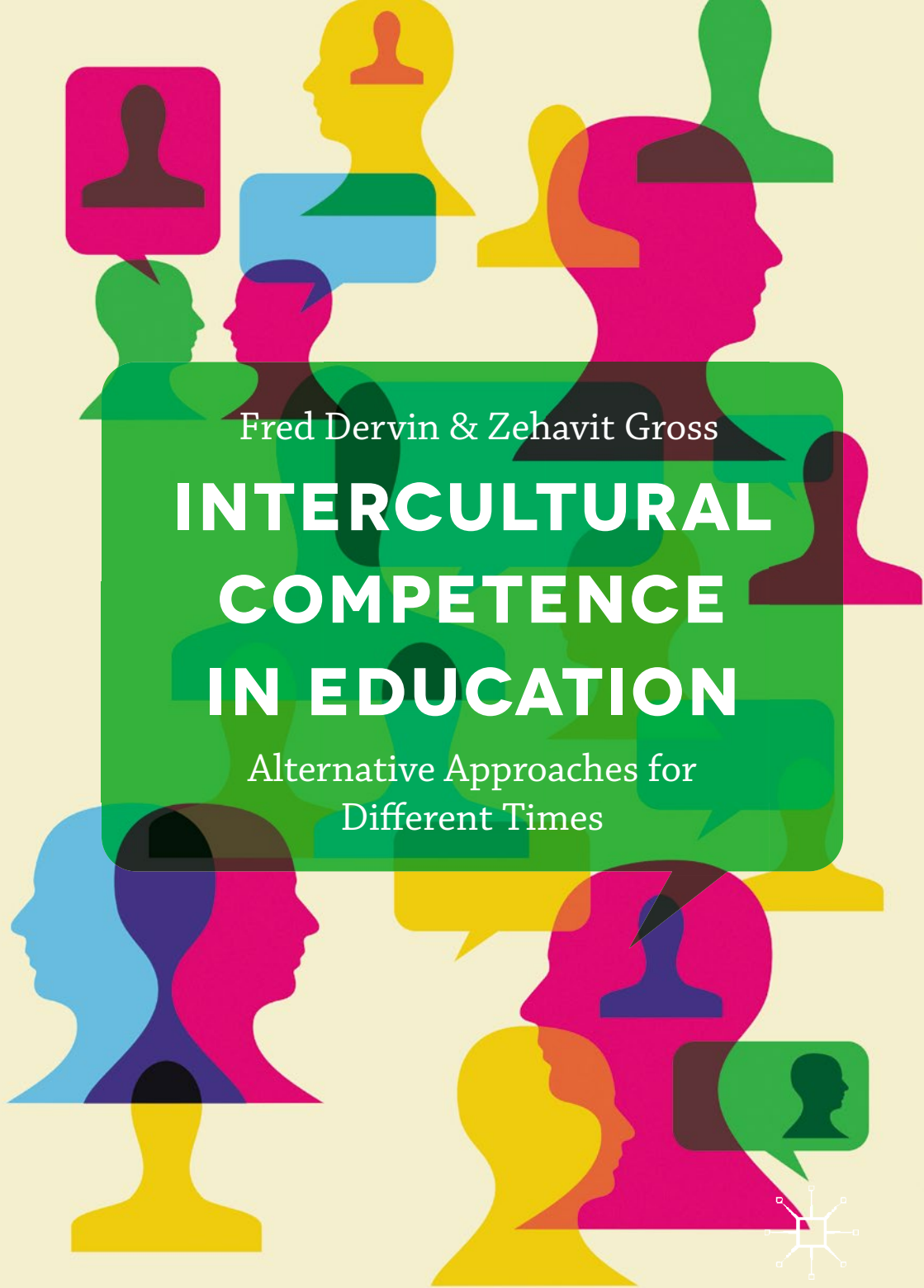

Fred Dervin & Zehavit Gross

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN EDUCATION

Alternative Approaches for Different Times

Intercultural Competence in Education

Fred Dervin • Zehavit Gross
Editors

Intercultural Competence in Education

Alternative Approaches for Different Times

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Foreword

Intercultural Competence: Alternative Approaches for Today's Education, edited by Fred Dervin and Zehavit Gross, offers a crucial and timely contribution to scholarship around intercultural studies. In our time, relevant sciences across multiple fields are challenging and invariably demolishing earlier conceptions of the world, its size and complexity, and the nature of humanity as part of it. The response from scholarship generally must be to put away narrow, perfunctory and unhelpful stereotypes about human difference, including many that might conform to political correctness, and replace them with more informed and facilitative insights befitting the age in which we live. These new insights must impel advanced approaches to the study of intercultural relations and the practical competencies needed to bring effect to inter-relating. Among the sciences that are blowing away overly simple assumptions about the world and humanity are astrophysics, neuroscience and the archaeological sciences.

Astrophysics is increasingly pressing the boundaries that have shaped our thinking about humanity's distinctiveness among human species and indeed the uniqueness of life on earth generally. The mind-blowing vastness of the known universe, possibly multiverses, the smallness of our 'pale blue dot at the edge of the universe' (as Carl Sagan would have it) and the clear linkages between life of all forms wherever it is to be found have robbed us of any grounds for arrogance in being superior as humans, much less superior as a particular species of humanity over other human cultures. If all of life is one and we share basic Ribonucleic acid (RNA) with all animate and supposedly inanimate species, then whatever small genetic twist binds us together as humans has to be seen as far more significant

than cosmetic differences of colour and creed. These insights must influence the way we see each other as sharers of the pale blue dot and hence the way we approach intercultural studies of any kind. For Sagan and his protégé, Neil de Grasse Tyson, the conclusion for humanity's place in the scheme of things is one of humility and reverence, all in one. We are small yet ever so privileged to share in the miracle of life on this magnificent but fragile speck in the heavens!

Neuroscience is pushing other boundaries, especially around the vastness of the brain, human and otherwise. It is telling us that digital storage of a single human brain (if it were possible) would likely exceed all the storage currently available on the planet. It is telling us that each and every human brain is unique, much like the fingerprint. Like astrophysical insights, these are findings that ultimately underline the remarkable complexity and majesty of the phenomenon of all life, but especially human life. Yet, while we adulate over the wondrous precision of a well-made motor engine and nurture and protect our mobile phones as if they were our progeny, we nonetheless treat each other as humans with callous disregard day in and day out. The engine and the phone are only disposable once they've run their course, yet we exclude, dismiss and dispose of human life daily through war, immigration policy and common bigotry. While modern science is telling us we should treat each other with awe, we persistently mistreat each other with hatreds built on the baselessness of cosmetic differences of gender, ethnicity and religion.

Finally, the archaeological sciences are providing ever-deepening understanding of how we have evolved as a species and what it is that connects us most deeply with our ancestors. The once supposed symbols of modern civilized humanity, namely living in community with authority, legal and economic structures, are giving way to conceptions of much older and apparently more ingrained pre-human architecture around common beliefs and associated artefacts of ritual and myth. In this sense, humanity and its direct ancestry is seen to have been around for far longer than the normally ascribed historical period or even that of homo sapiens. We now know we share DNA with the Neanderthal and possibly pre-Neanderthal peoples and, it would seem likely, both of these engaged in funerary rites not hugely different in kind from our own. This is something that sets humanity and its ancestry apart from other species of life and, again, one might suppose, should shore up our regard for each other and, in turn, our earnest desire to communicate with each other in optimal fashion.

These are just some of the ways in which modern research and scholarship is pushing us to lift our sights and intentions around our attitudes and treatment of each other as a species. Yet, as is so often the case, the prevalence of attitudes and treatment does not match it, indeed in many ways runs counter to it. At a time when we have the education and resources to live together better than ever before, we find ethnocentrism, xenophobia and violence one to the other as ingrained as they have ever been. The instance of Islamophobia is just one example, but quite likely the sharpest and most damaging available today. One would think that all of the above scientific insights, together with the obvious and demonstrable fact that those who commit atrocities in the name of Islam are renegades whose practices are clearly contradictory to anything one could find out about Islam from the first page of an authentic Islamic text or from conversing with any number of ordinary Muslims, would condemn Islamophobia to the almost unheard of margins of any civilized society. Yet, it is not so! So far is it not so that one now finds a candidate for presidency of the supposedly most civilized society on earth running strongly on an anti-Islam platform, and doing very well as a result. It is for reasons like these, and many others to do with securing a more coherent, harmonious and sustainable human community, that we need books like this one edited by Professors Dervin and Gross, and contributed to by a host of revered scholars in relevant fields.

Terence Lovat

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Towards the Simultaneity of Intercultural Competence

Fred Dervin and Zehavit Gross

Some months ago one of us attended a cross-cultural training session to boost his intercultural competence (IC) for selling educational services to 'Asian' colleagues. The session was run by a foremost cross-cultural consultant who had spent many years in different countries and spoke a dozen languages. The consultant provided the participants with a list of 'to dos' and 'don'ts' as well as 'cultural recipes', to meet people from the East 'successfully' and 'effectively', repeatedly emphasizing the fact that they had to pay attention to their Asian counterparts' 'face'. As the attendants were to present in front of the 'Asian' colleagues they were given tips such as 'bow before you start presenting; this will show that you respect them. Respect is key to intercultural competence'. When the day came to meet the 'Asians' (who were all from China) one could tell that everyone was nervous. 'Let's hope we don't make too many cross-cultural mistakes. I need to remember to bow and protect "their" face', some said. All the local speakers did perform a 'perfect' bow—as they had been taught—before talking. During lunch break, however, the Chinese asked some of them if they also had to bow when they were going to give

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presentations in the afternoon, and if bowing was a Finnish cultural habit. They all laughed in unison when the local partners told them that they had been instructed to do it for them, as a mark of respect for their 'culture'.

This anecdote, of which many readers will probably have ample examples, shows that the concept of intercultural competence can easily be *non-simultaneous*, in reference to E. Bloch's *Ungleichzeitigkeit*, 1935/2009: the 'recipes' and ideological representations that the concept bears are opposed to the reality of our world, of today's education. In other words the consultant's approach could be qualified as something of the past, a perspective on the 'intercultural' which is out of line with the current zeitgeist. Interestingly enough, one person's views on a 'culture' ('Asians') were meant to dictate the competences, attitudes and behaviours of 12 people from another 'culture'. Like us, the authors of the chapters contained in this volume believe that 'solid' cultural boxes need to be urgently emptied. What we propose to do in this volume is to re-calibrate IC to a more simultaneous, synchronized position—*IC for today's education*. We aim to discuss the politics of IC, its potentially ethnocentric and aggrandising aspects and the lack of reflexivity that sometimes goes with it.

Contradictorily the concept of IC can be both polysemic and empty in education: it either means too much or too little. Researchers, practitioners but also decision makers use it almost automatically without always worrying about its meaning(s), the impact(s) it has on those who are embedded in its discussions and the injustice it can lead to. A few 'usual suspects' whose work is systematically (and uncritically) mentioned have often managed to keep mainstream global understandings of intercultural competence simplified, fuzzy or unrealistic. In times like ours where the 'other' tends to be stereotyped, rejected, detested and sometimes abused, it is urgent to find new ways of dealing with the issue of interculturality from a renewed perspective. Education has a central role to play here.

This volume presents *new*, *critical* and *original* approaches to IC that try to go beyond these problematic 'McDonaldized' models and 'reinventing the wheel' perspectives. Some of the authors are interested in criticizing the most 'influential' models of IC while others have attempted (un)successfully to develop new understandings and models of IC. The editors wish to promote the idea that failure is also inherent to research on and teaching of IC. Too often an over-emphasis on success in the field represents a dangerous bias. The editors and the authors consider IC to be synonymous with multicultural competence, cross-cultural competence, global competence, and so on as these labels are also unstable and can be used interchangeably.

Warnings: The Non-simultaneity of IC

Different times, different worlds, different solutions. As hinted at earlier the way IC has been discussed, conceptualized and manoeuvred deserves full deconstruction again and again. One should never be satisfied with the concept. Non-simultaneous with the complexity of our world, more modern-classifying than postmodern-deconstructing in nature, many aspects of IC can often do more harm than good. In what follows we wish to oppose misconceptions of IC with the realities of our world.

Let us start with the following utterance: 'I enjoyed the company of Malaysians. I had never spoken to a Malaysian before, but they were really great!' For many people this simple utterance can signal IC: the utterer is open-minded, tolerant, respectful and so on. However the intercultural, like any other human and social phenomena, is ideological and highly political. Whenever we utter something about self and the other, our discourses cannot but be political. In the utterance above what the speaker says about Malaysians shows that he had (potentially negative?) expectations about them (*maybe they are not great?*) and that, maybe, under the surface, he believed that 'his' group or other groups were better. What we also find in this short excerpt is a good example of essentialism, whereby a few people are made to stand for an entire population (in the case of Malaysia: 30 million people). The British-Pakistani novelist and writer Mohsin Hamid (2014, p. 31) criticizes this monolithic approach when he describes different members of his family:

> I have female relations my age who cover their heads, others who wear mini-skirts, some who are university professors or run businesses, others who choose rarely to leave their homes. I suspect if you were to ask them their religion, all would say 'Islam'. But if you were to use that term to define their politics, careers, or social values, you would struggle to come up with a coherent, unified view.

As paradoxical as it might seem, an approach to intercultural competence that fails to point coherently, cohesively and consistently to the complexity of self and the other fails to accomplish what it should do: Helping people to see beyond appearances and simplifying discourses—and thus lead to 'realistic' encounters. As such Gee (2000, p. 99) reminds us that, when interacting with others, 'The "kind of person" one is recognized as "being", at a given time and place, can change form moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and of course, can be ambiguous or unstable'. It thus makes very little sense to present

people with grammars of culture or recipes. IC should help us to question our solid ways of 'appropriating' the world and the other. The prefix *inter-* in intercultural competence hints at transformations, *mélange*, reactions *not* cannibalistic behaviours through which one of the interlocutors swallows the other by imposing their 'better' and 'more civilized' culture.

Another problem with IC lies in the overemphasis on difference (cultural difference), which is problematic in a world like ours where boundaries are loose and ideas, thoughts, practices, discourses, beliefs and so on travel the world so quickly. Commonalities can cut across countries, regions, languages, religions and so on. They thus need to be included in IC. We argue with Maffesoli and Strohl (2015, p. 12) that an emphasis on similarities does not necessarily lead to universalistic perspectives but to 'unidiversalism' (diversities in difference and commonality). Without this, IC has the potential to repress and silence any a priori rejection and critical reflexivity. It can develop criteria of relativism, and sanctify hypocrisy and closed eyes, when it's 'convenient', in the name of interests and the noble need to show IC. Intercultural competence can be aimed at preserving social coherence and creating uniformity in a superficial sense, though not uniformity in the deepest sense. The aim can sanctify every means, and the means can be justified by the argument of interculturality.

The non-simultaneity of many approaches to IC also requires questioning the way we (are made to) believe in the aforementioned problems. In agreement with Merino and Tileagă (2011, p. 91), we need to be careful with mere reports of experience or discourses on interculturality: Culture can serve as an alibi, an invention and a way of manipulating the other or a way of showing others implicitly that we are better than them. IC also has the potential for flawed morality. In many cases, when people seem to be displaying IC, they in fact find themselves lying to comply with some form of political correctness, in order to articulate what 'the other' (or, e.g., educators) might want to hear. In actual fact, though, the speakers frequently articulate what is an a priori false representation, or a white lie. This raises the question whether the cultural is political, and whether the political is cultural—or both. Can we differentiate between them, or are there specific circumstances when we mix the two with the aim of achieving certain goals?

IC should thus help its 'users' to deal with these unfair phenomena and to question them in order to move to a higher level of engagement with others.

Proposals: Reinforcing the Simultaneity of IC

We agree with P. Nynäs (2001, p. 34) when he claims that 'there is no way we can provide a technique for successful communication or a causal model for intercultural communication'. There is no panacea for IC. IC cannot be 'acquired' forever. Those who try to sell their models of IC as leading to success or efficiency are either naive or deceitful. Renegotiating and reinforcing the simultaneity of IC mean taking into account current analyses of postmodern and postcolonial realities. They also require deconstructing Western epistemologies that have helped to validate 'our' superiority (Andreotti, 2011).

A simultaneous perspective on IC starts from the idea of *diverse diversities*: everybody is diverse regardless of their origins, skin colour, social background and so on. Depending on the context or interlocutor, signs of diverse diversities may change. IC should also aim at educating about the dangers of non-essentialistic, non-culturalist ideas and to 'suppress' them as they can hide discourses of discrimination, power, superiority and can easily serve as excuses and alibis (Dervin, 2016). This approach also questions issues of 'solid' origins, which can conceal 'codes' leading to (hidden) discrimination, oppression, injustice and hierarchies.

Of course we need to bear in mind that this approach to self and other has its limits. IC can be quite unstable as it is negotiated in interaction with 'complex' people and in specific contexts, which has an impact on power relations. In some situations, because one feels inferior or simply because one is tired, the noble objectives of non-essentialism and non-culturalism cannot be met even if one tries hard. IC should thus recognize their importance but, at the same time, urge its supporters to remain aware of the 'simplexity' of any act of interaction. Simplexity, a portmanteau word composed of *simple* and *complexity*, represents a continuum between the simple and the complex—two processes that we have to face all the time (Dervin, 2016). There is a need to recognize and accept that, as IC researchers and practitioners, we can only reach a practical simplification of intercultural phenomena. Simplexity, an emerging theory in General Systems Theory, philosophy, biology and neurosciences (Berthoz, 2012), represents the experiential continuum that every social being has to face on a daily basis. We all need to navigate between simple and complex ideas and opinions when we interact with others. It means that we often end up contradicting ourselves, not being sure about what we think, adapting our discourses to specific situations

and interlocutors, using 'white lies' to please the other, etc. Sometimes what we say shows some level of complexity (e.g., 'I believe that everybody has multiple identities'/'I don't believe in stereotypes'), which can quickly dive back into the simple ('but I think that Finnish people are this or that'). Neither simplicity nor complexity can thus be fully reached and what might appear simple can become complex and vice versa. Our own complexity makes it impossible to grasp the complexity of others. No one can claim to be able to analyse, understand and/or talk about the intercultural from a complex perspective because sooner or later the complex becomes simple and vice versa. 'Simplexifying' IC consists in recognizing and accepting that one cannot access its complexity but navigate, like Sisyphus rolling up his boulder up a hill, between the 'simple' and the 'complex'. This is also why IC should move beyond programmatic and 'recipe-like' perspectives. Simple progression ('stages') in the development and/or acquisition of IC should be rejected. As such IC is composed of contradictions, instabilities and discontinuities. Awareness of instability can help people to accept that the world, and especially self and the other, are neither programmed nor better than others and to urge them to revise their power relations.

Finally, as hinted at before, most models of IC 'available on the market' fall into the trap of 'success only'—a problematic feature of our times. IC should be acceptable as failure and, in a sense, promote the beneficial aspects of failure for future learning and self-criticality. Celebrating failure—as much as success—should be a 'natural' component of IC in a world obsessed with selective success only. Of course it is important to make sure that everyone faces failure and not just minorities or those who are deemed to be very different from 'us'.

In short, the simultaneity of IC should lead us to accept and recognize that:

- any approach to IC is ideological and political;
- the principle of 'diverse diversities' should guide our understanding of IC;
- interaction and the negotiation of identities are central to IC;
- the continuum *simple-complex* ('simplexity') should serve as a basis for work on IC; and
- discussions on and acceptance of failure should be included in 'models' of IC.

About the Volume

The principles for renewing IC proposed in this introduction and for making it more adapted to today's education are developed in different ways in the chapters of this book. The authors provide answers to the following questions:

- What is wrong with current approaches to IC? What mistakes have been made—especially from researchers' perspectives?
- How can we move from an individualistic approach to intercultural competence to interactive and co-constructivist ones?
- Is the idea of intercultural competence a thing of the past? How does it compare to intracultural competence (if such a thing exists)?
- What can we do with old and tired concepts such as identity, culture and community when we talk about intercultural competence?
- What are the myths surrounding the concept of intercultural competence?

The volume is divided into three parts: (1) Part I: Adding to previous perspectives: Making IC more effective? (Chaps. 2–5), (2) Part II: Renewing intercultural competence: Beyond established models? (Chaps. 6–9); and (3) Part III: Renewed intercultural competence in practice (Chaps. 10–12).

The first part opens with a chapter by Troy McConachy and Anthony J. Liddicoat about meta-pragmatic awareness and intercultural competence. The authors examine instances of language learners' attempts at intercultural mediation in the form of reflective commentaries on their processes of sense-making in relation to pragmatic phenomena across languages. They argue that this perspective to IC can lead to interesting creative solutions to interculturality.

In the following chapter Ulla Egidiussen Egekvist, Niels-Erik Lyngdorf, Xiang-Yun Du and Jiannong Shi explore Danish host students' IC in the context of international study visits. Inspired by social constructivist understandings of culture the authors explore the development of the students' IC by investigating their experiential learning, stereotypes and copying strategies and support.

Hild Elisabeth Hoff's chapter proposes to reconceptualize intercultural communicative competence by focusing on literary reading. Using M. Byram's famous model as a basis, the proposed model of IC demonstrates how the text interpretation process may operate at

different interlinked levels of communication, and involving emotions and cognition. The author also provides a practical example of how the fostering of 'intercultural readers' may take place in the Foreign Language classroom.

The last chapter of Part I examines how young people in Iceland describe IC under the label 'competences for active communication and participation in diverse societies'. The author, Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, explores the factors young people see as being important for active communication and participation in a diverse society. Unlike and in complement to the previous chapters, the author draws on critical multiculturalism, cosmopolitan citizenship, cosmopolitanism and liquidity in modern societies.

Part II contains four chapters that represent attempts at renewing IC, beyond established models. In 'Intercultural Competence and the Promise of Understanding', Giuliana Ferri adopts an interdisciplinary approach into the epistemological assumptions of the concept of competence and the ethical implications for intercultural dialogue. She illustrates Derrida's notion of promise to critique the epistemological underpinnings of the notion of intercultural competence as it is presented in two 'famous' intercultural frameworks. Through her critique, Ferri introduces the idea of a deferred promise of understanding as a guiding principle for interculturality. She also sketches an alternative understanding of competence that relies on an idea of communication aligned to a Levinasian interpretation of the ethical.

The next chapter is based the interesting notion of 'intercultural polyphonies'. The author, Clara Sarmento, proposes to open up our understanding of IC by including the relations between geographically distant cultures, as much as between marginal and mainstream, youth and senior, rich and poor, erudite and popular cultures, all within the same society.

Ribut Wahyudi's chapter is an auto-ethnography of IC. It represents at the same time a call for multidynamic, intersubjective, critical and interdisciplinary approaches to IC. The author argues that such perspectives fit well today's worlds and education, representing a shift from an emphasis on essentialized descriptions of the other as a cultural being to a more open, intersubjective perspective.

The last chapter of Part II 'Living Intercultural Lives: Identity Performance and Zones of Interculturality' was written by Leah Davcheva and Richard Fay. Reacting against mono-ethnic, mono-cultural and even mono-linguistic constructions of society, and inherent nationally framed understandings of IC the authors use the narratives of elderly Sephardic

Jews living in Bulgaria to trace the intra-, inter-, and trans-cultural activities that they have engaged in, and continue to engage in, within and beyond their home society. The authors thus propose a new, data-grounded conceptualization of ICC as a dynamic process of performing intra-, inter-, trans-cultural identities in zones of interculturality.

The last part of the volume proposes examples of renewed IC in practice. It opens with, Robyn Moloney, Lesley Harbon and Ruth Fielding's chapter 'An Interactive, Co-constructed Approach to the Development of Intercultural Understanding in Pre-service Language Teachers'. Exploring an experiential collaborative approach to the development of intercultural understandings in pre-service language teachers, the authors explain how they introduced the teachers to discourse analysis and recognition of classroom discourse patterns in order to have a critical discussion with them about cultural assumptions. This approach to IC represents an innovative task to support critical reflection, and to question teachers' perspectives, complexity and assumptions.

This is followed by Annelise Ly and Kristin Rygg's chapter 'Challenges of Teaching Intercultural Business Communication in Times of Turbulence'. The authors discuss the teaching of IC in a Norwegian School of Economics. Different activities illustrating the 'renewed' approach to IC are presented and problematized.

The final chapter has as its context competence-based forms of education (CBE), which are meant to align education with the demands of the business world. The author, Karin Zotzmann, discusses the assumption that there is a generalizable 'competence' with subcomponents that enables individuals to 'deal' with 'difference' and 'otherness', and that this can be codified, taught, acquired and, at least potentially, assessed. The chapter proposes a potentially more desirable view of IC for the context of higher education.

This is an ambitious volume and we hope that it will succeed in moving research on IC forward and spur enhanced interest in discussing it beyond 'non-simultaneity'—perspectives more likely to apply to today's education. IC will, no doubt, remain relevant and vital in the decades to come—*even if it may appear under other labels such as global-mindedness or cosmopolitanism*.

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PART I

Adding to Previous Perspectives: Making IC More Effective?

CHAPTER 2

Meta-pragmatic Awareness and Intercultural Competence: The Role of Reflection and Interpretation in Intercultural Mediation

Troy McConachy and Anthony J. Liddicoat

Introduction

In recent decades the development of intercultural competence (IC) has been discussed as an educational imperative in various contexts, including in foreign language education (e.g., Bolten, 1993; Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Byram, 1997; Kawakami, 2001; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Zarate, Lévy, & Kramsch, 2008). Within foreign language education it is increasingly recognized that language learners need to be equipped with the capabilities that will allow them to effectively navigate intercultural communication that takes place in one or more foreign languages. In particular, the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes many modern interactions means that the ability of individuals to mediate across cultures is of greater importance than ever. In models

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of IC that are influential within foreign language education, the ability of individuals to draw on knowledge of culturally specific meanings of different languages in order to relate and explain written and oral practices to speakers of another language has been considered a key component (Byram, 1997). However, the theoretical separation of intercultural competence from linguistic competence in some current models brings about difficulties in properly conceptualizing the role of language knowledge in intercultural mediation (Egli Cuenat & Bleichenbacher, 2013). Although knowledge of foreign languages is seen as a necessary condition for promoting dialogue through which cultural differences can be overcome, these differences are primarily understood as language-external. This means that language comes to be positioned more or less as a neutral 'tool' for problem-solving rather than as a constituent of cultural difference itself (Beacco, 2004).

We view culture as a meaning system constituted by a complex amalgam of knowledge, assumptions and values broadly shared within a given collectivity, which functions as a resource for individuals and groups to give meaning to the objects and actions in the material and social world (D'Andrade, 1984). Knowledge, assumptions and values are necessarily related in that all knowledge is based on certain assumptions about reality, and aspects of reality are judged according to a range of consciously and unconsciously understood evaluative criteria. Culture thus possesses properties that are used for delineating desirable and undesirable behaviour, as well as assigning a range of other social characteristics to behaviour and individuals. As a meaning system, culture is necessarily embodied in symbols, particularly the concepts that comprise the language and the discourse practices that are essential for dealing with everyday human life (Geertz, 1973). Individuals draw on culture in order to select possibilities for constructing social action, with the expectation that other members of their social group will interpret their actions appropriately and so establish intersubjectivity. Cultural differences may be manifested in differing repertoires of symbolic practices or in differing understandings of the meanings of those practices, which renders more difficult the establishment of intersubjectivity. It is for this reason that we view the act of intercultural mediation as presupposing a certain amount of awareness of the ways in which linguistic practices can be variably interpreted across cultures and the ability to use awareness as a resource for constructing plausible interpretations of linguistic phenomena that are encountered (Gohard-Radenkovic, Lussier, Penz, & Zarate, 2004). In this chapter we take the

position that any conceptualization of intercultural competence needs to take into account the linguistic experience of difference that is inherent in intercultural communication (cf., Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013) and the role that the individual's awareness of language plays in the negotiation of meanings. It is this dimension that has not been adequately theorized to this point in many models of intercultural competence in the foreign language teaching context.

Although much previous discussion on intercultural mediation has focused on how individuals use their knowledge of languages and cultures to mediate for others, we wish to emphasize that mediation is first and foremost an interpretive activity engaged in by individuals for their own understanding (Liddicoat, 2014). This chapter explores the relationship between awareness and mediation as elements of intercultural competence by examining the role that meta-pragmatic awareness plays in intercultural mediation. It analyzes learners' reflective commentaries on perceived pragmatic differences between languages and how they make sense of such differences.

Intercultural Mediation from a Meta-pragmatic Perspective

Within a view of intercultural mediation as an interpretive activity, the ways in which individuals draw on and move between cultural frameworks from their own and other languages when making sense of pragmatic phenomena is of central importance. While some aspects of pragmatic phenomena may be universal, there are important differences across languages in regard to how pragmatic acts are realized, the degree to which particular acts are conventionalized, and the significance that particular acts have in terms of reflecting and reconstructing social relationships. The ways that speakers use linguistic forms to perform pragmatic acts such as requests, apologies, compliments and criticisms, as well as the common conversational routines that lubricate social relations, are inextricably intertwined with broader culturally derived notions related to the rights and responsibilities of speakers when interacting in particular contexts (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Kasper, 2006). Naturally, this does not mean that all individuals who speak a particular language communicate or even interpret pragmatic acts in exactly the same way. What it means is that each language has a range of interactional options available for achieving particular pragmatic acts, and the significance of these options is interpreted with reference to broadly shared cultural expectations. As with all

types of social behaviour, pragmatic acts are interpreted within the context of a moral order (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). What this means is that pragmatic interpretation goes beyond 'identifying' the particular speech act an interlocutor is trying to achieve—it also necessarily accompanies judgements (both conscious and unconscious) as to whether the act was conducted in an appropriate way or not, which is essentially a judgement of the individual as a social being. Pragmatic acts provide resources to individuals for indexing particular characteristics, such 'friendly', 'playful', 'rude', 'considerate' and so on, and thus construct particular personas in their social relationships. Interaction is thus a venue for the interpretation of pragmatic acts and individuals who conduct such acts. What is problematic for IC, and thus highly relevant for intercultural mediation, is that the cultural assumptions from which such value judgements derive can tend to remain out of conscious awareness (Coupland & Jaworski, 2004). In IC this means that seemingly superficial pragmatic differences contain within them the potential for generating both positive and negative stereotypes. Therefore, the development of meta-pragmatic awareness is an important requirement for those who engage in IC.

Although we view meta-pragmatic awareness as a central feature of intercultural competence, it is important to note that meta-pragmatic awareness is understood in different ways. Some ways of understanding meta-pragmatic awareness focus very much on linguistic aspects of language in use and focus on recognizing what linguistic action is being performed by particular utterances in context (e.g., Mey, 1993; Verschueren, 2000). Other understandings of meta-pragmatic awareness see it more in terms of explicit knowledge of the ways that particular utterances tend to correspond with particular interactional contexts. The focus here is more on awareness of the contextual constraints on linguistic resources for achieving particular pragmatic acts and how this ties in with judgements of pragmatic appropriateness (e.g., Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Safont-Jordá, 2003). One significant limitation of such conceptions is that the object of meta-pragmatic awareness is limited to the more salient pragmatic norms and conventions of the target language, without incorporating the individual's reflexive awareness of the cultural assumptions and concepts through which norms themselves are constituted. That is, meta-pragmatic awareness is primarily considered to be knowledge of *what* is considered (in)appropriate language use in a given context rather than *why*. Moreover, meta-pragmatic awareness is typically theorized as a within-language and within-culture activity and as such does not involve the cross-language and cross-culture dimension that is inherent in IC. That is, traditional understandings of meta-pragmatic awareness have

not been formulated to capture the ways that individuals bring into interaction cultural concepts and frameworks relevant to different languages to arrive at interpretations of pragmatic acts.

In order to understand the role of meta-pragmatic awareness in intercultural mediation, it is necessary to recognize that for individuals who operate with more than one language, meta-pragmatic awareness is necessarily intercultural (McConachy, 2013). That is to say, the conceptual frameworks that underlie separate languages inevitably influence each other within the interpretative processes of the individual. This influence may involve the application of cultural concepts or assumptions about first-language pragmatics to the interpretation of a foreign language, or it may involve the reverse. Moreover, as an individual's capability in a foreign language develops and interactional experiences diversify, individuals construct interpretations that bring together cultural meanings from originally disparate frameworks in unique ways (Kecskes, 2014). Mediation is constituted by a process where the individual makes a conscious effort to consider the cultural frames that shape interpretation of pragmatic acts in each language, how these differ across languages, and what the consequences of these differences are for use of these languages in intercultural communication. From a meta-pragmatics perspective, mediation involves going beyond simplistic comparisons of pragmatic norms to probe the concepts and meaning structures that underlie language use and view diversity from beyond the scope of a single linguistic system (Liddicoat & Kohler, 2012). Meta-pragmatic awareness for intercultural mediation is thus characterized by heightened awareness of the culturally contexted nature of pragmatic acts within and across cultures. Viewing meta-pragmatic awareness in this way opens up the possibility of language itself becoming both a focus of and a resource for intercultural mediation.

The act of positioning languages and cultures in relation to each other, and hence of mediation itself, always necessitates comparison. However, there is a certain paradox in that although mediation essentially requires individuals to relate languages and cultures to each other, it requires that this be done in a way that each culture is seen in its own terms. In order to resolve this paradox it is best to see mediation as existing on a developmental plane, whereby the ability to move in and out of cultural frameworks to develop more nuanced understandings of the cultural basis of pragmatic interpretation increases in sophistication. While early attempts at mediation might result in simplistic comparisons and ethnocentric value judgements of self and other, the ability to reflect more deeply on the significance of linguistic input, to decenter from default perceptions, and the ability to develop more sophisticated explanations for pragmatic inter-

pretation can be regarded as indicators of development (Liddicoat, 2006). However, although an engagement with foreign conceptual systems, particularly as they relate directly to norms for language use, provides opportunities for moving beyond assumptions based on the first language, this is not a guaranteed outcome. In fact, an encounter with aspects of foreign-language pragmatics can challenge individuals' assumptions about how social relations are conducted and how the self is to be presented in discourse. This threat to the individual's worldview can lead to resistance or the attribution of negative value judgements to target language speakers as a kind of defensive psychological mechanism (Ishihara & Tarone, 2009). It, therefore, cannot be simplistically assumed that intercultural mediation will always be successful or that decentering will be an inevitable outcome of attempts at mediation. Resistance or discomfort encountered in attempts at mediation serve the important function of bringing to awareness each individual's personal boundaries, which can then be explored through further reflection.

An additionally important aspect of awareness in mediation is recognition of the fact that any individual comes to the act of interpretation not as national representative embodying perfect cultural knowledge, but as an individual with his or her own personal biography (Gohard-Radenkovic, 2009). As mediation always takes place from a given position, what is mediated in any concrete act of mediation is not one or more monolithic cultures, but the individual's situated understanding of these cultures. In relation to the first language, any individual's meta-pragmatic awareness is constructed on the basis of reference to broadly shared cultural models for interpreting pragmatic acts and the individual's own history of interactional experiences and personalized interpretations of these experiences (Kecskes, 2014). Interlocutors who come from a particular country will not necessarily be culturally situated in the same way and will, therefore, not always conform to one's expectations, particularly those drawn from exaggerated stereotypes (Dervin, 2011). This can be stated both in relation to how individuals achieve pragmatic acts and how they interpret them within and across cultures. In coming to mediate in a foreign language, while it is necessary for the learner to come to discern aspects of foreign language pragmatics and the underlying cultural knowledge and assumptions involved; the learner at the same time needs to be aware of contextual and individual variability in language use. In this sense, while mediation is informed by an individual's starting point meta-pragmatic awareness in any given interac-

tion, the individual needs to engage in continual reflection on the basis of incoming cultural data, sophisticating one's meta-pragmatic awareness and ability to mediate over time.

The analysis that follows will aim to illustrate how meta-pragmatic awareness functions as a resource for intercultural mediation along a continuum of development.

Data

The data for this chapter are drawn from a number of different sources. The focus is on language learners' reflections on their experiences of language in use. Some extracts are drawn from classroom interactions in which students focus on aspects of language and culture and construct meaningful accounts of their understandings. Other extracts are taken from learners' reflections on their language learning in which they retrospectively construct accounts of their emerging understandings. Each extract has been chosen to reflect a specific feature of meta-pragmatic awareness that emerges as language learners' reflect on language and the aim is for the data to be indicative of the processes relevant to understanding meta-pragmatic awareness as a component of IC, rather than presenting an exhaustive account of the complexities involved.

Extracts 1 and 2 are taken from written reflections in the learning journals of several Japanese learners of English in their early twenties who had been studying about the role of discourse about the weekend in social relationships in Australia. Extract 3 is taken from a separate group of four Japanese learners of English in their early twenties who were enrolled in a pre-sessional course in Tokyo. These students had been conducting a task that required them to reflect on ways of interacting they observed when overseas which they perceived as different to what might normally be expected in a similar context in Japan. Extract 4 is taken from a recording of an in-class discussion between a group of Australian post-beginner level students of Japanese who were working collaboratively to develop a script for a role play as part of a spoken Japanese language course. Extract 5 is taken from an interview with an Australian student of French who had recently returned from studying for a year as an exchange student at a university in Paris in which he was asked about his experiences, both positive and negative, when studying and living in France.

Learners' Meta-pragmatic Reflections as Acts of Intercultural Mediation

Meta-pragmatic awareness is manifested in different ways in learners' understanding of language in use and these differences can be understood in developmental terms, in which development can be seen as increasingly complex interpretations of the language–culture relationship (Liddicoat, 2006). The reflective commentary of several Japanese learners of English below, taken from McConachy (2008), can be seen as meta-pragmatic formulations that make a relatively simple link between language and culture.

Extract 1

S6: I felt that asking a bunch of questions to people in the workplace is very different to things in Japan. In Japan conversations tend to take place with one or two utterances, so I felt that people from English-speaking countries are friendly.

Extract 2

S5: I think Westerners have a friendly feel about them. In Japan this would be thought of as being 'over-friendly', so I really feel that cultural differences are very difficult. I hope that I can communicate enough that the other person doesn't interpret me as being rude.

The two examples come from students' discussions of differences between Australian and Japanese interactions involving enquiries about the weekend. In interactions among Australians, such enquiries typically constitute a ritualized form of social interaction that is played out in greetings (Béal, 1992), while in Japan this interaction is not ritualized and is relatively rare (McConachy, 2008). S6 articulates the idea that enquiries about the weekend involve more that the simple asking of questions but instead involve a form of action that is potentially problematic in the Japanese context. This reveals an insight into the culturally contexted nature of questioning, which results from the comparison of ways of speaking across cultures: 'asking a bunch of questions to people in the workplace is very different to things in Japan'. S6 and S5 both draw from their reflection on interaction the conclusion that Australians are 'friendly'. In doing so, they form a stereotype of Australian people based on a personality feature (friendliness) and establish an implicit dichotomy between Australia and Japan (friendly-unfriendly or more friendly-less friendly). In this case their analysis is brief and not fully developed as, rather than considering the meaningfulness of the practice within each cultural context for members

of that culture, the learners produce a stereotypicalized account of difference. In Extract 2, S5 does take the analysis further, however, and problematizes the Australian way of interacting when seen through his Japanese eyes. In so doing he articulates an awareness of the consequentiality of cultural differences as they are manifested in language use in that such differences do not simply constitute difficulties but also impact on how speakers are perceived. S5 thus moves from a stereotypicalzed account of a cultural difference to a personalized assessment of the consequences of difference for himself as a communicator.

In Extract 3, the speakers' reflection on cultural differences between Japan and the USA moves from a negative evaluation of cultural differences to an interpretation based on emergent understanding, that is, a seemingly unusual practice is understood as indicating something about different understandings of social relationships in similar contexts in different cultures.

Extract 3

Misato: So, when I went to San Fransisco the staff asked me, 'Where did you come from, Tokyo or Osaka?' I said, 'I from Osaka', and last he asked me to shake hands.

Tai: Weird

Misato: Yeah, at last I feel a little strange. So because he asked me many things.

Tai: Yeah, I think maybe he was too friendly.

Misato: And it because I foreigner and tourist so maybe he was too friendly, I think.

Tai: Ah, but I think the relationship between customer and staff is equal in….

Misato: Abroad?

Tai: Abroad? Yeah, I don't know about that, but maybe Western.

In this example, Misato is presenting an experience that occurred to her on a visit to the USA and describes an interaction with a shop assistant in which the she was asked personal questions. Tai's response characterizes this interaction from her own Japanese perspective as 'weird'—an assessment with which Misato agrees. Tai considers the interaction as deviating from expected norms 'too friendly'. Misato then reformulates the evaluations that they are making in terms of the context of the interaction—a meeting between a shop assistant and a foreign tourist. That is, she sees the interaction as not motivated by a personal failing ('too friendly') but by a reaction to a particular context. Tai then develops this understanding

through an implicit comparison between Japanese norms and American norms[1] that provide a cultural reframing of the nature of staff–customer interactions as one of equality rather than hierarchy. In so doing, Misato and Tai make use of what they were taught to reconstruct a cultural logic for the particular practices they are discussing and thereby show a developing awareness of the culturally contexted nature of language use that invites new interpretations of linguistic behaviour. The analysis here has begun to move beyond superficial stereotypes and personalized responses to a culturally contexted account of pragmatic differences. In formulating their understanding, they construct an interpretative account of the meaningfulness of cultural differences in interaction and develop an external perspective on their cultural practices, mediating between two experiences of cultural practices by developing a new understanding of a practice that initially had appeared to be a deviation from expectations.

In Extract 4, three Australian students are preparing a dialogue in Japanese dealing with a visit to a Japanese person's house. They are discussing the social rituals that accompany the beginning of such a visit and appropriate ways of using language in the context.

Extract 4

A: Perhaps we should bring a present.
B: Yeah.
C: Yeah. What do you bring in Japan?
(0.2)
A: Well usually it's something small.
B: So like what
A: I think things like cakes or some sort of treat. And you get it wrapped up specially.
(0.2)
B: Oh you mean like *omiyage*?
A: Yeah like those, but they're for souvenirs.
B: Okay, so let's say we bring some cakes. What should be say?
(0.4)
C: How about kono keeki wa oishii desu?
B: Uhm (02.) That'd sound-. (0.2) The textbook has it. Let's see. (30)
A: Isn't it something like *tsumaranai*?
C: Tsumaranai?
A: Yeah.
C: Like isn't that boring?
A: Yeah but they say it like that.

