows the British National Curriculum, which is designed for native speakers of English, the teachers stated that they needed to adjust this curriculum, and thus the related activities and tasks, to make them suitable for the school's largely non-native English-speaking students. It can therefore be stated that culture teaching takes place in which the development of English as a foreign language is facilitated in addition to the language development on which the British National Curriculum primarily focuses. Additionally, the English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes, organized to teach general English to those students whose English proficiency is not at the required level to participate in regular English classes, include culture-related activities embedded in language development, which are suitable for use in any English language context. The culture-related activities mentioned by the schoolteachers, observed in the classes, and analyzed in the curriculum, syllabuses, and teaching materials, showed how a wide range of practices can be conducted to develop students, CDA and ICC without jeopardizing their language development and regardless of the framework in which English is taught.

The study demonstrated how the investigated, identified, and analyzed activities aimed at developing the students' intercultural communication skills can be used in any English teaching context. These activities took the form of presentations, task-based/theme-based projects, research tasks, classroom discussions, group discussions, debates, quizzes, games, the reading and analysis of literary works, compare–contrast activities, reading and listening comprehension assignments, and role-play/simulation/drama, which can be implemented in teams or individually, depending on the purpose of the task. It should be noted that the activities mentioned above are also described and recommended by many scholars as ways to develop students' cultural awareness and intercultural skills (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2004; Piątkowska, 2015; Reid, 2015; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008).

As shown by the study, the activities listed above target the development of ICC components. For instance, literary works encompass fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, and prose, including novels, novellas, stories, poems, myths, legends, jokes, anthologies, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, essays, song lyrics, letters, emails, brochures, leaflets, videos, journal and newspaper articles, reports, working papers, conference papers, etc., collected from the target and international cultures (referring to English and non-English

cultures). These can be used to foster positive *attitudes* towards different cultures, *knowledge and understanding* of other cultures, and *(critical) cultural awareness/political education.*

Implications for Critical Culture Teaching and CDA and ICC Development in the Framework of Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language

It is also important to consider criticality in culture teaching and ICC development, since it encourages students to be aware of the reasons behind cultural norms, helping them to understand others and to be non-judgmental, thus potentially preventing conflicts, misunderstandings, and miscommunication. *Critical cultural awareness* or critical multiculturalism is mentioned by a number of scholars as a way to develop students' analytical thinking skills about cultures. Scholars suggest discussing controversial cultural issues, such as poverty, social inequality, discrimination, racism, stereotypes, prejudices, the social class struggle, minority groups, etc. (e.g., Byram, 1997; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015a, 2015b; Kubota, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Pennycook, 1999).

In terms of teaching the controversial issues of *deep culture*, topics can be categorized according to the students' language proficiency level and cognitive maturity, to ensure that the students are able to absorb, digest, and understand the given topics. Popular issues, such as gender discrimination and the Black Lives Matter movement in relation to racism, might be discussed first, for example. The students should be introduced to the topic by the teacher. Various supplementary materials can be used, including chapters or excerpts from novels, stories, and autobiographies, as well as blogs, videos, etc. Students might then be given a small-scale research task, which they subsequently present to the class for discussion. The class can be divided into groups to present or defend different or opposing aspects of the given issue. The ground rules should be established by the teacher, including an indication of the criteria for judgments if necessary, as stated by Byram (1997). The classroom/group discussions and debates should be designed to help students value, respect, and understand different ideas and to decenter their minds, if necessary, which does not mean indoctrinating them or imposing any particular ideology or theory. This will be further discussed in the following sections. Teacher training is essential to raise future teachers' awareness of the importance of criticality in culture teaching and how this can happen in practice in English classes.

The critical reading of the underlying meanings of texts, which develops discourse skills in addition to linguistics and sociolinguistics skills, can be vital for developing *critical cultural awareness* and intercultural skills. Furthermore, analyzing texts for their semantic and pragmatic meanings results in a deeper understanding of the target language and culture. Thus,

as mentioned above, the analytical reading of literary works can contribute to the development of CDA and ICC as well as to language development, as also recommended by González Rodríguez and Puyal (2012).

The results of the study also highlight the importance of compare–contrast activities, which are recommended as a way for students to become critically aware of similarities and differences between their own and other cultures, question the reasons behind those differences, and evaluate or make judgments about their own and others' cultural norms. This helps them to understand why cultural differences exist, even if they do not accept them. Comparisons thus develop students' criticality in the context of culture teaching, as also stated by Byram (1997).