B: Here it is. (2.0) It says uhm *kore wa tsumaranai mono desu ga*.

A: Yeah *tsumaranai mono desu ga*. It's like you give the present but you don't want people to think that it's good. It's like, y'know, if you say it's good, you're like saying that you have done good. It's like y'know uhm boasting.

B: So if you say it's boring you sound humble.

C: That's so Japanese<always gotta sound humble.

A: So if you say *oishii*, it's sound like you're saying "I'm great". That'd be so bad.

C: Yeah.

A: So you bring something small and you say it's not very good and so you sound like you're a good person.

After a discussion of whether they should bring a gift to the host, they then move to the sorts of language that would accompany the action of handing over the gift. C proposes '*kono keeki wa oishii desu*'. C's attempt is based on an Australian practice that involves indicating that one thinks one's gift is suited to the recipient as a way of expressing amicality but this is rejected by the others as an inappropriate response in Japanese. B's rejection is a rule-oriented one based on the authority of the textbook, which contains a formula for such situations. A provides his own version '*tsumaranai*' (boring) as an appropriate description of the gift. That is, he proposes a downgrading of the value of the gift in contrast with C's positive evaluation. C recognizes the word, but does not understand it as relevant to the event; that is, for her the description boring does not fit her understanding of the cultural context. B then confirms *tsumaranai* as the example from the textbook and this is accepted as appropriate. A then produces an explanation which attempts to address C's problem with the use of boring in this context—he makes his meta-pragmatic awareness explicit as a way of establishing understanding for C. In doing this he invokes the idea of humility as an appropriate Japanese stance in gift giving and links this to the particular language practice under discussion. The choice of wording is explained in terms of a general Japanese way of presenting the self to others. A is presenting his understanding of a Japanese worldview presented in the textbook which is implicitly contrasted with the Australian worldview encoded in C's '*kono keeki wa oishii desu*'. His talk deals with C's understanding as faulty in the Japanese context and seeks to represent a different understanding of appropriate talk in the context. He bases this talk on his understanding of what the word *tsumaranai* means, not in terms of its semantics, which is unproblematic, but in terms of its pragmatics and the

underlying cultural values associated with acts of gift giving. This view is in turn ratified by B, who formulates the cultural values articulated by A explicitly as humble behaviour. The account is then accepted by C as an exemplification of cultural knowledge that she has already learned about Japan and Japanese, although here in a somewhat stereotypicalized way ('That's so Japanese<always gotta sound humble'). A then reformulates this as an explanation of cultural meaning of the two ways of talking (a positive versus a negative assessment of one's gift) in each cultural context. An Australian way of speaking equates with a negative enactment of self in the Japanese context, with attendant problems for social relationships. The alternative downplaying of value, therefore, comes to have a cultural logic that is embedded in the interactional needs to the context.

Extract 4 is a more elaborated articulation of the relationship between language and culture and the ways that this influences linguistic practices as meaningful communication than the extracts that preceded it. It is an interpretative action that establishes sense for linguistic acts within a perceived logic of the interaction and its cultural context. It is through this linking of language forms, communicative purpose and cultural context that the learners develop an understanding of cultural differences in interaction as socially and culturally meaningful and so mediate between their own cultural assumptions and those of the cultural other. Their starting point lies in their developing understanding of differences between practices of language in use and their meta-pragmatic awareness provides the entry point for a more elaborated mediation of cultural difference drawing in cultural understanding outside language itself. In such applications of drawing together the linguistic and the non-linguistic in developing accounts of language in use, meta-pragmatic awareness can be seen as a key element of IC. Developed in such a way meta-pragmatic awareness can provide a resource that can be used to resolve other issues in intercultural communication by providing a way of seeing behaviours as meaningful within their cultural context. This can be seen in the following extract in which an Australian student, John, spending time in France talks about his difficulties in dealing with open office doors in a French context (see Béal, 2010, for a discussion of this difference in French and Australian practices).

Extract 5

John: This was a very hard thing to do. I hated it. I felt like I was violating someone else's space, that I was an invader. I know that's not the way they see it, but that doesn't matter. It still feels the same. This is just not something I can do. I mean I really feel that there's this really important barrier

there and I just can't get through that without permissions. That's an invasion. I can't go into another person's space, well I know it's not really their space, it's an open space, but I can't—it's just not—it really is their space for me. I can't change that and I can't be an invader like that. It's too traumatic. It doesn't even matter that no-one seems to mind. I mind. (Liddicoat, 2005)

In this extract, John is responding to an interviewer's question about problems he experienced in France. This extract shows that a simple activity such as entering an open door can become a very different activity when the context changes and the interactional rules that frame the situation normally change. An activity that is normally unproblematic can become traumatic when there is a clash between the meaningful possibilities that come with simple social actions. As Béal (2010) describes such situations in intercultural interactions in Franco-Australian contexts, an open office door has potentially different meanings in the two cultures. In Australia, office doors are often left open, but an open door does not invite access to the office, while in similar situations in France office doors are more often closed and an open door indicates that the office space is open space. The interactional result is that in Australia, when entering an office it is usual for the occupant to display that she has noticed the person wishing to enter, while for Béal's French participants, in the same context, the occupant would not display noticing until after the person had entered. There is thus for this Australian student a missing cue in French contexts and this lack re-signifies for him the activity as a social act. John's comment here is also an interpretative act that shows an understanding of both interactional contexts. He has come to understand that the meanings he attaches to the act are not the same as the ones that apply in a French context. His problem is that the differences in meaning are in conflict with his sense of himself as a social actor and his conceptualizations of politeness and social etiquette. As John goes on to explain his experience in France, his interpretation of the meaningfulness of the action of entering through an open door becomes the basis for an interactional analysis of what is going on and eventually to a mapping of the issue onto linguistic practices that eventually allow him to resolve the problem.

Extract 6

John: I still feel that way and I think I always will, but like I also know I needed to deal with that or it's not going to work. I can't just like hang around the door until someone asks me in. That just doesn't happen or they get annoyed at you for hanging around … I tried to think about why this was just so different and it sort of came to think that you know the person

> in the office doesn't look at you when you go in. And that's like what makes me feel so bad. That's why it feels like you're invading their space … So I kinda thought 'how could I get them to look at me'? So I decided to try talking before I had to go in. You know *pardon Madame* or something like that. And you know it was okay. If I did that I could do it. It sort of like got them to do it my way but was still like their way.

Here John can be seen as reanalysing the act of walking through the door to solve his problem. He does this by thinking of the action as an interactive one, shifting the focus from the act to what the people are doing during the act and noticing what was missing for him in the way he experienced the act in France. He identifies the act as an issue of securing the attention of his interlocutor for his action and maps this issue on to his pragmatic resources for securing what he need to accomplish this action—a gazing interlocutor. That is his meta-pragmatic awareness provided a resource for dealing with a non-linguistic problem relating from a change of context. He decided to initiate a summons-answer sequence as a way of securing the attention of the other person and in so doing found a way of resolving the problem for himself. In this case, meta-pragmatic awareness did not provide the starting point for the analysis but rather provided the way of working towards a solution—a solution that was located in an intermediary intercultural position in which neither his own nor his interlocutors' understanding of the situation became the frame for resolving a problem of difference in meaning but rather his mediation consists of a reframing of the event for himself to take into consideration both contexts.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to bring the 'cultural' and the 'linguistic' into a closer relationship in understanding IC. We have made the argument that for those who engage in intercultural communication, mediation takes on a particularly linguistic character because of the centrality of language in any act of communication. For the interculturally competent communicator it is particularly important to be able to move between cultural frameworks in the interpretation of pragmatic acts by reflecting on the nature of the practices of language in use encountered and the cultural knowledge and assumptions implicated in their interpretation. As highlighted in the data, meta-pragmatic awareness serves as an important tool for intercultural mediation by providing an entry point

into understanding the co-constitutive roles of language and culture in the construction of meaning.

Meta-pragmatic awareness provides a resource for reflection on and interpretation of cultural practices that the intercultural communicator develops to varying degrees of sophistication. At a superficial level meta-pragmatic awareness is constituted by awareness of differences in pragmatic conventions, though this may lead individuals to make simplistic associations between norms and national essences. More sophisticated meta-pragmatic awareness is characterized by insight into the fact that pragmatic acts are understood within the context of a particular cultural logic, and that this logic varies in degrees rather than absolutes across cultures. The ability to see linguistic practices as culturally contexted allows the individual to consider the limitations and consequences of understanding the linguistic practices of one language within the cultural frameworks of another. This awareness can then be used by the individual to consider their own ways of using the relevant linguistic and cultural knowledge and how to construct ways of dealing with incongruences within cultural logic across languages. As meta-pragmatic awareness develops in sophistication thus, individuals are able to draw together cultural understandings of meaning making that lie both within and beyond language, providing an important site for intercultural mediation. This means that pragmatics can provide one way of bridging the divide between language and culture that often limits the theorizing and operationalizing of intercultural competence in language teaching and learning.

Note

1. Earlier in the interaction the students had been discussing the hierarchical nature of service encounters in Japan, which they had summed up in terms of the Japanese aphorism *okyakusama wa okamisama* (the customer is a god).

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CHAPTER 3

Intercultural Competence in Host Students? A Study of Danish Students Facing China at Home

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Introduction

Intercultural encounters with individuals living in other parts of the world through study visits present students with situations in which learning can take place, particularly the development of what is most commonly referred to as intercultural competences (IC). There has been much research in the field of intercultural competences based on mobile students engaging in studies abroad for short- and long-term sojourns (Byram & Feng, 2006; Dervin, 2009), whereas information on the host as the subject of study-abroad research is scarce (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Weidemann & Bluml, 2009) and specifically lacking in relation to IC. Increased internationalization within education also makes it relevant to research student learning through internationalization at home activities that might bring about new perspectives on IC and intercultural

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meetings. In addition, most research deals with study-abroad activities at the upper-secondary-school level and in higher education (Byram & Feng, 2006; Deardorff, 2009; Dervin, 2009), while research involving younger learners at primary and lower-secondary school levels is less common (Snow & Byram, 1997).

The overall aims of this chapter are to explore the potential of developing IC in students hosting an exchange student during short-term study visits, to examine the challenges and possibilities of short-term study visits at the lower-secondary level, and to contribute to the discussions of internationalization at this educational level. More specifically, in this chapter, we ask the question: *What are the challenges and possibilities of using short-term study visits to develop IC in host students?*

Theoretically, this chapter finds inspiration in social constructivist understandings of culture based on the understandings of researchers such as Dervin (2009); Holliday (2013), and Jensen (2013), and also in Byram's (2008, 2009) research on the development of ICs in individuals. Empirically, data used in this paper were derived from the study of a group of Danish lower-secondary-school students of ages 12 and 13 who hosted a group of same-age Chinese students in homestays during a four-day study visit to Denmark in early 2012. Qualitative data were collected before, during and after the visit by means of portfolios and focus-group interviews.

It is important to stress that although we do not want to assess the possible IC development of the students, some evaluation on this matter is unavoidable. Instead, our main focus is to discuss host students' experiences in relation to the challenges and possibilities of using short-term study visits to develop IC in host students.

Theoretical Framework

Culture, Hybridity and Negotiation

In this chapter, and in line with Chap. 1 in this volume, we employ an understanding of culture that emphasizes hybridity and considers cultures as being produced by individuals. A constant negotiation between the individual and the social world leads to the shaping and reshaping of culture. Cultures are not fixed entities but social constructions created by people, and they undergo constant negotiation and development (Dervin, 2009; Holliday, 2013). Thus, intercultural meetings do not involve meetings or interactions between cultures or groups, but between individuals

(Byram, 2009, p. 186; Deardorff, 2009, p. 6; Dervin, 2009, p. 119; Wikan, 2002, p. 84).

Echoing Jensen (2013), we recognize the fact that in practice, it is difficult to delineate a sharp division between social constructivist and more essentialist understandings of culture. However, there is a need to be critical toward and continuously challenge essentialist understandings that treat 'cultures' as things (Phillips, 2007, p. 42) and individuals as 'robots programmed with "cultural" rules' (Abu-Lughod, 2008, p. 158). The terms 'Chinese' and 'Danish culture', respectively, are used in this chapter based on recognition of the fact that the particular structures of the society in which we were brought up have an impact on us as human beings and are resources on which we draw (Holliday, 2013).

A Constructivist Approach to IC

Much consensus exists about the holistic nature of competences, encompassing cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social elements, but the most common characteristic of a competence is the pivotal role of action orientation: What is essential is not what individuals 'have learned but what they can do with or through what they have learned' (Illeris, 2014, p. 114), and emphasis is on the ability 'to cope successfully with new, unknown, unfamiliar, and unpredictable challenges and situations' (Illeris, 2014, p. 115). In relation to IC, definitions and models generally acknowledge that IC entails four dimensions, these being knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviours, and requires the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with others in intercultural situations or contexts (Deardorff, 2009).

This chapter employs a constructivist approach to learning (Kolb, 1984; Wenger, 1998) and considers social interaction and experiences to be important parts of learning. IC is considered a specifically qualified learning in relation to the intercultural area (Illeris, 2011). Such learning is a never-ending process that can be developed in both formal and informal learning contexts (Byram & Feng, 2006).

Inspiration has been found in Byram's (2008, 2009) research on IC within foreign language teaching, which is based on the ideal of the intercultural speaker being an individual who is aware of cultural similarities and differences and able to act as a mediator in intercultural encounters (see Chap. 4, this volume). Byram's model comprises five elements: (1) Knowledge (savoirs), (2) Attitudes (savoir être), (3) Skills of interpreting and relating

(savoir comprendre), (4) Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire), and (5) Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager) (For a critical approach to Byram's model see Chap. 8, this volume).

For this study, it is important to understand what it means for learners of ages 12 and 13 to be interculturally competent. At this age, students have just entered into the formal operational stage of adolescence (Inhelder & Piaget, 1999) and have not yet reached full cognitive capacity. Thus, new ways of thinking are still being developed, such as metacognition and critical reflection. These cognitive and emotional aspects influence young learners' development of IC, so while these learners may not be able to reach their full potential, it is still possible for them to develop elements of intercultural competence (Byram, 2008; Illeris, 2007).

Research Methodology

In this study, we have employed a qualitative research approach emphasizing the words, feelings, perceptions and experiences of young host students. We hold that children are significant and competent social actors and take their life experiences seriously. We emphasize the importance of their reflections and lived experiences while keeping in mind that certain biological aspects influence their cognitive and linguistic abilities (Andersen & Ottosen, 2002). This was taken into consideration in the research design and in our analysis of the empirical material (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009).

Research Context: A Study Visit from China

In late 2011, a school located in Hangzhou, China, and with a focus on foreign languages, planned a study trip that would allow 22 students (12 girls and 10 boys of ages 12 and 13) to visit Germany during a Chinese school holiday in early 2012. The organizers found that there would be time to make a four-day sojourn to a school in Aalborg, Denmark, and through the Confucius Institute for Innovation and Learning at Aalborg University (CI AAU), cooperation was established with a local public school willing to find same-age host students (14 girls and 9 boys, see Table 3.1). The objective of bringing the students together was to create an intercultural community of practice (Wenger, 1998), facilitate institutional development toward internationalization, establish a foundation for future Danish-Chinese student exchanges, and possibly facilitate the development of ICs at a student level.

Table 3.1 Research participants

	Grade 6 Girls	*Grade 6 boys*	*Grade 7 girls*	*Grade 7 boys*	*All students*
Host students	6	6	8	3	23
Focus group interviews	6	4	7	3	20
Portfolios	5	5	7	2	19

With the exception of one case caused by unequal numbers, each of the Chinese students was randomly paired with a same-gender host partner in an individual homestay. In practice, the study visit included the use of English as lingua franca, workshops, a communal student dinner at school, regular school classes, a GPS run in the city, spare time spent with host families, and dinner for host families, students, teachers and organizers at a Chinese restaurant. The design of the study visit as an intercultural community of practice and the organizers' reflections in relation to the visit have been discussed in a previous publication (Lyngdorf, Egekvist, Du, & Jiannong, 2013).

Methods

The following qualitative research methods were used to explore and document the study visit for the purpose of researching the Danish host students' intercultural experiences and learning:

1. Student portfolios (before, during and after the visit),
2. Focus group interviews (after the visit).

A portfolio is a pedagogical documentation and learning tool that has the potential to clarify students' learning and development in various learning situations through the use of reflection (Ellmin, 1999; Lund, 2008). Host students were introduced to a student portfolio with predesigned categories in order to capture some of their understandings and intercultural experiences, and to stimulate reflection thereon (Byram, 2008). Prior to the arrival of the Chinese students, Danish students were asked to share their expectations of the visit and their guests. During the visit, they were asked to share particularly meaningful experiences and new knowledge. After the visitors departed, they were asked to share reflections on whether their expectations had been met. The portfolio was

made voluntary rather than integrated into the school context. Nineteen students worked on portfolios (Table 3.1), but in some cases, descriptions and reflections were limited.

Two months after the visit, providing students time to digest the experience, four focus group interviews (referred to as FG1-4) of approximately one hour each were conducted with 19 host students (Table 3.1) to supplement the written portfolio data through the creation of a forum for oral reflections through shared experiences, ideas, beliefs and attitudes. In order to create a safe context for students to share experiences, discoveries and viewpoints, interviews were arranged in groups of five or six students according to their classes, with a researcher functioning as a mediator (referred to as M) and thus a co-constructor of the knowledge produced. The combination of a group of students and one researcher helped balance the asymmetric power-relation between adult and child (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009), and the serving of snacks and drinks generated a relaxed atmosphere.

Focus groups were expected to bring about discussions, joint reflection and mutual learning through a sharing of experiences. Interview themes covered elements of IC and supplemented the portfolios by exploring incomplete information and common elements in more detail. The moderator transcribed the interviews based on a strategy of maintaining the contents of what was said, and the data were categorized, analysed and interpreted through meaning condensation (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2010).

Limitations

One of the main objectives of internationalization efforts at the school level in Denmark is to establish a foundation for and initiate a process of IC development in students in order for them to engage actively in handling the multifaceted future challenges in the international arena (Styrelsen for International Uddannelse, Denmark, 2010). Schools make use of various activities to achieve this, including short-term international experiences, but primarily due to the young age of the students at this educational level, short-term international experiences often last less than one week. One might argue that such brief encounters cannot play a significant role in individuals' IC development, but these very short intercultural meetings are a condition of researching international activities at this educational level. Furthermore, Dervin emphasizes that:

> Many researchers have demonstrated, for example, that people who travel a lot or spent extensive time abroad are not necessarily more open-minded than others (cf. for instance Phillips, 2007, p. 30) and sometimes they are even less. (Dervin, 2009, p. 124)

Thus, in relation to IC development, it is not the quantity (e.g., number of intercultural meetings or time spent abroad) that matters, but the quality of the intercultural encounters (see Chap. 1, this volume).

Ethical Considerations

It was emphasized as a condition for everyone involved, both in Denmark and in China, that the study visit would be used as a research context. The Danish school involved has a tradition of engagement and participation in research projects, and the Head of School gave permission both for research to be carried out and for students to work on portfolios and participate in focus-group interviews for research purposes. The school informed the host students' parents about our research activities in relation to the visit.

In a meeting prior to the host experience, the students were carefully informed about our role as researchers during the visit and presented with copies of the pre-designed student portfolio. It was emphasized that working on the portfolio and sharing the reflections therein was voluntary. Furthermore, students were asked to participate in focus-group interviews upon the departure of their visitors, and anonymity was promised in all cases.

Findings

Findings in this study reflect general understandings, experiences and reflections of the host students involved and are presented within the following categories:

1. Pre-understandings
2. Experiences during the study visit. Continuous revisiting of data showed that students repeatedly referred to experiences in relation to (a) Dining and home environment routines, (b) Interests, (c) Physical appearance, and (d) Language.
3. Overall reflections

Quotations from student portfolios and focus-group interviews (translated from Danish into English by the authors) are included in order to give voice to the students (students are identified with abbreviations, e.g., G2-6, meaning Girl 2 grade 6), and each category is summarized concerning the possibilities and challenges of using short-term study visits to develop ICs in host students. These will be used as a point of departure for discussion.

Pre-understanding

Findings from host-students' portfolios show that their main expectations were for the study visit to be a fun, exciting and/or educational experience. One girl wrote:

> It will be exciting to learn about their culture and getting to know a Chinese. It may also be embarrassing and awkward in some situations due to our language and that we may not know what to talk about. (Portfolio, G13-7)

Host students' main expectations of the Chinese students were for them to be kind and well behaved. Additional expectations among the students were for the Chinese students to be, for example, small, fast, serious, good at English, and similar to themselves. These findings bring insight into students' pre-understandings (Jensen, 2013) and hetero-stereotypes (Dervin, 2012).

Experiences

Dining and Home Environment Routines

Nineteen students shared experiences related to dining situations, which revealed differences in the use of cutlery or chopsticks, table manners, eating habits, preparation of ingredients, doing the dishes, and behaviour while dining. Two boys elaborated:

> What I remember best was when my mother had prepared a chicken and bacon sandwich […]. He just chewed his food so noisily. […] I have just never heard a human being eat so noisily. (FG4, B7-7)

> At breakfast […] [my Chinese visitor] put buttery cheese on one side of the bread roll, then some ham, and some thin slices of chocolate [traditional

> Danish food 'pålægchokolade'], and then he closed it. […] We don't usually eat something like that in my house.
>
> […]
>
> Well, we were having dinner, and then he has finished. Without carrying out his plate or anything, he goes to his room to find out something about an email. And we have not even finished eating. Then he comes and asks, 'Can you help me with my email address?' We are having dinner. Then we have to get up and help him. (FG2, B4-6)

In addition, a girl noted a difference in the process of washing dishes:

> They used cold water to do the dishes. Here we usually use hot water […] I thought it was a bit strange, but still, I did not know if it was because they did not know you are not supposed to use cold water, or because they used cold water at home. (FG2, G5-6)

Sixteen host students emphasized home environment routines related to showering, changing and washing clothes, and sleeping, and also differences in the everyday lives of Chinese and Danish students. In a focus-group dialogue, three students shared experiences regarding changing clothes and sleeping:

> G1-6: At first, I thought that perhaps she would be afraid of changing clothes in front of me. But she just quickly took off her pants and slept in her knickers.
>
> B1-6: Mine wore all his clothes while sleeping. He wore it for 2 days [*B2-6: looks disgusted*]. It is so nasty.
>
> G3-6: Mine, she, what was strange was that the clothes she was wearing, then when she was off to bed, she just took off her pants, and then she wore pajamas underneath. And then the next day she just put on her clothes again on top of the pajamas. That was a bit strange. (FG1)

One female host also described differences in their everyday lives:

> At least she has described it [school life in China] very well; that it is *really* hard, and that she would stay up until 12pm and do her homework. She finished school at 6pm, and then she would just sit in her room in the dormitory until 12pm. You see, they did not live at home, they lived at school. So I think it is really hard, because she also sent me an email saying 'My teachers are *so* mean and cranky' […]. (FG3, G7-7)

Findings show some common traits in host students' experiences regarding dining and home environment routines, which confronted them with tacit knowledge of cultural practices in their own environments through their visitors' hands-on engagement. This also allowed students to gain knowledge about differences in school systems.

Interests

Seventeen students emphasized experiences related to interests such as sports, games, activities, school and topics of conversation among friends. One girl shared an experience of learning about Chinese social interaction:

> G7-7: […] they asked us questions about which boys we thought were cute and so [laugh]. It was mega weird, I think. I did not even think they thought about such things.
>
> M: Well, do you talk about such things with your friends?
>
> G7-7: Yes.
>
> M: Since you think it was strange…
>
> G7-7: Yes. I think it was strange. I did not think they did so. Well, I thought that boys and girls could not date. And they said they could not.
>
> M: But you still think it is strange for them to even think about…?
>
> G7-7: Yes. But I don't think it was strange. I just did not *think* they did. I did not think they were allowed to. And then they were teasing someone with some boy and so. And I did not think they were allowed to do so. I did not think they could date in China. I thought it was like with Muslims—that they cannot date anyone before getting married and so. (FG3)

Two boys elaborated on an experience related to gameplay:

> B4-6: At [B5-6]'s house they asked if we should play poker. We said yes, because we knew what poker was. Then they bring out this box, and it was not that kind of poker they had. It was a different kind of poker. […]
>
> B5-6: Yeah, it was a bit difficult to understand.
>
> B4-6: Yes, but we learned in the end. It was pretty funny, and we won. (FG2)

The findings illustrate students' encounters with similarities and differences in both cultural products and practices related to interests between the Danish and Chinese students. For example, the Chinese students' interest in boyfriends and girlfriends was puzzling for some host students and thus illustrated the presence of a hetero-stereotype.

Physical Appearance

Twelve host students emphasized experiences related to aspects of the visitors' physical appearance, such as height, teeth, bracelets, glasses and fashion. Two explained in their portfolios:

> Almost all the Chinese either wore a bracelet or glasses. […] I think it was strange that so many either wore a bracelet or glasses, because not as many people do that here. (Portfolio, G8-7)

> [It was surprising] that he was as tall as me. I always think Chinese look so tiny on TV. Perhaps they stop growing before us? (Portfolio, B2-6)

Likewise, differences in fashion trends were discussed in a focus-group interview:

> G5-6: Yes, they wore really colourful clothes. We usually wear black and white and darker colours. […] They always wore red and… [*The girls speak all at once*]
>
> G6-6: A jacket with ears and something that looked like a pirate. It was 'Lalabobo' [fashion brand] [*All the girls laugh*]
>
> G5-6: Yes.
>
> B4-6: Also, all of their jackets were, at least in my opinion, these shiny ones, all smooth and shiny. (FG2)

Experiences related to physical appearance illustrate how host students were confronted with visible similarities and differences, both due to biological differences between and within the European and Asian races (e.g., height) and due to cultural practices in their home environments (e.g., bracelets and fashion trends).

Language

English was used as a lingua franca, and six host students noted improvements in their own English as a consequence of the visit. However, in their portfolios, nine students pointed at the limited English skills of some Chinese students as a challenging aspect of the experience. Due to the visitors attending a school with a focus on foreign languages, the hosts had expected better skills. Three girls jointly reflected on the limited English skills:

> G9-7: I also think it is because our language is more similar to English than theirs. There is not a single similarity there. […]

> G7-7: That is actually true. […] Actually, I have never thought about the fact that it might be difficult for them to learn English. It is just as difficult for them, as it is for us with French. But of course, we have only had French for half a year.
>
> G8-7: We have not learned much either. (FG3)

While there were some instances of limited English skills influencing attempts to understand situations or experiences and causing irritation for the hosts, nine students pointed at the use of activities such as board games, cards, soccer, foosball, and 'truth or dare' as a way to interact positively with the Chinese students by getting to know them better and creating a sense of community. One girl shared an experience of playing the game 'truth or dare':

> […] I think they think it was funny, because it was the Chinese students who had to decide a consequence for us […]. And then I believe they thought it was funny, because they could laugh with us at them. Whether it was them or us who had to do something, they could laugh with us. So there was a kind of community to it. (FG4, G10-7)

Students developed strategies to cope with language challenges, such as resolving misunderstandings or unravelling mysteries by asking clarifying questions or using digital translation tools such as Google translate. However, some did not make an effort to clarify communication, such as a girl who explained: 'They probably could not understand what I said anyway' (G9-7).

Findings show that while host students experienced improvements to their English through the practice of English as lingua franca, lack of language proficiency proved to be a challenge and created gaps between hosts and visitors. Strategies to overcome challenges involved acting as a mediator and dealing effectively with misunderstandings or puzzling episodes through engagement in social activities. In addition, games established a positive and informal atmosphere of community in the intercultural encounter.

Students' Overall Reflections

Looking back, students generally agreed that they had a good and educational experience through which some found new friends while others learned to take more responsibility or appreciate aspects of their own lives.

As one boy explained, the experience was also an opportunity to experience some aspects of China at home: 'Not to travel abroad to see how they are. To have the culture brought home' (FG2, B4-6).

The experiences led to overall reflections in relation to habits, similarities and differences in general, as well as varying understandings of politeness. In one of the focus groups, a girl reflected on her visitor's habits:

> I also thought about that in Denmark, with certain things, we could not imagine anything different. Therefore, in many cases I thought: 'Oh, that was a bit strange.' But then, after her departure, I reflected upon it and came to think it was a bit peculiar that we have so many things we cannot see done differently—with the cold meats and how they eat. […] They just do it. They just try all kinds of things that we could not even think of. […] Not only in terms of food, but generally speaking. […] at least I now think a lot about it. That it is fine. That you do not always have to think about things in that way. (FG2, G6-6)

Another girl reflected on the similarities and differences between the Danish and Chinese students:

> Well, there is not much difference in behaviour in our age group; how you behave as a Chinese and as a Dane. But when there are differences, then it is reasonably big differences. […] They behave very similar to us when they were hanging out with their friends. Then they had some things they could talk about. It was similar to us, if *we* were hanging out with our best friends. […] They were also looking at all kinds of singers from Asia and said that they were hot and such things, like we did. It is kind of the same. (FG4, G10-7)

In addition to limited vocabulary, other reasons for communication difficulties were discussed:

> G7-7: […] It was a bit difficult. I also think they are just a bit shy in general, because they have been taught in their upbringing not to be so ahead of the curve. I also think the reason why you talked only with your own Chinese is because, first, it was really difficult getting to know your own Chinese, and then it is even more difficult getting to know the others. It takes three days or so, before you really know the Chinese, so that you can talk a lot with them.
>
> M: But did that have anything to do with them being Chinese? […]
>
> G9-7: I think you judge them quickly.

M: How?

G9-7: Well, it is just like, because you know, because we have learned about China [in school], then you hear about how strict it is, and then you judge them to be these quiet and boring people, I think.

G7-7: Yes.

M: Okay, yes. So did they live up to the things you judged them to?

G9-7: Many times, I would say. They were boring. […]. She was very posh all the times. (FG3)

A few students expressed that they did not feel their expectations had been fulfilled. One experienced a very homesick visitor who did not engage in or share anything while visiting. Others expected something similar to a previous experience of international student exchange[1] (that they would interact with everyone, make many friends, and communicate easily via English).

Students' overall experiences led to discussing and reflecting on cultural practices, rules, and meaning constructions in different cultural environments, including their own. Understandings of 'politeness' and 'normality' in relation to such things as family and school life were widely discussed, and host students were confronted with the fact that 'good manners' and the definition thereof stem from an individual's cultural resources, or what is learned from family and society during their upbringing.

Challenges and Possibilities

Students' pre-understandings of, experiences during, and overall reflections on the visit indicate several possibilities and challenges in developing ICs:

- Students' pre-understandings indicate a willingness to engage in the host experience with a positive attitude (savoir être). However, students' retrospective attitude is closely linked to the (un)fulfilment of expectations during the experience.
- Concrete intercultural experiences in host students' own cultural environment provide possibilities for experiential culture learning (saviors apprendre/faire) and confrontation of pre-understandings and hetero-stereotypes (savoirs). However, pre-understandings and stereotypes can be difficult to change.
- English as a lingua franca provides students with possibilities to improve their English through practice (savoir apprendre/faire)

and to gain new knowledge in face-to-face communication (savoir). Conversely, the lack of language proficiency poses a challenge that demands effective coping strategies. Games were found to establish a positive atmosphere in the intercultural encounter by creating laughter, informal interaction and a feeling of community.

- Some students' retrospective reflections on the host experience indicate curiosity, openness and a readiness to suspend disbelief about both their own and others' culture (savoir être), in addition to an ability to critically evaluate practices and products in both their own and other cultures (savoir s'engager).

These challenges and possibilities will be discussed in relation to theory and other studies within the following categories: (1) experiential learning, (2) stereotypes, and (3) coping strategies and support.

Discussion

Experiential Learning

Hosting an international student creates an opportunity to experience an individual with another cultural background in a face-to-face meeting without travelling abroad. Homestays are an intense internationalization at home experience for host students, providing possibilities for them to learn in their comfort zones and seek parental support during the experiencing of similarities and differences in terms of cultural practices, which are some of the most noticeable signs of culture, and of which people may hardly be aware until they experience situations confronting them with unfamiliar practices (Holliday, 2013).

Byram and Feng (2006) argue that experiential learning about culture through hands-on experiences is more effective than classroom learning about culture. However, research on IC shows that face-to-face meetings between individuals of different cultural backgrounds do not automatically lead to IC (Deardorff, 2009, p. xiii; Dervin, 2009). Similarly, in his research on competences, Illeris (2011) argues that even though practical experience in a specific field is considered desirable, it is rarely enough for an individual to develop a structured understanding and react both quickly and appropriately to new situations. Conscious, critical and analytically orientated reflections are needed in order to develop a personal attitude and overview. Thus, a combination of practical experience and

theoretical schooling is considered the best way to develop competences (Illeris, 2011, p. 44). This leads to considerations related to the design of study visits and the support of students' IC development before, during and after host experiences, which will be discussed in the next section.

Based on a social constructivist understanding of intercultural encounters as involving meetings between individuals (Dervin, 2009), it is, however, also relevant to discuss why international study visits should be prioritized and whether intercultural encounters might as well happen locally. This study shows that the international perspective can bring about training in foreign language skills and raise awareness of similarities and differences between people. Elements such as different first languages and nation states can create borders between people. Phillips (2007, pp. 50–51) argues for a need to challenge the tendency to exaggerate differences between cultures and focus more on similarities instead. This might result in a deeper sense of global citizenship, while a focus on differences could be used as a point of departure to reflect upon normality and the social construction of culture.

Stereotypes

Host experiences can bring about some of the possibilities and challenges in confronting existing stereotypes formed around oneself and others in a process of stereotyping, re-stereotyping and de-stereotyping, an example in our findings being the development of one student's understanding of Chinese dating practice.

Stereotypes are poorly nuanced images charged with values (both positive and negative) that emphasize differences and boundaries between groups of people and either ignore or explain away deviating examples (Illman, 2006). Stereotypes are 'understood as tools for defining the otherness of the other and maintaining symbolic order' (Hall, 1997, p. 258). Once stereotypes become part of our worldview, they are difficult to change. As explained by Lippmann (1922, p. 64): 'They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy'.

Increased intercultural contact between individuals does not necessarily disarm stereotypes (Hewstone, 1996; Illman, 2006), and Allport's research on contact hypothesis in relation to prejudice and stereotypes concludes that mere contact between individuals of different groups does not necessarily lead to a change of attitudes. Contact has to 'reach below

the surface in order to be effective in altering prejudice' (Allport, 1954, p. 276).

Keeping this in mind, it is crucial to create awareness of stereotypes in students involved in study visits. However, echoing Dervin (2012, p. 186), attempts should not be made to 'break' stereotypes or replace them with the 'truth'. It is unrealistic to believe that stereotypes can be completely eradicated. They will always exist, but it is possible to heighten the awareness of their existence and provide an understanding of how and why they are created, and how they may influence individuals in intercultural encounters (For more on stereotypes see Chaps. 1 and 10, this volume).

Coping Strategies and Support

Students' intercultural encounters in study visits are complicated and, in many ways, unpredictable. Similar to Weidemann and Blüml's (2009) study on German host families, the present findings show that it was not a purely positive experience for the host students involved; in some cases, it was found to be problematic to varying degrees due to such factors as language difficulties, lack of interaction or specific negative episodes left unexplained. The findings illustrate a need to help students put cultural behaviour in context and understand that there are, in fact, many similarities between people from different cultural backgrounds, no matter how different they may initially seem. Some behaviour is universal, some is cultural, and some is personal (Storti, 2009).

This fact points to the challenge of helping students manage pre-understandings and expectations of the hosting experience in relation to the reality of the experience and of exploring certain experiences during the intercultural encounter. Learning situations are not necessarily conflict-free and can be experienced as both difficult and frustrating (Illeris, 2014).

To assist host students, study visits can be designed in ways that prepare them in advance for the intensive and sometimes challenging character of the host experience through theoretical schooling. Themes and theories of culture, IC, stereotypes, coping strategies, human interaction, and the general etiquette of being a host (to avoid alienation of the other) could be addressed at a learner-appropriate level (Byram, 2009; Dervin, 2009). Furthermore, this study suggests that laughter and the use of games as mediating objects are positive aspects in intercultural encounters, which could be emphasized during the experience. Likewise, it is important that the experience is not merely left to evaporate into thin air, but used to

create a foundation for coping successfully with future unfamiliar and challenging intercultural situations. Individual portfolio writing can assist students in their learning process in relation to the experience, and support through creation of a forum for joint reflections was found to add nuance to experiences, raise awareness of similarities and differences, and bring about overall reflections of critical cultural awareness. Thus, the 'right' facilitation of intercultural learning spaces (see also Lyngdorf et al., 2013) and help during the reflection process can assist students in their intercultural competence development and their appreciation of diversity.

Conclusion

Findings from host students' experiences and reflections in this study indicate both challenges and possibilities of IC development in relation to experiential learning, stereotypes and coping strategies and support.

The study shows that host students experience many challenges involved in the intercultural encounter despite its taking place in their own cultural environment and comfort zone. There is a continuous interaction between potential difficulties and possibilities in such a meeting, and the study shows clear signs of challenges related to cultural practices such as eating and visible cultural products such as clothes, both of which illuminate differences. However, the challenges host students encounter appear to be eased through laughter and games, which were found to bridge the intercultural meeting by bringing about a feeling of community and emphasizing similarities in the students.

It is essential to maintain awareness of the fact that ICs are not necessarily the result of a host experience; the experience can also reinforce host students' negative hetero-stereotypes. Thus, the 'right' facilitation of the study visit is important in order to establish a context for possible IC development, and support is essential before, during and after the experience. Shared experiences and joint reflection in groups were found to reveal many nuances to students' experiences and lead to a critical cultural awareness among some of the participants.

Note

1. Five students had experiences from Poland and Sweden via EU-funded Comenius programmes.

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CHAPTER 4

From 'Intercultural Speaker' to 'Intercultural Reader': A Proposal to Reconceptualize Intercultural Communicative Competence Through a Focus on Literary Reading

Hild Elisabeth Hoff

Introduction

In an essay about what education can learn from the arts, the US academic E. W. Eisner (2004) brings attention to how the conditions of our contemporary world necessitate a reconsideration of current educational methods and aims:

> our lives increasingly require the ability to deal with conflicting messages, to make judgments in the absence of rule, to cope with ambiguity, and to frame imaginative solutions to the problems we face. Our world is not one which submits single correct answers to questions or clear cut solutions to problems. (p. 9)

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The present chapter explores how intercultural competence (IC) may be reconceptualized as an educational goal to take into account such notions of conflict, ambiguity and imagination. The fragmentation and pluralism of postmodern societies as well as the development of global communicative technologies (see Chap. 5, this volume) have turned intercultural communication into a 'complex, changing and conflictual endeavor' that entails 'challenging established meanings and redefining the real' (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359). As a consequence, interculturality, to a larger extent than before, requires the ability to look beyond actions and words, to reflect upon the effects of subject positions and to analyse cultural assumptions from different vantage points in order to bring about new, imaginative understandings.

The present chapter addresses such concerns by adapting and reformulating a central term in foreign language (FL) didactic theory. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)[1] describes the ideal 'intercultural speaker's' engagement with both individuals and texts from foreign cultures, and accordingly processes of reading are included in the concept. The present chapter argues that the encounter with FL texts offers unique opportunities to investigate the complexities of intercultural communication, and proposes that the constitution of a profoundly engaged, analytical and creative 'intercultural reader' may add a new dimension to Byram's original concept. While other scholars have already highlighted the role of literary texts in promoting IC, the present chapter explores this issue from a different angle than previous efforts, focusing on what makes the reading of FL texts a form of intercultural communication in itself, and also on what distinguishes processes of text interpretation from real-time communication. In doing so, it examines aspects of the reader–text relationship on which Byram's model of ICC, as well as other theoretical perspectives on reading and IC, are unclear.

The research question has been formulated as follows: how does the competent 'intercultural reader' interact with FL literature in her quest to create meaning, and how may this interaction promote her awareness of the 'complex, changing and conflictual' (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359) nature of intercultural communication? In order to answer this question, the qualities of the competent 'intercultural reader' are defined, and a descriptive model of her engagement with FL texts is proposed. The chapter also provides a practical example of how the fostering of such 'intercultural readers' may take place in the FL classroom.

Background

The present chapter relies on a view of reading as a communicative experience. Gadamer's (1996) theory of hermeneutics describes the nature of interpretation, or the process of understanding a text, interhuman communication or the world at large, as a form of dialogue that transforms the interpreter as a moral subject. The need for interpretation arises when the subject is confronted with a 'horizon of understanding' different from her own, and, through dialogue, the two conflicting systems of convictions are integrated in a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1996, pp. 302–307). As the intercultural encounter represents such a meeting between different horizons of understanding due to divergent subjectivities, the reading of FL texts may function as a form of intercultural communication.

The dialogue between reader, text and their interaction, is the central principle of reader reception theory (Eco, 1990; Fish, 1980; Iser, 1978). According to this tradition of literary theory, the act of reading is a give-and-take process of meaning-making in which the reader and text interact in a dialectic relationship. Iser (1978) points out that the indeterminate quality of the literary text places it in an asymmetrical relationship with the reader, and balance can only be achieved if the 'gaps' of the text are filled by the reader's projections. Herein lies the major difference between reading and other forms of social interaction: the text cannot adapt itself to each reader with whom it comes in contact. The participants in other communicative situations can ask each other questions in order to clarify points of misunderstanding or disagreement, and they may adjust their responses and their own outlook accordingly. In contrast, the reader's interpretation of the text may, in Gadamarian terms, broaden the 'horizon' of the text and thus add to it a layer of meaning which did not previously exist, but because the text itself cannot change, 'a successful relationship between text and reader can only come about through changes in the reader's projections' (Iser, 1978, p. 167). This ability to decentre—to move away from one's own perspective in order to gain a fuller, more nuanced understanding—also lies at the core of the concept of IC (Bredella, 2003; Byram, 1997; Forsman, 2006).