Implications for Developing Language Teachers' Attitudes and Practices in Relation to Teaching CDA and ICC

The first implication of the study concerns the need for pre-service and in-service teacher training programs that include intercultural education. As shown by the present research and other relevant studies in the literature, teachers generally have positive attitudes towards different cultures (e.g., Eken, 2015; Jedynak, 2011; Larzén-Östermark, 2008). However, they do not have sufficient knowledge of teaching culture and developing their students' intercultural skills. Moreover, most of the participating teachers in the reviewed studies and some in the present research perceive culture teaching as transmitting information or providing facts about the target culture (English-speaking countries), primarily based on elements of big C culture (e.g., Jedynak, 2011; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, 2002; Young & Sachdev, 2011). As reported in the studies, the participants' perception of their profession is expressed in linguistics-related statements rather than intercultural terms. The interviewees also list the difficulties inherent in teaching culture, referring to the lack of interest on the part of their students, the lack of cultural elements in teaching materials, the absence of curriculum support, and issues related to the assessment of students' intercultural skills.

As Studies 7 and 8 demonstrate, the content of the English teacher training programs and the enriched culture-related and/or intercultural activities identified and described can help pre-service teachers to change their perceptions of culture teaching from the difficulties mentioned above into an awareness of its possibilities and applicability, and to develop their intercultural skills for use in their future classes. Teacher training programs in universities and schools thus play a crucial role in raising teachers' cultural awareness and in helping them to understand the importance of developing their students' critical intercultural skills by including all aspects of culture (*big C, little c,* and *deep culture*) into their English classes.

Regarding students' perception of culture learning, as the studies demonstrate, students' lack of interest prevents teachers from teaching culture (e.g., Young & Sachdev, 2011). However, as Study 5 suggests, culture teaching makes language classes more enjoyable, makes the language learning process contextual and more understandable, and helps students engage and actively participate in the classes. It can therefore be said that teachers' attitudes and practices play a vital role in fostering students' curiosity about culture learning. For this to happen, teachers need to be trained to teach culture and develop intercultural competency skills.

As stated by some of the participating teachers in the present research, their own training programs in the context of formal higher education tended to focus on the theoretical aspects of intercultural education. The teachers admitted being unable to remember, or not knowing, how to conduct culture-related activities. One recommendation to emerge from the present study therefore concerns the balancing of theoretical and practical aspects when developing intercultural competence in the context of teacher training programs. This will ensure that teachers are familiar with the practices associated with the respective theory and will help them to conceptualize theoretical approaches through their practical application.

The second implication is related to workshops, seminars, exchange programs, the Erasmus Programme, and professional development courses, where teachers are able to meet other teachers and teacher trainers in multicultural settings, experience intercultural encounters, and learn about intercultural education. The present study showed that the teachers working at the observed school had vast experience of teaching abroad. They were thus aware of cultural differences and of critical incidents that might arise in their classrooms. School authorities should therefore be sufficiently flexible to allow teachers to travel abroad to attend the kind of programs or courses referred to above.

Implications for Designing English Teaching Materials for Teaching Culture and Developing CDA and ICC

The first implication concerns the integration of culture teaching into English teaching materials. Since language and culture are not separate, language teaching materials contain culture-related topics and activities. However, these activities should include not only the immediately visible elements of culture — that is, *big C* culture — but also the invisible and controversial elements of culture (*little c* and *deep culture*), as a way of developing students' critical cultural awareness and intercultural skills. As mentioned earlier, activities such as research projects, presentations, and classroom discussions should be used primarily, since their multifunctional aim is to develop the students' skills of discovery, interaction,

interpreting, relating, presenting, observing, critical thinking, mediating, and research. However, these activities should not be limited to the target culture (i.e., the culture of English-speaking countries). International cultures (non-English-speaking countries) should also be included, since English is widely used as a lingua franca.

The designers of teaching materials should consider including elements of the local culture, depending on the country in which the materials are published. Learning about the students' own culture will help them to understand other cultures, to relate their own culture to different cultures, and to think critically about the similarities and differences between cultures, which is crucial for the development of *critical cultural awareness/political education.*

As the current research revealed, supplementary materials/resources in addition to textbooks/coursebooks, including extracts from novels, novellas, stories, and drama scripts, or links to related websites, blogs, videos, etc., will facilitate teachers' practice and reduce the time they spend designing/creating/selecting materials. This will be beneficial to both novice and experienced teachers when planning lessons, in terms of culture teaching as well as language teaching.