Moreover, from a didactic perspective, it is worth noting how processes of text interpretation differ from real-time communication. While oral communication functions at a level of immediacy, for instance, the nature of the dialogue between reader and text is somewhat different, as the written word invites the reader into a more deliberative and reflective style of

communication than spoken interaction. The reader always has the option to stop to reflect on what she has read, to re-read certain passages, and to adjust her response to the text accordingly. The encounter with literature also gives the reader the unique opportunity to take on a number of different vantage positions in the communication process, since the possibility to revisit the text several times allows her to employ a range of analytical approaches in order to fill the 'gaps' of the text. In contrast, face-to-face encounters require a more immediate form of understanding, as they do not allow for the same amount of reflection and critical distance which may be involved in processes of text interpretation. From this viewpoint, the reading of a FL text provides opportunity for a multifaceted analysis of intercultural communication.

Previous Research on Reading and the Development of IC

In a context of language education, the reading of literature and other forms of fictional text[2] has traditionally been linked to *Bildung*, of which IC is an inseparable aspect (Bohlin, 2013; Byram, 2010; Fenner, 2012; Hoff, 2014). Indeed, the inherent qualities of FL literature have led scholars from diverse fields of research to highlight the role such texts may play in developing intercultural understanding (Bredella, 2006; Burwitz-Meltzer, 2001; Fenner, 2001, 2011; Greek, 2008; Hoff, 2013; Kramsch, 1993, 2011; MacDonald, Dasli, & Ibrahim, 2009). First of all, literature functions at both a cognitive and emotional level, much like IC itself (Narancic-Kovac & Kaltenbacher, 2006). Moreover, the reading of FL literary texts allows a 'symbolic dimension' (Kramsch, 2011) to be included in the concept of IC. Fenner (2001) argues that FL literature represents 'the personal voice of a culture' (p. 16), facilitating access to information rich in cultural details while at the same time allowing for personal contact with otherness. Furthermore, literary language is fraught with ambiguity and symbolism, and it consequently carries a multiplicity of possible meanings which must be negotiated by the reader (Fenner, 2001; Ibsen & Wiland, 2000; Kramsch, 1993). The reading of literary texts is thus a more subjective and emotional experience than the reading of factual texts. A literary narrative challenges the reader to place herself in somebody else's shoes (Bredella, 2006), and to enter into a negotiating dialogue with the values and worldviews inherent in the text. Because literature is 'neither oppositional to or representative of reality, [it] enables the (re)shaping of [the] reality of its reader' (MacDonald et al., 2009, p. 115).

At the same time, the 'multivocality' of the literary medium lends itself to a complex analysis of issues regarding culture, identity and difference (Greek, 2008).

A number of scholars within the field of FL didactics (e.g., Burwitz-Meltzer, 2001; Fenner, 2001; Gomez, 2012; Hoff, 2013; Kramsch, 2011; Narancic-Kovac & Kaltenbacher, 2006) have discussed reading practices and approaches to text that may be suited to bring about processes of intercultural learning in the FL classroom. Although much of this research emphasizes the importance of helping learners to establish a dialogical relationship with the text and offers didactic advice to practitioners in this respect, it does not explore the details of *how* the communication between reader and FL texts may take place. A recent study by Porto (2014) sheds some light on this matter, by 'extend[ing] the focus of research on intercultural communication to include the analysis of reading processes' (Porto, 2014, p. 518). Porto introduces a model that is partly based on Byram's model of ICC and may be used to identify the different ways in which FL learners understand the culture-specific dimensions of texts. Her study shows how the reading process involves moving back and forth between different levels of cultural understanding, and as such it is successful in capturing the fluid and procedural aspects of interculturality. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the understanding of cultural aspects of FL texts during reading is 'not a matter of idea units present or absent in a recall, but a question of increasing levels of complexity and detail' (Porto, 2013, p. 285).

What Porto's study does not reveal, however, is how readers go about accessing these different levels of complexity. In an educational context, it is important to bear in mind that learners' competences as 'intercultural readers' will not be developed automatically as a result of their exposure to a FL text. In fact, such exposure may, for instance, serve to uphold cultural stereotypes rather than countering them, unless prejudiced attitudes are explicitly brought out in the open and challenged in the classroom (Hoff, 2013). Moreover, research indicates that it is a particular challenge for young readers to use and understand other contexts than their own 'here and now' perspectives as they interpret literary texts (Skarstein, 2013). Adolescent readers are inclined to be either completely immersed in the experience (Appleyard, 1991) or they may exhibit a resistant attitude to the text due to the estrangement effect of reading in a foreign language (Hoff, 2013; Thyberg, 2012). This means that young readers of FL literature may fill the 'gaps' of the text solely with their own projections or

they may overlook aspects of potential conflict and ambivalence; in short, they may not be as inclined to scrutinize the text from a critical distance as more mature readers.

Accordingly, it is not possible to separate cultural competence from literary competence when it comes to the reading of FL texts. In order to integrate language, literature and culture in FL education it is not sufficient for teachers to be able to identify different levels of complexity and detail in learners' ability to access and understand the cultural dimensions of FL texts; they must also have insight into *how* the communicative process between a competent 'intercultural reader' and FL text takes place so that they can *assist* the learners into accessing and dealing with such complexity. In other words, there is a need for research that examines the reader–FL text relationship closely. In order to provide a context for such an investigation, a discussion of intercultural communication in general and the qualities of Byram's 'intercultural speaker' in particular, is first provided.

The Complexities of Intercultural Communication

IC entails the ability to successfully communicate across cultures. This is especially prominent in Byram's influential model of ICC, which is an extension of the concept of communicative competence, a central concern in FL education since the 1980s. First published in *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* in 1997, Byram's model defines the qualities of a quintessential 'intercultural speaker' who is genuinely concerned with 'establishing and maintaining relationships' across cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997, p. 3). The model identifies five aspects of learning that should be cultivated in order to foster such competence:

> *Savoir*: knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal.
> *Savoir être*: attitudes; relativizing self, valuing other.
> *Savoir comprendre*: skills of interpreting and relating.
> *Savoir apprendre/faire*: skills of discovering and/or interacting.
> *Savoir s'engager*: political education, critical cultural awareness. (adapted from Byram, 1997, p. 34)

According to Byram (2000), the intercultural speaker is able 'to see relationships between different cultures—both internal and external to a society—and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either

for [himself] or for other people'. He also knows how to 'critically or analytically understand that one's own and other cultures' perspective is culturally determined rather than natural' (Byram, 2000, p. 10).

However, successful communication cannot be achieved merely through an understanding of how different cultural contexts affect the interpretation of what one says or writes, and a reason for this is that processes of globalization and migration have made it increasingly difficult to attach meaning to such concepts as 'culture' and 'identity' (see Chap. 8 and 9, this volume). Indeed, the impact of transnational and multilingual cultures has been the focus of a significant amount of research within the fields of sociolinguistics (Bloomaert, 2010; Zarate, Lévy, & Kramsch, 2008) and FL didactics (Byram, 2008; Fenoulhet & Ros i Solé, 2011; Kramsch, 2009; Risager, 2007). Ros i Solé (2013) notes that Byram's model is 'rooted in a single mother tongue and nation and its accompanying social spheres and spaces', and argues that this 'limit[s] the ways in which multilingual subjects are able to position themselves in the language learning experience and the roles they are allowed to adopt' (Ros i Solé, 2013, p. 335). She therefore proposes to expand the concept of the 'intercultural speaker' to a 'cosmopolitan speaker' in order to take into account multiple and complex identities more effectively. A consequence of such complexity is that IC is

> not only a question of tolerance towards or empathy with others, of understanding them in their cultural context, or of understanding oneself and the other in terms of one another. It is also a matter of looking beyond words and actions and embracing multiple, changing and conflicting discourse worlds. (Kramsch, 2011, p. 356)

This means that intercultural communication may be a challenging, even uncomfortable and confusing, undertaking. It is thus essential that intercultural education plays a role in promoting learners' ability to handle conflict and ambiguity in a constructive and creative manner.

To what extent, then, are ambivalence and uncertainty recognized as a part of 'the intercultural speaker's' experience as he engages with otherness? Byram's model acknowledges that the 'intercultural speaker' may go through 'different stages of adaptation to and interaction with' otherness, and that these stages may include 'phases of acceptance and rejection' (*savoir être*) (Byram, 1997, p. 58). This means that the model to some extent incorporates elements of conflict and ambivalence, but the central

aim for the 'intercultural speaker' is to overcome such temporary drawbacks in order to establish a harmonious relationship with an interlocutor, or to help along such relationships between other individuals. For instance, the 'intercultural speaker' helps 'interlocutors overcome conflicting perspectives' (*savoir comprendre*) and to 'negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of difference' (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram, 1997, pp. 61, 64). It should be noted that 'the intercultural speaker' acknowledges the fact that opposing views may not always be possible to reconcile. However, this appears to be a solution for which he 'may settle when all attempts of a harmonious fusion of horizons have failed, rather than as positive conditions for the communication process' (Hoff, 2014, p. 514). In terms of its potential to enhance 'the intercultural speaker's' awareness of the complex and frequently conflictual nature of intercultural communication, then, what may not be adequately expressed in Byram's model is an acknowledgement of how conflict, misunderstanding and disagreement may lead to 'meaningful communicative situations in which the participants are deeply engaged, thus contributing to a higher level of honesty and involvement' (Hoff, 2014, p. 514).

The FL learner's encounter with literature can play an important role in this respect. Iser (1978) notes that it is the very 'lack of ascertainability' in the reading process, caused by the indeterminacy of the literary text, that 'gives rise to communication' (pp. 166, 167). Accordingly, phases of conflict, misunderstanding and ambiguity are a natural part of any encounter with literature, and should not be regarded as barriers hindering successful communication, but as *catalysts* for communication itself. Indeed, the tolerance and even the aesthetic enjoyment of ambiguity is 'a key "competence" for an appreciation of literature and the development of literary literacy in a broader sense' (Lütge, 2012, p. 193). Since text interpretation always involves 'a logic of uncertainty and qualitative probability' (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 159), learners' engagement with FL literature may be essential in promoting their disposition to see the world not in black or white but in multiple, subtle nuances.

Moreover, because discourse both reveals and conceals something about the nature of being, seemingly effective communication may be no more than a common illusion, behind which 'the circulation of values and identities across cultures, the inversions, even inventions of meaning' (Kramsch, Lévy, & Zarate, 2008, p. 15)[3] may be hidden. What the 'intercultural speaker' perceives as harmony and mutual understanding, then, may in fact be a deception. Indeed, he cannot always take what the interlocutor

says at face value. This is not necessarily a matter of recognizing whether the other's utterances are to be trusted, but of exploring the subconscious dimensions of the dialogue. The theoretical perspective of the Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Bakhtin (2006) may be used to illustrate the complex nature of interhuman communication in general, and the act of text interpretation in particular. Bakthin employs the terms 'heteroglossia' and 'polyphony' to describe how any utterance bears traces of other voices and discourses: 'Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions' (Bakhtin, 2006, p. 293). This means that there is always a multiplicity of possible, even conflicting, interpretations that must be considered and negotiated in order to make sense of human discourse or a text, and the implicit ideologies involved must be identified and challenged.

Byram's model of ICC answers this need to take into account and scrutinize multiple perspectives by emphasizing the 'intercultural speaker's' recognition of how different cultural points of view may lead to diverse experiences of texts or events. The 'intercultural speaker' is able to use the encounter with an interlocutor from a foreign culture to 'discover other perspectives on interpretation' (*savoir être*), to 'establish relationships of similarity and difference between them' (*savoir apprendre/faire*) and to 'mediate' between them (*savoir comprendre*) (Byram, 1997, pp. 58, 62, 61). Furthermore, he knows how to 'identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents' and is able to 'place a document […] in contexts (of origins/sources, time, place, other documents or events)' (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram, 1997, p. 63). In other words, he is able to disclose ideological dimensions in the text and to identify aspects of intertextuality in order to explore how the text draws on prior discourses.

It follows from this that the 'intercultural speaker' acknowledges that processes of reading entail examining the FL text from a number of different vantage points, and he may thus be in possession of some important tools that might help him in his quest to look beyond actions and words in the intercultural encounter. However, what is lacking in Byram's model is the 'intercultural speaker's' recognition of what distinguishes processes of text interpretation, and particularly the reading of literary texts, from other forms of intercultural communication. In the following, the complex processes of communication that may potentially take place during the reading of FL texts, are explored in order to define the qualities of an ideal 'intercultural reader'.

Defining the 'Intercultural Reader'

A unique characteristic of the literary medium is that it is not governed by time and space constraints as it speaks to its readers. From this viewpoint, FL literature gives readers the opportunity to communicate with literary voices from other cultural, social and historical contexts. The multivocality of literary texts adds to the complexity of this interpretative process. A piece of FL literature does not represent 'the personal voice of a culture' (Fenner, 2001, p. 16) as much as it can be said to be an amalgam of multiple, diverse and even conflicting voices along a spectrum of accessibility: those of the narrator, the protagonist, the antagonist, other characters, the author, the implied author, the implied reader,[4] etc. In other words, the text encompasses multiple, complex identities that must be discerned by the reader.

Furthermore, the reader's communication with these diverse voices may be enhanced or obscured by the narrative style and structure of the text. The point of view, tone, range of vocabulary, use of symbols as well as adherence to or breach with familiar genre conventions, for instance, have an impact on how the text speaks to the reader, and on how the reader responds. Such processes are further influenced by the plot, setting and theme of the text, that is, the structural framework underlying the order and manner in which the story is told. The way in which one expresses oneself, either as a result of deliberate or subconscious choices, is of course a central element in any intercultural encounter, but processes of text interpretation offer the reader the opportunity to analyse the *effects* of such choices and to pay as much attention to what is not said as to what is said (Kramsch, 2011).

Moreover, the lack of time and space constraints allows readers to take into account how a wide range of other prior and contemporary readers experience the text. It is thus not sufficient for a reader of a FL text to gain insight into how a particular interlocutor from a foreign culture may understand the text differently from her; she is interested in exploring how and why the cultural, social and historical subject positions of a wide range of readers may lead to different interpretations. The subjective nature of literary reading lends itself to an examination of how diverse, even opposing, perspectives can be found among readers *within* a given culture, not only across cultural boundaries. Such an emphasis on the individual rather than the collective aspect of intercultural communication may lead to an understanding of cultural identity as a dynamic and multidimensional concept (see Chaps. 8 and 9, this volume).

Another point for consideration is that different pieces of literature may address the same basic themes or events. They may be set apart by the particular language that they use or by the way the events are framed and narrated. In order to gain an understanding of how the FL text both draws upon and challenges prior discourses (*savoir s'engager*), the reader must examine the manner in which it communicates with other texts, both contemporary and from other historical periods. She must also consider the extent to which she and other readers respond differently to these other texts, and reflect on *why* such responses may be similar or disparate.

It follows from this that the encounter with FL literature has the potential to be a multifaceted endeavour, which may enhance the reader's understanding of the 'complex, changing and conflictual' (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359) nature of intercultural communication. The reader's consideration of how the text communicates with a wide range of other readers and texts enables her to challenge her own prior understandings as well as those of others in order to construct new interpretations. The qualities of a competent, creative and flexible 'intercultural reader' may thus be summed up as follows:

1. The 'intercultural reader' regards the reading of FL texts as a form of intercultural communication, and understands how the nature of text interpretation allows her to explore the complexity of this type of communication from a number of different vantage points.
2. The 'intercultural reader' regards conflict and ambiguity as catalysts for communication rather than as communicative difficulties to be overcome, and consequently seeks out and explores such conditions both in terms of her own emotional response to the FL text and as inherent aspects of the text itself.
3. The 'intercultural reader' takes into account how the FL text may communicate with other contemporary and prior texts and readers as she attempts to fill the 'gaps' in the reading process. This venture involves exploring the effects of her own cultural, social and historical subject positions as well as those of the FL text itself, other texts, and other readers.
4. The 'intercultural reader' takes into account how discourse both reveals and conceals something about the nature of being, and is consequently concerned with the effects of different narrative styles and structures. This entails looking beyond the surface of the FL text as well as developing a critical awareness of how she and others communicate.

5. The 'intercultural reader' regards her encounter with FL literature as a creative undertaking that entails challenging prior understandings and constructing new, creative interpretations.

Three Levels of Communication

The following is an attempt to describe the processes of communication in which the competent 'intercultural reader' takes part as she interprets a piece of FL literature. Her engagement with the text can be said to operate at three, interlinked levels of communication, each of which involves her emotions as well as her cognition. At all three levels, the effects of narrative choices as well as the various cultural, social and historical subject positions of text(s) and reader(s) are considered by the 'intercultural reader'.

Level 1 involves the 'intercultural reader's' engagement with multiple voices inherent in the FL text. The protagonist and other characters often represent the most easily accessible voices of the text, and are consequently also the ones to trigger her immediate emotional response. At the other end of the spectrum, the 'intercultural reader's' communication with the implied author/reader relies not only on a high degree of abstract thinking and critical investigation of the narrative; it may also require research of external sources.

At Level 2, the 'intercultural reader' takes into account how other readers may communicate with the FL text, and she reflects on how different subject positions make some interpretations possible/likely and others impossible/unlikely. Her investigation may include contemporary and prior readers who share the 'intercultural reader's' own cultural background, readers from the author's/narrator's/literary characters'/implied author's/implied reader's cultures, as well as readers from cultures with no apparent connection to the text or the 'intercultural reader' herself. A variety of diverse interpretations among readers within a given culture are considered.

Furthermore, this deliberation of other interpretations may take place on a concrete or an abstract level, depending on whether the perspectives of the other can be explicitly accessed. In a classroom context, for instance, the text-interpretation process has the potential to become a collaborative effort (Aase, 2005; Ibsen & Wiland, 2000). Such democratic and sociocultural processes of text interpretation may allow the different subjectivities of the classroom to be recruited rather than ignored (Tornberg, 2004), and may thus contribute to an understanding of cultural identity as a complex phenomenon. Other, concrete sources that might be taken into

consideration at this level of the 'intercultural reader's' communication with the text, are book reviews or alternate versions of the text.[5] Where such concrete sources are not possible to access, the 'intercultural reader' must draw upon her existing knowledge of foreign cultures (*savoir*) and project herself into the position of Another (*savoir être*) in order to imagine how the text may be understood from other points of view. In doing so, she must also reflect upon how the subjective nature of literary reading as well as the multiple, complex identities of individuals make it difficult to foresee how others may respond to a given text.

Level 3 takes into account how the FL text may communicate with other texts. This means that texts from different cultures, time periods and genres are compared and contrasted. The aim of the 'intercultural reader' is not only to identify aspects of intertextuality, but to juxtapose the FL text with other texts in order to explore the extent to which alternate narrative choices and subject positions affect her understanding.

Based on the above discussion, I propose a schema of the communicative processes involved and the relationships between them, in Fig. 4.1.

The 'intercultural reader's' quest to fill the 'gaps' of the FL text involves a continuous expansion of her projections upon the text, and the act of reading should, therefore, be regarded as a dynamic process of moving back and forth between the different levels, leading to a gradually increasing awareness of the inherent complexities of the text as well as the

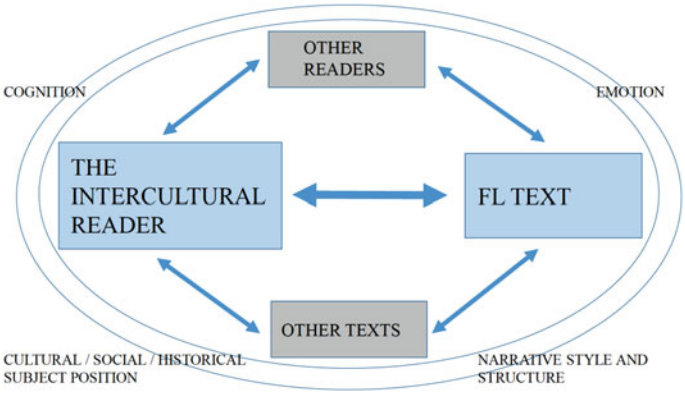

Fig. 4.1 Model of the intercultural reader's engagement with FL literary texts

interpretation process. Because both the narrative style and structure of the text and the cultural, social and historical subject positions of the readers as well as those of the literary voices have an impact on the communication process, the model illustrates the fact that linguistic, cultural and literary competence cannot be separated when it comes to the reading of FL texts. The teacher's role in this process is discussed in the following section.

Fostering the 'Intercultural Reader': Some Suggestions for the FL Classroom

The three-level model proposed here describes the ideal 'intercultural reader's' interaction with FL texts. However, the model may also be used to inform teaching procedures and reading practices in the FL classroom. In this respect, the central task for the FL teacher is to draw the learners' attention to potential 'gaps' in the text, and then to encourage them to explore such ambiguities from a variety of different vantage positions involving all of the three levels of communication described in the model.

Because the subject's emotional and personal involvement is essential to the development of IC (Byram, 1997, 2010; Fenner, 2001, 2012; Kramsch, 2009; Narancic-Kovac & Kaltenbacher, 2006), the effect of negotiating meaning from the 'gaps' of the literary text may be enhanced if the learners are explicitly encouraged to explore feelings of confusion, discomfort and tension during reading. One way to bring about such processes in the FL classroom is by including texts that *challenge* the learners on a number of levels, for instance in the form of provocative subject matters, the inclusion of unsympathetic literary characters who may be difficult to relate to or narrators whose trustworthiness is disputable. The degree of complexity in this process must be adjusted to the learners' prior experience with texts, but it must also challenge their creativity and capacity for critical and abstract thinking. It is important to note, however, that any resistance and discomfort exhibited by learners upon their initial contact with the text do not mean that a sense of openness cannot be maintained at the same time. In the words of Ricoeur (1970), hermeneutics, or the process of interpreting, is 'animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience' (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 27). This means that elements of contention and disagreement do not rule out the possibility of establishing a meaningful relationship with the FL text; in fact, such conditions may stimulate a more profound dialogue.

Let us look at an example of how such a multifaceted interaction with literary texts may be promoted in the FL classroom. The following is not intended to be a normative or exhaustive representation of how reading should take place as a form of intercultural communication, but the example to be discussed here shows how learners may be encouraged into and guided through processes of text interpretation which involve all three levels of communication. Moreover, it indicates how such communication may take place across notions of time and place, involving varying degrees of critical and abstract thinking.

The word 'nigger' (often referred to as the 'N-word' to avoid controversy) is a highly sensitive term that carries connotations of racism, oppression and dark chapters in African American history. Mark Twain's classic novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* may be juxtaposed with an episode of the contemporary TV series *The Wire*, and learners of English as a foreign language[6] may be invited to compare and contrast the use of the word in the two texts. The classroom discussion may revolve around such questions as:

- How did the use of the N-word in these texts make you feel? Why did it invoke such a reaction? Discuss your responses in groups. To what extent are your reactions similar or different? What may be the reasons that you respond similarly/differently? (Levels 1, 2)
- How might your response(s) differ from an American reader in general, and an African American reader in particular? Is it even possible for you to make assumptions about this? Why/why not? (Level 2)
- Does the word mean the same thing in the two texts? (Levels 1, 3)
- Read some of the reviews written at the time *Huckleberry Finn* was first published.[7] What can these reviews tell you about the critics' attitudes to the use of the word in the book? Would the use of the word be a point of discussion in your own review of the book? Why/why not? (Levels 1, 2)
- In recent years, some publishers have removed the N-word and replaced it with 'slave'. Which effect does this have, do you think? Can you think of other texts (written in a foreign language or your own mother tongue) that have been treated in a similar way? Do you agree or disagree with such a decision? Why? (Levels 2, 3)
- What do you think are Mark Twain's and the creator of *The Wire*'s attitudes to the use of the word? What kinds of evidence in the texts do you base your assumption on? (Levels 1, 3)

- The narrator of *Huckleberry Finn* uses the word when talking to and about Jim, a runaway slave who becomes his friend. In *The Wire*, the word is used by members of the police force to insult the African American teenagers, but it is also used humorously and affectionately among the teenagers themselves. What makes it possible for these various characters to use the word in such different ways, do you think? (Levels 1, 3)
- Do you think that the word would have been used in the same way if Jim had been the narrator of *HF* rather than Huck? Why/why not? (Levels 1, 3)
- *Huckleberry Finn* is considered to be one of the greatest works of American literature, while *The Wire* is a contemporary product of pop culture which reaches a wide, international audience. Do the different statuses of these texts legitimize your own use of the word in any way? If so, which one, and why? (Levels 1, 3)

When discussing these questions, the learners may gain profound insight into the various cultural, social and historical implications of an utterance. Their emotions are explicitly included as they are asked to examine aspects of ambiguity, contradictions and intertextuality, in addition to considering different interpretations, and even alternate versions, of the texts. Both concrete examples, in the form of fellow classmates' readings and book reviews from a different time in history, as well as abstract examples in the form of the learners' perceptions about other people's perspectives, are included. Throughout this set of questions, there is a focus on the effects of narrative choices and subject positions. Finally, the juxtaposition of a piece of nineteenth-century 'classical' literature with a contemporary pop-culture text allows learners to ponder how we draw on prior discourses to express ourselves, and to reflect on how notions of language, culture and identity may be manipulated in order to challenge established meanings and redefine our reality.

Conclusion

As expressed by the editors in Chap. 1, the aim of this volume is to offer innovative and critical perspectives on IC as an educational aim. In such respect, the present chapter adds a new dimension to the academic discourse on IC and reading through a close examination of the relationship

between reader and FL text. The chapter has explored why and how the process of interpreting a FL text may be regarded as a multifaceted form of intercultural communication. Adapting and reformulating a central concept in FL didactic theory, it has addressed the need to define the qualities of a profoundly engaged, analytical and creative 'intercultural reader' in order to supplement Byram's original description of the 'intercultural speaker'. Answering to recent developments in culture, sociolinguistics and FL didactic theory, the chapter has argued that the subjective and indeterminate nature of literary reading makes FL literature a particularly suited medium through which to foster individuals who are capable of handling the complexities of our contemporary world in a constructive, creative manner.

A descriptive model of 'the intercultural reader's' engagement with FL literature has been proposed and discussed. This model shows how the text interpretation process may operate at three, interlinked levels of communication, each of which involves the 'intercultural reader's' emotions as well as her cognition. At all three levels, she considers the effects of the narrative style and structure of the text as well as the various cultural, social and historical subject positions of text(s) and reader(s). Furthermore, the model takes into account how the text-interpretation process may take place across notions of time and place, involving varying degrees of critical and abstract thinking. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the model for educational practice, the chapter has provided a practical example of how the fostering of 'intercultural readers' may take place in the FL classroom.

By defining and discussing the qualities of the 'intercultural reader' as well as the communicative processes involved in her reading of FL literature, the chapter has illuminated aspects of the reader-FL text relationship on which previous theoretical perspectives on reading and IC, are unclear. In doing so, it has shown how it is not possible to separate IC from literary competence when it comes to the reading of FL texts, and the model may thus hopefully contribute to the integration of language, culture and literature in FL education. Further, empirical research is needed regarding the use of the model as a tool for analysing readers' engagement with FL texts.

Notes

1. Byram (1997) uses the label 'intercultural communicative competence' to indicate that his model expands the concept of communicative competence, in addition to making explicit that it is first and foremost relevant in a context of FL teaching and assessment (Byram, 1997, p. 3). In the following, the term ICC will be used when referring specifically to Byram's model, whereas the term intercultural competence (IC) will be used more broadly.
2. This includes films and other forms of multimodal texts. For the sake of brevity, the term 'literature' is in the following used as a common denominator for such fictional texts.
3. This is originally a quote in French. One of the co-authors provides the English translation in Kramsch (2011).
4. The *implied author* is a term which refers to the character a reader may attribute to the author based on the way the text is written, and accordingly it may not correspond with the author's true personality. The *implied reader* exists merely in the imagination of the author, and may be reconstructed only through the latter's statements or extra-textual information (Abrams, 1999, pp. 219, 257).
5. For instance, Baz Luhrman's film *Romeo + Juliet* may be approached as an interpretation of Shakespeare's original play.
6. Due to the explicit language of the dialogue in *The Wire*, this particular lesson plan is suitable for upper-secondary-level learners above 16 years of age. An example of a classroom discussion of *The Wire* can be found in (Hoff, 2013).
7. http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/huckfinn/hucrevhp.html

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CHAPTER 5

Competences for Active Communication and Participation in Diverse Societies: Views of Young People in Iceland

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir

Introduction

What does it take to be an active member of contemporary diverse societies? What are important competences for communicating and participating in such societies and how are they expressed by young people? In this chapter I address these and other related questions and discuss the usefulness of different approaches in addressing the liquidity and complexity of social relations in contemporary diverse societies. The chapter draws on research (two separate studies) conducted in 2011–2014 with students from various ethnic backgrounds in upper secondary schools and universities in Iceland.

The first study is a mixed method study conducted in 2011–2014 (Finnbogason, Gunnarsson, Jónsdóttir, & Ragnarsdóttir, 2011) where a survey and focus group interviews with young people age 18–24 were used for data collection. The aim of the project was to study young people's life views and values in a multicultural society in Iceland. The first part of the research was a survey that was conducted among students in seven upper

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secondary schools in the Reykjavík area and other areas of Iceland in 2011 and 2012 covering measures of self-identity, family ties, communication, diversity, religious affiliations and background variables. Focus-group interviews were conducted in the schools in the following years, where mixed groups were asked to discuss a number of topics related to the main findings of the survey.

The second study is a qualitative interview study conducted in 2011 with nine young immigrants in Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2011). The study was a follow-up study from an earlier longitudinal study conducted in 2002–2005 with these immigrants and their families. The purpose of the research was to analyse their experiences of life and work in Icelandic society during the past ten years, with particular emphasis on their school experiences and how they thought schools in Iceland could better support immigrant children.

Drawing on selected findings from both studies, the aim of the chapter is to explore which factors these young people see as being important for active communication and participation in a diverse society. Questions considered in the chapter also include whether these young people relate obstacles for communication to their different origins, cultures, values, religions or other factors, or whether they consider these as irrelevant factors.

Background and Context: Icelandic Society and Education System

Languages, cultures and religions of Iceland's population have become increasingly diverse in recent decades. The ratio of non-Icelandic citizens to the total population was 1.8 per cent in 1995. In 2000 it was 2.6 per cent; in 2005 3.6 per cent and in 2013 6.7 per cent of the total population of 321,857 (Statistics Iceland, 2013). Over the past few years there has been a rapid increase in the youngest age groups (Statistics Iceland, 2013). Immigrant children and youth consequently attend most preschools and compulsory schools in Iceland, creating new challenges for school communities that previously were more homogeneous in terms of students' ethnicity and languages (Ragnarsdóttir, 2008). The largest groups of people born in other countries than Iceland come from these countries: Poland (9,404), Denmark (3,147), USA (1,967), Sweden (1,869), Germany (1,512), Philippines (1,487), Lithuania (1,408), UK (1,200), Thailand (1,132), Norway (972). These numbers can also include Icelandic citizens born in these countries (Statistics Iceland, 2013).

Religious diversity has also increased in recent years, partly as a result of immigration, with a growing number of religious organizations in Iceland. According to Statistics Iceland (2013), 76.2% of the population of Iceland claim to belong to the National Church of Iceland which is an Evangelical Lutheran Church. 5.2% of the population are not registered in religious organizations. Altogether 40 religious organizations other than the National Church are registered in Iceland, most of them are Christian. Two are Buddhist (0.3% of population), two are Muslim (0.2% of population), one is Bahá'í (0.1% of population) and one is Ásatru (old Icelandic religion, 0.7% of population) (Statistics Iceland, 2013).

Several policy initiatives have been developed in recent years as a response to the changing demographics in Icelandic society on state and municipal levels (Félagsmálaráðuneytið, 2007; Reykjavíkurborg, 2014). While some aim at the integration of immigrants (Félagsmálaráðuneytið, 2007), other policies have broader aims with a focus on equality for all in a multicultural society (Reykjanesbær, 2004; Reykjavíkurborg, 2014).

The Icelandic education system has gradually been responding to the changing demographics in Icelandic society. It is grounded in equal rights to education for all persons (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2015). Legislation governing preschools, basic schools and upper secondary schools in Iceland (Lög um framhaldsskóla nr. 92/2008; Lög um grunnskóla nr. 91/2008; Lög um leikskóla nr. 90/2008) are based on principles of equality. These laws stipulate that schools should benefit all students and educate each child effectively. Various municipalities have developed policies where the growing diversity of students is addressed (Reykjanesbær, 2004; Reykjavíkurborg, 2014).

In spite of an educational system based on principles of equality and new policy initiatives, findings of research in Iceland have shown that rapid demographic and social changes have resulted in the development of new inequalities: the formation of obstacles for educational access and participation for ethnic minority students, as well as social exclusion (Bjarnason, 2006; Ragnarsdóttir, 2008; Ragnarsdóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2010). Furthermore, the findings of a recent study indicate that dropout rates among young immigrants in upper secondary schools are higher than the average in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Garðarsdóttir & Hauksson, 2011). Consequently, there is a need to address structural as well as social inequalities in Icelandic society. Exploring young people's views on communication and participation

in an increasingly diverse Icelandic society is an important contribution to a discussion on such inequalities.

Theoretical Framework

Globalization, Mobility and Communication in Diverse Societies

Globalization and international migration have produced transnational communities and culturally diverse societies (Osler & Starkey, 2005). In the introduction to their edited book *Youth Moves: Identities and Education in Global Perspective*, Dolby and Rizvi (2008) argue that increasingly, a large number of young people develop their identity within a context of mobility. Quoting Bauman, they note that emerging global cultural economies are 'driven largely by the new information and communication technologies that make it possible for people not only to travel across vast distances but also to remain connected' (Dolby & Rizvi, 2008, p. 2). As a result of this, more complex identities emerge. According to Dolby and Rizvi, young people 'who have a multiple and mobile sense of belonging view themselves as neither immigrants nor as tourists' (Dolby & Rizvi, 2008, p. 2), but 'consider themselves to occupy an entirely different space' (Dolby & Rizvi, 2008, p. 2). In a similar vein, in discussing the contemporary world, Elliott and Urry (2010, p. 15) claim that 'all social relationships should be seen as involving diverse "connections" that are more or less "at-a-distance", more or less fast, more or less intense and more or less involving physical movement'. Thus many connections with peoples and social groupings are not based only upon propinquity, but also on absence or imagined presence. How do the experiences of multiple and mobile sense of belonging affect young people's competences for communication? Is the term culture an important issue in understanding these competences or are other issues more relevant to young people's contemporary world? Do other factors position young people unequally in regard to communication and participation?

According to Parekh (2006), it is difficult to reach full equality in societies as each society has one or more majority languages and no language or society is culturally neutral. Therefore, obtaining equality in contemporary multicultural societies is a challenge. Each society needs to find its balance and ensure equal opportunities and equal access through active communication and agreements of groups. With the development of Icelandic society towards increasing cultural diversity, the questions arise whether such

balance has been reached and how young people view and address the diverse reality in their everyday lives and surroundings. Cummins (2009) has discussed how the increasing mobility of people between countries has given rise to social tensions 'as societies find themselves dislodged from their national identity comfort zone' (Cummins, 2009, p. 53). In this respect, it is interesting to consider whether young people's travels and international communication on the Internet as well as confronting various aspects of diversity on a daily basis make diversity ordinary rather than a cause for social tension, or even both at the same time.

Some authors have discussed cosmopolitanism as an important quality in times of transnational communities and culturally diverse societies (see Hansen, 2010; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Urry, 2003). Appiah (2006) notes that, although disputed, cosmopolitanism is a useful concept in contemporary larger societies. According to Appiah, two strands intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism: First, the idea that we have obligations to others and second, that we take seriously the value of particular human lives, taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance (Appiah, 2006, p. xv). In discussing the term cosmopolitanism, Ong (1999) discusses the 'need to identify a kind of progressive cosmopolitan intellectual' (Ong, 1999, p. 14), in order to disassociate the term from 'European bourgeois culture, capitalism, and colonial empires…'.

Related to this, Osler and Starkey (2005) have discussed the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship. According to them, citizenship has three essential and complementary dimensions; 'It is a *status*, a *feeling* and a *practice*' (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 9). While citizenship is probably most often understood as status, Osler and Starkey (2005) argue that citizenship is also a feeling of belonging to a community of citizens and practice, associated with democracy and human rights. Historically, citizenship has mostly been related to nation states. The concept of cosmopolitan citizenship refers to recognizing 'universal, values as its standard for all contexts, including national contexts', stressing 'those things that unite human beings rather than what divides them' (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 21). Furthermore, according to Osler and Starkey (2005), a limited understanding of citizenship as a function of nationality is no longer adequate and at odds with realities on the ground, as globalization has enabled the development of a consciousness that identity is multiply situated.

On a similar note, in discussing a possibly emerging 'cosmopolitan global fluid', Urry (2003, p. 133) notes that such fluid involves various characteristics. These are: extensive mobility; curiosity about places,

peoples and cultures and a stance of openness to other peoples and cultures; willingness to take risks by virtue of encountering various 'others'; and some global standards by which other places, cultures and people are positioned and can be judged.

Bauman (2007) describes the consequences of this state as liquid modern times, where the social relationships of individuals become increasingly complicated as they choose groups, ideas, values and attitudes, which again are changeable (see Chap. 3, this volume). Similarly, identities can become hybrid and changeable (Baumann, 1999; Giddens, 1997; Ragnarsdóttir, 2007; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). While there have been many academic debates about clashes and challenges in modern multicultural societies and the complexity of communication in such societies (see Baumann, 1999; Holliday, 2011; Kymlicka, 1996; Parekh, 2006; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010), rather few have focused on how young people experiencing such societies feel about their communication and participation.

Intercultural Competences and Intercultural Dialogue in Contemporary Societies

When discussing competences for communication and participation in diverse societies, it is important to consider the concepts intercultural competences (ICs) and intercultural dialogue.

In an article on the challenges of developing IC in Europe, Hoskins and Sallah (2011) trace the use of the terminology of culture within European policy and practice, and explore the effectiveness of the use of culture in addressing discrimination at an individual and structural level. They criticize definitions of IC and dialogue which place the onus on people to take responsibility at the individual level, while the obligation of mainstream organizations and public bodies to address discrimination and oppression is often overlooked. They argue further that:

> The mainstream services that interact with people, in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society have the responsibility to ensure that their staff has the required skills, knowledge and resources to effectively engage with everyone in the public sphere regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion or background. (Hoskins & Sallah, 2011, p. 121)

Hoskins and Sallah (2011) argue that the approach of IC needs to be more political and more involved in dismantling the structures that oppress. May's (2011) writing on critical multiculturalism is useful in

this context. He argues that a theory of multiculturalism requires a central recognition of unequal power relations and emphasizes that culture needs to be understood as part of the discourse of power and inequality. Similarly, definitions and understanding of IC need to address unequal power relations.

In the European context, Barrett (2011) discusses the *Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* from 2008, which proposes that 'intercultural dialogue offers the best approach for managing issues of cultural diversity within contemporary societies'. He notes that the White Paper defines intercultural dialogue as 'the open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups from different ethnic, religious, linguistic and national backgrounds on the basis of mutual understanding and respect', arguing that such dialogue is crucial for promoting tolerance and understanding, preventing conflicts, and enhancing societal cohesion. Barett (2011) also discusses how these competences need to be learned, practised and maintained. In the same chapter, Barrett refers to a variety of models that have been developed on ICs and are outlined in Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), who claim that these models can be classified into five types: compositional models; co-orientational models; developmental models; adaptational models; and causal process models. Do such models provide us with an explanation and understanding of communication in modern diverse societies? Do they shed light on the realities and understanding of young people?

To summarize, it is important that the use of the concept of IC acknowledges unequal power relations and allows for a broad definition of culture.

Method

The first study introduced in the chapter is a three-year project (2011–2014) based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The aim of the study was to explore the life views and life values of young people in Icelandic society. The sample is students (18–24 years) in upper secondary schools in Reykjavík and the countryside. A survey and focus groups (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) were used for data collection in seven upper secondary schools in different areas of Iceland, three schools in Reykjavík, the capital and four schools, each in a different area around the country. In the survey, conducted in 2011–2012, participants were asked about background information, such as gender, age, nationality, mother language and religious affiliation. They also responded to 77 different statements (Likert scale) about their life views and life values, identities, well-being, communication and

attitudes towards others, and diversity. Issues such as tolerance, prejudice, equality, human rights and religious needs were addressed in the survey. There were 904 participants. Findings from the survey provided the basis for focus-group interviews with mixed groups (in terms of gender and background, one in each of five schools in the study) of students in 2013–2014. The interviews lasted approximately one and a half hours each and were all conducted in Icelandic. They were coded thematically and categorized into main themes (Flick, 2006; Kvale, 1996), which were: views about diversity; religions and life views; family, friends and communication; schools; fear, anxiety and bullying; human rights, equality, freedom and justice; visions for the future and growing up; and other.

Methods in the second study included individual in-depth and semi-structured interviews with nine young immigrants, six young women and three young men in the 16–24 age range. Purposive sampling was used to track the individuals, who all participated in the author's previous study, among ten immigrant families in Iceland (2002–2005). The aim of the study was to explore the young immigrants' experiences of living and studying in Icelandic society for ten years. Two of the participants are originally European; from two European countries and seven originally Asian; from three Asian countries. They belong to five families. Questions in the interviews centred on their daily lives, their education and work, their social networks and friends, their connections with Icelandic society and their countries of origin, as well as their future plans. An effort was made to learn about their personal histories and experiences since the author's earlier research was concluded, which included their families. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each and were all conducted in Icelandic. Coding and categorization of data was thematic (Flick, 2006; Kvale, 1996). The main themes that emerged from the data were: adapting to a new society; experiences of schooling and social network; languages; visions for the future.

The findings are introduced separately for the two studies.

Findings

Young people's views on communcation and participation in a diverse Icelandic society

The following sub-sections introduce some findings from the survey and focus groups in the first study concerning communication and participation.

The Participants

Altogether 904 students 18–24 years participated in the survey, 491 females (54.3%) and 413 (45.7%) males. The background of the students is in broad terms as follows: Table 5.1 shows the origins of parents of the participants. The parents of 89.15% of the participants are Icelandic, while 8.4% of the participants have one parent of non-Icelandic origins. Participants who have both parents of non-Icelandic origins are 2.2%.

Background information on first languages spoken in participants' homes reveals that 92.1% of participants have Icelandic as a first language, while 5.9% of participants have Icelandic and another European language, 0.2% of participants mention Icelandic and an Asian language as first languages and 0.2% mention Asian language only, while European languages other than Icelandic are mentioned by 1.1% of participants. Information given by participants on religious affiliation reveals that 59.3% of participants claim to belong to the National Church of Iceland (Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church) or Christian religion more broadly, while 23.8% of participants claim to be non-religious or not to belong to religious associations. 6.6% of participants claim to belong to other religious associations than Christian. However, 10% of the participants (89 participants) did not reply to the question on religious affiliation.

The overview on background information of the participants reveals that the participants are a diverse group in terms of origins of parents, languages and religions, although the majority are Icelandic and claim to be Christian.

Table 5.1 Origins of parents

	Numbers	*%*
Iceland	806	89.15
Iceland/Nordic countries	25	2.8
Iceland/other European countries	27	3.0
Iceland/USA or Canada	8	0.9
Iceland/other areas	15	1.7
Europe	11	1.2
Asia	5	0.6
Latin America	4	0.4
No reply	3	0.3
Total	904	100.0

Below, some main findings related to conceptions of culture, background and religions in an increasingly diverse Icelandic society are introduced.

Culture, Background, Religions and Communication in a Diverse Icelandic Society

In response to one of the statements in the survey: *My culture and background is very important to me*, 84% of girls and 77% of boys agreed or agreed strongly with the statement. If we look at cultural background the young people having mixed or foreign background (89%) are more likely to agree or agree strongly to the statement than those with both parents as Icelanders (79%). Response to the statement *Taking different cultural and religious traditions into account is important* in Table 5.2 gives a higher proportion of positive responses.

Of the participants, 88.3% agreed or agreed strongly. Around 90% of the girls agreed or agreed strongly to the statement and 81% of the boys. Almost all (98%) of the young people having mixed or foreign background agreed or agreed strongly to this statement but only 79% of those with both parents as Icelanders. Responses to these two statements may indicate that there is generally a positive atmosphere among young people towards different cultural and religious traditions and an understanding of the importance of taking different traditions into account. This could also indicate positive views towards equality in society, although the statement could be interpreted in different ways.

However, taking different cultural and religious traditions into account does not appear as clearly in responses to the statement *All religious organizations should be able to flourish and build their places of worship*, where 58% of participants' responses agree or agree strongly, while 24% disagree or disagree strongly and 14% claim not to know. Recent media coverages

Table 5.2 Responses to 'Taking different cultural and religious traditions into account is important'

	Numbers	*%*
Agree strongly	451	50.2
Agree	342	38.1
Disagree	39	4.3
Disagree strongly	27	3
Don't know	39	4.3
No reply	6	0.6

Table 5.3 Diversity (of backgrounds) is important for Icelandic society.

	Numbers	*%*
Agree strongly	179	20.0
Agree	374	41.7
Disagree	119	13.3
Di sagree strongly	47	5.2
Don't know	177	19.8
No reply	8	0.8

on religious buildings, often with negative undertones may have influenced responses to this particular statement.

Responses to the statement on diversity in Icelandic society in Table 5.3 are equally interesting. Around 62% of participants agree or strongly agree on the statement that *Diverse backgrounds or origins are important for Icelandic society*, while 18.5% disagree or strongly disagree and around 20% do not know. These findings may reveal some insecurity towards the multicultural society and are in some contrast to the flexibility towards diverse cultural and religious traditions appearing in Table 5.2.

As discussed earlier, the main findings of the survey provided a basis for the focus-group interviews where the main issues were explored further. In the focus-group interviews, cultural and religious diversity was discussed openly and extensively by the participants. The young people generally positioned themselves firmly within the diverse society and opposed the forming of any types of divisions based on people's backgrounds, cultures and religions. They expressed a general belief in equality and human rights and the will to stand up and take action in case of injustice. Furthermore, a sense of religious pluralism was expressed by some of the students as the following example from a young man reveals:

> Yes, I am … registered in the national church but I don't define myself as a Christian but I … have been reading about various religions … Buddhism and eastern philosophy and I am enthusiastic about this, but could not, not yet at least, define myself as a Buddhist.

A young woman added:

> I do not think much about whether I am religious or whether I believe in god or … I am registered in the national church and christened and confirmed

> but somehow it is not much part of my daily life but … of course one should just respect everyone and everyone is entitled to their opinion and I have nothing against this … I mean everyone just has their belief and this is fine.

The young people generally had strong opinions about diversity and prejudice and how to counteract the negative effects of prejudice in communication. One young man noted that:

> If I am with friends of different backgrounds and you know, the fact that he is of a different background …, does not bother me … I do not feel any prejudice or such, I am not saying that there is no prejudice in this society…

Referring to religious backgrounds this discussion took place in one of the focus groups:

> Researcher: How would you describe your general view of life?
> V1: To give everyone a fair chance.
> V2: Yes, to trust everyone until they show distrust or something like this.
> V1: It does not matter how a person looks, how she behaves, if she behaves well towards me I behave well towards her.

Several statements in the survey were directly related to racism and prejudice. A statement on racism, *Racism is never justifiable* (see Table 5.4) gives positive results.

Findings in Table 5.4 reveal that around 90% of participants agree or strongly agree on the statement. 7.7% disagree or disagree strongly and 2.8% don't know or did not reply. It is interesting to consider what these numbers indicate. Are these findings related to the multicultural society generally and discussion or lack of discussion on this development in society? Can these findings perhaps be linked to negative media coverages on immigrants or particular groups of immigrants?

To follow up, in the focus groups, equality and prejudice were discussed openly. One young woman described these in the following way:

> I think, concerning equality in society, that there is, unfortunately… a lot of prejudice against religious groups but… I think it is becoming less, you know 15 years ago it was more open… why are they like this, they are different but… now people… perhaps think like this… but do not say it openly…

Table 5.4 Responses to the 'Racism is never justifiable' statement

	Numbers	*%*
Agree strongly	692	76.9
Agree	117	13
Disagree	36	4
Disagree strongly	33	3.7
Don't know	22	2.4
No reply	4	0.4

you know you should not be prejudiced and I think that it is decreasing and with new generations it is becoming less and less obvious.

A young man added to this: 'It is a certain belief in man'. The focus group agreed.

In the focus groups tolerance was also discussed as well as empathy. A discussion between three young people was as follows:

V1: It is to be able to completely put yourself in another's shoes and borrow their eyes.
V3: Just be open to something else.
V2: And these are just the golden rules from Christianity, treat others as you want to be treated, show others tolerance and they will show you tolerance.

Another conversation on tolerance was as follows:

V2: You just need to show tolerance and really learn to show tolerance in a society where there are so many different religions.
V1: So many people think… that they can and are doing this but are not really doing this, but I think… at least everything is getting better and becoming better and I feel that most people are positive…
V2: Now that they are discussing, this discussion about the mosque is going on, about that a mosque should not be allowed, I think we are just taking a step backwards in not allowing it.

A few questions in the survey were linked directly to individuals and communication in the multicultural society. To the statement *I think it's*

Table 5.5 Responses to the 'I think I can learn a lot from having friends with different backgrounds' statement

	Numbers	*%*
Agree strongly	395	43.8
Agree	356	39.5
Disagree	35	3.9
Disagree strongly	14	1.6
Don't know	102	11.3
No reply	2	0.2

important to have friends that have another mother tongue (first language) only 24% agreed or agreed strongly. No gender differences appeared. In the responses to this question, it was interesting how many of the young people were not certain (29 %). Of those with both parents Icelandic 22.7% agreed or agreed strongly compared to 35.5% of the young people having mixed or foreign background. Another related statement, *I think I can learn a lot from having friends with different backgrounds* reveals very different responses, as appear in Table 5.5. At the same time as half of the young people do not think it's important to have friends that have another mother tongue, over 83% claim they can learn a lot from having friends with different backgrounds. Of these, 87% of the girls agreed or agreed strongly but only 75% of the boys. Only one of the young people having mixed or foreign background disagreed to the statement and none of them disagreed strongly.

Somewhat fewer agree or agree strongly on the statement *Communication of people of different origins are important to me*. Here, 61.5% of participants agree or strongly agree on this statement. Around 22% disagree or disagree strongly and around 17% answer that they do not know. It is interesting to compare these findings with responses to the statement *It is rewarding to associate with people who have different opinions than I have*. Around 90% agree or agree strongly on this statement, while around 4% disagree or disagree strongly and 6.6% claim they do not know. Here the focus is on different opinions generally rather than the different origins in the statement above and this could explain the difference in responses.

Some examples from the extensive survey and focus group interviews have been introduced above. To summarize, findings of the study indicate that the majority of the young people participating in the survey are

positive towards the increasingly diverse Icelandic society and do not see differences in cultures, backgrounds and religions as an obstacle for communication. This is further emphasized in the focus-group interviews. The focus-group interviews also reflect the complexity and liquidity of the young people's identities.

In the following sub-section, some findings from the second study, with young immigrants, will be introduced.

Views of Young Immigrants in Icelandic Society

In this study, the nine young immigrants' (age 16–24) experiences of living and studying in Icelandic society for ten years were explored. Questions in the interviews centred on their daily lives, their education and work, their social networks and friends, their connections with Icelandic society and their countries of origin, as well as their future plans. The main findings indicate that the participants in the study have all successfully adapted to Icelandic society and take a positive stand towards it. They claim to be happy about their lives in Iceland and have positive visions of the future. They describe how they have become used to living in Iceland and how they identify at least partly with Icelandic society. One of the participants said:

> I have been here for nine years… half of my life was here… It is a little difficult now: I go every year to [the country of origin], two weeks, three weeks or a month, it differs. But, now I find it difficult to live abroad, in [the country of origin]… Now I am so used to living in Iceland…

Some of the young immigrants see themselves as having mixed or hybrid identities, partly Icelandic and partly belonging to their country of origin. One of the young women described herself as being 'sort of fifty-fifty'. However, most of them talked about being citizens of the world or cosmopolitans rather than belonging to two cultures, being able to live and work wherever they may choose. One of the young men said:

> I am going to finish [school] here first… perhaps live anywhere, I don't really care… where English can be used… just work there and travel… go wherever I can, not stay in one place… rather change and see something new.

They appear to have managed to use their experiences in a new society and the opportunities it provides for their own benefit. They talk about their experiences of immigrating to Iceland having formed them as individuals and provided them with both open-mindedness and serenity. The young immigrants all have interesting future plans in work and education, both in Iceland and elsewhere. These individuals see many opportunities resulting from their immigrant background and experiences from living in two or more countries. The fact that they seem to enjoy the best of both worlds, their country of origin and Iceland, and have plans to use their experiences for their benefit could be related to the environment they are brought up in. They have been able to be active in Icelandic society and schools, as well as their country of origin, thus ensuring contact with different cultures and societies. The young immigrants do not seem to have experienced pressure to assimilate, rather to enjoy the best of both worlds. Their parents seem to have supported them in making their own choices regarding participation and communication in both societies, for example by travelling back to their countries of origin regularly and communicating with their relatives there, thus keeping different options open for their future.

To summarize, the main findings of the research indicate that the participants in the study feel that they have all successfully adapted to Icelandic society and take a positive stand towards it. They emphasize the possibilities that their experience of living in two countries has brought them and how they can make use of these experiences in their future work.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the chapter was to explore which factors young people in Iceland see as being important for active communication and participation in a diverse society. Questions considered in the chapter also included whether these young people relate obstacles for communication to their different origins, cultures, values, religions or other factors, or whether they consider these as irrelevant factors. Although the two studies introduced in the chapter are limited to around 900 young people in Iceland, they provide important indications of how young people view communication and participation in a society that is becoming increasingly diverse. Young people's views on communication in a contemporary diverse society can provide indications concerning what competences are important for communication and participation in diverse societies more generally.

The views of the young people in the two studies are generally positive towards diversity and opposed to inequality based on diversity. The findings indicate that the young people see diversity as a normal or intrinsic part of their society and their daily life and do not describe different origins, cultures, values or religions as obstacles for communication. These views and attitudes indicate or connote that the young people share certain competences for communication in a diverse society, which may perhaps be defined as intercultural. Some of them describe themselves as cosmopolitan and discuss various competences that they see as important for participation and communication. Their attitudes reflect an understanding similar to the 'diverse diversities' discussed in the introduction, rather than cultural boxes.

As discussed earlier, in recent years Icelandic society has changed rapidly from a relatively homogeneous to a more diverse society. Young people are presently under the influence of international communication through the Internet and increasing travels (Dolby & Rizvi, 2008; Elliott & Urry, 2010). Such communication across borders influences young people's identities (Banks, 2007). The findings from the survey introduced in this chapter indicate that the young people are generally positive towards communication with peers that have different opinions and find they learn a lot from having friends of different backgrounds. One can draw the conclusion that the international and intercultural communication in their daily lives and the rapid societal changes they have experienced may have influenced their identities and views strongly. The positive attitudes towards diversity generally that appear in the findings are hopefully indications of a development of a strong diverse society in Iceland. It may also be an indication of a strong sense of equality that around 90% of participants in the survey agree or strongly agree on the statement that racism is never justifiable. At the same time, it is a matter of concern that not all participants agree with this statement. Also, it may be a matter of concern that only around 62% of participants agree or strongly agree on the statement that diverse backgrounds or origins are important for Icelandic society. It is likely that Icelandic society in general and its political and educational systems need to address issues of diversity and multiculturalism more thoroughly and find their balance with active communication with groups and individuals without losing the necessary cohesion (Parekh, 2006). Responses to the statements on diversity in the survey indicate that diversity is for many of the young people a normal state rather than a cause of tension (Cummins, 2009). Communication on

the Internet on a daily basis and frequent travels of many young people in Iceland are likely to affect their views on diversity.

When considering quotes from the focus-group interviews with mixed groups of young people and the individual interviews with young immigrants, concepts such as cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006; Hansen, 2010; Ong, 1999) and cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005) come to mind. Osler and Starkey's (2005) definition of the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship as including 'universal values as its standard for all contexts, including national contexts', and stressing 'those things that unite human beings rather than what divides them' (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 21) relates to the comments of the young people in the research. Similarly, Urry's (2003) emerging 'cosmopolitan global fluid' can be a useful concept in understanding the young people's views on communication in the increasingly diverse Icelandic society. Findings from the focus groups and individual interviews also reveal a sense of hybrid and changeable identities among some of the young people (Baumann, 1999; Giddens, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; see Chap. 3, this volume).

According to the findings of the two studies introduced in this chapter, critical and hybrid (May, 2011) and political (Hoskins & Sallah, 2011) models of IC can be useful in understanding how the young people view communication in a diverse society as well as the notion of cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006). Combining these models potentially sheds light on their realities and understanding. Findings from the two studies indicate that the young people's views and perhaps also identities stretch across national and cultural borders—imagined or not—and that they see themselves as belonging to a more complex and cosmopolitan reality (see Chaps. 6–8, this volume).

The findings from the studies introduced in this chapter provide important indications of young people's views towards diverse values, cultures and religions in a society that has recently become increasingly diverse. More extensive research with young people in contemporary diverse societies is likely to provide interesting data on their complex daily realities and potentially important guidelines in defining competences for communication in diverse societies.

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PART II

Renewing Intercultural Competence: Beyond Established Models?

CHAPTER 6

Intercultural Competence and the Promise of Understanding

Giuliana Ferri

Setting the Scene

Notwithstanding the contribution of postcolonial notions of subjectivity that emphasize the hybrid nature of a third space (Bhabba, 1994), the category of culture remains at the centre of intercultural communication theory. I agree with both Dervin (2011) and Holliday (2011) in pointing not only to essentialist intercultural communication theory with its rigid attribution of cultural identity along national lines (e.g., Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004), but also to neo-essentialist uses of culture, particularly in the field of intercultural foreign language education. In fact, Cole and Meadows (2013) write of an 'essentialist trap', highlighting a paradox of intercultural communication: although there is a growing awareness of the dangers of essentialism, culture and language are still considered discrete entities, a fact that Holliday (2011) defines in terms of methodological nationalism and which derives from the association between learning a foreign language and a foreign culture. Thus, neo-essentialism describes the situation 'where educators recognise the limits of essentialism but nevertheless reinforce it' (Cole & Meadows, 2013, p. 30). Taking an anti-essentialist stance, I focus on the first term of the word intercultural, the

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'inter-', to argue in favour of a shift from culture to the dynamic process of communication, in order to highlight the dialogic character of interaction and its unpredictability.

In regard to the notion of competence, Byram argues that academic research has been preoccupied primarily with the necessities of international trade, leaving under-theorized the aspect relating to the creation of a framework for dialogue that will provide 'a better understanding of human beings and their potential' (2011, p. 20). In this sense, Byram delineates a research agenda for intercultural competence (IC) based on the problematization and critique of current theory, in order to provide the conceptual work needed before the collection of empirical data. This conceptual work, including philosophical inquiry, is not limited to the description of a phenomenon but postulates 'the possible forms it might take' and evaluates 'the effects these might have' (2011, p. 33). In this particular context philosophical inquiry can be employed to analyse the role of the notion of competence in the intercultural field,

> Philosophical inquiry is also necessary for the analysis of the concept of 'competence' which has easily become attached to the notion of the intercultural. (2011, p. 33)

In line with this critique, I adopt an interdisciplinary approach in the form of a philosophical investigation into the epistemological assumptions of the concept of competence and the ethical implications for intercultural dialogue. From this perspective, I critique the epistemological underpinnings of the notion of IC as it is conceptualized in two frameworks that are paradigmatic of current thinking in intercultural research: the pyramid model (Deardorff, 2009) and the Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility (ICOPROMO) project (Glaser, Guilherme, del Carmen Méndez García, & Mughan, 2007).

First, I illustrate the notion of tolerance as it is conceptualized by Derrida (2006) in relation to the concept of hospitality, and I propose a guiding principle for intercultural communication based on the idea of deferred understanding, meaning the acceptance of risk taking and incompleteness in communication. Following from this, I introduce the notion of subjectivity as it is formulated by Levinas (1998, 2006), which provides an account of the relationship between self and other that informs a dialogic, ethical and open-ended understanding of communication in the form of presence to one another as corporeal, embodied subjects who

co-construct meanings. In the light of this philosophical discussion, I critique the pyramid model of competence and the ICOPROMO project. Finally, I sketch an alternative understanding of competence that relies on a dialogic idea of communication closely aligned to a Levinasian interpretation of the ethical, which is connected to the experiential sphere and the bodily aspects of lived human subjectivity.

The Promise of Understanding

Vandenabeele (2003) warns against the danger of creating another 'grand narrative' (Lyotard, 1984) of intercultural communication, highlighting the danger of universalizing an ideal of understanding and communicative transparency based on the value of unambiguous information (Block & Cameron, 2002) and on the ideas of tolerance and understanding from the hegemonic perspective of a dominant cultural position (Holliday, 2011). This 'grand narrative' of efficiency in communicating across cultures is evident in formulations of IC and intercultural training programmes that focus on the acquisition of communicative skills to deal effectively with the other (e.g., Deardorff, 2009; Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009).

This ideal of fulfilment and completeness in communication is ascribed by Derrida (1974, 1984, 1997) to a metaphysics of presence. In other words, Western metaphysical tradition refers to an original signified that encloses truth within a system of binary oppositions, in which one term is identified with full presence—or truth, and the other term, the negative, with the loss of presence (Bradley, 2008; Derrida, 1997; Norris, 1982). As MacDonald and O'Regan (2012) argue, an instance of this metaphysics of presence in intercultural communication theory is reflected in the opposition between tolerance and intolerance: the positive value of tolerance of the other, achieved through intercultural understanding, is opposed to the negative value of intolerance and refusal of the 'cultural other'. Thus, according to this metaphysics of presence, on the one side intercultural theory embraces and celebrates cultural difference, while on the other it aims for a final moment of reconciliation of all differences in the unity of universal tolerance.

In contrast to this ideal of universal tolerance and of a final unity of understanding, I refer to the notions of promise, hospitality and deferred understanding, which recur throughout Derrida's philosophical investigations. The promise is described in the notion of a 'disjointed' temporality that is irreducible to presence (Derrida, 1994; Wortham, 2010), meaning that there is an element that remains irreducible to the system of

binary oppositions of Western metaphysics, which is described by Derrida in terms of a promise of hospitality without reserve. This idea of hospitality is better illustrated through Derrida's deconstruction of the notion of tolerance.

Derrida contrasts the idea of tolerance, intended in terms of '*condescending concession*', and '*a form of charity*' (Borradori, 2003, p. 127), to that of unconditional hospitality. The inherent contradiction in the notion of tolerance is expressed with the word hostipitality: the word hospitality carries within itself its own contradiction, in the word host-hostility,

> The welcomed guest (hôte) is a stranger treated as a friend or ally, as opposed to the stranger treated as an enemy (friend/enemy, hospitality/hostility). (Borradori, 2003, p. 127)

This means that the welcome conferred upon a guest is dependent on the goodwill of the host, and that the welcome can be withdrawn, turning into hostility, if the rules imposed to the guest are not observed. These rules are defined by Derrida as the law of the household,

> Where it is precisely the *patron* of the house—he who receives, who is master in his house, in his household, in his state, in his nation, in his city, in his town, who remains master in his house—who defines the conditions of hospitality or welcome; where consequently there can be no unconditional welcome, no unconditional passage through the door. (Derrida, 2006, p. 210)

In fact, the exercise of tolerance is dependent on a conditional welcome, which can be withdrawn to exclude the welcomed. Although unconditional hospitality is in itself impossible, this notion provides an idea of perfectibility guiding the rules that govern conditional hospitality, regulated by politics and the law. In other words, unconditional hospitality is experienced in the tension between the act and its realization.

In this sense, Derrida's deconstruction of the word hospitality resonates with the distinction that I propose here in relation to intercultural communication theory between two forms of understanding, one intended in terms of a promise of final reconciliation and universal tolerance, and the other in terms of a promise of deferred understanding which is constantly renewed in the practice of communication and thus remains open-ended. This distinction addresses the problematic nature of the notion of tolerance of the cultural practices of the other employed in intercultural

theory, which leaves the conceptualization of the relationship self/other open to this internal contradiction highlighted by Derrida and which I analyse next in reference to Levinasian ethics.

Levinas: The Vulnerability of the Subject

In the context of intercultural theory an understanding of the role of the other in shaping interaction is a crucial determinant in the task of redefining an idea of competence that is based on the interdependence of self and other. To this purpose, I contrast the Kantian presuppositions of current notions of IC with the concept of Levinasian heteronomy intended in terms of hospitality without reserve and deferred understanding.

In Kantian autonomy, persons are ends in themselves in virtue of their rationality and thus each person is a moral legislator, according to the dictates of the moral imperative guided by reason (Kant, 1983). This conception of the self as moral legislator can be observed in the notion of tolerance that underpins IC. According to this ethics of autonomy, the competent intercultural speaker is able to determine in advance the outcome of communication through the acquisition of communicative tools that are used responsibly by the moral agent in interaction with a cultural other, who is the recipient of this act (Ferri, 2014). In contrast to this understanding of ethical autonomy, an appreciation of Levinasian ethics suggests a different approach to intercultural communication, because the position of the moral agent as legislator is destabilized by the presence of the other.

The notion of the face (Levinas, 1998, 2006) conveys the ethical effect of an encounter with the other that reveals the vulnerability of existence, indicating the proximity and corporeality of the other person facing the self. In the context of intercultural theory, I propose an understanding of the other that emphasizes the materiality of the embodied other facing the self (Sparrow, 2013). As an illustration of this reading, in the following quote Levinas explains that, as opposed to ontological knowledge of the other, the ethical relation is established in the presence of self and other in their materiality, as embodied beings,

> I do not know if one can speak of a 'phenomenology' of the face, since phenomenology describes what appears. So, too, I wonder if one can speak of a look turned toward the face, for the look is knowledge, perception. I think rather that access to the face is straightaway ethical. You turn yourself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, forehead,

> a chin, and you can describe them. The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the colour of his eyes! When one observes the colour of the eyes one is not in social relationship with the Other. The relation with the face can surely be dominated by perception, but what is specifically the face is what cannot be reduced to that. (Levinas, 1985, pp. 85–86)

Understood in this way, 'the whole human body is in this sense more or less face' (Levinas, 1985, p. 99). Thus, obligation towards the other is not the result of a formal or procedural universalization of maxims, because ethics is lived in the corporeal obligation that originates from the immanent, here and now, meeting with the other (Critchley, 1999). Here, I understand that in the presence of another being we are compelled to respond, although in relation to the phrase '*straightaway ethical*' employed by Levinas, I contend that it does not imply necessarily a conception of '*goodness*' as it is commonly used in reference to a moral judgement, rather it expresses the practical engagement established with an other in the praxis of everydayness and communication, which also harbours the possibility of hostility, fear and even violence. Understood in this sense, ethical engagement assumes a different connotation due to the acknowledgment of the possibility of miscommunication, misunderstanding and failure to establish dialogue, which is entailed in a conception of intercultural communication that recognizes the dimension of risk taking and open-ended engagement between self and other.

IC and Individual Autonomy

Following from the theoretical discussion relating to the idea of hospitality and to the ethical status of the self in the encounter with the other, I focus on the critique of two models of competence. These two models illustrate the Kantian ideal of an autonomous and self-sufficient self who is in control of the interaction and is unaffected by the role played by the other in communication. In particular, I draw attention to an epistemological issue, which I identify in the passage from a mono-cultural self to inter-relationality that is postulated in both the pyramid model and the ICOPROMO project as a result of the acquisition of skills and ICs.

Whereas the notion of a mono-cultural identity is unproblematized in both frameworks, I adopt a critical stance in relation to the idea of an idealized self as expression of a national culture and of a national language. This idealized self indicates an essentialist orientation according to which cultures

are clearly defined entities delimited by national boundaries. From this perspective, Street (1993) attributes essentialism to the use of nominalization imported from scientific discourse, which turns culture into a natural entity that determines individual behaviour. To this use of the notion of culture, Street opposes the idea of culture as a verb, describing meanings as contingent and unstable, constantly negotiated in everyday life and culture as a discursive construction built in interaction (see Chap. 7, this volume). Similarly, Coupland (2007) refers to the term styling to indicate culture as the shaping of social meanings through the use of semiotic resources.

To the critique of mono-cultural identity as expression of an essentialist conception of culture, I add another dimension relating to ethics. As the contrast between Kantian autonomy and Levinasian heteronomy suggests, the notion of mono-culturality is rooted in the ideal of a self-sufficient and self-governing individual reflected in the conception of ethical autonomy of Western liberal tradition. With the critical reading of the two models of competence I aim to tease out this particular aspect relating to ethical autonomy and I argue for a different conceptualization of the relation between self and other based on dialogism.

The Pyramid Model and the ICOPROMO Project

With the critical reading of two competence frameworks, in this section I delineate the features of the autonomous Kantian individual who is in control of the interaction. In reference to Derrida's ethics of hospitality, I highlight the limitations of cultural tolerance that emerge in the two models and I contrast the value of autonomy with that of interdependence.

The notion of competence delineated by Deardorff (2006, 2009) aims to provide a framework to guide intercultural dialogue according to a pyramid model in which the main four elements are ordered hierarchically: attitudes, skills, knowledge, internal and external outcomes. These elements can be applied to a variety of contexts to guide and assess the development of IC. In this model, IC is defined in terms of effectiveness in communication. The final outcome of the process of acquisition of competences allows the self to move from the personal level, represented by attitudes, to an interpersonal and interactive level. This conclusion, however, poses an issue. Although the acquisition of the required attitudes leads to appropriate cultural behaviours in intercultural situations, the role of the other in shaping competence is neglected in the emphasis placed on skills and measurable, realistic outcomes.

As a consequence, what Deardorff interprets as inter-relationality stands for a change in behaviour generating from a static notion of culture occurring after the acquisition of competences, rather than through a process of transformation originating from the 'inter', the processual act of interaction. The essentialist attribution of cultural traits arises from an abstraction according to which an autonomous and self-sufficient individual acquires the skills to deal with the representative of a cultural tradition, the 'other'. In contrast to this conceptualization of the relation between self and other, in this chapter I bring forward the idea discussed in relation to Levinas that self and other meet in the materiality of practical engagement, as embodied subjects and not as abstract entities. Before I describe the features of dialogic engagement, envisioned according to this Levinasian perspective, I discuss the representation autonomy of the self in the ICOPROMO project.

As in Deardorff's pyramid model, responding to the necessities of global trade represents a major preoccupation in the ICOPROMO model (Glaser et al., 2007). However, the ICOPROMO project combines the preoccupation with professional development in competitive markets and the idea of transformation. Indeed, this model of competence is defined '*transformational*' because,

> it articulates the journey the individual undergoes when becoming aware of intercultural challenges as a result of his/her mobility or that of others with whom he/she must communicate effectively. (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 15)

Similarly to Deardorff's model, this training programme is targeted at educators and facilitators working with undergraduates, graduate students and professionals who need to develop language and cultural awareness in order to interact effectively in intercultural situations. The transformational journey of the individual towards the acquisition of competences is represented by a traffic light in which the individual is initially positioned on the red light prior to the development of intercultural skills, moving to the amber and green lights once she becomes able to interact effectively with cultural difference. The theoretical premise of this journey is individuated by the authors in the necessities presented by the 'new world order', meaning the global flows of trade and communication developed after World War II, which in their account has exposed individuals to a higher intensity of cultural difference and consequently to challenges that are linguistic, cultural and emotional. Crucially, the authors define the individual in terms of a 'mono-cultural identity' (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 16), and as a

consequence the main aim of the training programme is to cause an attitudinal change towards the other, with the ability to dispel stereotypes about 'members of a foreign culture' (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 16).

As mentioned above, the transformational aims of the ICOPROMO model are based on the notion of a 'new world order' that poses the challenge of being able to cope when confronted with cultural difference. The development of IC, in order to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes, requires: awareness of the self and the other, communication across cultures, the acquisition of cultural knowledge, sense-making, perspective-taking, relationship building and the ability to assume social responsibility. This complex of skills results in intercultural mobility, 'the ability to interact effectively in intercultural professional contexts' (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 17). The theoretical underpinning of this transformational model resides in a conception of the self based on field theory (Lewin, 1935), which studies behaviour as the interaction between personality and environmental pressures. Thus, training is designed with the scope to influence behaviour through an intervention that is tailored to the needs of individuals and the particular challenges that they are facing.

In more detail, the development of competence begins with the awareness of self and other, particularly dealing with culture shock or 'cultural fatigue' (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 31). This aspect relating to culture shock as a consequence of cultural difference is employed to justify the notion that communication across cultures leads to miscommunication and misunderstanding and the necessity to acquire both language awareness and the acquisition of specific cultural knowledge. The fact of being exposed to new information from a different culture leads in its turn to the necessity to develop the ability of sense-making, in the form of interpreting and making meaning, as well as the skill of 'identifying/perceiving and understanding prevalent values, beliefs and norms in a situation' (Glaser et al., 2007, p. 35). Perspective-taking allows the individual to look at reality from different viewpoints, and to develop empathy and tolerance, flexibility and the ability to decentre. At this stage, the result of effective IC is represented by intercultural mobility. However, according to the authors this mobility needs to be contextualized within a broader project of democratic citizenship, which promotes intercultural interaction and dialogue in complex societies and emerging communities created by intercultural contact.

The problematization of Deardorff's model of competence and the ICOPROMO project highlights a number of issues that relate to their epistemological assumptions. Table 6.1 illustrates the sequence of the acquisition of competences that is employed in both models.

Table 6.1 Sequence of the acquisition of competences

Motivation to become interculturally competent	*Skills*	*Outcomes*
Global trade Need to become competitive Response to culture shock	To acquire knowledge of another culture and the patterns of behaviour associated with it To relativize and dispel stereotypes attributed to the cultural other	Effectiveness Cultural sensitivity Tolerance Responsibility Transformation

In both frameworks the motivation to interact in intercultural contexts stems from the necessities of global trade, which require that the problem of cultural difference is fixed through the acquisition of skills and the framing of the other in cultural terms. The emphasis on consciousness and on a functional, instrumental understanding of communication presents the transformation of the self into a responsible, intercultural being as a process beginning in a fully bounded individual who acquires the necessary competences to deal with the initial cultural shock that occurs as a consequence of the encounter with another culture. Following the acquisition of competence, the individual is then able to deal effectively and sensitively towards the cultural other.

From this perspective, although the dimension of critical intercultural citizenship developed by Guilherme (2002) is included in the ICOPROMO project, and a critical approach to a static vision of culture is advocated in Deardorff's model, the practical necessity to become competitive in the global market is taken as the principal element that guides the epistemological assumptions underpinning both frameworks, which relate to the conception of the self as an autonomous being (see Chap. 12, this volume). Thus, the ideal of autonomy critiqued in this chapter emerges in both frameworks in the shape of the self-sufficient and self-governing individual of Western liberal tradition, while the role of the other in interaction is left unexamined.

This aspect is visible in reference to Deardorff's description of intercultural learning and intercultural courses in further education as a means to equip students for a more global and interdependent world,

> How can we prepare our students to comprehend the multitude of countries and cultures that may have an impact on their lives and careers? More

> broadly, what knowledge, skills, and attitudes do our students need if they are to be successful in the twenty-first century? (…) To this end, service learning and education abroad become two mechanisms by which students' intercultural competence can be further developed, leading to students' transformation. (Deardorff, 2011, pp. 69–70)

The role of global trade is acknowledged as the initiating force behind the development of intercultural training programmes and creates what Holliday (2011) defines in terms of a reification of intercultural training and the creation of a product marketed as IC. This reification presents the intercultural process as the meeting of separate cultural entities, while the intercultural trainer facilitates and provides the tools to help navigate and interpret behaviour as expression of cultural difference. The starting point in this process is represented by the notion of culture shock, or cultural fatigue, which is assumed to initiate the transformational process that changes the individual from mono-cultural to an interculturally competent entity.

The idea of culture shock derives from anthropology and the four stages of adaptation identified by Oberg (1960), beginning with the honeymoon stage during initial contact with a different culture, followed by negative feelings of anxiety, rejection, anger and frustration, ending with adjustment and finally adaptation to the new culture. This concept of culture shock has been widely criticized, although it has become embedded in popular consciousness and it is used to designate the shock upon encountering an 'exotic' culture (Kuppens & Mast, 2012). In relation to the role of culture shock in both models of competence discussed in this research, I argue that what is described as the encounter with a reality that is incomprehensible and alien represents a more complex phenomenon that comprises a series of factors that neo-essentialist accounts of culture, of which the two models of competence are paradigmatic, fail to acknowledge.

In this sense, what is described in terms of culture shock hides the complexity of factors that influence communication in intercultural encounters, so that power imbalances between self and other due to low socioeconomic status or to a lack of sociolinguistic competence in the use of a dominant language, are attributed to cultural difference. Therefore, when culture becomes the principal explanatory category to understand intercultural communication, the notion of competence is presented as a fix, a set of tools that the individual can utilize to become tolerant and understanding of other cultural beings in the context of a globalized neo-liberal market,

which I understand in terms of the deterritorialized flows of global trade illustrated in Hardt and Negri (2000), characterized by competitiveness and the necessity to interact effectively. Crucially, this focus on cultural difference prevalent in intercultural training, based on the notion of cultural shock experienced by the individual, leaves unaccounted for the aspect of globalization relating to power and cultural capital, or global flows of 'interested knowledge, hegemonic power, and cultural capital' (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 1). To this end, I suggest to focus on two aspects that have been neglected in both models of competence, relating to the complex and dynamic relation between self and other, and that introduce the dialogic perspective that I discuss in the next section.

The first aspect is represented by hegemonic cultural representations of the other. This aspect is underpinned by an essentialist attitude to culture, which is taken at face value as a set of beliefs held by a particular group that influences behaviour. In this essentialist conception of culture, the role performed by the other in interaction is limited to that of representing a cultural being. Holliday (2011) ascribes this essentialism to the dichotomy established between a Western self and a marginalized other. This dichotomy creates an organization of knowledge in which perceived Western and non-Western characteristics are distributed along a dichotomous axis: industrial–rural, developed–underdeveloped, secular–religious, modern–retrogade, individualistic–collectivistic. Organized along these binary terms, essentialism creates hegemonic cultural discourses according to which non-Western societies become a counterpoint to the West and are viewed as monolithic entities characterized by rigid cultural values (Hall, 1996; Nair-Venugopal, 2012).

Thus, the neo-essentialist dichotomy between a Western perspective on the one side, and a separate cultural block that includes all non-Western cultures on the other, reflects the relation proposed by Holliday (2011) between the dominant, hegemonic discourses of the West and the process of othering towards peripheral discourses emanating from non-Western perspectives. In this process, hegemonic discourses position their own production of knowledge in scientific terms, while alternative discourses are labelled as cultural products of the other. As such, these peripheral and non-Western perspectives are invoked in both models from a neo-essentialist position in the name of the ideal of tolerance of the other. In this modality, the mono-cultural self, expressed in terms of a Western individual characterized by a specific cultural identity and informed by the Kantian ideal of autonomy, encounters the non-Western other. The

dynamic of the encounter is reduced to the ability to recognize the cultural traits of the other, demonstrating tolerance and sensitivity in handling the resulting difference. In this way, the role of the other in intercultural communication is reduced to represent a cultural standpoint.

The second aspect relates to the emphasis on appropriateness, effectiveness and on the instrumental needs of the self in guiding communication, which underplays the influence of the context of interaction. Koole and ten Thije (2001) argue that the focus on cultural difference in the analysis of communication in intercultural contexts leads researchers to overlook other characteristics of discourse, such as power relations between dominant and non-dominant groups, resulting in analytical stereotyping and overgeneralizations. Thus, the *a priori* reliance on cultural difference in the analysis of intercultural interactions highlighted by Blommaert (1991) can be contrasted to other approaches that emphasize power relations and the societal institutions within which the interactions take place, through a situational and discursive approach (e.g., Gumperz, 1982, Koole & ten Thije, 2001, Scollon & Scollon, 1995). According to interactional sociolinguistics, the influence of culture is often inflated in determining behaviour and communication while other factors are ignored, such as socioeconomic inequality in multilingual contexts. In the context of IC, the idea of cultural difference in communication is used in guiding communicative exchanges in elite situations, such as business and management, in which recognition of the other is essentialized from a hegemonic position:

> Whereas the intercultural object—the Other—is usually pictured as caught in a web of age-old essential and inflexible values and customs, those who have identified the other claim to be free of such determinism. (Blommaert, 1998, p. 3)

The recognition of the influence of cultural essentialism and of inequality in communication has important repercussions in the conceptualization of a dialogic understanding of competence that emphasizes the provisional and open-ended dimension of interaction (see Chap. 2, this volume). Indeed, the analysis of context offered by research in the field of sociolinguistics provides a starting point from which it is possible to begin to unravel the complexity entailed in communication from an anti-essentialist perspective.

With the critical reading of the pyramid model and the ICOPROMO project I have highlighted the conceptualization of the relation between

self and other based on an essentialist interpretation of culture, according to which the other is the object of tolerance. In the next section I adopt the notion of dialogism in order to reflect on the ethics of communication from the dimension of the 'inter' of interculturality, meaning the praxis of interaction between self and other. I suggest that the challenges that emerge in the course of intercultural encounters can be envisioned in terms of an ethics of hospitality and deferred understanding. From this ethical perspective, the complexity of intercultural communication surfaces when the ideals of autonomy and self-sufficiency of the self are destabilized by the embodied presence of the other. What is revealed in this instance is the tension experienced between hospitality as unconditional welcoming of the other and the limitations of cultural tolerance, a situation expressed by Derrida with the aforementioned notion of hospitality.

Therefore, in rejecting a notion of intercultural communication that relies too excessively on a static and essentialist interpretation of culture, I suggest that intercultural interaction brings to the surface the endeavour, and often the failure, to negotiate meaning that characterizes human communication, both inter-and intracultural. This existential dimension is rooted in the unpredictability of interaction, when hospitality is tested during the encounter with the other in dialogue. To this end, in order to begin the task of reconceptualizing IC from the perspective of dialogism, it is crucial to redefine alternative representations of the relationship between self and other that focus on inter-relationality. In the next section I discuss the broad features of Levinasian ethical engagement with the other as a guide for intercultural theory.

Dialogic Competence as Deferred Understanding

Dialogism has been discussed in the context of intercultural theory as an alternative to essentialist positioning of self and other along cultural definitions. Heisey (2011), Orbe (2007) and Xu (2013) invite researchers to include the contradictions, the tensions and the inequalities that are manifested in communication, thus emphasizing multiple perspectives and a deeper appreciation of complexity. In this regard I maintain that, in order to allow the emergence of a dialogic moment of communication, understanding is deferred in the praxis of engagement between self and other.

For example, Yoshikawa (1987) employs the double swing model based on the idea that communication is an infinite process in the course of which participants undergo a transformation. This idea is based on the Taoist teaching of the *Yin* and *Yang*, which expresses the notion of the interdependence of self and other at the root of dialogism. If Western rationality is founded on a system of binary oppositions, defined by Derrida in terms of a metaphysics of presence, the Taoist principle of *Yin* and *Yang* incarnates the fundamental contradictory nature of the self and the coexistence of opposites. The principle of *Yin* and *Yang* is accompanied by the concept of *bian* (change), which in Taoism represents the fundamental principle ruling the universe. In other words, the dialectical interaction of the two opposites *Yin* and *Yang* underpins the dynamic nature of the real, characterized by change and transformation (Chen, 2008).

With a similar approach, I propose an exploratory illustration of interaction in Levinasian terms, which I suggest contributes to the development of an understanding of competence in terms of dialogism, as opposed to the ideal of ethical autonomy of the two models of competence examined in the previous section.