The teaching materials analysis carried out in the framework of the current research illustrated how language development can take place in conjunction with culture teaching and ICC development. English language teaching practices, including a wide range of culture-associated activities, can thus be useful resources in ESL and EFL contexts. The activities explored and described in the present dissertation can thus be considered beneficial for the development of linguistics skills and intercultural competence in any English teaching context.

The final implication concerns the guidance contained in teaching materials. Although English teaching materials do contain the mentioned activities and/or content to a greater or lesser extent, the teachers may not know how to use them. Clear and precise explanations that offer teachers guidance in the development of language and intercultural skills are therefore required. Teacher training workshops should also be organized by schools to clarify how the teaching materials can be used and to provide guidance for teachers on teaching culture.

Implications for Designing and Selecting Curricula Focusing on Teaching Culture and Developing CDA and ICC

The implications aimed at the designers of teaching materials can also be relevant to curriculum designers in terms of including aspects of culture and developing ICC. As mentioned, both local and international cultures and the cultures of English-speaking countries should be integrated into the English curriculum used in any English teaching context. The

flexibility offered by the analyzed curriculum, where teachers had a free hand to teach within the framework of the lesson objectives stated in the curriculum, can be considered a good example for curriculum designers. Curricula enriched with examples from seminal British and international literature can be used as a model for language and intercultural development.

It is worth mentioning that careful decisions must be made in terms of the curricula followed by international or local schools that provide a so-called international education and award internationally recognized certificates/diplomas. Of relevance to the present research is the fact that the British curriculum is used in British schools worldwide, even though these schools also have non-British and non-English-speaking students. Schools should therefore carefully consider whether curricula designed for native speakers of English are appropriate for their students whose first language is not English. In the present research, the participating teachers stated that some of the literary works were too advanced for their students and were challenging to understand. Furthermore, thought must be given to how subjects in the curriculum such as geography and history, which have a primary focus on Great Britain, can be taught in a way that benefits non-British students. As the present study revealed, the curriculum chosen by a particular school might not be entirely suitable for its student profile. Consequently, the school authorities should consider the benefits of international curricula that are designed for international students.

Implications for Teacher Training Programs in English as a Second or Foreign Language

A vital implication related to training programs for teachers of English as a second or foreign language is that separate, individual intercultural courses should be included in addition to culture-related classes. Although cultural studies courses help trainee teachers learn about different cultures, mainly the cultures of English-speaking countries, intercultural courses are specifically aimed at developing the trainees' intercultural skills, as illustrated by the present research. Well-designed intercultural courses, with a balance of theoretical teaching and practical activities, should therefore be implemented by universities to ensure that pre-service teachers become interculturally competent individuals who are able to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired in the program into their professional and private lives.

The content of English teacher training programs in terms of teaching culture and developing ICC has already been outlined, including the different aspects of culture. However, emphasis should be given to the controversial issues of *deep culture*, and trainees should be guided on how to teach such issues in their future English classes, as critically highlighted by the present research. As the present dissertation suggests, the trainees' practical classroom

experience should be organized in culturally diverse schools, or even abroad where possible, allowing trainee teachers to experience intercultural encounters and potential incidents and giving them an opportunity to implement their knowledge and skills before they begin teaching.

The design of the syllabuses and teaching materials should be left to the trainers, who are aware of their students' needs and interests, as highlighted in the present research. With the exception of standardized tests for language development, intercultural assessment should take place by means of the trainers' observations and by tracking students' progress using a self-assessment schedule such as the one designed by Lázár and her colleagues (2007). As recommended by the present study, the self-assessment protocol, which was used at one of the observed universities, provides an excellent example of how to assess and evaluate students' intercultural development. However, this protocol should be used by the students.

A wide selection of the activities used at the investigated universities are presented in the relevant sections of the dissertation. In terms of developing trainee teachers' intercultural skills as well as teaching skills, the highlighted activities, approaches, and techniques are good examples and can be transferred to any institute of higher education that offers intercultural training.

Finally, schools that provide an international education and award international diplomas should obtain help from universities or experts to train their teachers to deal with students from different cultural backgrounds. The teacher training programs at the universities observed in the present study are understandably restricted to their existing students. However, lecturers who teach cultural studies or intercultural classes can provide intercultural courses, including practical solutions, to address teachers' lack of intercultural education.