A crucial aspect in this Levinasian perspective is represented by the interdependence of self and other. This means that the self experiences the ethical after the encounter with the other, as a result of interaction. This ethical character of interaction is revealed when the self is somehow thrown off balance by an unexpected encounter that upsets the cultural parameters employed to categorize the other. Such an experience is the result of an existential disposition that in Phipps's (2007) terms develops when the self is fully immersed in the messiness of intercultural encounters and is open to challenge pre-conceived ideas of culture and identity. This notion of messiness proposed by Phipps contrasts with the idea of culture shock described in reference to the Pyramid model and the ICOPROMO project. On the one side, the idea of culture shock expresses the experience of intercultural encounters as a problem, a potential source of incomprehension and difficulty. On the other, messiness articulates the uncertainty and the precariousness of interculturality in terms of an existential challenge in which the self discovers uncharted possibilities. As Piller suggests, because context is an emergent and dynamic process that is negotiated by all participants, this 'messiness' of actual interactions demonstrates the limitations of attempts to understand and regulate communication using the category of culture. This means that establishing dialogical relations

lived in the immanent *here and now* requires an understanding of the complexity of factors that constitute the context of interaction,

> Paying close attention to actual interactions not only reminds us of the importance of natural language and the complexity of human interactions; it also demonstrates that interactants sometimes simply do not want to understand each other and that misunderstandings arise not only because of linguistic or cultural differences, but also because people fight and argue. Put differently, in interactions there are often simply different interests at stake and interactants may not actually want to understand each other. Intercultural communication research often creates the impression that if we just knew how to overcome our linguistic and cultural differences, we would get on just fine with each other and the world would be transformed into a paradise on earth. (Piller, 2011, p. 155)

In this sense, intercultural speakers are able not only to analyse the constraints that influence interaction and the role of language in the communicative exchange, but are also able to recognize and understand the ways in which culture is being enacted and recreated. As a result, the concerns relating to the use of the category of culture to explain when something 'goes wrong' in communication are addressed by the straightforward relation with the other described by Levinas, which relates to his notion of responsibility intended as a response to the other that occurs through engagement in dialogue. This notion of responsibility is described by Bakhtin (1986) as the *addressivity* of language, the fact that all interactants are active participants in communication.

The acceptance of the impossibility to reach this ideal of 'a paradise on earth' (Piller, 2011, p. 155), meaning the idea of a promise of understanding in which all conflicting claims are pacified in the name of a higher universal truth, brings about an important dimension of communication between self and other. Accounts of critical awareness (see Guilherme, 2002; Tomic, 2001; Tomic & Lengel, 1997) describe the process in which the encounter with the strangeness of another cultural perspective allows the self to reflect critically on her own cultural standpoint and to discover the other within oneself. From this perspective, the self understands the cultural differences that guide the behaviour of the other, is able to negotiate these differences, and can finally achieve a critical outlook regarding her own cultural tradition through reflection. Although this is a desirable outcome of interaction in intercultural encounters, I nevertheless point

at another aspect of communication between self and other that can be interpreted within a dialogical perspective.

According to the idea of immigrancy of the self (Cavell, 1996), the self is defined through the act of negotiating and translating meanings. This means that, although we are born into a language community from which we acquire social meanings, we live from the beginning in a process of translation, in negotiating the modalities in which the language and the conventions of the community are appropriated in unique ways. Adopting this description of the self, I propose that in open-ended dialogue self and other do not simply accept their reciprocal belonging to different cultural traditions, thus becoming tolerant of the other, but through interaction they discover the fact that they are both incomplete beings. This existential discovery creates an asymmetrical relation with the other (Levinas, 1985, 1998), meaning that the other is not simply a mirror reflecting the otherness present within the self, instead both self and other find a common existential state of incompleteness expressed in the inadequacy of culture to explain the behaviour of the other interlocutor. Thus, intercultural communication acquires a dialogic dimension, intended in terms of a promise of deferred understanding that is ever receding and open ended, requiring commitment and ethical responsibility from both self and other, through interactions that are experienced in the *here* and *now* of intercultural encounters.

Self and Other in Interaction

Having delineated the theoretical underpinnings of dialogic competence, in this section I illustrate the positions of self and other in interaction and the respective underlying assumptions that underpin each framework.

Deardorff—The pyramid model

Self	Knowledge and skills	Other

Competence is understood as the ability to deal effectively with the other. Knowledge about the culture of the other, and the skills to communicate effectively are acquired before the interaction.

Underlying assumptions: effectiveness, communicative transparency, tolerance, awareness of culture, rationality, autonomy, cultural sensitivity.

ICOPROMO—A transformational model

Self	Knowledge and skills	Other	Transformation/Intercultural personhood

IC represents the ability to develop critical awareness of culture in order to communicate effectively. As a result of intercultural interaction, the self is transformed into an intercultural speaker who can communicate effectively with the other and is able to assess cultures critically, showing high degrees of tolerance of the other.

Underlying assumptions: effectiveness, critical awareness of culture, autonomy, rationality, tolerance, sensitivity, responsibility.

Dialogic interaction

Self and Other	Interaction	Other and Other

Dialogism is developed in interaction: it is based on the interdependence self/other and on the appreciation of context. Interaction results in the recognition of a reciprocal and common existential state of incompleteness. Intercultural encounters represent the opportunity to discover the otherness in the familiar, and to accept the fact that both self and other remain unknowable.

Underlying assumptions: culture as a discursive resource of all interlocutors, reciprocal incompleteness of both self and other, heteronomy, sensibility, ethical responsibility, dialogism.

In dialogic interaction, the development of existential attitudes brings about the acceptance of uncertainty and the knowledge that both self and other are incomplete beings. These attitudes, and their underlying assumptions, challenge the implicit autonomy that characterizes the ways in which IC is conceptualized in the other two models discussed in this chapter. In dialogic terms, competence requires the development of intercultural sensibility, meaning an embodied relation with the other, which I contrast to the ideas of intercultural awareness and sensitivity promoted in the pyramid model and the ICOPROMO project.

With the notion of sensibility, Levinasian ethics suggests an alternative conceptualization of the relation with the other, based on the perception of embodiment in the ethical encounter. Whereas awareness and sensitivity develop in the autonomous and self-sufficient dimension of the self,

sensibility represents the bodily aspect of experience and indicates pre-reflective engagement, meaning that the self as a sentient being is affected by the presence of the material presence of the other. This fact creates the preconditions for the development of an ethical concern for the other stemming from the *here and now*, meaning the immediacy of lived experience. The ethical, in other words, is embedded in the materiality with which the self is engaged in everyday existence,

> We live from 'good soup', air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep, etc. These are n from them. (Levinas, 2008, p. 110)

Taking this materiality into consideration, it is important to highlight how this understanding of the ethical does not necessarily entail that engagement with the other is devoid of difficulties. On the contrary, it implies a traumatic element of discovery of the self as a sentient being who is faced with the ethical choice to respond to the presence of an other. This response, indeed, can assume the aspect of refusal of engagement, of fear or of misunderstanding. The crucial point is that this material presence of the other will pose ethical demands and ethical challenges that the self is called to acknowledge.

To summarize, the following characteristics represent the broad features that I suggest could contribute to the redefinition of competence in dialogic terms:

- *Asymmetry*: I understand the asymmetrical relation between self and other in terms of a lived experience of communication between embodied subjects.
- *Heteronomy*: this aspect stands for the phenomenal world where the self interacts with other selves. The experience of ethics is thus developed in interaction, intersubjectively, and not only from universal maxims.
- *Sensibility*: being affected by others as an embodied ethical self. Understood in this sense, I suggest the notion of intercultural sensibility to illustrate the type of dialogic engagement with the other that I propose in relation to the notion of competence.
- *Promise as deferred understanding*: this concept relates to the idea of dialogue as open-ended engagement with others, and acceptance of uncertainty.

In reference to the notion of tolerance discussed in relation to Derrida, the idea of deferred understanding presented here addresses these concerns relating to a superficial embrace of cultural difference as tolerance of the practices of the cultural other. Particularly, it addresses the dangers of reification and totality that occur when the necessity to determine the outcome pacifies the unpredictability of dialogue, so that the promise of understanding is totalized in the search for a final dimension of reconciliation of differences.

This dialogic reading of the ethical encounter informed by Levinasian ethics reveals intercultural interaction in terms of unpredictability, open-endedness and practical concern for the other. From this standpoint, I highlight instances of intercultural communication in practice that are documented in other fields of research, which illustrate complexity and precariousness in communication. For example, the presence of a dominant other in situations of clear inequality is documented in ethnographic research on asylum seekers in the Belgian legal system (Maryns, 2006; Maryns & Blommaert, 2002) and research on grassroots literacy with African migrants and asylum seekers in Belgium (Blommaert, 2001, 2004). Similarly, Phipps (2014) proposes an interdisciplinary connection with the field of Peace and Security Studies (e.g., Lederach, 2003, Schirch, 2004), emphasizing the challenge faced by intercultural communication theory to address openly issues of conflict. These examples borrowed from other academic fields point in the direction of a productive confrontation with other disciplines that share similar concerns regarding human understanding and cooperation, presenting new challenges for future research.

Conclusion

The philosophical discussion conducted in this chapter reflects the state of flux and theoretical development of intercultural communication research, particularly in the formulation of non-essentialist approaches to the conceptualization of intercultural understanding and ethical responsibility in communication. This situation in research is exemplified by Martin and Nakayama who, reflecting on their previous conceptualization of culture and communication, argue that this particular field of research has currently not achieved a unified methodological approach,

> After ten years, revisiting the contemporary terrain of Intercultural communication seems warranted. The field has exploded in many different

> directions that have opened up the very notion of 'intercultural' communication. In some ways, the term itself, 'intercultural', tends to presume the interaction between discrete and different cultures. (…). Ten years later, the very problem of conceptualising 'intercultural communication' remains as vibrant and relevant as ever. (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 59)

This proliferation of different approaches opens intercultural communication to theoretical interventions that offer new epistemological and methodological frameworks. Indeed, the state of flux of intercultural theory provides the opportunity to shift the focus from predominant discourses related to business relations, intercultural training and language learning in higher education to the development of viable alternative perspectives that redefine the immanent and contingent nature of intercultural dialogue (see Chap. 1, this volume). The latter aspect of communication has been the central theme in this chapter, defined against the autonomous idea of a self-governing individual that characterizes dominant conceptualizations of competence. With the adoption of philosophical argumentation, I have attempted to reconceptualize competence from a dialogic perspective, emphasizing the provisional character of interaction between self and other in intercultural encounters.

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CHAPTER 7

Intercultural Polyphonies Against the 'Death of Multiculturalism': Concepts, Practices and Dialogues

Clara Sarmento

Introduction

The contemporary intercultural travel is a global journey, a circumnavigation powered by the speed of digital technologies and this concept of intercultural underwrites all the comings and goings, the transmission and reception of information that are implicit in communication, diversity and in the transit that the prefix *inter* suggests. Intercultural transits have always been present, from the perverse intercultural dialogue of colonialism to the current cultural heteroglossia of the Internet. This is why I propose to examine the motivations, characteristics and regulations of cultural interactions in their perpetual movement, devoid of spatial or temporal borders, in a dangerous but stimulating indefinition of limits. This reflection approaches the topic of intercultural competence (IC) and the concept of interculturalism (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006; Costa & Lacerda, 2007; Dervin, Gajardo, & Lavanchy, 2011; Ibanez & Saenz, 2006; Sarmento, 2010) as movement, communication, dynamics, but also encounter and synthesis between cultures, with the purpose of discussing their pragmatic

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consequences in academia and society. Ultimately, the objectives of this chapter are both scientific and political because the *intercultural* stands at the junction of knowledge and politics (Dervin et al., 2011, p. 1).

I start this reflection by discussing the differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism, before proceeding to a definition of IC as the result of interdisciplinary dialectics, resorting to the concepts of hybridity, cultural translation, contact zone, emergent/absent narrative, threshold, and intersecting discursive fields. The discussion will be located within the Western European and particularly Portuguese contexts, with references to Portugal, France, Germany, USA, and the English-speaking world in general. The author of this chapter assumes a Western-centric perspective and a clear preference for Portugal-related issues, due to a long experience in teaching, researching and fieldwork in this Portugal. Portugal is also an excellent, albeit seldom explored (at least at the international level), case study, as far as colonial and postcolonial narratives of dominance, hybridity and intercultural contact are concerned because of its recent and contemporary history. In fact, Portugal fits within Achille Mbembe's image of 'interweaving logics in a continuous improvisation and negotiation' (Mbembe, 1992, p. 5), since the country is still struggling with the reconstruction of its post-1974 identity, as a former colonial power once central within its own empire, though always peripheral in Europe.

Normative practices of modern research in the Humanities do not privilege relations of permanence any longer, to the detriment of relations of movement—a perspective that changed as a result of the endless mobilities in the world today. As Stuart Hall (1994) states, the notions of belonging and homeland have been reconceptualized in contexts of migration, deterritorialization, diaspora, virtuality, digitalization and other features of the globalized world, that make even more pertinent the principle by Hall that cultural identities are not fixed but fluid, not given but performed. In this way, we cross the first great border of intercultural transits—the frontier created by the concept of culture itself—avoiding the commonplace notion of the intercultural as a mere 'us *versus* them', and steering clear of the fundamental error of a form of interculturalism that ignores the diversity contained in its own definition. This approach generates an interdisciplinary dialogue between fields that have traditionally ignored each other, such as translation studies and anthropology, law and the sciences of language, history and literary studies, because IC entails the ability to understand the close relationship between language, culture, arts, conventions and discourses, in a constant process of problem solving and anticipation, adaptation and awareness.

Moreover, this methodology is also intercultural at its source and subjects, not only in the objects that are examined; because one should not fear the alterity that, after all, one proposes to study. Hence, the present approach to the notion of the intercultural functions as a sort of third space, to quote Homi Bhabha (1994), a third space for hybridity, subversion and transgression. Hybridity—and cultural translation, which Bhabha regards as a synonym for hybridity—is politically subversive. Hybridity is the space where all binary divisions and antagonisms, typical of conservative political and academic concepts, including the old opposition between theory and practice, critical reflection and politics, science and humanities do not work anymore. They do not work in IC either, since I understand it as the capacity for unceasing movement, communication and cooperation between cultures.

The Power of Definitions: Between Science and Politics.

In contemporary cultural diversity, past and present, global and local, converge in the analysis of concepts and objects closely related to ongoing political, economic, social and cultural transformations. Scientific research is also an area of intersections, of permanent cultural translation; that is, of reinterpretation, of repositioning of symbols and signs within existing hierarchies. In this reflection on IC, I encourage critical readings that attempt to look beyond arbitrary meanings, favouring contextualized interpretations that, in their uncertainty, are likely to produce new hypotheses, theories and explanations.

Present-day converging interests are evident in the expectations of both publishers and the reading public and in the relations of power that pervade Western academic life, with its tenure tracks, 'publish or perish' mantras, rankings and indexes, and general anti-humanities trends. These notions and expectations persistently transform the output of researchers, to the extent that they tend to adapt their practices and creative capabilities to professional and economic pressures. However, many researchers often respond to such pressure with their own strategies, innovations and subversions, and seldom do they remain passive within the process of incorporation in large-scale political and institutional systems. Networks and echoes emanating from the international academic community spread rapidly throughout the globe, and their multiple forms of cultural interaction bring with them their own forms of manipulation and subversion of power. These actions carried out in the peripheries—and which are, in turn,

central in the lives and experiences of individuals—can be designated and described, more or less metaphorically, as 'borderzones' (Bruner, 1996, pp. 157–179), 'thresholds' (Davcheva, Byram, & Fay, 2011, p. 144), 'intersecting discursive fields' (Tsing, 1993), or 'spaces on the side of the road' (Stewart, 1996), all of them reflecting the dialogic nature of culture and IC.

This is why IC is the place where the overlapping of cultures occurs, which is the characteristic of a site of cultural translation. Cultural translation—both as Judith Butler's 'return of the excluded' (Butler, 1996, pp. 45–51; Butler, Laclau, & Žižek, 2000) and as Bhabha's hybridity—is a major force of contemporary democracy, also in the academic field. For Judith Butler, the universal—here understood as a synonym of hegemony, a Gramscian combination of power and consent (Gramsci, 1971)—can only be conceptualized in articulation with its own peripheries, the aforementioned 'borderzones', 'spaces on the side of the road' and other metaphors. Thus, what has been excluded from the concept of universality forces this same concept—from the outside, from the margins—to accept and include it again, which can only happen when the concept itself has evolved enough to include its own excluded. This pressure eventually leads to the rearticulation of the current concept of universality and its power. Butler calls the process through which universality readmits its own excluded 'translation'. Cultural translation may work as the 'return of the excluded', pushing limits, bringing about epistemological changes and opening new spaces for free discussion and independent research. Because, for Bhabha, as well as for the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006, 2008), the potential for change is located at the peripheries. Peripheries marked by hybridity, where the 'new arrivals' (Santos, 2006)—'new arrivals' or 'excluded' such as polytechnics and universities from peripheral countries and regions, but also unconventional research groups, young female academics—are able to use subversion to undermine the strategies of the powerful, regardless of who they are.

When talking about intercultural experience, it is tempting to talk on behalf of the others—a notion that is always contingent and relational, as 'we' are the others' other—but seldom do we grant a voice to those 'others' themselves (Cerqueira, 2013). However, the true intercultural experience occurs when we are able to see ourselves and our work as if we were those so-called others, whose otherness originates, for example, from their nationality, gender, orientation, academic background or field of research. Let us remember that Derrida (1981 [1972]) has shown how

the construction of an identity is always based on exclusion and that a violent hierarchy results from such dichotomous pairs, as in the binaries man–woman, white–black, colonizer–colonized, straight–gay, elite–masses, and nowadays also in science & technology–arts & humanities.

But local and global practices and knowledge—with their associated discursive productions—do not form a dichotomy. Instead, their correlation provides a stimulating dynamic tension, as the search for local concepts generates new concepts, which encourage challenging epistemological and phenomenological adaptation, under a genuinely interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective. Any approach must be located within the network of ideological and material contexts of a given region, which is always an evolving territory. In a postcolonial world, the intersections of past and present, global and local, define the guidelines to explore the negotiation and evolution of concepts, as well as the material forces that influence individuals, communities and nations. Postcolonial societies, either Eastern or Western, Northern or Southern, are in a continuous intercultural flow. This constant need to negotiate and construct identity through a polyphony of narratives actually underlies life in most territories of the world. The concept of interculturalism explored here and the related idea of IC also develop from polyphonic narratives of dynamic tensions. This concept of interculturalism might be compared to the concept of multiculturalism which I understand as a delimited space, within which different cultures cohabit in a self-enclosed, stationary ignorance. But in reality, the multicultural space exists as a result of intercultural, multidirectional and reciprocal (random?) movements, and as such, will be discussed here.

In general, multiculturalism has been analysed under an ontological approach, as an existing or desired social reality. Multiculturalism has also been widely subjected to a political-ideological lens, focusing both on the dominant or host society, and on the migrant or (allegedly) minority groups. Conversely, interculturalism is analysable as movement with an underlying stream of consciousness, as manifested in critically aware journeys, in mutual knowledge, understanding and communication. Interculturalism is then, and preferably, a hermeneutic option, an epistemological approach, as Martine Abdallah-Pretceille emphasizes, because no fact is intercultural *per se*, nor is interculturalism an attribute of the object. Only intercultural analysis can give it this character, through a paradigm of hybrid, segmentary and heterogeneous thinking (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, pp. 480–483).

Multiculturalism is a judgement of existence: in the same physical or conceptual space, different people coexist, from different cultures (in terms of memories, options, references, values, preferences, projects, expectations, experiences, practices and attitudes), but—under ideal circumstances—they mutually recognize the right to live together. Multiculturalism preaches not only the right to share a territory, but also the obligation to live in it according to the cultures of those various groups and communities. Thus, multiculturalism tends to assume a utopian character, stripped of dilemmatic or conflicting aspects, ignoring all impending cases of conflict of norms, values and practices. By following this argument, and bearing in mind that utopias are by definition unreal, it is tempting to pretend a shocked disappointment at the alleged failure of multiculturalism and jump into the easy conclusion that it is in fact impossible for different cultures to coexist. Therefore, when this discourse becomes an actual practice, those who are identified as agents of difference might be segregated or ultimately erased—through illegalization, deportation, imprisonment, assassination—in the name of common sense, so that a normal(ized) society may prevail.

In fact, there are political implications when distinguishing multiculturalism from interculturalism. The political exploitation and ideological abuse of the concept of multiculturalism can be related to a polemical speech by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who declared the 'death of multiculturalism', without elaborating on the nature and causes of such failure. Merkel was referring to the implicit illusion that Germans and foreign workers could live side by side, once German workers lost the hope that '*they* wouldn't stay', 'they' being the *gastarbeiters*, or 'guest workers', who arrived in Germany to fill the labour shortage during the economic boom of the 1960s (*The Guardian*, 17 October 2010). In Merkel's speech, the representation of these groups and their competences is underpinned by a certain shared notion of culture, multiculturalism, and their agents. The 'death of multiculturalism' implies that its agents, those who have brought along multiplicity and difference, have also failed and are no longer welcome, thus recalling Giuliana Ferry's approach to 'conditional hospitality' in this volume (Chap. 6). But recent history—in Germany as elsewhere—has taught us that discursive categories and symbolic markers of identity have actual and very dramatic effects in the everyday experience of groups and individuals.

The apparent shortcomings of multiculturalism require the transition to a more complex stage, that of IC, in the context of diversity that now

characterizes Western societies. The depiction of interculturalism as facilitating an interactive and dynamic cultural exchange is concerned with the task of developing cohesive societies, by turning notions of singular identities into notions of multiple ones. Based upon a deep sharing of differences of culture and experience, interculturalism encourages the formation of interdependencies, which structure identities that go beyond nations or simplified ethnicities (Booth, 2003, p. 432). According to Meer and Modood (2012), there are four ways in which conceptions of interculturalism are being positively contrasted with multiculturalism. These are, first, as something greater than coexistence, interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second, that interculturalism is conceived of as something less groupist or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Third, that interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, that where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices, as part of the process of intercultural dialogue. Modood goes even further to state that the multicultural framework has allowed the evolution from biological racism to cultural racism, emphasizing the old dichotomy of self and other, and producing an idea of culture that is naturalistic and essentialist, through the homogenization of identities (Werbner & Modood, 1999, pp. 3–4). Indeed, racism can exist without race, operating through reductionist discourses that favour the cultural explanation at the expense of other levels of analysis, and approaching interactions in a mono-causal way (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1985). Such interpretations posit that cultures, in essence, occupy different, irregular spaces and that cultural belonging explains mutually exclusive and incompatible behaviours.

Despite the obvious difficulty of the task, for the sake of argument it is appropriate to establish here a brief diachronic perspective. The concept of interculturalism emerged in France during the 1970s, due to the need for the inclusion of immigrant children and consequent adaptation of educational methods in the face of an increasingly multicultural society. This simple chronological information contains two conceptions already noted earlier: the use of the prefix *inter* assumes that two or more cultures interact, while the prefix *multi* does not assume hybridization, but instead the coexistence of various cultures, stratified and hierarchical. This model of IC began to be defended in the francophone world and soon spread throughout Europe. Actually, French interculturalism is less anchored in

civil rights movements and more influenced by international organizations, such as UNESCO and the European Council. Schools, as a means of inclusion of different communities, were the first institutions to feel the need for IC, through the practice of sociocultural mediation (Meunier, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2014). In Portugal, sociocultural mediation emerged in the 1990s, as a result of the country's joining the then European Economic Community. Through it, Portugal established further contacts with countries where sociocultural mediation was already an essential institutional way to achieve inclusion. Portuguese policies of sociocultural mediation are essentially performed by qualified communication agents, who promote dialogue between cultures and social groups, seeking to mitigate differences by knowing and understanding them (ACM, 2014).

On the other hand, the multiculturalism concept prevails in the Anglo-Saxon world, where groups of different cultural matrices are integrated in public life in order to ensure social cohesion, but not inclusion. Integrating or assimilating migrants is not part of the same national and societal project as creating a society that offers similar opportunities to everyone. And even if it is not made clear right away, not everyone of foreign nationality is labelled similarly. Moreover, a 'well-integrated' person is one who has become 'like us' and thus, implicitly, will never become 'us' (Dervin et al., 2011, pp. 7–8). Ultimately, a 'well-integrated' person has rejected or concealed those features that might be identified as foreign, thus rejecting or concealing a significant part (if not all) of her own identity, the stable core to one's individuality and sense of personal location.

Interestingly, a significant part of the existing literature on multiculturalism in English is, in fact, an exhaustive list of differences between an individual *us* shocked but full of good will, and a collective *other*, characterized as homogeneous and hypersensitive to offences to their strange traditions. This literature takes the form of empirical manuals with very pragmatic purposes: to facilitate economic relations with exotic partners, and/or become popular university toolkits. Departing invariably from artificial situations of conflict, misunderstanding, lack of communication, latent hostility and general embarrassment caused by exposure to the cultural norms and practices of the 'other', seldom do the explanations provided equate to the possibility of a certain action being dictated by the individual's conscience (see Dresser, 2005; Storti, 1994, 2007 [2001]; Trompenaars & Hampden Turner, 1997). For the authors who favour this essentialist approach, it seems to be inconceivable that a non-Western (i.e., non-Anglo-Saxon) behaviour may derive from something other than the

simple dictates of tradition and culture, met without dissonance or place for the agency of autonomous individuals. This rather deceitful naiveté (see Chap. 1, and politically biased strategy that supports such 'efficient' models of IC.

When highlighting intergroup differences instead of intragroup and interindividual differences, business, education, training and communication in general become strictly culturalized. Yet, it should be recognized that the margin between the sheer refusal of the cultural dimension and the overemphasis on culture as the determining factor of behaviour is narrow. However, any excessive focus on the different characteristics of others leads to exoticism as well as to communicational void, and enhances, consciously or not, stereotypes and prejudices, because all work representing the other is political and expresses power relationships, as any labelling or categorization does. When an individual—who is seldom the prototype of a group—fails to be incorporated into the expected (prejudged) framework, serious difficulties arise, because in reality people cannot be understood outside a process of communication and exchange. Questioning one's identity in relation to others is an integral part of IC, as the work of analysis and of acquiring knowledge applies to others as much as to oneself (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, pp. 476–478).

A statement that marks the emphasis currently placed on IC can be found on the seventh 'Common Basic Principle[s] for Immigrant Integration' of the European Union (European Commission, 2004), which argues that the frequent interaction between immigrants and citizens of member states is a fundamental mechanism for inclusion, emphasizing the importance of communal fora, intercultural dialogue and information about immigrants and their cultures. The key point here is the inverse of a mere celebration of diversity of cultures as folklore or as ethnic versions of classic multiculturalism. What is involved here is the positive encouragement of actual encounters between different groups and the creation of dialogue and joint activities. Of course this does not mean that intercultural dialogue has not been part of the multicultural philosophy and practice. But it becomes evident that the idea of multiculturalism has succumbed easily to an interpretation of ethnic cultures, with strictly defined boundaries and static essential components, without internal dissent. In other words, multiculturalism has been oriented towards essentialism, albeit tacitly or implicitly, as is the case of the above cited 'manuals of intercultural communication'.

Alongside multiculturalism's seemingly neutral surface, there is a political discourse that overstresses and may even produce difference between groups while reproducing, justifying and obscuring oppression and inequality. Mainstream multiculturalism, at its core, normalizes the idea that there are different categories of human beings, 'essentialized, primordial, and fixed. Furthermore, multiculturalism posits that it is natural to "stick with your own kind"' (Kromidas, 2011, p. 73). In her thought-provoking work on multiculturalism, essentialism and critical cosmopolitanism in New York primary schools, Maria Kromidas describes a new accommodationist and routinized multiculturalism that has been hegemonically incorporated as the perfect ideological counterpart to global capitalism, very distant from any notion of social justice. This approach to multiculturalism as folklore—where commodified cultures orderly display themselves for the comfort of dominant groups—entails a superficial and acritical understanding of cultural diversity. Relying heavily on the writings of Abdallah-Pretceille, Kromidas also contrasts a multiculturalism that depends on a reified and static conception of culture, with an interculturalism that deconstructs this homogeneous entity, seeking a complex and dynamic multiplicity instead. The former stresses typologies and categorizations while the latter emphasizes mutations, fusions and relations. Again, and as stated above, typologies and categorizations are expressions of power, politically and historically constructed, and are by no means universal truths. Hence, the ultimate goal of multiculturalism is a cautious tolerance, while that of interculturalism is conviviality and, again, communication. The very borders that encapsulate the static taxonomy of the former become the object of critique of the latter (Kromidas, 2011, p. 75). For Abdallah-Pretceille, interculturalism implies the shift from an analysis in terms of structures and states to one of complex, changeable and arbitrary situations, processes and cultural phenomena, such as acculturation, assimilation, resistance, identity or hybridity. In brief, culture in action, instead of culture as an object: that is the aim of IC (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, pp. 479–481).

As it has been argued in this section, interculturalism is conceived through the exchanges, interactions and alterities that take place when cultures meet, and also through the transformations and processes of communication that derive from it. I now discuss interdisciplinary and intercultural dialectics, in order to underpin the dialogue between epistemological and cultural categories, while overcoming the risk of categorization and exclusion that they would otherwise entail.

Interdisciplinary Dialectics for IC

The key skills for IC rely on interdisciplinarity and creativity, in order to generate a productive intervention both in society and science. Creative, interdisciplinary approaches to intercultural phenomena are, therefore, likely to select unexpected fields of study, with their own hybrid methodologies. This will be the core argument of this section, as the relational and even dialectic epistemology of our perception of IC is crucial for a study that goes beyond meaningless cultural multiplicity. I use here the term 'dialectic' because, although conflict is a necessarily part of the intercultural process—both in social practice and in academic research—synthesis will hopefully emerge from it.

IC and the capacity for dialogue between cultures are not a mere passive acceptance of the multicultural factor, nor the utopia of complete harmonization, but rather an essential component of every culture that wishes to assert itself as such. This type of dialogue occurs among individuals who speak different languages and for whom words and objects have diverse meanings. However, this does not result in a new Tower of Babel nor in social chaos, because there is an attempt at communication, and there is something that is actually shared, which is exactly what allows awareness of, and openness to, differences. When differences are left aside and considered as non-existent, the result can be an insufficient understanding of self and others. That is why it is necessary to understand the communicative challenge presented by the unlimited amount of discourses and texts, within the framework of IC (Ibanez & Saenz, 2006, p. 15).

Although identity and difference are not exclusively discursive, they are contained in discourse, both framed within the broad scope of interaction. It is for this reason that language (or rather, the recognition of the diversity of languages that can be used to express communicative meanings) becomes a major factor when dealing with interculturalism. Understanding the other and what he says requires a coincidence of cultural horizons, along with the recognition of linguistic diversity. On the other hand, linguistic diversity is also present within the boundaries of a national language through intralinguistic social, regional and stylistic differences, as well as through variations in dialect and register, thus calling for an intracultural variety of IC. Some examples are the Portuguese dialect *Mirandês* or the typical accent of Porto, that can be interpreted either as marks of social background, statements of regional identity or as everyday forms of resistance to the cultural centralism of the capital. The

symbolic value attached to different languages or to variants of a common language has to be interpreted in conjunction with other meanings shared within social interaction, because cultural signs are polysemic and their meaning can only be provided through a contextualized analysis that goes well beyond the mere recourse to a dictionary.

Communicative competence develops at the intra- and intercultural levels alike. In other words, speakers need to be aware of the variety of registers and of the plurality of discourses that exist in a culture, either their own or others', following the principle of self- and hetero-analysis, characteristic of IC. The richness of the worlds discovered through linguistic diversity and communicable meanings is such that every translation is necessarily imperfect. As a prerequisite for intercultural dialogue, we must recognize the different languages used by other actors and know their 'hidden dimension[s]' (Hall, 1992 [1966]), even if we cannot do it other than through translation, in order to assimilate the unknown culture as a variation of our own. But practices and styles of translation that are not truly interpretative may hinder rather than facilitate intercultural communication. The hegemonic power of a culture can be enhanced if we accept as natural a translation in which the voices of other cultures are domesticated, without being understood as originated elsewhere. Cultural polyphony can be both facilitated and stalled by academic discourse, so great is the responsibility of the studies conducted on the coexistence and interpenetration of voices from different cultures (Ibanez & Saenz, 2006, p. 18).

If diversity is now more visible than ever, it is also more communicable. This has gradually become obvious with the emergence of *English* as a *lingua franca* in a globalized world and with the growing need for translation skills by individuals and institutions alike. This is why the work of the translator acquires new dimensions: on the one hand, the translator establishes relationships that make knowledge more accessible and that bring people and cultures together; on the other hand, she directly interferes in her country's textual production, to the extent that she recreates, according to a pre-determined model, aesthetic shapes, ideologies and epistemologies to be included in her own tradition. The subversive nature of translation creates a renewed vision of the figure of the translator, granting her an importance that was not evident before, because 'translation is one of the most obvious forms of image making, of manipulation, that we have' (Lefevere, 1990, p. 26). Thus, the study of translation can tell a lot not only about the literary world, but also about the actual world

in general. In other words, translation is another path for the study and acquisition of IC.

Resistance to the impositions of globalization is marked by the way local communities preserve and transmit their oral traditions, dialects, founding myths and precepts of common knowledge, whose cultural symbolism, ethics and aesthetics may function as educational tools for IC. Such manifestations of memory as part of identity, both individual and collective, are also a key factor for the essential sense of continuity, coherence and (re) construction of communities. For the present chapter, the main relevance of narratives of local and oral culture does not lie in their credibility as documents in the positivist sense, because, and according to Sidney Chalhoub (2003, p. 92) on literary fiction, they search for reality, interpret and tell true stories about society, but do not have to function as a glass window over, or as a mirror of, the social 'matter' represented. Their relevance for IC lies instead in the search for complex meanings, in the fact that they allow us to analyse critically the discourses that guide the logic of identity and the practices that move (and are moved by) current and retrospective representations of reality.

The development and extension of the processes of mediatization and migration, which characterize globalized modernity, produce a considerable intensification of deterritorialization, understood as a proliferation of translocalized cultural experiences (Hernàndez, 2002). Deterritorialization implies the growing presence of social forms of contact and involvement which go beyond the limits of a specific territory (Giddens, 1990). Consequently, since culture is intimately related to the practices, regulations and values that structure life within a given society, then intercultural competence should also be aware of how these conventions have been influenced and hybridized by different cultures, as commonly accepted institutions. Depending on the complexity of those regulations, intercultural awareness may focus on everyday tacit rules—the so-called 'commonsense'—as well as on complex political, religious, economic, legal and philosophical systems, because all these ideological processes act at the subliminal and the conscious levels alike, and contribute comprehensively to the construction and regulation of social identities. Systems of social and cultural regulation offer multiple perspectives for understanding in the present field of IC. Some possible topics for consideration are the politics of intervention across borders, court interpreting, codes of conduct in virtual social networks, localization of marketing campaigns, power relations in global tourism, immigration and emigration laws, the unspoken rules of

gender prejudice, or even the history of the laws of slavery and their power over the fate of millions forcibly displaced around the globe.

Indeed, the transition from multiculturalism to interculturalism reinforces principles that emphasize the historical interconnectedness of cultures. Societies have never been static throughout history, as they have always adapted and changed according to the stimuli received from other cultures. The main difference is that, nowadays, cultural contacts and exchanges occur in a much faster and globalized way. When Antonio Perotti writes that 'the intercultural approach to the teaching of History is critical for the understanding of cultural diversity in European societies' (Perotti, 2003, p. 58). This statement has historiographical implications, since intercultural understanding implies a search for syncretic expressions that allow us to achieve a truly universal history, composed by all groups in communication. Thus, the centrality of dialogue for a new ethics of the intercultural requires not only respect for other cultures, but also the understanding of how much they already have in common, how they have interacted in the course of time, and how those similarities provide a basis for the development of new shared insights.

Taking as a paradigmatic case the history of Portuguese expansion, it becomes clear that even in a system of cultural dominance, the global interaction provided by the decompartmentalization of the world was made of reciprocal influences. Europeans left their mark in the world, but while interacting with people overseas they have also experienced significant cultural changes. One should note that contemporary Western culture is in itself the result of hybridization, under the influence of the so-called minority cultures, in a mutual exchange that should not be reduced to mere conflict (Costa & Lacerda, 2007, p. 9). The Portuguese role in the making of an early globalized modernity has to be taken into account when the first steps towards full integration of the planet as 'old world' and 'new world' are brought into systematic conjunction. The creation of a regularized, globe-spanning network from the early-fifteenth to the late-sixteenth centuries involved the interpenetration of the commercial and the political, the material and the imaginary, the elite and the popular elements of the Portuguese experience. This experience forged particular forms of global consciousness that came to affect not only Europe, but also, through the means of the oceanic networks thus created, much of the rest of the world. Thus, if we are to seek some of the most important precursors of present-day modes of globality and thinking globally, sixteenth-century Portugal has to be considered (Inglis, 2010). The interactions of

Portuguese expansion took place not only throughout the empire, but also at the metropolis back home, because of the way overseas people, their objects, habits and beliefs merged into Portuguese society, leaving indelible traces in various fields, from visual arts to erudite music, from poetry to myth, from culinary to navigation instruments, from philosophy to natural sciences. Although the crimes of colonial history are obvious, it would nevertheless be relevant to question—albeit carefully and critically—the process of European expansion as a vehicle for the creation of syncretism, with contributions from multiple sources, encompassing similarities and differences, where fusions happened alongside segregation (Costa & Lacerda, 2007, p. 21). And here we are talking about dialectics and synthesis, once again.

As a result, the colonial and postcolonial world is a space of constant translation, a permanent contact zone, to quote from Boaventura Sousa Santos, a worldwide frontier where peripheral practices and epistemologies are the first to be noticed, though seldom understood. Intercultural encounters and communication—or translation—bring the aspects that each cultural practice believes to be more central or relevant into the contact zone. Therefore, in intercultural contact zones, each culture decides which aspects should be selected for translation, although there are elements that are considered as being untranslatable into other cultures, or too vital to being exposed to the perils and doubts of a contact zone (Santos, 2006, p. 121). The issue of what should or should not be translated is not limited to the selection criteria each group decides to adopt in the contact zone. Beyond active selectivity, there is something we may call passive selectivity, which consists of what has become un-nameable in a given culture, due to long-term severe oppression. These are deeply seated silences, absences that cannot be fulfilled but shape the innermost practices and principles of a cultural identity, such as slavery, racism, religious intolerance, colonial oppression or the subjugation of women, to name but a few.

Taking as an example again the Portuguese colonial space, it has often been represented as a mere adjuvant or antagonist in the dominant narrative of the quest for religious conversion, power, wealth and social promotion. Contact zones thus created were never truly hybrid, as everything that did not fit into this grand narrative had very little meaning for the actors on stage. Similar processes of silencing and production of non-existence—like the silencing of women, minorities, slaves, returnees from ex-colonies, colonized communities and oppressed groups in general—have contrib-

uted to the construction and strengthening of deep asymmetries between cultures, individuals, societies and genders, characteristic of colonialism and patriarchy. Because cultures are monolithic only when seen from the outside or from a distance; when seen closer to, or from within, it is easy to understand that cultures are constituted by many and often conflicting versions of themselves (see Chap. 1, this volume).

More than ever, IC is to be practised both at home and abroad, since the scope may encompass the relations between distant Eastern and Western cultures, as much as between marginal and mainstream, youth and senior, rich and poor, erudite and popular cultures, within the same society, which is only apparently cohesive (for a similar defence of cultural self-analysis see Chap. 8, this volume). Still, the need for intercultural understanding among such diversity is often neglected in favour of issues facilitated by distinctive ethnic markers, which in turn evoke the simplistic dichotomy of the archetype white *versus* black, that is, light *versus* darkness. But then, how to face the deep cultural rifts that exist between generations in a WASP family, for example? Or the growing gap between rich and poor in the receding Western economies? Or the stereotypes that underpin the political dialogue between the countries of Northern and Southern Europe? Michael Chapman argues that, unlike in his home country South Africa, in societies where language, race, religion, class and comfort are reasonably homogeneous, cultural memory hardly needs to be invoked in the daily round. However, the more homogeneous a society, the easier it is to conceal the manipulation of its cultural memory by the politics of power (Chapman, 2005, p. 113). Likewise, within the only apparent homogeneity of Portugal—if we leave aside the presence of the Roma community throughout the country, or the racial variants that postcolonialism and immigration have recently brought into the major cities—there are profound cultural differences between urban centres and rural countryside, coast and inland, north and south, capital and periphery that, although devoid of visible ethnic markers, require IC so that dialogue and knowledge may emerge (see the studies by Cole, 1994 and Wall, 1998, for instance). Only then is it possible to confront the contact zone, the threshold between what we take to be the image of a culture and what is in fact involved in that culture.

When IC is put into practice as we understand it, narratives gradually emerge from a centuries-old silence, narratives that have been absent from history, to adapt once more the concepts developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2008, pp. 11–43; 2006, pp. 87–125). Emergent narratives grant a voice to subaltern groups, to all those 'others' history is slowly

recognizing. But the narratives of absence are also to be heard as, beyond emergent voices, or maybe through (and because of) them, it becomes possible to access otherwise silenced narratives of the everyday experience lived in the margins of dominant social structures. These narratives generate a source of vital information that complements official history and is absent from the canon of great narratives, with their underlying discourse of power. It is then possible to understand the infinite diversity of human experience as well as the risk it faces of—due to the limits and exclusions imposed by strict isolated areas of knowledge—wasting fundamental experience, that is, of seeing as non-existent or impossible cultural experiences that are in fact available (the 'absent') or possible (the 'emergent') (Santos, 2008, p. 33). Here we may recall the aforementioned thresholds, borderzones, contact zones and intersecting discursive fields, as well as Bakhtin's spaces of enunciation, where the negotiation of discursive doubleness—which is not synonymous with dichotomy—engenders new speech acts (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 360). But while borders imply obvious barriers to be challenged, thresholds emerge as subtle intellectual constructions, which—surprisingly or not—are rarely part of the academic institutional routine. They imply access rather than a dividing line and suggest a potential for making the academic territory more collaborative and intellectually powerful, through new processes of identification and interaction (Davcheva et al., 2011, p. 144), that is to say, through new processes of IC.

However, if deprived of a careful critical analysis, the diversity of practices, knowledge and experiences that result from those narratives may generate a diffuse plurality of self-enclosed discourses and identities, devoid of any actual interaction, much similar to the concept of multiculturalism criticized above. Once again, IC should foster communication, generate mutual intelligibilities between different worldviews, find convergent as well as divergent points and share alternative concepts and epistemologies, so that distant (in both space and time) cultures may ultimately understand each other. Once more—and taking into account that communication occurs through multiple, overlapping and even conflicting discourses—the communication model underlying the concept of interculturalism used here is a palimpsest, a constant intertextuality with other discourses and texts from the past and the present, that will, in turn, be used in future discourses and texts, in a permanent translation and dialogue between cultures.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed IC in some non-traditional perspectives, aiming at the emergence of interstitial spaces that refuse the binary representation of cultural antagonism. The discourse of hybrid spaces is based on a dialectic that does not imply cultural hegemony; instead, hybrid spaces reposition the (necessarily) partial culture from which they emerge in order to construct a sense of community and a cultural memory that grants narrative power to excluded groups. The condition of the contemporary world, within which the social and cultural multiplicity of the human being has become explicit and visible both in the streets and through the media, makes the phenomenon of diversity ubiquitous and necessarily open to discursive, ethnographic, anthropological, historical and semiotic analysis, among endless other possible approaches. As a consequence of such diversity, intercultural transits need a map drawn by disciplines that are seldom taken into account in a conservative approach to the notion of culture. This is why IC should circulate across disciplines, a line of thought that implies hybridization, dynamics and a permanent challenge to itself.

Interculturalism, as we understand it, is a cohesive process of culture making, rather than a mere encounter of inherent cultural characteristics. It draws attention not to rules, structures or explanations, but to exceptions, instabilities and misappropriations (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1985). Interculturalism focuses on processes. It is deeply involved with everyday reality, changes boundary lines, negotiates conceptions and explores transformative dynamics of communication. While questioning definitions, we go further than Meer and Modood (2012) and, instead of contrasting interculturalism and multiculturalism in equal terms, we claim that multiculturalism, as a mere political ontology, is a subcategory of interculturalism. Interculturalism, its study and respective competence go beyond contemporary circumscribed issues, towards the understanding and fostering of global communication, both past and present. Interculturalism and IC are epistemological solutions to the political misuse of multiculturalism as a utopian ontology. As a political stance, multiculturalism becomes anchored in a specific, therefore ephemeral, context. Conversely, as an epistemology, interculturalism becomes atemporal and, if transferred into the political arena, likely to function as an effective answer to the essentialism of multiculturalism. Ultimately, if repositioned within alternative academic strategies, it may lead to understanding and reconciliation.

Resorting to metaphors to summarize better our point, interculturalism can be seen as the movement of the matter that multiculturalism is. And, as there is no static matter in the universe, interculturalism becomes a synonym for the history of humankind, where static, culturally pure societies have never existed. Interculturalism is the grammar that connects the words of the global text and renders their juxtaposition understandable, communicative and eventually translatable. Conversely, these words remain orderly—but meaninglessly—stacked, in parallel columns, in the dictionary of multiculturalism, which is but a survival toolkit for those lost in a strange culture. As it becomes evident, those who are willing to join the intercultural dialogue must follow new paths across old challenges. This renewed experience implies a dynamic force among cultures and disciplines, and this is the reason why we must question and reposition the motivations, discourses, definitions, strategies and rules of cultural interaction in their perennial movement.

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CHAPTER 8

Intercultural Competence: Multi-dynamic, Intersubjective, Critical and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Ribut Wahyudi

Introduction

Culture is a complex concept, as well as a dynamic one, so it is hard to define. Furthermore, as people are now interconnected across the world, through global mobility and the Internet, the boundary of culture is blurring. This is especially true when culture is seen from a postmodernist perspective rather than a modernist view, which sees culture as a national attribute (Holliday, 2009). In a postmodernist perspective, any categories are 'perspectival' and are ideologically governed by the creator of the categories (Dervin, n.d., *Discourse of Othering*). Holliday (2009) argues that the notion of collectivism and individualism, native-speakerism and language standards are 'ideological acts within unequal worlds' (Holliday, 2009, p. 144). Holliday (2010a, p. 175) points out that cultural complexity has four dimensions:

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- A nation is often an external cultural reality that may be in conflict with personal cultural realities.
- Cultural identities can mean diverse things, many of which are not bound to national boundary, such as: religion, ancestry, skin-colour, language, discourse, class, education, profession, skills, communities, family, activities, regions, friends, food, dress and political attitudes.
- Cultural realities are attached to individuals as they move from one cultural arena to another. Membership and ownership of culture is fluid and thus individuals may have the sense of belonging to different cultural realities simultaneously.
- Language can be many things—a cultural reality, a cultural marker, an artefact, a cultural arena and the location of cultural universes. It may or may not be strongly associated with nationality or nation.

Due to the above complexity, there is no consensus on how to measure intercultural competence (IC).

The Definition of IC

Intercultural Competence (IC) has recently been defined as 'having adequate relevant knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures' (UNESCO, 2013, p. 16). While the above definition is broad, subjective judgement is inevitable when judging the adequacy of relevant knowledge. Therefore, people may have different interpretations of IC. Apart from that, the UNESCO definition seems to assume that learning other cultures progresses in linear and additive ways (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006a). However, people may act in total opposition to other cultures, as was the case where some teachers showed total opposition to imported English Language Teaching (ELT) Methods (Canagarajah, 2002). Thus, the definition of IC seems problematic, as cultural learning in a foreign language can be unpredictable.

The Complex Nature of IC

Deardorff (2006, p. 258) asserts that IC 'continues to be a complex topic fraught with controversial issues' and 'continues to evolve' and may involve a 'culture specific approach, identities, cyberspace, global and local nexus'

(Liu, 2012, pp. 273–274). The complex nature of learning IC is itself dependent on the definition of culture. For example, when culture is defined as an 'integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behavior of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations' (Goode, Sockalingam, Brown, & Jones, 2000) then IC will cover the diverse aspects mentioned. Controversial issues may be embedded in IC discussions when the topics under discussion are acceptable in a particular society, but are considered socially inappropriate in another society. For example, same-sex marriage is legal in New Zealand, but not in Indonesia. Thus, the inclusion of same-sex marriage in the IC course in Indonesian might be controversial. IC continues to evolve to meet global demands, such as the fact that IC is required in business contexts, daily interactions, interfaith dialogues, political matters, technological advancements and health communication. IC is then embedded in 'turbulences' (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013, p. 532) as a clear stance on what IC is and how to study it cannot easily be drawn by researchers. The turbulences indicate that IC presents problematic issues for researchers. In light of these issues, this chapter aims to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are the problems with the existing IC paradigms especially Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006) and Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003)?
2. What framework can be proposed for IC in postmodern times?

Methodology

I wish to make sense of my own intercultural experience through auto-ethnography and self-reflection (Holmes & O'Neill, 2010). I will tell my own story of becoming an interculturally knowledgeable person through analysing critical moments of intercultural encounters. Auto-ethnography is an empowering methodology, adaptable for English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers as it provides space to write personal experiences, such as struggles, failures, joys and delights, through the use of personal pronouns 'I', 'we', and other people's experience in a 'live' manner (Dyson, 2007). Auto-ethnography remakes power relations and allows unknown social worlds to be studied (Denshire, 2014). However, auto-ethnography is criticized for its lack of analytic outcomes, ethical problems and the moral obligation, especially for funded research, to include field research (Delamont, 2009).

This chapter will explore the former IC paradigm, propose an alternative IC framework and elaborate on my personal intercultural encounters and learning trajectory that confirm my alternative framework. It is worthy of note here that my IC and intercultural learning are closely related. My intercultural learning refers to the process of understanding my own culture and other cultures more deeply and in this process of understanding, I gained some sort of competence (IC). The intercultural-learning process takes place in intercultural encounters: 'an important site where self-knowledge emerged through communication with the other, enabling people to explore both the individual and relational aspects of their interactions, and therefore critically reflect on their intercultural competence' (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012, p. 716). Therefore, intercultural learning and IC are integrated and one cannot be discussed without the other.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter makes use of postmodern and poststructural literature as it aims to explore IC from complex, dynamic, intersubjective, critical and interdisciplinary approaches. The chapter employs scholarly works from Foucault (1994) on subjectivity, Morgan (2007) and Pierce (1995) on identities, Klein (2005) on interdisciplinarity, Ellingson (2009) on a postmodern view of crystallization, Gorski (2008) on critical consciousness and Kramsch (2014a) on multiple subject positions and other scholars.

The Problematic Issues of the Existing IC Paradigm

There are some problems with the existing IC paradigm. For example, a positivistic point of view, which says that the measurement of competence is possible, dominates (Deardorff, 2006). Deardorff (2006, p. 241) said: 'it is best to a use mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess intercultural competence, including interviews, observation, and judgement by self and others'. Quantitative methods in this case are problematic as they attempt to simplify the complex phenomena of IC to a set of measurable objects, a typical of positivistic paradigm (de Sousa, 2010). While assessment in terms of observation and judgement by self and others is bound to the subjectivity of observers, so is judging yourself and other's judgment. Qualitative assessment underlines the notion of intersubjectivity promoted in this chapter. Deardorff (2006) aims to define and search for 'appropriate assessment methods of intercultural competence', by

conducting a survey completed by recognized international scholars. It is worth noting that the international scholars in the study predominately held a Western and US centric view of IC, which sees that IC 'resides largely within individual' (Deardorff, 2006, p. 245). Scholars from Asia, who hold the view that IC is a product of group- or interpersonal relationships made limited contributions (Yum, 1994 cited in Deardorff, 2006). Deardorff presented five findings. The first finding was that there is no consensus among administrators on the best way to define IC. The second finding was that there is even 'greater breadth' of definitions among intercultural scholars than administrators. The top rated definition was: 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 247–248). The third finding was that administrators and scholars agreed that it is important to assess student's IC. The fourth finding was that the best way to assess IC is through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurement. The fifth finding was that, in general, intercultural scholars and higher education administrators agreed on the definitions, components (see Deardorff, 2006, p. 249) and assessment methods for IC emerging in the study.

This chapter also questions the factors of intercultural communication Byram (1997) proposed, which include: (1) *savoir* (knowledge of self and others in social interaction), (2) *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting/relating), (3) *savoir appendre* (skills of discovery and interaction), (4) *savoir être* (attitudes of curiosity and openness), and (5) *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) (Byram, 1997). Knowledge of self and others consists of knowledge of one's own social group and other cultures, as well as knowledge of interaction processes on both individual and societal levels. The skill of discovery is the ability to make sense of an important phenomenon in foreign language learning and relate it with other phenomena. Byram discusses attitudes of curiosity and openness as the willingness to examine one's own assumptions, and beliefs alongside other's meaning, beliefs and behaviours and argues this positive attitude will not be achieved without reflective and analytical examination of one's own meanings, beliefs and values with others. These five (*savoir*) factors seem to assume that cultural learning occurs in a linear and progressive way. Furthermore, culture is still viewed from a modernist definition: 'tied to characteristics of native member of a national community' (Kramsch, 2014a, p. 70). The cultural learning process is, of course, more complex than that as it enables 'instabilities' and 'processes' (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013), opens

the possibility of the exclusion of discourse (Foucault, 1971) and enables the negotiation of power relations (Gallagher, 2008). Specifically, Dervin (2010) critiqued Byram's (1997) *savoirs* as unconvincing as, according to him, there is no guarantee that everybody 'believes in them'. Byram's definition is also critiqued as his parameters of intercultural dialogue are set by the other and thus there is imbalanced power between self and other (Hoff, 2014).

Byram's linear and additive factors of intercultural communication are similar to that of Bennett's (1993 cited in Bennett et al. 2003) developmental model of IC in the language classroom. Bennett proposes that intercultural sensitivity goes through six stages: (1) denial (2) defense (3) minimization (4) acceptance (5) adaptation and (6) integration. Denial, defense and minimization are classified as *ethnocentric stages* while acceptance, adaptation and integration are clustered as *ethnorelative stages*. The linear and additive assumptions in this model can be seen from the last three stages in which the language learners accept, adapt and integrate, but there is no guarantee of progress in this way.

An Alternative Framework for IC in Postmodern Times

I would argue that IC needs to be framed within multi-dynamic, intersubjective, critical and interdisciplinary approaches. 'Multi' means that human understanding about other cultures is constructed by many aspects: for example, what's considered good/bad in one's own ethnic culture, religion, educational background, references (books, electronic media) and cyberspace. 'Dynamic' means that people continuously re-construct their understanding about culture they are in as the result of their interaction in society, and subjectivity means that people's understanding about culture is shaped by the discourses in which they live (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000; Foucault, 1994).

As the discourses that shape people's understanding about culture may alter from one period of history (episteme) to another, so does people's subjectivity, they continuously reconstruct their subjectivity so that they are in the state of *intersubjectivity*. Additionally, one's subjectivity is the result of one's interaction with others who have their own subjectivities. Dervin (n.d.) asserts that the notion of intersubjectivity needs to be explored, especially in discussions of 'identity, representation, stereotype, and Othering'. In this regard, intersubjectivity also implies the need to be critical when discussing IC. For this critical aspect, I would suggest

that IC should consider Gorski's (2008) seven points of consciousness to decolonize intercultural education: (1) how culture and identity affect one's access to power, (2) how justice is prioritized over conflict resolution, (3) the rejection of *deficit theory*, 'any approach that explains inequality by demonizing disenfranchised communities' (Gorski, 2008, p. 522), (4) the investigation of power imbalances on both individual and systemic levels, (5) the acknowledgement of sociopolitical contexts, (6) understanding that the concept of 'neutrality' equals the status quo, and (7) advocating speaking for truth and challenging hegemony and hierarchy (Gorski, 2008, pp. 522–523).

IC is required to capture the complex phenomena of globalization (Axford, 2013), from an interdisciplinary approach. Klein (2005, p. 64) states: 'interdisciplinary work encompasses a broad range of practices, from simple communication of approaches to mutual integration of ideas and approaches'. In this regard, IC should be seen from a variety of lenses, not only from culture alone. IC may include perspectives from: sociology, religion, politics and others. This chapter views IC from these constructs and as situated, complex and dynamic (Morgan, 2007).

In a nutshell, IC should be viewed as the result of dynamic human understanding and intersubjectivities, which people construct and reconstruct after they engage in social interaction and/or virtual communication, especially when the interaction or communication requires their critical understanding of processes and interdisciplinary knowledge.

My approach is similar to the *liquid approach* to intercultural discourse (Dervin, 2011), which underlines the notions of intersubjectivity and the dynamicity and contextual aspects of interculturality. This approach is a rejection of the static nature of the classical approach, which views knowledge in different cultures as accumulative and uses simple categorization (McSweeney, 2002 cited in Dervin & Tournebise, 2013). In this approach, six turbulences are proposed for Intercultural Communication Education (ICE) (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013, pp. 534–535). Those are: (1) putting an end to differentialist biases, (2) moving away from individualist biases, (3) exhausting results is impossible, (4) looking at exceptions, instabilities and processes rather than structures, (5) taking into account the importance of intersectionality and (6) placing justice at the centre of ICE.

The first turbulence rejects any effort to dichotomize the individualistic and collectivistic nature of culture as this dichotomy is not natural and 'is always based on someone's vision' (Dervin, n.d., *Research on Interculturality: The Researcher's Role*). The second turbulence problematizes the individualist

bias of culture and advocates the need to see culture as a process of interaction, which is, therefore, intersubjective. The third turbulence contends that research on IC is always dynamic and produces something and is never 'exhausted'. The fourth turbulence scrutinizes surface values by looking at instability, exception and processes. So rather than assuming a certain ethnicity and nationality, which tend to interact in a way that is predictable and controllable, people are urged to look at any possibilities that occur in natural contexts including contradictions, instabilities and also the role of power-relations between interactants in intercultural interactions. The fifth turbulence is how the 'co-construction of various identities' (Dervin, n.d., *Research on Interculturality: The Researcher's Role*, p. 535) such as gender, age, profession and social class intersect in intercultural interaction. Thus intercultural interaction involves interconnected, complex intercultural formations. The last turbulence is to put 'justice' in the centre of ICE, combating every form of inequality, discrimination, prejudice and oppression (Räsänen, 2009 cited in Dervin & Tournebise, 2013).

Unlike the modernist positivistic tradition, which makes use of triangulation, research in a postmodern context (such as this chapter) has its own rigour regarding trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is seen as 'crystallization' (Ellingson, 2009), which views 'validity' not as triangulation but uses the imagery of crystals that 'combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach' (Ellingson, 2009, p. 934). The imagery of crystals in this chapter is reflected through the different substances, dimensions and shapes of my intercultural learning trajectory and IC from scholarship, religion, politics, emotions and agency.

Redefining the Context of IC

I would argue that the five *savoirs* (Byram, 1997), identification and assessment of IC (Deardorff, 2006) and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993 cited in Bennett et al., 2003) are not adequate to capture the complexity of IC under the influence of globalization. Kumaravadivelu (2012) proposes that Language Teacher Education (LTE) in a time of globalization should be tailored with interweaving globalizing perspectives: postnational, postmodern and postcolonial. I argue that these three 'posts' are relevant to the discussion of IC, because IC, through the global mobility of people and borderless world and through Internet contacts, facilitates the exchange of values (Kramsch, 2014b) and should provide access to power and dismantle oppression (Gorski, 2008).

Postnationalism inevitably emerges as an effect of globalization and is marked by three distinct characteristics: 'shrinking space, time and disappearing borders' (UN Development Report, 1999 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 3). Postmodernism problematizes 'the status of knowledge and the understanding the concept of Self' (UN Development Report, 1999 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 5). Postcolonialism interrogates the colonial characteristics of English which still 'lingers' and discriminates against other languages (Shin, 2006).

Following these three posts, in the postnational sense, IC is impacted by global discourse, especially the countries with global power. The countries in this group include the USA, China and Japan. Thus, people who have future interests (e.g., business cooperation, bilateral relations, university networks) with people from these and other globally powerful countries need an adequate understanding about their potential partner's culture so that they are able to conduct better business negotiations, foreign policy agreements, academic cooperation and so on. In a postmodern sense, IC is viewed as unfixed and constantly evolving, self-defined and comprised of multiple identities and intersubjectivities (Williams, 2006, p. 216). In a postcolonial sense, IC should problematize the Western-centric definition that IC resides largely in the individual (see Deardorff, 2006) and sees IC as the result of co-construction between or among individuals in society.

In this chapter, IC is analysed through language learners' multiple subject positions (Kramsch, 2014a) as conflicting and subject to change in different places and times (Wendon, 1997 cited in Kramsch, 2014a). Furthermore, as identity is a key component of IC (Krajewski, 2011) and IC is better seen as a process with complex entities (Krajewski, 2011) that involve fear, emotion, confusion and agency (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012), in the following, I will elaborate my identity formation as an EFL learner through auto-ethnographical reflection.

Auto-ethnographical Reflection

I will now discuss the empirical dimension of my intercultural encounters, which are multi-dynamic, critical, intersubjective and interdisciplinary in nature and confirm my theoretical proposal for IC in postmodern times. As I am multilingual, I speak Javanese (local language), Indonesian language (national language) and English, I will also discuss multilingual references relevant to my identity formation. Canagarajah (2009, pp. 17–20) highlights six points of multilingual strategies to negotiate English: multilinguals retain their linguistic distinctiveness in social encounters, multilinguals

co-construct intersubjective norms of communication, multilinguals communicate through hybrid codes, multilinguals are consensus oriented and supportive, multilinguals exploit ecology for meaning making and for multilinguals language use and language learning are interconnected. Multilingualism itself has been a key issue in LTE in Europe whereby IC, multilingual individuals, identity, profession, knowledge and values, are central concerns (Ziegler, 2013).

The Multi-dynamic and Intersubjective Construction of Identities

In my junior and senior years of High School, I saw English as superior. In this phase, I valorized Britain and America. My understanding of English was affected by the master discourse: the discourse taught by English teachers in the classroom, which is common in the Indonesian context (Lauder, 2008). The English discourse is widespread in our country; the focus of learning was mostly on grammar and reading. My understanding of other cultures was the result of my interaction with L (Canadian), M (Australian) and N (German). My interaction with L took place occasionally (when I was at Senior High School) especially when she visited my boarding house. L married the son of the owner of my boarding house. This occasional interaction gave me few insights into Canada, instead my confidence grew through conversing with a 'native speaker', especially learning pronunciation and new words. With limited English proficiency, I also became friends with M and N who married my neighbour in the village. I met them, usually during Idul Fitri, and talked about many things ranging from the mundane to the political. My contacts with M and N took place annually especially during the Idul Fitri day, when we celebrated the Islamic day after Ramadan. At this stage, my English learning was a form of 'colonial celebration' (Pennycook, 2000) and I was a 'faithful imitator' (Gao, 2014) where I still valued the 'native speaker norm'. The language identity I was experiencing, in my junior and senior years of high school, was largely unexamined as I was not engaged in critical reflection or the exploration of the self (Rassokha, 2010). However, as a multilingual, my linguistic distinctiveness (Canagarajah, 2009), for example, my hybrid pronunciation, appeared when I was engaged in conversation with both the German and Australian friends. My pronunciation was a mixture between Indonesian/Javanese and English.

During my undergraduate degree, especially in 2000–2004, I joined and engaged with the Islamic Mysticism (Sufi) community. This deep

involvement with the community has shaped my understanding of life, including how to value people from other cultures and religions. In this community, the universal values of life religions shared was emphasized more than the superficial nature of their differences. Also during my undergraduate degree, I was active in an English student organisation at a university in Jember, where I finally served as the Vice-President of the student organisation. I actively engaged in the activities run by this organization, including representing the organization in the national debate competitions. In the debate rehearsal and competitions, I was trained to see one topic from different perspectives. These debates broadened my open-mindedness. My knowledge also grew, not only of linguistics and literature, but also my general understanding of economics, law, politics and so on especially topics that were motions in the debate competitions. My exposure to religious mysticism and university organizations helped me construct my views on others in a way that was not easily trapped in stereotyping. Thus in that context, I co-constructed the intersubjective norms (English and Islamic Mysticism) (Canagarajah, 2009) and exchange of values (Kramsch, 2014b).

I then studied for a Master's degree which was the first time I had been overseas. My first-hand experience of Australian society, both academically and socially, taught me a lot of things. For example, academically I learned that the courses were carefully set up so that students could understand particular subjects in detail, both in terms of theoretical understanding and practical aspects. In addition to this, I learned that academic writing should be concise, clear and detailed, as I was exposed to the concept of writer's responsibility (the writer is responsible for creating clarity so that the piece of writing will not leave the reader with questions) (Mok, 1993). Furthermore, writing must be free from plagiarism. However, despite the clear writing frameworks provided, to a certain extent, I still could not escape my Asian way of thinking (especially in the first semester), which is described by (Kaplan, 1966) as indirect. Thus, my thinking at that time was a hybrid (Canagarajah, 2009); I was trying to reconcile both the Javanese/Indonesian and Australian styles of writing. In daily life interactions, in some occasions, my first-language knowledge served as the bridge for my English literacy (Kirpartrick, 2008). For example, I pronounced the words 'Panania' and 'Myra Road' in Indonesian ways so that the Australians I was speaking to took some time to understand my intention. Socially, I learnt that Australian society values being punctual (at least as I experienced it). Furthermore, I learnt that Australians will

say 'thank you' easily in daily encounters, for example, after getting off the bus and after business transactions, which rarely happened in my own country. In this regard, sociocultural knowledge helped me understand why the word 'thank you' is uttered. Living with a friend from an Asia-Pacific country, I learnt how to be assertive, firm and brave, especially when my flatmate was late paying the rent several times. I threatened to report him to the scholarship coordinator if he did not pay the rent punctually. In this case, I broke Javanese values (my tribal values), where people are supposed to prioritize compromise and harmony when solving problems, rather than being assertive. This is similar to what Holliday (2010b) narrated in his study; Parisa, an Iranian Moslem woman, breaks the collectivist stereotype by performing individualist, critical and problem-solving actions when coming to international conventions. Despite the tension that occurred between my Asia-Pacific friend and I, we also shared some positive talks. My friend told me that in the Old Testament it is said that Christians should not eat pork, as Moslems believe today, which showed me that there is similarity between our religious values. Another good moment was when a missionary gave me a Bible when I was hanging around at a university in Sydney. I took the Bible with me to my accommodation and gave the Bible I got from the missionary to my friend. I said to my friend that the Bible was good for him and he received it positively. In this regard, my language learning in the Sydney context is an exchange of values (Kramsch, 2014b), where I was informed of the values from the bible and I informed my friend about the Islamic teaching with regard to pork. As I studied, I engaged in more exploration and reflection of English in relation to my-self and others; my language learning at the Master's level became more meaningful. I became an active explorer of meaning making in intercultural encounters.

My Critical Turn and New Positioning Toward English

My PhD study was the turning point where I learnt a lot about cultural-studies literature, especially postcolonial and poststructural ideas. These ideas helped me construct and reconstruct my views about other cultures. Inspired by postcolonial and poststructural ideas and ELT scholars such as Canagarajah, Kumaravadivelu, Pennycook and Angel Lin, who have applied cultural-studies theory to ELT, my stance towards learning English became a lot more critical. I concluded that English language and culture should be positioned equally with Indonesian language and

culture. My learning of English is a means of gaining international access, but concurrently I will advocate my own identities (Canagarajah, 1999; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, & Riazi, 2002). Thus, at this stage, my position might be described as critical intercultural positioning. At the moment, as a part of my PhD research, I am investigating how issues with ELT and English in the classroom, due to its Western origins, might be negotiated, resisted or implemented. At this stage, I am aware of the sociopolitical context, the power imbalance, the access to power, and the rejection of neutrality (Gorski, 2008) of ELT methods and English imported from Western countries (UK and USA) (Canagarajah, 2002, 2006b; Hashim, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2006c; Pennycook, 2000)

Under a similar framework, I also wrote an article that critiques the critical-thinking concept offered by Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) taught in the West (see Wahyudi, 2014) and worked collaboratively with my students on Indonesian themes (Djayanti & Wahyudi, 2015; Qadafi & Wahyudi, 2014). At this stage, my learning represented 'post-colonial performativity' (Pennycook, 2000) or 'playful creator' (Gao, 2014), as I attempted to gain access internationally through English, but at the same time I performed agency and identities, an example of the global and local nexus that Liu (2012) proposed. Similar to this, Le Ha (2009) reminds us that many of the stereotypes of Asian international students are not necessarily true. Her participants revealed that their identities were: 'produced and reproduced in complex, dynamic and sophisticated ways, around their negotiation of available options and awareness of possibilities, and their creation of new self-constructions that were relevant and meaningful to their sense of self' (Le Ha, 2009, p. 212). Sung's (2014) study also suggests similar findings where some participants in the study foreground their local or global identities as well as their hybrid identities (global and local).

In daily encounters, my intercultural interaction takes place with my supervisors and other postgraduate students. For example, I was invited by my supervisor to attend her pre-Christmas celebration. My understanding of Islamic teaching did not prevent me from attending the celebration. As far as I am concerned, celebrating Christmas (with the intention that Isa was a prophet of God) and joining Christmas parties (not sermons) is allowed in a moderate Islam. However, some Moslems believe attending Christmas celebration violates the Islamic doctrine. This intercultural encounter reflects an interfaith understanding between my supervisor and I: when inviting me my supervisor did not impose on me and I accepted

the invitation. This intercultural encounter reflects what Mutter (n.d.) said about the importance of entering into 'respectful dialogues with individuals from other culture and faith communities'.

Another example of intercultural encounters came through my living situation. Australia and New Zealand have 'specific systems of control for the safety of people' (Tong & Cheung, 2011, p. 59), such as fire alarms in homes, special protective clothing for building and construction workers and the requirement for international students to obtain health insurance (which in Indonesia is rarely required). They also have clear regulations around renting property, which I did not experience when renting a room in the Indonesian context. When I was in Australia, my Asia Pacific friend and I negotiated the amount of bond deduction by the agent at the end of our accommodation contract, as we felt that the agent had claimed too much deduction on the bond. After heated negotiations, the bond deduction claimed by the agent was reduced. When I was in New Zealand in 2014, when I was making toast I was surprised by the sound of the fire alarm. Instead of complying with the fire alarm (which might be a safety indicator in New Zealand), I took the battery off, so that it would never disturb me again. Instead of complying with the rule, I disobeyed it. I changed my subject position from obedient tenant to disobedient one.

The Internet and social media also play an important role in the way IC is constructed and reconstructed. People from different parts of the world join the same professional Facebook groups, for example: *Teacher Voices Professional Development* (TVPD). In this group, English teachers, researchers and practitioners from different countries share their articles, discuss different ELT issues from their own countries, share teaching strategies and discuss current issues (Wahyudi, 2015). This group, in short, provides opportunities for the members to learn each other's cultures in the context of ELT issues and thus enhance each other's academic IC. This confirms Liu's (2012) hypothesis that cyberspace is a medium for IC, as people (from different geographical location) in TVPD share their different academic and cultural experiences with each other. One of the valuable insights that I got from joining the group is that I learned how academic debate and discussion is performed. I have rarely seen hot academic debate of this sort among Indonesian scholars.

I also learned about other cultures through the process of publication. As I experienced rejections and acceptances of journal articles and a book chapter, I got hands-on experience of publishing. Sending articles to journals

based in different countries, I noticed that some journals have very clear procedures, while others have more flexible rules. Some of the journal editors are tolerant of non-native speakers' writing styles while others require that writing is edited by native speakers. Some journal editors are strict, while others are encouraging and helpful. The process of journal-article and book-chapter publication teaches me that we need to be aware of the foreign culture of academic publishing rules and systems, including when to accommodate or reject the reviewers' feedback (Kubota, 2003), and be aware of the non-discursive rules and the politics of knowledge production behind publication (Canagarajah, 1996).

My experiences above underline some of the issues Liu (2012) brought up about the future of IC research. The issues concerned are: identities as IC, cyberspace as an arena for IC, and global and local nexus. My English language learning history indicates that my identity as a foreign-language learner has shifted from 'colonial celebration' to 'postcolonial performativity' (Pennycook, 2000) and from 'faithful imitator' to 'playful creator' (Gao, 2014), from merely imitating native speakers to critical negotiation of identities. This is typical of identities as understood from the postmodern perspective, which sees identities as unfixed, contradictory, fragmented and shifting (Hall, 2000).

Pierce (1995) explores identities in postmodern contexts and underlines that social identities are multiple, sites of struggle and change overtime. Pierce used the example of Martina, who is an immigrant, a mother, a language learner, a worker and a wife. Martina, as the caregiver, could not rely on her family members all the time in her daily social practice. With a restricted command of English, she had to deal with 'strange looks' from others. Instead of complying to 'legitimate' speakers of Canadian English, Martina framed her relationship with her co-workers as a mother, so that her young co-workers had no authority over her. Pierce (1995) also discusses Eva, an immigrant working in an Italian restaurant. At first she was happy, later she was concerned about improving her English so she moved to an English restaurant. There she just did her job and nobody initiated conversations with her. Finally, she committed herself to break the habit of being an immigrant with the status of 'illegitimate speaker of English'. She started to greet others in English in her workplace. She challenged the position of being an illegitimate speaker of English by trying to converse with others, despite criticisms of her accent. All the experiences faced by Martina and Eva indicate that social identities are multiple, sites of struggles and keep changing.

The Internet is another source of intercultural learning. It has provided me with a rich exposure to broaden my academic and cultural experience. From this cyberspace medium, I can learn how academics from Anglo-Saxon countries respond to emails (straight and to the point) and from the academic dialogues in the TVPD Facebook group. Further, I can expand my knowledge of the current call for global and local dialogue on how the global discourse of UK and US English should be used in the classroom context (Canagarajah, 1999, 2006a, 2006b; Lin et al., 2002; Wahyudi, 2014). Exploring interculturality online, Dervin (2014) found that students in his study not only 'defend' and negotiate their national and ethnic identities, but also construct each other's perceptions through chat-room sessions.

Intercultural Encounters and Interdisciplinarity

The intercultural exposure elaborated above is interdisciplinary in nature. This close relationship between intercultural encounters and interdisciplinarity is the real picture of human daily interaction in society, whether in person or through computer-mediated communication. Interdisciplinarity in IC is required as people need to collaborate with each other to fulfil their needs. Thus IC is needed in business contexts, health communication, political bargaining, interfaith dialogues, academic exchange and so on. These conversations do not only take place between institutions, but also among individuals. My intercultural learning history and identities have been going through dynamic changes over time as the result of discourses I was exposed to in the school/university setting, experiences in a religious community group (Islamic Misticism/Sufi), inspiration from postcolonial/poststructural ELT scholars, discussions on Facebook, taking an online course and direct exposure to English speaking countries: Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, my intercultural encounters have been through interdisciplinary fields (Klein, 2005) ranging from scholarship, religion, health, politics of ELT and sociology. These intercultural encounters shape my intercultural understanding and also my IC.

Discussion

Exploring our life experience is important in understanding IC including self-reflection, reflecting on how we see others, challenge, discomfort and difference. The discussion focuses on points Holmes and O'Neill (2010) and Pierce (1995) suggested could be explored in relation to IC.

Reflecting on Self and Other

Individual and direct interactions with Australians encouraged me to re-examine my former assumptions and knowledge that, as commonly stereotyped, Australians are individualistic. For example, if we asked for directions Australians might be more helpful than we imagined, as they will not give direction if they do not know the place we are trying to reach. In an Indonesian context, sometimes someone will provide an answer even when they are not really sure. I also examined my assumptions about religion. Many say that Australia is a liberal country that does not practice religion strictly. This might be true in terms of religious rituals, but in terms of government practice, Australia might be much better than a country which claims to be governed by religious symbols, in that in Australia bribery and corruption are rare. In comparison, massive cases of corruption and bribery are found in so-called 'religious countries'.

Reflecting on Challenge and Discomfort

I experienced challenge and discomfort when I was studying towards my Master's at a university in Sydney. Once I made an appointment for one-to-one tutoring. In the appointment, I was 5–10 minutes late; the tutor got angry with me and told me that if I could not fulfil the appointment, then I should not make the appointment. I felt very ashamed. Also, in the first semester, I found it very hard to adjust to the academic system in the university. Even though I worked hard when I was doing the assignments, I still could not get the grade point average I expected. As well as these challenges, I felt discomfort when I first saw people kissing and hugging each other in public, as it is uncommon in Indonesia. But finally I regarded these interactions as mundane phenomena that are a part of their culture. It also felt unpleasant when a group of male teenagers, who appeared drunk, shouted loudly at me while driving very fast in Wellington. Having said that, I am fully aware that I should not stereotype New Zealanders.

Reflecting on Difference (Culture and Religion)

Cultural differences may or may not be problematic for me in relation to others. When I was living with an Asia Pacific friend who was Christian and a Sri Lankan who was Hindu, religious and cultural differences cre-

ated no problems. They respected the fact that I prayed more often than them. With Australian and New Zealand friends, cultural and religious different posed no problems, as we never discussed religion.

Intercultural Learning Trajectory as Multiple, Sites of Struggle and Dynamic

In addition to the above reflections, understanding intercultural learning in postmodern times requires us to see it as multiple, sites of struggle and dynamic (Kramsch, 2014a; Pierce, 1995). The following is my intercultural learning trajectory from that perspective. As highlighted by Pierce (1995), when learning a second/foreign language, one's social identity is framed within multiple positions, stuffed with struggle and flexible to change from time to time. In my context, I always performed multiple identities. For example, when I joined a six-month course—English for Academic Purpose (EAP)—at an English Academic Training Institute (EATI, pseudonym) in Indonesia in 2008, I was a student of the EAP course, the teacher of my own students and an awardee of an Australian Development Scholarship (ADS), in each case I was a Javanese Muslim interacting with other non-Muslim students and teachers.

An example of struggle in my English language learning at EATI was when I replied to my teacher's criticism of my English writing. I said to the Australian teacher that if I were teaching Australians who were learning Indonesian, I would be able to provide comments as she did to me. My intention was to communicate to the Australian teacher that she could be more considerate and encouraging when giving feedback to non-native speakers like me. My dissertation project is another struggle, which is voicing our identities as non-native speakers and explores ELT Methods and World Englishes in an Indonesian classroom context, using a poststructural approach. My dissertation studies how teachers in the EFL setting consider not just accepting ELT Methods but also negotiating or resisting them. In a similar vein, teachers may consider not only the 'standard' of UK and US English, but also the possibility of using a variety of Englishes in the classroom. In both cases, I changed my position as a subject. In the first case I wanted the Australian teacher to see things from an equal perspective to foreign language learners so that she would be more thoughtful in how she treats me as a student. In the case of ELT methods and World Englishes, I wish to explore the possibility of teachers' multiple positioning (acceptance, negotiation or resistance) (Canagarajah, 2009; Le Ha, 2009; Pennycook, 2000; Sung, 2014).

My students and I are participating in an ongoing struggle to get our voices heard (researching Indonesian topics, for example, Djayanti & Wahyudi, 2015; Qadafi & Wahyudi, 2014) in the global community, by publishing the research in Asian and international journals. In my articles, I want to re-define the concept of learning about the UK and USA as a way of negotiating 'global and local communication'. During the publication process, we have received a significant number of rejections and critical feedback, one of which was that our paper should be edited by *a native speaker*. This was one example of the way the idea of the superiority of native speakers over non-native plays out.

The fact that there are elements of politics in ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Pennycook, 1989), imperialism in ELT (Canagarajah, 2009; Phillipson, 1992, 2008) and racism in ELT teachers' recruitment of non-native speakers (Mahboob & Golden, 2013), inspired me to negotiate with those discourses and advocate my agency and identities by publishing articles using our peripheral voices. In this way, we are hoping to gain legitimacy over English, to gain equality in the ELT industry, to advocate for linguistic rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008), to engage in critical knowledge dialogue and production (Canagarajah, 1996) and to avoid being the passive object of the 'master' discourse!

Conclusion

The important lesson that I have learned from other cultures is that I will always be in-between (Bhaba, 1996). I will never be able to be a native speaker, as I imagined in my junior and senior years of high school when I was initially learning English. As the times change, I have actively constructed and negotiated identities: my intercultural third space (Kramsch, 1993).

My auto-ethnographical reflection has shown that my understanding of English culture and other cultures follows a very dynamic route. I constructed and reconstructed my view of culture as the result of a variety of things, such as my informal interaction with people from other cultures (including tension, negotiation and co-construction), affiliation with religious groups, participation in debate competitions, academic reading, use of online resources, correspondence with foreign professors, participation in international conferences, the internet and social media, and efforts at publication. Also the way I learn English has moved from acceptance to critical negotiation, especially since I engaged with poststructural, postcolonial and postmodern cultural-studies literature (see Gao, 2014; Gorski, 2008; Le Ha, 2009; Pennycook, 2000; Sung, 2014).

The former paradigms of IC such as Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006) and Bennett et al. (2003) and their critiques Dervin (2010), Hoff (2014) along with my alternative framework require us to see IC as a process (Krajewski, 2011), which advocates multi-dynamicity, intersubjectivity, criticality and interdisciplinarity (religious, academic, technology, socio-cultural, etc.). This new framework of IC is 'more adapted to our times, more meaningful and thus more beneficial to education' (Dervin, n.d.). Toward post-intercultural education in Finland?

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CHAPTER 9

Living Intercultural Lives: Identity Performance and Zones of Interculturality

Leah Davcheva and Richard Fay

Introduction

In this chapter, we reflect on our process of working inductively towards and articulating an understanding of interculturality through an appreciation of individuals' experience of it. That work is being informed by and also captures the linguistically framed experiences of the participants in an ongoing research project (Fay & Davcheva, 2014). Our initial focus—as we narratively interviewed 14 Sephardic Jews living in Bulgaria about their experiences of Ladino, the heritage language of their community, a language brought from Spain by their forebears who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century—was on their understandings of this heritage language. However, quite early on in the process we moved from an exercise in oral history celebrating an endangered language (as in, for example, Annavi, 2010; Harris, 1994; Kaufman, 2010; UNESCO, 2002) to that of working towards an adequate statement of what these individuals did and do with their diverse Ladino skills and understandings.

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Our study worked inductively towards a conceptualization of their Ladino-framed identity performance. What we ended up with was, in all but name, a freshly coined theorization of their experience of interculturality, that is, how they lived their lives interculturally. Beyond our initial intentions, we arrived at an understanding of their narrated lives that was not framed in terms of existing models of intercultural competence (IC) (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; CoE, 2009; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Spitzberg, 2000; Chap. 6, this volume) but rather in terms of their experience of interculturality. Our theorization arises out of the narratively performed identity work of these, often elderly, Sephardim (ages ranging from 43 to 93) whose lived experience with Ladino among other linguistic-cultural resources (e.g., MacPherson, 2003) is located more in the last century than in this, lived experience that predates the intense globalization and technologization of our increasingly transnational times. Our theorization has its roots in the past more than in the present although we believe it has relevance for the present and the future and is not simply a device with historical application.

Our narrators, chosen for their knowledge of Ladino from the relatively few Sephardim still residing in Bulgaria, are otherwise unexceptional. They are ordinary people. In everyday terms, they are not particularly special vis-à-vis intercultural communication. Like so many other people, they have lived their lives in a complex and diverse society, engaging in numerous types of relationships and participating in ever-changing sociocultural and geopolitical landscapes. And yet, they attracted our researcher curiosity and attention through the ways in which—drawing upon their linguistic-cultural resources—they lived out their lives in eras when intercultural training was largely unheard of (for recent developments in training and education see the three chapters in Part III of this volume), or within the reach of only the few. In this chapter, we pause to reflect on what we feel we have learned from these ordinary people and their experiences over the last century near enough regarding identities and their performance of interculturality.

Our discussion is organized as follows: first, we outline the context and the dimensions of our study, which bear relevance to the main conceptualizing thread and then proceed to present our theorization of the participants' performance of interculturality. In doing so we provide examples of their narrated experience to both illustrate our discussion and support the arguments we make.

The Study

Before we present our ongoing theoretical work, we want to give a brief outline of the research context, followed by foregrounding the narrative, interculturally collaborative, and multilingual dimensions of our research approach, and finally, sketch out the main research outcome—a five-zoned framework—from which our theorization of interculturality has arisen.

Ladino and the Sephardim

Ladino is a Romance language with roots in Old Spanish. The language travelled with the Sephardic Jews, the Sephardim, as thousands of them headed east, across the Mediterranean, and found new homes around the sea including North Africa and the Balkans (Gibert, 1995, pp. 50–51). Ladino contains elements from Hebrew and Aramaic, reflecting its function as a Jewish language, and from languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French and Bulgarian, reflecting the co-territorial status of Ladino and other languages in the Ottoman Empire where many Sephardim settled (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2000; Michael, 2010). It played an important cultural and communicational part for Sephardic Jewish communities including those in Bulgaria (Kantchev, 1974; Moscona, 1968). At some points in its history since 1500, it has been used mainly internally within families, but, at others, for example, mid-nineteenth century, its stature grew to include external functions such as media presence and literary creativity (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2000, pp. 110–114).