Contributions of the Study

The present study contributes to the existing literature by exploring and describing activities aimed at culture teaching and intercultural skills development. The activities identified and listed in the current study are recommended by a number of scholars primarily as ways to develop students' intercultural competence in language classes, thus the findings support the elaborated theories and suggested practices (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014; Byram et al., 2002; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2005; Reid, 2015; Usó-Juan &Martínez-Flor, 2008; Sercu, 2002). The wide range of language development activities, including culture, presented in the present study provide insights into the teaching of grammar and vocabulary and the development of sociolinguistics, discourse, and pragmatic skills, which contribute to improving students' linguistic and intercultural skills for successful communication. The

present study thus contributes to an understanding that culture teaching does not jeopardize the development of language skills, and provides examples of many practical activities that can be used in any English teaching context.

The study investigated attitudes and practices concerning the development of CDA and ICC exhibited by interculturally experienced and/or trained teachers who have been working in an international school in a foreign country. Thus, unlike the respective studies conducted among local foreign language teachers working in monocultural schools in their own country (e.g., Eken, 2015; Jedynak, 2011), the present study provides a better understanding of foreign teachers' feelings, beliefs, opinions, hesitations, and considerations in relation to teaching culture and developing ICC in a foreign country. The findings of the study thus contribute to an understanding of how interculturally experienced teachers perceive culture and culture teaching; how they integrate culture into their English classes; and how their vast cultural experience contributes to their teaching. At the same time, the study also reveals the gap between what is expected of language teachers and what they actually do, despite their substantial exposure to different cultures. In addition, the study lists a number of reasons for the neglect or omission of culture teaching, and the teaching of controversial issues of *deep culture* in particular, which is nevertheless vital for developing *critical cultural awareness*. The implications of the study therefore concern how teachers' intercultural education through pre- and in-service teacher training programs also contributes to culture teaching.

Although not the primary aim of the current research, consideration of the parents' expectations of international schools also emerged in the course of the study. The study thus contributes recommendations aimed at international schools in relation to the design or selection of their curriculum and teaching materials, including the employment of teachers who are able to work in a multicultural context and teach students from different cultural backgrounds. The study also revealed how international schools can benefit by including Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) in their curriculum. With respect to both the observed school and other international schools, the present study is also valuable in terms of highlighting the gap that needs to be filled between the parents' expectations, what the school promises, and what the teachers actually teach in their classes.

The present study described the various activities designed and implemented in the context of teacher training programs to develop CDA and ICC. The wide range of approaches, techniques, and practices mentioned by the teacher trainers and identified in the respective curricula and syllabuses can thus contribute to the design of related courses in the English

teacher training programs of other universities. The balance achieved between theoretical and practical aspects offers an excellent example for other institutes of higher education, both in Hungary and elsewhere.

Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of the present research give rise to several ideas for future research on the development of students' CDA and ICC, as outlined below.

Firstly, Study 1 and Study 2 investigated the teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to developing CDA and ICC. The studies showed that the teachers were generally open to different cultures, although some were challenged by their own stereotypes and prejudices despite the expectation that they should be non-judgmental. Further research might thus specifically investigate the kind of stereotypes teachers have, how they struggle to overcome them, and how these stereotypes affect their teaching and their rapport with their students. Critical incidents experienced by teachers in their classrooms and how they manage them might also be explored as a way of helping teachers to develop a *readiness to suspend disbelief, judgment,* and other *attitudes*. Similarly, it would be important to look at controversial topics that potentially cannot be taught in specific regions of the world for cultural or religious reasons, to deepen understanding of the extent to which criticality can be embedded into the respective curricula and teaching materials. Other reasons for the neglect or omission of culture teaching should also be investigated using a variety of methods to analyze new findings.

Secondly, the way in which international schools define themselves, how they offer international education, how the students and parents perceive international education, and the relationship between international education and intercultural skills development deserve in-depth investigation. Comparative research should therefore be undertaken in a larger sample of international schools to investigate the academic and intercultural development they promise. International and local schools providing similar diploma programs might be compared in terms of how they teach language and interculturality. Similarities and differences might thus be discussed despite the differences in the teacher and student profiles. Likewise, attitudes and practices in relation to the development of CDA and ICC exhibited by teachers who are native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English can be examined to identify potential differences or correlations.

7   Publications Connected to the Topic of the Research

Dogan Ger, S. (2020). Teachers' attitudes and practices concerning the development of students' cultural diversity awareness and intercultural communicative competence: A pilot study in an international school in Hungary. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy, 14*, 25-54.

Dogan Ger, S. (2021). Teaching materials analysis: The place of culture in English teaching materials used in an international school in Budapest. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy, 16*, 54-76.

Dogan Ger, S. (2022). Teaching culture and developing cultural diversity awareness and intercultural communicative competence in schools with English is the medium of instruction: A pilot study. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy, 17*, 106-134.

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