During the Holocaust, these Ladino-speaking communities were largely destroyed. Now the language is very much endangered with perhaps as few as 150,000 speakers scattered worldwide (UNESCO, 2002). At this point, the youngest native-speakers are probably over 50 years old, and, once they have gone, Ladino is likely to disappear as a native language. Harris (1994, pp. 197–229) lists 24 reasons for the present endangered status of the language including the often negative attitudes towards the language and what it represented, the geographical dispersion of speakers, their assimilation into other communities, and their decrease in number after the Holocaust.

Bulgaria provides an interesting case because the Sephardim here largely survived the Holocaust. When World War II ended, there were some 50,000 Jews remaining in Bulgaria, many of them still familiar with

some Ladino. In 1948, however, most of them left for the newly founded state of Israel and those who remained were circumspect in advertising to the political authorities their Jewish affiliations, for example through Ladino usage (Benbassa & Rodrigue, 2000, pp. 104–105; Cohen, 1998; Moscona, 2004; Vasileva, 2000, pp. 117–171).

There are different names for the language commonly called Ladino. While our storytellers tend to call it Judesmo, this language is also variously known as Judæo-Spanish, Judæo-Spanyol, Djudeo-Kasteyano, Spaniolit, among others. Our use of Ladino here reflects our initial practice when we began discussing the topic. It was informed by works including Annavi (2007), Alfassa (1999) and the lengthy history of English-medium usage to refer to the language of Sephardic Jews in Bulgaria (e.g., Gelber, 1946, p. 105).

The Narrative Dimension

Drawing on our previous collaborative projects (e.g., Davcheva, Byram, & Fay, 2011) and mindful of the richness of the participants' lives and what might be their preferred way of personal expression, we decided to approach their experience of Ladino through narrative. We generated our data in face-to-face Bulgarian-medium story-generating interviews. The stories were then transcribed, re-storied, and translated into English. Re-storying is the process in narrative research of transforming the transcripts of oral performances into reader-friendly prose narratives, allowing at the same time the participants to speak for themselves, (e.g., Fay, 2004, pp. 87, 101; Roberts, 2002). Ultimately, we built a body of Bulgarian and English prose re-storyings of stories originally told in Bulgarian.

The Interculturally Collaborative Dimension

Working from largely differing institutional, professional, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we were critically alert to our alternate positionings as both insiders and/or outsiders to the worlds of Ladino, the (inter-)cultural realities of the Bulgarian-Sephardim, English- and Bulgarian-medium scholarship and research. And while we regarded our different positionings very much as a given, we noticed and made use of the opportunities our multiple perspectives afforded us to develop new understandings of the ways the storytellers perform their own interculturality.

The Researching Multilingually Dimension

Three languages—(comments about) Ladino, (interviews and re-storyings in) Bulgarian, and (translated re-storyings in) English—mixed, intermingled and interacted to give rise to our corpus of Bulgarian- and English-medium re-storied narratives, inter-researcher communication, and a growing bank of analytical texts and research presentations. At first spontaneously, as we noticed things in the 'natural' flow of the study, then as we progressed, more in awareness and by design, we welcomed the freedom that the multiple language phenomena offered us to engage with the data and see through the shades of meaning.

Main Research Outcome: Five Zones of Interculturality

Through a sequence of thematic analysis steps, we developed a five-zoned framework which we used to make sense of the Ladino-framed interculturality of our storytellers. As set against the Bulgarian context (in all of its historical, national, social, political, cultural and linguistic complexity as this has developed over their lifetimes), the storytellers can be understood to be performing their identities in terms of five, to some extent, overlapping, zones, namely:

1. the (intra-)personal, that is a zone of internal dialogue;
2. the domestic, that is a zone for the family;
3. the local, that is a zone for the Sephardic community in Bulgaria;
4. the diasporic, that is a zone for the wider Sephardic Jewish community; and
5. the international, that is the international community of Spanish-speakers.

The (Intra-)Personal Zone

Here, the storytellers reflect on what their knowledge and use of Ladino means to them. Despite political and ideological restraints and despite the state and societal 'encouragements' to integrate into a homogenous understanding of Bulgarian society including an undisputable supremacy of the Bulgarian language, they recognize Ladino as a special marker of identity for them. Aron remembers the way he felt exceptional 'when I

realised that I knew a language which was not typically spoken in Bulgaria'. Similarly, for Andrey…

> My sense of being an heir to this language is special. It enthuses and empowers me with a kind of primary and fundamental force. […] We seek our sense of uniqueness and find it in this language. It is a symbol, a token of our otherness.

Prominent in this zone is the curiosity and the desire of the storytellers to consider how Ladino makes them different and to seek for the answers in an ongoing internal dialogue. They savour the difference and stand their Ladino-marked identity ground, albeit aware of the risks it sometimes entails in the social reality they inhabit. Although they accept both their Bulgarian-ness marked by the Bulgarian language and their special Sephardic identity marked by Ladino, the texture of their performance is evocative of heritage, of qualities that are distant and remote in time and place but endow them nevertheless with a special voice.

No matter what direction their mindset takes—of pain or happiness—significant for us is their position of acknowledging their multilingual capacities and aligning, one way or another, their multiple linguistic identities. Importantly, they do so in full awareness of revolting against the dominant image of the 'typical' Bulgarian national.

The Domestic Zone

It is at home that all of our research participants began shaping a sense of themselves as Ladino speakers. Their stories tell us how they were exposed to the language, how they acquired (whatever competence they have in) Ladino, and how they experienced it in the home setting. Contrary to expectations of an all-inclusive monolingual world, the picture they draw of their home life is more like that of an arena where they perform multiple identities depending on who their interlocutors are, the interactions they engage in, what they want to do or achieve, and ultimately, the influence of ever-changing circumstances outside the family.

For the more elderly ones (e.g., Ivet, aged 92), Ladino was a first language: 'Judesmo is my mother tongue. At home we spoke Judesmo. I spoke Judesmo with my aunts, grannies, everybody'. For the less-elderly ones, Ladino is less 'present' in their upbringing and did not become a fluent first language but they all attribute meanings of intimacy, safety and

privacy to its use. While the 'street', the world beyond their house door, was apparently a Bulgarian language domain, home life revolved around Ladino. From an early age, Sephardic children and adolescents developed the knowledge of which of the two linguistic identities to perform where. They learned to gate-keep and hold the domains separate.

> My Grandma always spoke to me in Ladino. When I was in my teens and my friends were around, she would still do it. She very well knew that my friends were all Bulgarian and could not understand a single Ladino word. Invariably, my reaction was to respond to her in Bulgarian, and thus demonstrate my disapproval—emphatically and strongly. This kind of response destroyed the intimacy between us. We would often argue. [Andrey]

For most of our participants, life at home involved a complex navigation between different languages and ambiguities. The choice of whether to use Ladino or Bulgarian at home was also influenced by the political climate of the time in question. To suit the purpose of becoming a good citizen of the newly established socialist society, Ivet and her husband choose to perform not only their citizen-of-Bulgaria roles, but their family and parenting roles in Bulgarian. We can see how, in this family context, people move between languages and identities, depending on what their resources are and how they are needed.

The Local Zone of the Sephardim in Bulgaria

This is where the identity performance of our storytellers tends to take on some quite sudden and, often, dramatic turns. The complexity with which they constitute themselves—nostalgic losers of their heritage language and yet rebels and ardent revival missionaries; intercultural connectors and yet, gatekeepers of their heritage language—is suggestive of an environment strongly influenced by significant political changes and social transitions, fertile ground for identities in a flux.

As the Sephardic community in Bulgaria dwindles, the storytellers experience a sense of loss and nostalgia for the times when Ladino was used for daily communication by their relatives, friends and Jewish (and also sometimes Bulgarian) neighbours, 'All their jokes, curses and playful bantering was done in Judesmo' [Eli].

However, even in those distant times, in the 1930s and 1940s, 'the version of Ladino they used was interspersed with Bulgarian words' (Sami).

This usage signalled affiliation to both the (Jewish) community and the Bulgarian society. Some of the younger members of the community went further and questioned the taken-for-granted richness of their inherited language and asserted their new, 'modern' (non-Ladino) identities in the community of Sephardic Jews:

> When she was young, my paternal Grandma Blanca regarded herself a modern young woman and tended to speak Bulgarian only. In those times, they apparently believed that speaking Ladino was something that only the lower classes did, or just old women anyway. [Andrey]

Competence in correctly spoken literary Bulgarian was highly valued and younger members of the community experimented, consciously and consistently, in order to 'pass' as Bulgarians, and do so even within their own community, 'We did not like sticking out like this and did our best to get rid of the accent—so that nobody could tell' [Aron]. They played around with their identities, deliberately stepping beyond the linguistic line which, for centuries, used to define them as Sephardic Jews.

In spite of the prevailing sense of having become losers of the most significant marker of their Sephardic identity, the 'inhabitants' of the local zone of the Sephardim have taken it upon themselves to rescue the language from its slide into oblivion and preserve its distinctiveness and beauty. They sing in Ladino heritage choirs, set up Ladino speaking clubs and some of them, missionary-like, teach the language to keen members of the community.

What is striking in this local-community zone is the transition its members have made from using the language naturally for the purpose of running their daily lives, through willingly, or less so, dropping it from their linguistic agenda, to becoming its proponents in the name of keeping it for posterity.

The Diaspora Zone of the Wider Sephardic Community

The wider Sephardic community transcends national borders, time and history. Not experiencing themselves as the 'other' in this zone, and not having to act out what they see is necessary to be recognized as good Bulgarian citizens, our storytellers narratively produce themselves as competent speakers of Ladino, interculturally confident individuals, and valued insiders of an inclusive community.

With Sephardim from countries such as Turkey, Greece, France and Israel they use Ladino as a lingua franca and their stories do not dwell on broken or unsuccessful communication but rather speak of easy moves between languages and cultures.

Ladino-based diasporic encounters with complete strangers, long-time friends, business partners, and fellow professionals point at a commonality experienced with confidence and self-esteem. Ladino provides entrée into an inclusive international community and differences turn out to be less salient. Even a small degree of fluency in Ladino grants the right of entry and a sense of belonging.

Here, the storytellers seem no longer to be the nostalgic losers of their linguistic and cultural heritage as they were in the previous zone. Instead, they become active members of the wider Sephardic community.

The International Community of Spanish Speakers

The visible horizon widens even further here as the storytellers move—physically, linguistically and culturally—beyond the boundaries of their Sephardic community. They connect, in a variety of ways, with members of transnational Spanish-speaking communities from countries such as Cuba, Spain, Argentina, Mexico and Chile and develop relationships underpinned by the discovery that modern Spanish and Ladino are mutually intelligible. Monitoring and self-aware of their linguistic performance, our participants position themselves along a Ladino-Spanish axis and in doing so they are able to extend their inherited ownership of Ladino and, in varying degrees, take ownership of modern Spanish. Some of the participants just stay with Ladino and do not attempt any of the distance between the older language and Spanish. They understand and make themselves understood. Others mix and mingle the languages creatively and carry their linguistic practices from Ladino to Spanish:

> I expressed myself by capturing the root of a word and then attached different things to it. The result was a mongrel-like language, a mixture of everything. But I managed to get around through this approximation of the Spanish language. [Gredi]

Still others take it upon themselves to learn modern Spanish. Friendships with Spanish-speaking people are more easily developed in Spanish than in Ladino and it is the desire to connect and dialogue freely that drives them

towards learning the new language. In some ways, they seem to have made a leap across time to transition from the Spanish of the end of the fifteenth century to its contemporary version.

Having briefly reviewed the performance of our storytellers in each of the five zones, we shall now stand back from the detail of it and reflect on how we have conceptualized their Ladino-framed accounts of their lives.

Zones of Interculturality

As noted above, the five-zoned framework, which we use to present how our storytellers lived their Ladino-framed lives, evolved as a by-product of our main focus on their narrativized understandings of Ladino. It was also a framework that developed largely inductively rather than being framed in existing models of IC. However, we did not start from an entirely blank sheet and like other intercultural scholars we were familiar with many of the existing models such as those summarized in the opening chapter of Deardorff's edited book on IC (2009).

In an earlier narrative study (Davcheva et al., 2011), we explored UK supervisors' experiences of working with international doctoral students, and our discussion of this area of educational experience was presented partly in terms of zones of interculturality in which we considered—through a thematic analysis of the supervisors' stories—how interculturality was operationalized. We spoke of 'Place and space', and 'Borders, boundaries and thresholds' as the constituent ways in which we understood the narratives of their supervisory experiences. Further, in that study, we located interculturality in zones of dynamic interaction and negotiation between supervisors and their PhD students (Davcheva et al., 2011, p. 162). In these zones, interculturality was operationalized in ways we thematically identified as stepping over borders, dividing lines and thresholds.

That earlier analytical work, although also largely inductive, nonetheless flowed from our shared comfort in theoretical frameworks including Holliday's (1999) *small culture* approach, Singer's (1998) understanding of the individual as culturally complex and culturally unique, Bhabha's (1990) *third space* and Kramsch's (1998) *intercultural space*.

To the later research project, we brought with us a combination of (i) a shared set of favoured ways of working and understanding the intercultural—ways that challenge the all too often essentializing and reductivist but nonetheless dominant and often-used models for understanding cultural difference and IC (e.g., Hofstede, 1991; Thomas &

Inkson, 2003; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997; UNESCO, 2013), and (ii) an initial attempt to work with zones of interculturality. Through this latter study, we also added a sense of identity-work through narration (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashach, & Zilber, 1998) understood through the notion of performativity (Butler, 1991). The outcome was the five-zoned framework we re-present next.

Here, we will now reflect on that outcome in order to move from a framework which, we believe, accounts for much of what we find telling in the storytellers' accounts of their Ladino-framed lives, to a more generally applicable conceptualization that might have explanatory power for other studies of other lives.

Figure 9.1 presents a first attempt to develop such a conceptualization. It captures a number of key elements from the framework we developed for our Sephardic storytellers but it also modifies and extends them. Just

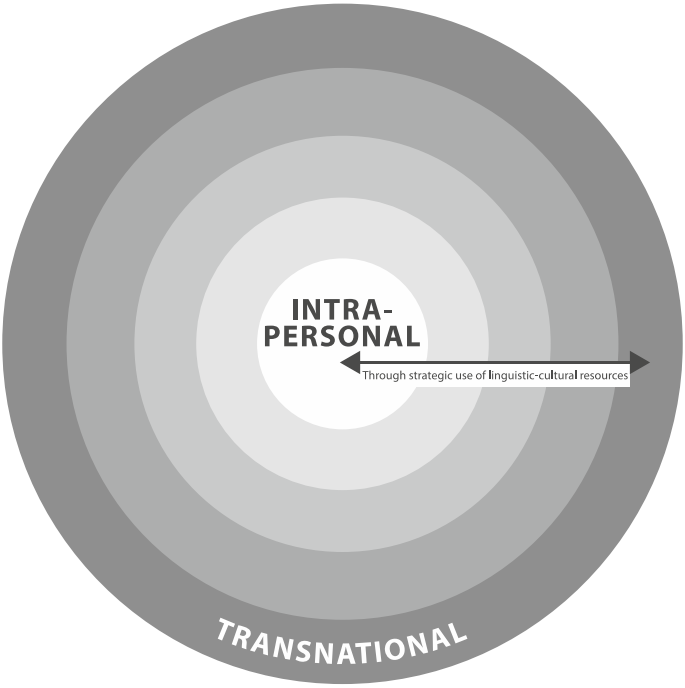

Fig. 9.1 Zones of interculturality

as the five zones move from the very personal to the broadest zones of human interaction, so too the visual is focused on zones from the intrapersonal to the transnational. However, to highlight how the delineation of the zones will vary for each person and context, we have expanded the number of zones from five to seven, and in practice, in any study the number of zones might increase or decrease, but can probably be mapped against this spectrum from the most personal to the most global. The lack of hard lines between these zones also serves to indicate the great fluidity we suspect will be evident if the conceptualization is applied to other researched lives.

Our ongoing study is linguistically- and culturally oriented and for that reason we have attended to what linguistic-cultural resources the storytellers have and how they strategically bring them to bear in the different zones in which they lead their lives (for a similarly oriented discussion of the linguistic experience of interacting across cultural boundaries see Chap. 1, this volume). The arrow covering the full range of zones is labelled to reflect our focus. It may be that other researchers would, as they consider the experience of interculturality presented by others, choose to label the arrow differently.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter we have set out an approach to recognizing the richness and personal diversity of the Ladino-framed lived experience of the Sephardim in Bulgaria. Instead of looking at their narrated lives through the lens of IC we develop a conceptualization of performed identities in zones of interculturality. Two discernible intentions run through our current work. First, we move entirely away from prevailing learning models of IC (e.g., Belz, 2007; Byram, 1997; Jackson, 2010; Shaules, 2007). Second, we advance further our first formulation of zones of interculturality, a key point in our previous study of international PhD supervision (Davcheva et al., 2011). Presenting a list of zones and making visible what happened in them, our purpose then did not extend to the development of a generalizable conceptualization. The ongoing study, however, is taking us in this direction and in Fig. 9.1 our work-in-progress towards this end is newly articulated. In it, the notion of zones of interculturality is becoming a foundational defining characteristic, one which has, we believe, both explanatory power for the particular experience of interculturality we read into the stories of our storytellers as well as for other studies. We could, for

example, use this model of expanding zones to present a perhaps clearer conception of supervisor understandings of international supervisions than we had presented previously. If we were to do so, we might change the focus from the strategic use of linguistic-cultural resources to the dynamics of interaction and negotiation across a number of zones. In a similar way, we hope that other researchers might conceptualize interculturality as the zones in which individuals perform their ordinary lives against the complex geopolitical and linguistic-cultural backdrop of their times.

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PART III

Renewed Intercultural Competence in Practice

CHAPTER 10

An Interactive, Co-constructed Approach to the Development of Intercultural Understanding in Pre-service Language Teachers

Robyn Moloney, Lesley Harbon and Ruth Fielding

Introduction

As three former language teachers, now language teacher educators, we have been active in the exploration of intercultural language pedagogy and scholarship for over ten years. Over time, however, we have been challenged to reflect critically on our work with teachers, and what we have seen in classrooms. We have reflected that regardless of engagement and critical reflection upon interculturality within teacher training, publications and curriculum materials produced, 'interculturality does not seem

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to have been entirely integrated into language teaching and learning' (Dervin, 2011, p. 1). This critical reflection has shaped our questioning of whether intercultural underpinnings have truly been embraced in language classrooms, and in consequence, our agreement with the proposition of this volume. That is, a new approach is demanded that re-examines the nature of the learning involved in classrooms where an intercultural stance is an intended outcome. In our responsibility for facilitating the development of relevant skills in pre-service teachers, we have observed the mixed nature of responses to exploration of intercultural material in the pre-service-teacher classroom and the many varied interpretations of the 'intercultural', from static culture learning at one end of the continuum to open reflective questioning at the other. This has pushed us to reconsider new ways to facilitate understanding of an intercultural approach with pre-service language teachers.

In earlier research (Harbon & Moloney, 2013), authors 1 and 2 employed an applied linguistics approach, using examination of the Initiation–Response–Evaluation (I–R–E) discourse model, to analyse school language classroom transcripts. We were interested in how intercultural learning can occur through open and well-designed teacher questioning in language classrooms. In working with our pre-service language teachers, among a range of other activities designed to explore intercultural learning, we designed a task drawing on this earlier research, to highlight the teacher role in this process. This chapter reports the unexpected additional learning that emerged from this task which we believe shows some possibilities for co-constructed and interactive approaches to intercultural understanding. Through observation of pre-service teacher collaborative dialogue on the task, we became aware that the task offered the pre-service teachers a productive opportunity to critically examine cultural assumptions, both within a transcript of the classroom discussions, and for themselves. Such critical examination has been identified as an essential learning activity in teacher education (Dervin & Hahl, 2015). It offers the possibility for pre-service teachers to co-construct understandings of the intercultural, perhaps aligned with Davcheva and Fay's (Chap. 9, this volume) 'zones of interculturality'. The study presented in this chapter thus underlines what we believe now is the necessity of a collaborative co-constructed critical approach to the development of intercultural understandings in language teacher education, one that is based on the groundedness of social constructivism in pre-service teacher education (Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

Literature Review: Problematic Understandings

A number of elements have contributed to the problematic understandings, and, in our view, the often mixed outcomes, of 'intercultural' language learning. As teachers attempt to implement an intercultural approach, a number of troubling elements can be seen in some classrooms. These have been identified as (i) the treatment of cultural differences as objective data, leading to stereotypes, (ii) the essentializing of experience, in the research field, and (iii) (even within well-intentioned 'intercultural' research) confused adherence to national and ethnic categorizations (Dervin, 2010). Such issues shape how the 'intercultural' and its related concepts are theorized and put into practice. We recognize many research studies and classroom activities, including our own, that have, albeit unintentionally, reflected these three elements.

We identify that our concerns about the limitations of some forms of enactment of intercultural language teaching can be classified into two connected areas. These resonate with Dervin's criticisms as the concerns can be described first as a representation of intercultural competence (IC) being a fixed ('solid') asset of cultural capital, creating an essentialization of IC itself, reflecting essentialized notions of culture. Second, the concerns can be seen as an over-simplification of intercultural pedagogy that occurs in language classrooms.

We acknowledge and critique the trajectory in our own development as intercultural researchers and teachers. To this end, we briefly sketch the literature of influence which we believe has contributed to some of the limited understandings being replicated in classrooms. We then deconstruct how we have worked with our pre-service language teachers to build both awareness of the role of classroom discourse and critical recognition of over-simplified and stereotypical notions of culture, constructing alternative ways of teaching interculturally.

An early influence on the current practice of intercultural education was the writing of Ned Seelye (1994). Seelye strove to provide classroom strategies for intercultural communication. As a scholar from the US 'multicultural education' discourse, Seelye offered teachers cultural activities and quizzes for classrooms. Seelye's intent was to 'teach' culture, through the eliciting of cultural curiosity and empathy, to create critical awareness of stereotyping and anti-racism initiatives. Seelye argued that if culture can be taught as concrete items, then those items can also be assessed, and thus he included tests to assess achievement (1994). Moran (2001)

included so-called instruments of intercultural testing, and models of 'culture learning' in the Appendix to his volume, as 'etic' cultural perceptions, used in fixed and static ways (Moran, 2001, pp. 157–169).

Other such models claiming to measure or assess intercultural understanding include for example the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) (Bennett & Hammer, 1998). While the DMIS may have been a first step in awareness of developmental change in response to cultural interactions, its use without a larger frame of reference has contributed to teachers acquiring linear, objectivist and 'culturalist' understandings, which promote fixed notions of what intercultural development might be. Such models suggest that the individual is solely responsible for his upwardly mobile successful acquisition of IC, as a result of his actions. Considering the individual as the sole star of the process has been described as the 'absence of the interlocutor' in definitions of intercultural competence (Ruben, 1989, p. 234), that is, as Dervin describes it, 'monological and individualistic'. Such definitions only mention the 'user' of the competence and ignore the influence of the interlocutor and the context in which interaction may be taking place. Many intercultural researchers and teachers would recognize Dervin's amusing portrait of the individual who is 'interculturally competent but … easily troubled by the lack of motivation of the other, her/his bad intentions, his/her language skills' (2010, p. 7). We would argue that 'intercultural' might be better understood if it incorporated understandings of how community and individuals reciprocally co-contribute to the development of cultural belonging. We argue that the notion of 'investment' as explored by Norton (2000, 2006, 2014) shows such a reciprocal relationship that notions of intercultural understanding also need to embrace. Norton's work (2000, 2006, 2014) showed that to become a member of a new culture requires the investment of not only the individual themselves, but also the community around them in fostering linguistic and cultural growth. We argue that similarly the construction of intercultural understanding cannot solely take into account the individual, but must also attend to the role played by the context and the surrounding participants in this process. It must, therefore, become a co-constructed and interactive process rather than an individual experience.

In our work in teacher professional development, we have observed that many teachers have been reluctant or unable to engage with what they perceive to be abstract and irrelevant intercultural enquiry in language classrooms. Teacher training about the theoretical nature of the

intercultural approach has not always been embraced by teachers, because the unfamiliar, abstract and often alienating language of the discourse is hard to reconcile with everyday practice. In addition, one well-known model is conceptualized in French and therefore may be unclear to teachers with no knowledge of the French language (Byram & Zarate, 1996). In the prevailing pedagogic discourse, 'invisible' assumptions as to learner and teacher roles have similarly made comprehension difficult for some language-teacher communities (e.g., Moloney, 2013; Orton, 2008). Teachers retain beliefs as to their responsibilities to deliver knowledge about the particular national 'culture' of their language. Indeed, from our knowledge of Australian teacher education, we can anecdotally report that teachers frequently believe that they are 'doing intercultural' if they are teaching static culture thus essentializing both culture as an entity and essentializing the activity of intercultural pedagogy. Scholars have recognized the limited abilities in teachers to understand and adopt new pedagogy of critical thinking within language learning (e.g., Kramsch, 2006; Sercu, 2006). In the effort to 'concretize' intercultural learning to make it more 'teachable', there has been a trend to simplify and reduce the intercultural notions for language classrooms. Most commonly, activities have been devised to facilitate thinking about comparison of cultures.

The newest wave of language-learning textbooks admirably features the inclusion of activities and questions to stimulate critical cultural awareness (for example, Burrows, Izuishi, Lowry, & Nishimura-Parke, 2010; Comley & Vallantin, 2011; Goonan, 2011). Frequently however when such cultural comparison is enacted, it is up to the teacher whether these comparisons are handled as thoughtful, collaborative open enquiry or as a concrete set of exercises of stereotypical comparative point-scoring without deeper enquiry. Where intercultural learning exists only at the level of simplistic comparisons, it may continue inadvertently to promote fixed, essentialized notions of cultures (Holliday, 2010; Young & Sercombe, 2010, p. 182). At a more concerning level it can lead to 'othering', a process by which comparisons lead to over-simplification and over-emphasis of difference, which may in fact increase the generalization and stereotyping of groups and disregard the complexities of cultures (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010).

The analysis in this study thus turns to an approach prioritizing and modelling co-constructed learning through social interaction, as we explore how it might be possible to address some of the reductionist patterns occurring in intercultural practice. The key role of social interaction

within learning is long established, with much educational writing of the past 40 years having been built on Vygotsky's (1987) work on the social construction of knowledge. Vygotsky established that movement from the 'social plane' of functioning to the 'internal plane' of functioning requires active engagement by students, peers and the teacher (1987). For such engagement to occur, it is essential to use talk and other mediation to regulate attention, explore conceptualzsation, integrate experience, stimulate recall, and explain. Structured social interaction enables students to transform their thinking (Wells, 2000).

Essentially the social constructivist notion is that learners learn 'through social interactions involving both peers and teachers' (O'Leary, 2014, p. 15), which develops into a partnership and 'promotes conversational interaction, collaboration and reflection' (O'Leary, 2014, p. 16). In discussing how such learning might occur, O'Leary also builds on the theory of Williams and Burden (1997, p. 46, cited in O'Leary, 2014, p. 18) that talks of a 'dynamic social constructivist model of the teaching and learning process where "the learner(s), the teacher, the task and the context interact with and affect each other"'.

In our study we became interested in noticing acts of co-construction of discourse and interaction in relation to intercultural approaches among individual pre-service language teachers participating in small group collaborative tasks. Dynamic understandings of culture and the 'intercultural', are created when individuals encounter one another in relationship. Our work is informed by Abdallah-Pretceille's (2004) identification that: 'La question n'est pas tant la culture de l'autre, mais tout simplement la question de la relation à l'autre' [The question is not the culture of the other, it is very simply the question of the relationship with the other]. To this end, in this work we look for evidence of Ogay's (2000, p. 53) term, 'dynamique interculturelle' [an intercultural dynamic] between our participants, rather than competence, in exploring the participants' mutual responsibility and engagement.

Turning to the context of our study, in the broader university setting graduate attributes today commonly include the capacity for critical, analytical and integrative thinking and for global cultural competence (Barrie, 2004, 2007). In pre-service teacher education programmes, the ability to reflect critically requires pre-service teachers to move beyond the acquisition of knowledge towards developing active questioning of perspectives, assumptions and values (Mayer, Luke, & Luke, 2008). In pre-service language teacher education, there is mindfulness that the teaching and learning

of additional languages has a broader societal significance. Language education and critical literacy have the potential to contribute to understanding of citizenship, human rights and anti-racism (Andreotti, 2011; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Starkey, 2005, 2007). In this way, facilitating the development of interculturally aware teachers also assists these pre-service teachers to meet many of the desired graduate attributes.

There have been a number of different approaches to the development of intercultural capabilities in teacher education, for example, through curriculum intervention (Jokikokko, 2005; Mushi, 2004); international exchange opportunities (Harbon & Atmazaki, 2002; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010); use of reflective narrative (Moloney & Oguro, 2015); and use of postintercultural strategies in teacher education (Dervin, 2014; Dervin & Hahl, 2015). We recognize the struggle for intercultural understanding encountered by teachers when they engage in overseas postings, which has been shown to be only solvable through collaboration with local peers (Ye & Edwards, 2014). We are mindful of research contexts that have remarked on the limited success of intercultural development in pre-service and in-service teachers, either working in isolation, or in a passive knowledge-delivery learning model (for example, Kinginger, 2008; Moloney, 2013). Therefore, intercultural pedagogy involving collaborative construction needs to be explored.

As noted, in our pre-service teacher workshops, among other learning activities, we have sought to raise awareness of intercultural possibilities arising from the 'linguistic turn' literature, especially the I–R–E turn (Harbon & Moloney, 2013; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, 1992). In this way we encourage consideration of how interaction in the classroom may have the potential to open up collaborative dialogue about intercultural notions. Tsui (1995) and Dashwood (2004) have examined language teaching and learning in classroom interaction. Tsui's work in 1995 concluded that 'studies conducted on classroom interaction have shown that student talk accounts for an average of less than 30 per cent of talk in "teacher-fronted" classrooms' (Tsui, 1995, p. 81). Dashwood's (2004, p. 20) Australian research found how the language teacher 'invariably reclaims the "turn", thus reducing student opportunities to talk on task'. Hall (2002, p. 80) has written of the I–R–E pattern that:

> The pattern involves the teacher asking a question to which the teacher already knows the answer. The purpose of such questioning is to elicit information from the students so that the teacher can ascertain whether they know the material.

In examining conceptions of interactive pedagogy, Smith and Higgins (2006, p. 499) present evidence that teachers can facilitate a more interactive learning environment 'by careful use of the feedback move in the I-R-F exchange … inviting peer reviews and agreements/disagreements … [as well as encouraging] backchannel moves' as an alternative to the familiar I–R–E or I–R–F [Initiation–Response–Follow up/Feedback] patterns. Nassaji and Wells (2000, p. 376) referred to the I–R–E discourse patterns as 'triadic dialogue', and although 'essential for the co-construction of cultural knowledge', note its limitations in that it is also 'antithetical to the educational goal of encouraging students' intellectual discursive initiative and creativity'.

Harbon and Moloney (2013) demonstrated that where teachers can devise patterns of communication involving inclusive open-ended enquiry, there is potential to inform construction of intercultural understanding between learners in classrooms. This has, thus, remained as one of our pedagogical tools, in our language teacher education workshops, to ask pre-service teachers to examine interaction patterns in school classroom transcripts. This chapter however involves a re-examination of the task, in noting a second layer of learning evident, of which we were not initially aware: that is, the pre-service teacher discourse as they made sense of the classroom transcripts. In our exploration of the discourse pre-service teachers engaged in while examining classroom interaction, we noticed the opportunities for co-constructed intercultural understanding. This is the focus examined in this chapter.

What then are our criteria for recognition of the intercultural dynamic occurring in the pre-service teachers in this study? We are in agreement with Dervin and Dirba's (2006) study of Finnish and Latvian pre-service teachers, which concluded that students are operating interculturally when they demonstrate willingness/ability to communicate with individuals, when they make an effort to decentre from their own culture, when they develop an awareness that 'national culture' can be an oversimplistic explanation of culture, and when they develop an awareness that all individuals are diverse, and shift identities according to interlocutor and context. Thus in this chapter we explore the unexpected ways that some pre-service teachers de-centre, critically analyse culture, and develop a dynamic together in a workshop class through 'talk'.

It is our responsibility both to refine our practice and to facilitate the development of interculturally aware teachers, knowing that the nature of

intercultural communication can be challenging, even uncomfortable and confusing (see Chap. 4, this volume). The goal of this study is to examine whether a learning task can afford the growth of an intercultural dynamic within language-teacher education.

Methodology: Pre-service Teachers Co-constructing

Our participants are pre-service languages teachers. As part of a methodology workshop conducted in two different university contexts, following a short introduction to the I–R–E discourse model and its role in classrooms, pre-service teachers worked in pairs, to read three classroom lesson transcripts from a secondary school in Sydney, and to identify the functioning of the I–R–E in the lesson transcripts. The transcripts are, respectively, one Japanese, one Italian, and one Spanish lesson. The teachers featured in these three lesson transcripts were all engaged in what they considered to be an explicit 'intercultural' approach. In the case of Japanese and Italian, the transcribed lesson focused on the topic 'festivals', and in the Spanish class, the focus was upon the analysis of behaviour at a dinner party in a Spanish home. Ethics permission had been granted to video-record and transcribe the teacher and student discourse in a number of school lessons in those languages. We subsequently obtained ethics permission to audio record the pre-service teacher interactions as they explored the transcripts.

While all enrolled pre-service teachers participated in the university workshops, informed consent for the audio-recording and research participation was given by 37 students in University A, and 35 in University B. Those who gave consent were audio-recorded during this task. Participants were all multilingual and most had background experience of travel, exchange or immigration. Some participants had engaged in lengthy practicum experiences while others had limited classroom experience at the time of the study.

At the time of the study the first author taught in the pre-service language teacher education programs at University A. The second and third authors taught in the pre-service language teacher education programs at University B. Approval of ethical considerations were sought and approved in both universities. We acknowledge the influence of the ideology and physical presence of the three researchers in the task (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

One sample of language classroom discourse text was first examined together by all class participants as a whole group, identifying and labelling the I–R–E features, and introducing the possible limitations of the labels and the need for other possible discourse labels, such as Follow-up, and Feedback. This was followed by the small group analysis activity. Transcripts of actual Italian, Japanese and Spanish language lessons from schools (published in previous research, see Harbon & Moloney, 2013) were provided to the groups of pre-service teachers for analysis. Sample classroom transcripts used are included as Appendices A and B.

Pre-service teachers participated in a Concurrent Verbal Reporting protocol (Jääskeläinen, 2010), whereby the researchers used the audio recording function on flip cameras to record the 'stream-of-consciousness thinking and reflecting' dialogue between the pair (or group) of pre-service teachers as they grappled with this task. Participants examined the transcripts, identifying and labelling the I–R–E turn in the transcript discourse, and questioning whether the teacher and students were successful in constructing any intercultural enquiry. The transcribed data from the Concurrent Verbal Reporting protocols were read, re-read, and analysed using a constant comparison method of content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Using a grounded thematic approach by successive researchers' readings, common themes were highlighted and data grouped according to the themes emerging from the data. Data were reduced through content analysis, enabling more concise themes to be derived.

Our pedagogical intent, and the design of the learning task, was to raise our pre-service teachers' awareness of linguistic patterns in classroom discourse, and how such discourse patterns might affect learning and opportunities for intercultural consideration. The task was thus preceded by instruction about I–R–E patterns of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, 1992) and the role of mixed patterns of discourse in encouraging greater inclusion of learner response. The task was also embedded within a sustained engagement with intercultural pedagogy, as mandated by our local syllabuses, and, therefore, students had already engaged with key ideas underpinning intercultural approaches to teaching languages. We were initially less concerned, and, in fact, less critically aware ourselves, about noticing differences in the school transcripts in how the teachers had designed their lessons and variously sought to enact intercultural learning in their classrooms.

As we listened to the audio-recordings of the pre-service language teachers' small group discussions, and later examined the transcripts of these recordings, it became clear that the pre-service teachers had moved beyond the demands of the task, in their critical comment. They offered collaborative identification of the patterns of questions and answers, as demanded by the task, but they also offered co-constructed critique of the lesson content, and the teacher behaviour, with considerations of how the interaction opened up or stifled opportunities for intercultural engagement. They brought to the discussion their own rich backgrounds and prior learning, and from this, constructed their interpretation of the school teacher and learner behaviour.

Findings: Pre-service Teacher Collaborative Discussions

Sample 1: University A, Group of Three Participants

In order to examine the flow of interaction in a group of three participants, two extended extracts from the transcript are offered below. The three participants, of different cultural backgrounds, are examining the transcript of the Italian lesson, (which had been conducted in Italian, which accounts perhaps for the simplicity of the question/answer format). In the Italian lesson, after some initial discussion about festivals in Italy, the teacher had asked groups of learners to prepare written answers in Italian to a number of questions about festivals in both Italy and Australia. For readers unfamiliar with the Australian context, Anzac Day commemorates the World War I landing by Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli, Turkey. Extract 1 is a transcript of pre-service teacher discussion.

S3: (reads from the translated teacher line within the transcript) '*what do young Italians and Australians like to do on festivals?*'

S1: if you had a class full of kids who weren't native Australians, they might not actually know … wouldn't know what the typical Australian things were. They would genuinely have to look things up, find out what Australians do.

S1: (reads translated teacher line) '*Anzac day is an emotional day*'.

S3: if you just said that, you'd have to explain what Anzac day is.

S1: you'd have to explain it to lots of kids … Imagine if you had international students, you'd have to explain everything.

S3: I'm sorry, but Anzac day is touchy, it's also so uniquely Australian. I don't know any other country that celebrates a war day like Australia does. It's very strange to me, coming from my background. It's a very strange concept, very strange concept.

S2: same for Italians.

S1: oh, that's a good perception.

S1: (reads translated teacher line) '*What is the most important festival in Australia?*' Again—it's too typical—we have a broad spectrum of nationalities here, if your background is not Australian … you will have other days that are important too.

S2: You can't really say we eat lamb, if you have Muslim kids in the class … It's culturally insensitive.

S1: It's very stereotypical. Exactly.

S3: The teacher should be saying 'Australia Day means different things to different people'. Because we are such a multicultural…

S2: It's also in fact the day Australia was discovered, not just that we eat lamb.

S1: But it's a good way to bring those things up, to find out, like, whose family celebrates what, their religions. Like I wouldn't even know the different countries, it'd be interesting to find out from the kids.

S2: But then you'd have to talk about Aboriginal history and what Australia Day might mean to them. It's definitely not as nice and happy for them as for others.

S1: It's more a way to show a broad range of what's different. It's a good way to include, you should show as many different things as possible. I mean, 'Australian', what is that?

S3: Yes, what *is* that?

Across this extract we can see various examples of the progressive co-construction of what may be identified as an intercultural dynamic. In addition to identifying Initiation–Response elsewhere in the transcripts, the three participants identify and criticize the culturally 'solid' nature of the teacher questions. They identify that the questions used by the

teacher may fail to incorporate the practices of many Australian families. However, the pre-service teachers also show some tendency toward stereotyping and limitations themselves, in S2's assertion that Australia Day is the day Australia was discovered, when it had in fact been occupied for 40,000 years by Indigenous Australians.

They are critiquing the strategy of over-simplification in the school task, using their prior knowledge from their in-school practicum and their knowledge of the high representation of students with a language background other than English, in Sydney classrooms. When it comes to Anzac Day, S3 strongly expresses her individual consternation as to the Australian celebration of a war commemoration, supported also by S2 from her own experience, and this appears to prompt a surprising new perception in S1 about what it actually means to be 'Australian'. A discussion of Australia Day (26 January, commemorating the arrival of the British Fleet for settlement with the first convicts) follows. This has been offered by the classroom learners as the answer to the translated teacher question 'What is the most important Australian festival and why?' The eating of lamb on this day has been commercialized by the meat industry as an 'Australian' thing to do. S1, S2 and S3 attack the inadequacy of the culturally generalized question for its production of simplistic answers. They are able to construct an alternative, what the teacher could have said, to have positioned it differently. S2 moves to counterbalance her previous statement as to the 'discovery' of Australia, by contributing to the perspective of Aboriginal Australians (some of whom refer to the day as 'Invasion Day'). Finally, they come to the conclusion together that the classroom task may still be a useful one if conducted in a much more fluid complexity, to engage the idea of 'what is Australian?'. They move towards a collaborative conclusion by throwing up the entire question of essentialized and generalized culture, ('I mean, 'Australian', what is that?') in the face of the multiplicity and individuality of school students', and their own, identities and experience.

In this extract, we see pre-service teachers building co-constructed diverse perceptions which lead them to critique and challenge assumptions evident in the lesson transcripts. Their relationship is represented in their willingness to contribute and respect individual perspectives and backgrounds, and their expressions of concern. Together they collaborate to criticize the reduction of national culture, and construct an understanding of complexity.

Sample 2: University A, Group of Two Participants

While in Sample 1, the extract has shown the co-construction taking place at the pre-service teacher level in this task, and their criticism of the Italian lesson strategies, the Sample 2 extract shows their awareness of the positive co-construction taking place between the teacher and students in the transcript of the Spanish lesson, which was an analysis of language and behaviour at a Spanish dinner party. The teacher is encouraging learners to notice that the guests do not say the word for 'thank you' at the end of the party.

S1: She's giving them some information. But she asks 'what else' 'what's missing'?
S1: She's getting them to give her what's missing, so she can give them feedback, so they are already then on the track.
S2: Response, feedback. There's lots of feedback.
S1: Feedback and initiation, she is following on with a question from that feedback. She's asking them to make a judgement, as to whether this is culturally appropriate.
S1: The kids make a guess then she affirms.
S2: Students respond again, feedback… It's not a yes/no answer, it's going deeper.
S1: They are questioning the teacher, seeing if they are on the right track, and she can say yes…
S1: So she is setting it up. Getting them to think about their connection with the situation… This is a really good lesson, the way she has gone into the text, getting them to think about it culturally, and use what they know. She's making them construct everything
S2: She uses open-ended questions.
S1: She's really only added one point, no, two points, to the actual cultural information. The kids guess, she is getting it all out of the kids.

This sample shows that the pre-service teachers recognize, through their collaborative analysis of the communication patterns in the transcript, that this teacher is facilitating a discussion in which the classroom learners themselves co-construct intercultural understanding of the behaviour in the Spanish dinner party. It suggests that here the classroom learners

are involved, not with information about 'the culture of the other', but with constructing their 'relationship with the other' (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004). This stands out for them as exceptional, in contrast to the other lesson transcripts. We thus see the co-construction process occurring at two levels in this sample.

Sample 3: University B, Group of Three Participants

The three pre-service teachers in this group similarly appear able to easily identify and label the I–R–E in action, and also critique the stereotypes they perceived in parts of the lesson, layering their observations as they spoke over the top of each other, to construct a conclusion. This group is discussing both the Japanese and the Italian lesson transcripts. They also judged that the teachers in the transcripts missed opportunities for further intercultural exploration.

S1: Well I think much of the topics have come up in these dialogues… They could be developed further. It's sort of like a selection of different topics as we see the conversations happening. For example, the specific reference to the Japanese festivals discussion. A lot of words come up like sausages, watermelons, which people link to a certain culture. And I think it's good to have that kind of intercultural understanding coming through the things that we use in our daily routines but it's good to have a focus

S2: Yeah

S1: And as pre-service language teacher, I would say …it's very good to brainstorm but I don't want to keep it at a superficial level.

S3: Yeah, well they seem pretty superficial to me.

S1: Compared to the Spanish ones.

S2: Yeah, because like things like, you know, the Italian ones, what is it? Italians like New Years because there is [sic.] fireworks? You know that's not really true, is it?

S1: There's a lot of unjustified stereotypes. And these stereotypes don't really help to…

S1: I think it's kind of creating an intercultural barrier as opposed to promoting the exchanges of knowledges [sic.] that are valuable to each of the cultures. To say that something is a

typical Australian thing or a typical Italian thing—I mean stereotypes are good, they give us awareness of who we are, like identity, but…

We observe a confidence in S1's statements about cultural stereotypes, confirmed in turn by her classmates. The criticism about reduction of 'national culture' is termed 'unjustified' by S1 and also an 'intercultural barrier'. This reflects what Holliday et al. (2010) call 'othering', which can lead to the over-simplification of understanding about cultures.

The group cohesion that is established among the three participants here shows evidence that the pre-service language teachers are now confident to actively apply the terms and notions learnt (such as labelling parts of the transcript as 'Initiation', or 'Response' or 'Follow-up'). However, beyond this they are engaged by the active learning, which differs from previous exposure to the intercultural notions through lecture/textual information. In other words, the pre-service language teachers are now 'experiencing' the classroom discourse seeing a language teacher trying to take an intercultural stance, not merely reading about it. We note the role of pre-service language teachers' individual prior knowledge in interpreting the transcript and its dialogue with their peers. Through this process they co-construct their understandings of what is intercultural and what is stereotyping.

In the analysis of the following short extract from the same three participants commenting on a section of the Spanish lesson that dealt with punctuality in Spain, we see further examples of the engagement with intercultural language learning on a deeper level. The school class transcript showed that the learners wanted to know exactly how late you could be in Spain. In the pre-service teachers' discussion, we see this participant's ability to recognize the learners' involvement in the question, and we observe her 'de-centring' as she engages in reflecting on her own interest in it, shedding light on her own intercultural understandings and cultural knowledge.

S2: Yep, you have to find something that sparks their interest. I think that was what was really good with the Spanish one, coz they were all, like, 'They get there late' and they were all interested in it, you know. I'm interested in it. I hate waiting two hours.

We can see that S2 extends the individual nature of the student's question about lateness protocols in Spain, by providing her own emotive response to the notion of lateness. The other members of the group interject throughout the extract, building upon the perceptions that they each provide and demonstrate collaboration, peer confirming and co-constructing of understanding. The methodology appears to allow the group a certain engagement and enjoyment of the multiple peer perspective-sharing, allowing them to display enjoyment of identifying cultural differences.

The following extract shows one of the pre-service teachers demonstrating that 'we' (assuming this represents 'her Australia') don't have any festivals. She is caught in what some have observed to be normative, or 'invisible' Australian culture (Lo Bianco & Crozet, 2003). She is interrogated by S1, however, on this comment, thus exhibiting their co-construction of understanding.

S1: Mmm. Yeah, like in the Italian lesson they could have talked about the fact that most of the public holidays are like religious…
S2: yeah.
S1: whereas in Australia most of the public holidays aren't. There are a lot of things they could have expanded on. But you could start off first with Italian festivals as opposed to talking about the Australian ones.
S2: Well we don't really have any, so I think that…
S1: Is that right?
S2: Well….
S1: is it?
S2: Well, I'm saying they have so many in Italy, like festivals and holidays, and it's so much more exciting than what we do on Australia Day.
S1: Yeah, like every weekend is like the Festival of Bean, or like the Festival of Pork. [All laugh]

The task appeared to give the participants the chance to hypothesize and second-guess what might have been intended and how the classroom learners responded. They were able to discuss freely any aspect of the transcript that took their attention, in their small group. The

seemingly 'off topic' reference to little towns in Italy that have what may appear to them to be absurd-sounding festivals—celebrating something which may never be celebrated in Australia—seems to be a catalyst for intercultural curiosity. There is evidence that these students, while able to notice some of the limitations in the transcript, still themselves exhibit some essentialized notions of the 'other' where they see the Italian festivals as innately fun because of their 'difference'. In doing so, they indicate what Gorski (2008) discusses as unintentional reinforcing of stereotypes. As Gorski says: 'despite overwhelmingly good intentions, most of what passes for intercultural education practice … accentuates rather than undermines existing social and political hierarchies' (Gorski, 2008, p. 516).

Nevertheless, we see in this dialogue some challenging of ideas. Within the group dynamic we can see one student taking on the role of the 'initiator' of questions, and the others, the 'responders'. What could also occur, therefore, is a modelling of the form of questioning that might be used in an intercultural exploration in her own classroom later on.

Then returning to the prescribed pedagogic task, the final conclusion of the three pre-service teachers appears to consist of a statement of what they have learned, again confirming their critical understanding of the intercultural shortcomings in the lessons examined through the task.

S3: Actually if you look at these ones, then it's all like just I–R. There's not even an Evaluation. Teacher asks a question, Initiation. Student gives an answer. Another student gives an answer. Another student gives an answer. Teacher makes a statement, that's it.

S1: So it's about analytical skills as well that they can transfer into other subject areas. That's what we should also be looking at. That's what's missing in all of these conversations.

We see here that the students themselves construct an understanding of what they perceive is missing in these transcribed attempts at intercultural pedagogy. The three pre-service language teachers have determined what they might need to add to their pedagogical repertoire to make their classrooms more intercultural—that is expanding the forms of questioning and facilitating students to build on prior knowledge and link to other subjects.

Sample 4: University B: A Group of Four Participants

This group provides further evidence that together the pre-service teachers undergo a process of co-construction in their analysis of the extract. This example shows the pre-service teachers analysing the I–R–E patterns in the transcript. The group indicate that they have the ability to decentre, and put themselves in the position of both the students and the teacher in the classroom as they empathize with what is occurring in the transcript. In this extract, participants are considering learner answers to what has been a closed question from the teacher, to which there was a 'right' answer. Participant S4 in this group considers her own communicative practice in her university classes:

S4: I think that student gave that comment as an answer (Response), but you know, when you're a student sometimes if you're not sure, your tone goes up, it's more like a question.
S2: yeah if you're not sure.
S4: so she [the teacher] probably didn't catch her tone so she thought it was a statement not a question.
S2: but these students are not sure of the answers.
S4: because as a student, I remember doing a similar thing. As a student you're not supposed to know, or you don't know if you have the right to, like, make a statement, because it's more of a question. You're not supposed to be perceived as having the most knowledge. So generally you try to answer a statement but naturally sometimes your tone goes up. And you try to get confirmation from the teacher.

In this extract we also see S4 offering a personal reflection from her own experience of classroom interaction. Together the pre-service teachers construct a critique of the power structure of the I–R–E classroom discourse in which a student either lacking in confidence, or in interpreting the classroom power dynamic, may feel she does not 'have the right to' participate and contribute. Their suggestion that a student may not feel entitled to be perceived 'as having the most knowledge' indicates the pre-service teachers' perception of the coercive power relations in the class, where the teacher is the expert with the answers. The construction in this excerpt may refer to young pre-service teacher perceptions that it is not cool to be seen as knowledgeable. The participants show their curiosity to notice and reflect as they jointly critique the work of the teacher:

S4: She's (the teacher) having her own conversation!
S2: She switches topics too quickly. Shouldn't she, like, ask what do you do?
S3: Yeah.
S2: Like give some comparison. But then she just switches to another topic.
S4: Yeah like every one of her comments is like that.
S2: She should switch to another topic after the comparison. She doesn't give them any new information at all.
S3: There's no linking. There's no linking between the two, it's just stating.

The pre-service teachers show in their discussion of this lesson extract that they have awareness of diversity and complexity in terms of what the students in the transcript might have had the potential to contribute to the class discussion. The pre-service teachers exhibit some belief that a more collaborative classroom dynamic is needed, which would enable students to contribute to, extend and build the interaction. They argue that the teacher is limiting the discussion by not enabling a full range of responses to each question to be put forward by different students. They believe the teacher moves too quickly from one topic to the next without fully exploiting the opportunities for intercultural exploration.

We also can see this group of pre-service teachers' awareness of the notions of self and other. They critique the discussion of 'Australian' culture as being monolithic when Australian culture is often interpreted as what they call 'Caucasian Australian':

S2: (reads translated teacher line) Young Australians like to watch the march on Anzac Day
S3: Is that true?
S4: *laughs*
S2: Not particularly
S3: That's what young Australians do?!
S4: Maybe if you're, like, five years old… they're really talking about Australian things like barbecues, Anzac day you know they're really stereotypical like Caucasian Australian things.
S2: I guess she's just asking questions and letting a few people answer.

The pre-service teachers, therefore, indicate the ability to construct their own understandings of what an intercultural stance might look like through the task of critiquing other teachers' attempts at interculturality, and recognizing their own perspectives. This, therefore, appears to be a useful prompting task to help pre-service teachers critique their own beliefs about what effective intercultural classroom pedagogy might look like in practice.

Discussion: Viewing the 'Intercultural' in Less Concrete Ways

A number of themes have emerged from our analysis of the pre-service language teachers' discussions about intercultural aspects of language classroom discourse. These themes, echoing Dervin and Dirba's (2006) identification of elements of intercultural ability, support our assertion that this is a useful task, which provides a context in which an intercultural dynamic may be experienced among pre-service teachers. It is also a task in which new teachers can see how a limited interpretation of 'intercultural' in the language classroom may in fact have a detrimental effect upon learners' critical and intercultural development. The pre-service teachers spotted and critiqued limitations in the intercultural teaching within the transcripts, and in this way could explore the 'essentializing' and 'stereotyping' that ensued. We believe tasks such as this afford the opportunity for the pre-service language teachers to engage with intercultural pedagogy in a new way. Whereas previously they had explored intercultural pedagogy in more traditional ways and through the academic literature, through this task the pre-service language teachers together observed, reflected, brought to it their own experience and co-constructed a personal understanding of an intercultural approach to language teaching. We thus argue that the task exemplified in this chapter indicates how a co-constructed pedagogy might be employed in teacher education.

Setting the expectation of collegial co-construction in the transcript task, we believe offers the pre-service teachers an active opportunity to analyse the communicative patterns in the classroom and reflect on the role of such communicative patterns in opening up, or closing down, critical enquiry among language learners in classrooms. All groups perceived the differences in communication patterns in the lessons and were able to identify the positive and negative effects that these patterns had

on classroom enquiry. By providing pre-service teachers these concrete examples of classroom transcripts and the many instances of the teacher-focused I–R–E discourse patterns, pre-service teachers appeared to feel equipped to deconstruct the classroom teacher–student interaction. By engaging with classroom interaction transcripts they were able to explore and critique how the language teacher can open up classroom dialogue for a stronger intercultural stance. The pre-service teachers may have drawn upon their understanding of the intercultural notions, from earlier reading of the academic literature, and applied this to produce an active engagement with the task. Although the task is based around a concrete set of examples, the nature of the critique and discussion enables the pre-service teachers to move beyond narrow interpretations of intercultural discourse.

The transcript task affords the pre-service language teachers a collaborative opportunity to identify, label and critique not only the less-positive teacher and student stereotyping in some of the lesson content, but also the positive strategies of a teacher facilitating a collaborative, co-constructed discussion in the classroom. Viewing the lessons through transcripts, as voyeurs at a distance, rather than first hand in an actual classroom themselves, the pre-service teachers showed the ability to critically observe another teacher. It is possible that the reading and decoding necessary to make meaning from a transcript actually enabled these pre-service teachers to analyse the teacher and student interaction in more in-depth ways than they had exhibited through observing teachers in action during their practicum periods.

With the exception of the Spanish lesson transcript, the pre-service teachers indicated how they observe the teachers in the transcripts unintentionally involved in the reduction of 'national culture' as they go about their daily language teaching. The pre-service language teachers are able to read the transcript and observe an unwitting perpetuation of stereotypes, through the language teachers' over-simplification. In the process of attempting to introduce an intercultural stance, some language teachers have unintentionally become purveyors of the process of 'othering' as argued by Holliday et al. (2010), leading to an over-simplification of culture. They have, as Gorski (2008) argues, engaged unwittingly in accentuating stereotypes and the hierarchies underpinning those stereotypes, rather than challenging them.

The pre-service language teachers show recognition that simplistic comparisons of cultures can lead to even greater stereotyping. The transcript task may thus facilitate perceptions, in pre-service teachers, that their future role and responsibility, as intercultural language educators, teachers

and community members, needs to focus more on combating, rather than unwittingly supporting, stereotypes and xenophobia. Such a development may prove to be a critical element in the formation of teachers' identities.

Pre-service language teachers need to be aware of the potential pitfalls associated with the over-simplification and use of comparison inherent in many intercultural approaches (Holliday et al., 2010). The collaborative discussion transcript task which we provided for our pre-service teacher groups can be considered a pivot point that requires collaborative dialogue for the deconstruction of meaning from the I–R–E exchange. The pre-service teachers are empowered to make collaborative suggestions from their prior knowledge and their own perspectives. They are encouraged to accept, reject or modify peer perceptions. Wells (2000, p. 56) has written that:

> particular occasions of situated joint activity are the crucible of change and development … in joint activity, participants contribute to the solution of emergent problems and difficulties according to their current ability to do so; at the same time, they provide support and assistance for each other in the interests of achieving the goals of the activity.

The collaborative group nature of the task enables the pre-service language teachers to contribute their individual prior knowledge, both independently and interdependently, in their own interpretation of the transcript and in their dialogue with their peers. They become aware of their co-construction of knowledge because the lecturer/researcher has devoted a particular focus to the task, underlining its importance in the development of an intercultural stance. The pre-service language teachers appear curious to notice and reflect, and to bounce ideas off each other. Learning is constructed as a collaborative activity. The pre-service teachers appear respectful of the diversity and complexity of self and peers. The nature of the task encourages pre-service teachers to form their own definitions of what is intercultural within each of the transcripts and develop their own critique of what limitations are shown.

The study demonstrates social-constructivist learning in action, and an intercultural dynamic in the development of learning with peers. The pre-service teachers show the ability to de-centre, highlight their own practice (for example, critically noting their own linguistic behaviour in university classes, making connections with their own practicum teaching, and in interrogating what it means to be Australian). In this way they exemplify the elements of intercultural stance that require teachers to be able to critique their own assumptions.

Conclusion: Coherent Co-construction of the Intercultural Dynamic

Like McConachy and Liddicoat (Chap. 2, this volume), our work has examined the interpretive aspect of intercultural mediation. We believe that the pre-service teacher interaction explored in this chapter represents in microcosm a new collaborative practice in teacher education which is needed to develop new approaches to intercultural language education. While our original focus was to encourage pre-service teachers' exploration of questioning patterns to facilitate intercultural dialogue, their collaborative enquiry took the task to another level, as an unexpected but positive outcome. Engaging in what we see to be a 'dynamique interculturelle' the pre-service teachers took a group initiative to de-centre and to construct understandings. In light of the need to shape beginner language teachers' abilities, and their need for models to imitate, Wells (2000) has described a process of development within a group, where, 'it is not necessarily the most expert member(s) of the group who are most helpful in inducting newcomers … in many situations, there is no expert; in the case of the invention of radically new tools and practices, this is self-evidently so' (Wells 2000, p. 57). Thus we can see how the community-of-practice hierarchy can be altered through co-constructive practice to enable newcomers to contribute to shaping understanding.

This two-level study (we studied the pre-service teachers studying the classroom teachers) thus demonstrates that within a co-constructed classroom model students have the opportunity to voice different perspectives, pursue curiosity, to critique and respect multiple perspectives in collaboration, and to take initiative in challenging perceived stereotypes. This applies equally in the school-language classroom and in teacher education. Much is revealed to pre-service language teachers about how this process may similarly occur in school classrooms through management of classroom discourse. With no 'expert' evident in the process at either the school or the university level, the school students, the pre-service teachers, and the teacher educators, take forward an un-fixed yet coherent construction of an intercultural dynamic. At a time where the intercultural has been diminished in some contexts to static and essentialized comparisons of culture, a new co-constructed pedagogy is essential to revive the core aims of the intercultural approach. We have highlighted how one task might work towards teachers and teacher educators developing a more collaborative and co-constructed stance in their intercultural approach to teaching a language.

Appendix A: Sample of Italian Classroom Transcript, with I–R–E Labelling Activity

	Festivals	*What's going on? IRE?*
Teacher	*Durante i periodi di feste che cosa piace fare ai giovani in Italia? E ai giovani australiani?* What do young Italian and young Australians like to do on festivals?	
Student 1	*Ai Giovani italiani piacciono stare insieme e scambiare i regali per natale* Young Italians like being together and exchanging presents for Christmas.	
Student 2	*Ai giovani australiani piace fare un BBQ per la festa di Australia* Young Australians like having a BBQ on Australia Day.	
Student 3	*Ai giovani australiani piace assistere ad una marcia il giorno di ANZAC* Young Australians like to watch the march on ANZAC day.	
Teacher	*ANZAC e` una giornata emozionante* ANZAC day is an emotional day.	

Appendix B: Sample of Spanish Lesson Transcript, with I–R–E Labelling Activity

	A Spanish dinner party	*IRE?*
Teacher	"*Vale. Nos llamamos y citamos*—we'll ring you. And we'll fix a date." So, what's not in here? What's missing?	
Student 1	Bye!	
Teacher	*Adios*, yep. What else is missing?	
Student 2	Thank you.	
Teacher	Thank you. There is no way of thanking. *No hay palabra que dice 'muchas gracias'. Hay 'mucho gusto' y 'encantado' que son muy respetuosos. Pero en ningun momento se dice 'gracias'. (muffles) Que. mas no hay?* (What else is not there?)	
Student 3	*Por favor.*	
Teacher	*Si. 'Por favor.' No hay 'por favor', no hay 'gracias'. Pero os pregunto, pensais que esta gente esta amable o que no tiene educacion?* No 'please', no 'thank you'. Do you think they are like polite or impolite?	

	A Spanish dinner party	*IRE?*
Student 4	Polite.	
Teacher	Ya. Polite. But they don't say thank you and they don't say please. So, how do they express the politeness and the respect?	
Student 5	Compliments.	
Teacher	Compliments. *Hacen complimentos. Que. mas?*	
Student 6	They invite them to their house?	
Teacher	Yeah. So they invite them over. That's very typical in Spain. Before you leave you say 'Oh how about you come to our house in two weeks? Nos vemos en dos semanas'.	

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CHAPTER 11

Challenges of Teaching Intercultural Business Communication in Times of Turbulence

Annelise Ly and Kristin Rygg

Introduction

The globalization of business (Søderberg & Holden, 2002) has led to an increasing need for companies to understand and manage cultural diversity at the workplace. Managing this diversity is seen as a key to meet demands of a global market, improve productivity and achieve corporate competitiveness (see Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000 for a definition and a discussion of the concept of diversity management). Courses and seminars have, therefore, been implemented in many companies, but also in business schools in order to equip students with the necessary intercultural competences (ICs) (Blasco, 2009; Eisenberg et al., 2013). Such courses and seminars aim to help students develop cross-cultural skills to 'become competent global managers' (Blasco, 2009, p. 176) who are able to work in an international business environment.

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While business environments in reality are becoming more complex and multifaceted, many courses on intercultural communication still tend to teach and assess students in a traditional way, based on the accumulation of knowledge about different cultures, often reduced to the concept of nations (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013; Fang, 2006; see also Chap. 12, this volume). Course curricula in business schools frequently rely on theories such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions, sometimes supplemented by Hall's high and low context theories. These frameworks, however, have largely been criticized (see for instance Fang, 2003; McSweeney, 2002; Piller, 2011 for Hofstede and Cardon, 2008 for Hall) mainly because they lead to simple and stereotypical categorizations of cultures, instead of reflecting on the complexities and paradoxes inherent to all cultures (Fang, 2012; Osland & Bird, 2000).

New theoretical frameworks for teaching and assessing intercultural communication and competence are appearing in research (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2011; Dervin, 2010, 2012; Dervin & Tournebise, 2013; Holliday, 2013; Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010) causing 'turbulences' in the field (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013). Thus, lecturers of intercultural communication are urged to find alternative methods, frameworks and activities that respond to the complex and dynamic multicultural world that the new theories reflect. As Szkudlarek, Mcnett, Romani and Lane (2013, p. 478) sum up, 'we are just beginning to understand the enormity of this challenge and to initiate the reflection and discussion on how our teaching should address this complexity'.

Although many scholars tend to criticize and reject the traditional approach to intercultural communication, little has been said on how the subject should be taught and what activities should be implemented in its place. This chapter aims to give some suggestions in that regard, but also to discuss the challenges involved. It draws on our experiences and reflections of implementing a course on intercultural business communication with focus on East Asia at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH). Three objectives were chosen for the course: (1) develop students' skills in observations, (2) train students to handle complexity, and (3) encourage students to reflect on and be critical of existing theories and texts. To fulfil the three objectives, we implemented different activities that turned out to be complementary; reflection texts, role-plays and case studies. In this chapter, we start with a presentation of our course and its objectives followed by examples of the activities we have implemented. Last, we share our reflections on the process and discuss the outcome in relation to the demand for new approaches in the field.

Course Description

The Course

In 2011, a student survey conducted at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) in Bergen, Norway, called for a course on East Asia, with a focus on business culture and communication. The authors, who specialize their research on China and Japan, were asked to create and implement a course that could cover the topic.

The course is designed as an elective course targeting both Norwegians and international students studying at bachelor level, and is taught in English. It started in autumn 2012. The course stretches over 12 weeks, with 4 hours of teaching per week and is offered as a 7.5 ECTS course.

Profile of the Students

The course gathers about 30 students each year, from about 10 different countries. The majority are international students, mostly from Europe (the largest groups being from Norway, Germany, Italy and Finland) but also from Asia (mainly China and Japan).

Most of the students in the course have international experience or an international background. Some are binational, some have grown up in different countries abroad, and some have worked or studied abroad. Some of the Norwegian students have taken three semesters of Japanese prior to this course.

We perceived this diverse group as a great opportunity to foster intercultural interactions and experience sharing. It also presented pedagogical challenges that we detail in our discussion part.

The Lecturers' Motivation

Creating and implementing a course offered us the opportunity to determine the objectives, the content and the methodology of the course ourselves. Thus, it allowed us to tailor the course on the basis of our research and personal interests. Our personal backgrounds and experiences, for instance, (Kristin is from Norway but has lived in England and Japan, and Annelise grew up in an overseas Chinese family in France and has lived in China and Norway) made it difficult for us to work with the theoretical frameworks offered by the traditional approach to intercultural

communication (see Chap. 1, this volume). In addition, our previous research has led us to look at theories such as Hall's contextual model (Rygg, 2012) and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Ly, 2013) with critical eyes, and we realised that they could not be used without also discussing their limitations.

To the best of our knowledge, teaching methods where consultants reduce differences 'to minor hurdles which could be easily overcome if the right steps were taken' (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000, p. 21) are still predominant in intercultural communication seminars in business schools and companies. In this perspective, handbooks that are frequently used to teach the management of diversity in companies (Gesteland, 2002; Lewis, 2006) were considered too simplistic and essentialist and were hence not beneficial for the purpose of our course.

Further, we questioned the traditional way of teaching and learning in business schools that mainly rely on academic lectures and that usually do not challenge students 'to engage in much thinking or reflecting on course material' (Cockburn-Wootten & Cockburn, 2011, p. 45). Instead, our wish was to encourage students to be reflective, and also, ideally, reflexive (Cunliffe, 2002). Examples of reflective activities are when the students discuss and analyse case studies and texts. These activities 'can be important in processing learning, because they help us make sense and develop new understandings of situations' (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 413). This may later on lead students to become more critically reflexive and 'explore how [they] might contribute to the construction of social and organizational realities, how [they] relate with others, and how [they] construct [their] way of being in the world. Critically reflexive questioning also means exposing contradictions, doubts, dilemmas, and possibilities' (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 414).

This, of course, was sometimes seen as a challenge in itself when we met students that systematically wanted to apply theories to every situation, failing to consider the unique and complex issues at stake in an encounter. Other challenges include the fact that the course objectives were not very clear when we started out in 2012. Teaching this class has allowed us to think critically about intercultural communication teaching, try out new activities and, sometimes, fail in reaching our students or our initial objectives (see in Chap. 1 of this volume how failure can be inherent to the teaching of IC). We develop and illustrate this point in the discussion part.

Course Objectives

The course objectives, however, have become clearer over time, and are listed below together with the theoretical framework that has been influential to us.

Develop Students' Skills in Observations

Holliday et al. (2010) and Holliday (2013) reject the traditional way of investigating culture (which he calls the 'top-down approach') that starts with large assumptions about national cultures followed by observation of intercultural encounters. In his opinion, such assumptions will later colour all cultural observations and are 'associated with stereotyping' (Holliday, 2013, p. 30). Instead, he promotes a 'bottom-up approach' in which one begins with direct observation of cultural practices.

Holliday provides the following advice when working with a 'bottom-up approach':

- Be aware of the influence of theories, profiles and stereotypes and try to put them aside.
- Begin with a feeling of acceptance. Try to imagine oneself in the shoes of the person or people one is engaging with, acknowledging that it is possible to feel like them.
- Be prepared to engage with complexity that cannot be explained easily. (Holliday, 2013, p. 41)

Although Holliday is engaged in observing real life encounters, we have implemented a 'bottom-up approach' in the classroom through the use of case studies. Case studies present the students with an opportunity to discuss diversity while not focusing directly on their own assumptions. However, in talking about the characters' perspectives, students also gain insight into their own thinking on the situation (Guo, Cockburn-Wootten, & Munshi, 2014, p. 179). We discuss further why we found that casework in class had better outcome than fieldwork outside the classroom in part four.

Case studies are activities associated with the Harvard business school, where the analysis and the discussion of cases is the predominant mode of learning (Heath, 2006). In our course, we used what Heath calls 'incident cases', defined as short business cases describing a single incident that is used to raise an issue for discussion. Teaching and working with case

studies is widespread in business schools and the students are normally familiar with the teaching method (i.e., first read a case and later discuss it in groups). In many management courses, the main objective of case studies is to illustrate a theory. Thus, cases are usually presented after a given theory. In our course, however, we have adopted a 'bottom-up approach' to case studies. In practice, this means that an 'incident case' is first presented and the students are asked to observe and reflect on it. Thereafter, it is followed up by theory beneficial to understanding the case. Example three (3.3) below is a good example of this. We used authentic business cases, either collected through our research work (see for instance Rygg, 2012) or published by others. However, the cases staged characters and situations that are at their level of responsibilities. The characters were often junior executives put in a situation that was easily identifiable and understandable.

Train Students to Handle Complexity

Traditional textbooks, as those mentioned earlier, focus on knowledge about others and skills to avoid culture clash. However, the uncertainty of unfamiliar intercultural situations outside the classroom may cause people to act on 'auto-pilot' forgetting what they have learnt and resorting to old prejudices (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Thus, we agree with Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p. 1) that intercultural training should include training to tolerate the psychological demands and dynamic outcomes that result from intercultural interactions. Above, Holliday stresses similar issues when he suggests being 'prepared to engage with complexity that cannot be explained easily'.

Cunliffe (2002) argues that emotions do not only cause anxiety and defence, but might also lead to positive effects of heightened awareness and sensitivity. Applied to classroom learning, lecturers should not expect learning only to occur cognitively through theory but possibly more importantly, encourage learning through 'aha! Moments' (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 410), which are emotional embodiments of learning.

To accommodate both objects above, many researchers advocate the use of experiential exercises (Blasco, 2009; Fleming, 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Szkudlarek et al., 2013) where the students are affectively as well as cognitively engaged in a situation (see also Chap. 3, this volume). Rygg (2014) maintains that role-plays and simulation games can help students 'see the other from the inside', which means to be able to place oneself within the experience of the other and to feel, in some

measure, what it is like to be him. The same exercise may also cause the students to see 'themselves from the outside', which implies to see one's own subconscious values from the other's perspective. However, unrestrained imagination based only on a person's intuition and feelings is cautioned. Instead, imagination should be verbalized in order to create conscious awareness. As Guo et al. (2014, p. 179) sum up, 'learning to identify and see a situation from another's perspective is a crucial competence for management students and teaching this skill is a vital part of management education'.

Encourage Students to Reflect on and be Critical of Existing Theories and Texts

Business students (and executives) are often provided with knowledge on intercultural communication through either general textbooks that offer a list of dos and don'ts across cultures (e.g., Gesteland, 2002; Lewis, 2006) or through books that focus on region-specific knowledge and cultural etiquette (for China, see e.g., Ambler, Witzel, & Xi, 2008; Ostrowski & Penner, 2009; Zinzius, 2004, and for Japan, Condon & Masumoto, 2011; Hodgson, Sano & Graham, 2000; Nishiyama, 2000).

Most of these books have several limitations: First, they reduce the concept of *culture* to *national culture*, taking for granted that cultures, within the political scope that a nation represents, are homogeneous. Second, most of these books present the Chinese and the Japanese cultures from an etic perspective. Thus, the authors only relate cultural attitudes and behaviour from an outsider's perspective without explaining the reasons for such behaviour, causing the Other to appear diametrically different and strange. As we see from the references above, it does not always help to include East Asian authors in the hope that they will present a more nuanced picture of their own culture.

Furthermore, from a semantic point of view, when these authors try to explain 'culture-laden' (Wierzbicka, 1997) concepts, such as *guanxi* (for China) or *amae* (for Japan), they usually use Western culture-laden words, translating *guanxi* into 'relationships', or 'network' and *amae* into 'interdependence'. Such translations are incomplete. As Wierzbicka points out, the uncritical reliance on Western words to explain Japanese concepts may lead to the misinterpretation of the Japanese culture. The Japanese value *amae*, for instance, has been described with adjectives such as 'manipulative' or 'juvenile' by Western scholars, and even though they 'describe Japanese cultural patterns rather than condemn them [the Japanese] …

this doesn't alter the fact that these words are inherently pejorative and that they suggest to the reader a negative evaluation of what they purport to describe' (Wierzbicka, 1997, p. 236).

With this in mind, the third course objective is to encourage the students to acquire a critical view of established theories and texts (see example 3.1).

Examples of Activities That Respond to the Course Objectives

In the following part, we explain through concrete classroom activities how the course objectives mentioned in 2.4 were implemented. Our reflections on the process and discussion of the outcomes are discussed further in part four.

Example One: 'The Chinese are…, They Like… and Dislike…'

> Chinese, especially those from the northern part of the country, speak softly. They avoid interrupting other people, since this would be rude. It is important for visiting negotiators from more expressive cultures to avoid loud talking and wait patiently until their Chinese counterpart has finished speaking before saying their piece. Another feature of Chinese paraverbal behaviour is that a laugh or a giggle may signal stress, nervousness or embarrassment rather than amusement. (Gesteland, 2002, pp. 173–174)

As in the example above, books describing Chinese business behaviour often use sentences such as 'the Chinese are…', 'the Chinese like…' These statements picture all individuals from a nation as alike and thus their culture as homogeneous.

Students tend to accept such generalizations without further criticism. In our experience, to develop a critical mind cannot be learned from one activity alone but needs activities that help develop and sharpen the reflection skills in a gradual process. One such activity in this course was the production of a so-called *reflection text* in which the students would critically read and comment on two texts describing Chinese or Japanese business behaviours. The ongoing process was implemented in two ways: first, through classroom exercises and discussions, and second, through written feedback on a first draft.

In our first lecture, for instance, we implemented a short oral exercise in which the students were asked the following question: 'What is your culture?'[1] The students were given a couple of minutes to formulate their answers that were then written on the blackboard. The answers showed that some students defined themselves by their national culture 'I am German'; others had to include several nations in their answers such as 'I am half Norwegian, half Thai'. Other students felt the need to nuance their answers with a regional difference such as: 'I am from the South of Italy and unlike people from the North, we are more…'. Some students also identified themselves with the business school culture such as 'most Norwegians are like this but at NHH, the students are rather…'. This activity made the students start to reflect on their own cultures and on what it feels like being reduced to a stereotyped national culture. If they cannot be labelled by their national culture; neither can the Japanese nor the Chinese. Such activity set the tone for the rest of the course and was a quick leap for the students to understanding that the framework they would be presented with in the course could not tell the whole story.

Writing the reflective text was a continuous process during the first half of the semester. By looking at the positioning of the author, the objective, the intended audience and the choice of vocabulary, most students managed to discuss critically the different points of view conveyed and the advantages and limitations of such texts. We provided the students with written feedback on their draft so that they could sharpen their reflection skills further before handing in the final result. The reflection text was part of their written assignment grade. The reason why some students needed more help than others in order to think critically and reflectively is discussed further in part four.

This example illustrates how activities could raise the criticality and the reflectivity of the students towards existing texts, but also, later on, of existing theories, in response to our third course objective.

Example Two: 'What is Tanaka's Point of View?'

The following example has two different objectives. First, it aims to portray how our methodology changed from a traditional approach to a 'bottom-up approach'. Second, it gives an account of how a role-play inspired by the ideas outlined earlier was implemented.

In the first year, we introduced the topic of communication styles by presenting some central theoretical concepts in intercultural communication;

high and low context communication (Hall, 1976). High context communication was illustrated by Japanese examples. The lecture was a typical example of a traditional 'top-down approach', where the Other, in this case, the Japanese, ended up being portrayed as different, static and inadaptable. The first thing we noticed was that the four Japanese students in the class felt awkward. Even though these four had quite different intercultural experiences (for instance, one whose father's occupation had led him to spend most of his childhood in the USA), they found themselves not only being 'simplified' as human beings but also contrasted to and, thus, isolated from the other 'low context communicators' in class. In this perspective, Lorbiecki and Jack (2000, p. 22) also point out that such an approach—that originally aimed for greater tolerance—ends up creating 'resentment from those who had been subjected to the scrutiny of difference'. The experience made us question our own approach, and led to a change away from the traditional lecture format towards a bottom-up approach with active student participation.

The following lecture started off by asking the students to work on an 'incident case'[2] that we have named 'Marianne and Tanaka'. A Norwegian businesswoman, Marianne, was sent to Japan to work as the project manager for a group of international computer programmers. The project task was to install a new program for a large Japanese firm. According to Marianne, the Japanese client was unreasonably demanding:

> I have tried to tell them that 'this is not necessary, we just waste time doing it', 'yes but you have said you would do it', the client tells me, 'yes, but that was before I knew how much time it would take and now my opinion is that we should not', 'yes but you said so', period.

Marianne was frustrated and at loss of what to do. The Japanese were definitely not as polite and indirect that she had heard that they would be, and she felt that they demanded things that European customers would handle themselves. Next, the students read a transcribed interview with Marianne's Japanese colleague, Tanaka:

> It happens that Marianne explains too much, 'no, that is not right, not right, not right', she says but, well, it is simply how the customer feels so […] to say 'ah, I see' or 'maybe it is better like this?' increases the possibility of a good relationship with the Japanese client. Especially Japanese customers

> don't like debate very much and, well, in Japan the customer is above and the vendor is below, aren't they?

After reading and reflecting on the content and the communication styles of both texts (the students' texts were longer, with more fillers etc. than those presented here), the students debated solutions to the problems by taking on the roles of Marianne or Tanaka. One of the great advantages of this was that the Japanese students in class were just as likely to take Marianne's stand, which relieved them from having to defend themselves or their fellow nationals, and thus, made them less isolated from the rest of the class.

Using the incident case with role-play responds to the first course objective by asking the students to reason from the given situation instead of attributing people's intentions or behaviour from theories, and to the second course objective by having the students engage both cognitively and affectively in learning. However, as cautioned earlier, the exercise cannot end here. Feelings and thoughts that have come up during role-play must be verbalized in order to create new awareness, and in this particular case, we provided conceptualizing tools from intercultural communication and management literature after the play. The exercise found several causes to Marianne's problems; different perceptions of the roles of sellers vs. buyers, different views of what a project manager's tasks are, and differences in how opinions are expressed depending on those roles. Thus, as also noted by Ogbonna and Harris (2006), theories on national culture differences are not always enough to explain differences in organizational structures, processes and cultures. However, the students who had experienced being both Marianne and Tanaka through role-play and found commonalities in the opinions of both, also found the theories in general to be too simplistic (objective 3), something which, in turn, resulted in a general scepticism towards the course literature (more about this in 4.2 below).

Example Three: 'Should We Conduct 200 Tests?'

The third example is another illustration of an activity that implemented all three course objectives and especially portrays the 'bottom-up approach' to case studies based on observation before theory.

The activity is constructed around a case study inspired by two interviews of a Norwegian manager conducted by Rygg (2012), and is

composed of two parts. The first part introduces the setting, the incident and a narrative told by the Norwegian manager at the Japanese branch of a Norwegian company manufacturing reverse vending machines. A reverse vending machine is a machine for recycling bottles and cans. Even though the problem is observed through the eyes of the Norwegian branch manager, his 17 years' of experience in Japan means that his comments also offer the opportunity to see the case from a Japanese perspective. In fact, in this particular case, the manager had struggled more with the Norwegian head office and their unwillingness to understand the Japanese partner's logic than with the Japanese, whose view he sympathized with. However, this was information that we initially did not share with the students. The second part describes how the Norwegian manager solved the incident.

The students started by reading the following narrative told by the Norwegian manager:

> We are about to install a new type of reverse vending machines in a large number of stores in the Tokyo metropolis. With the new machines, the customers will be able to use an IC card (card with a chip), which they also use to buy groceries at the store. However, before the new machines can be placed at the various locations in Tokyo, we have been asked by our Japanese partner to perform as many as two hundred tests on them. These tests include such things as what happens if you have put the IC card in the machine and the electricity in the supermarket shuts down, or what happens if the customer forgets his card in the machine and leaves without it? Some of the Norwegians are very frustrated.

Then, the students were asked to discuss in groups how the company should respond to the demand for two hundred tests and to justify their answers. Many of the students made comments such as: 'This tactic is not efficient! The company is not responsible for the electricity in the store! If someone forgets his card in the machine, well, that's bad luck, but nothing to do with the company. Those Japanese waste a lot of time on unnecessary details! Why can't we just try and see how it goes?'

After the students had discussed the problem, the second part of the 'incident case' was presented to the students. In this part, the Norwegian manager, interviewed one year after the machines had been placed out on locations, explains what the company had done. His narrative can be summed up as follows:

- The company did, in fact, conduct all the two hundred tests.
- The machines have been in use for one year, and they have yet to receive a single complaint or a single reported error.

For the first time, this information might have triggered the students into considering a possible rationality to the Japanese way of thinking when they demanded the two hundred tests.

So far the students had had to simply cope with the fact that they were in a situation that they did not fully understand. From this point on, we decided to include theories on Japanese decision processes (Nishiyama, 2000), with comments on Norwegian decision processes from the Norwegian branch manager. Figure 11.1 gives a simplistic representation of the contrast in Japanese and Norwegian decision processes.

The Norwegian decision phase is short compared to the Japanese. The manager explained that what they usually did in Norway and other countries in Europe was to test the machines until they were roughly ok, then place them out on location, and later adjust them if necessary. He realised that a lot of adjustments would be bad for the company's reputation in Japan, where the implementation phase is expected to be short and problem free (cf. Fig. 11.1). In addition, to travel around in a metropolis like Tokyo to adjust machines, would be enormously time consuming. In the aftermath of such a thorough planning phase, there were few adjustments that had to be made at all.

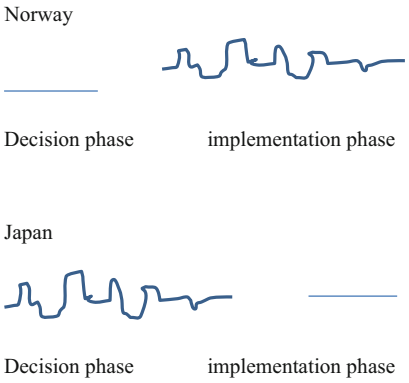

Fig. 11.1 Contrast in Japanese and Norwegian decision processes

Adopting a 'bottom-up approach' to the 'incident case' presents several advantages. First, the students, who at this stage of the course have very little knowledge of differences in decision-making processes, are forced to observe a situation without prior theoretical knowledge and are thus less prompted to cultural stereotyping (objective 1). Second, the students are trained to tackle frustrating intercultural situations (objective 2). After reading the first part of the 'incident case', many students face frustration as they do not understand the Japanese way of thinking. After reading the second narrative, however, the students in class realised that the Japanese partner's demand for the two hundred tests might not be so inefficient after all. Thus, the focus had shifted from a self-oriented perspective to an other-oriented one. This is what we referred to as 'seeing the other from the inside'. At the same time, the students realised, by seeing their own assumptions from the Japanese perspective, that their own idea of efficiency by making quick decisions might have some limitations too. This is what we referred to earlier in this paper as 'seeing oneself from the outside'. Third, by presenting the theory on decision-making processes after the case, the students have the chance to reflect critically on existing theories and nuance their point of view (objective 3). Instead of thinking that the Japanese decision-making process is inefficient, for instance, they realise that the total length of the two phases is equally long in both decision processes (cf. Fig. 11.1).

Discussion

To fulfil our three course objectives, we implemented different activities that turned out to be complementary: reflection texts, role-plays and case studies. These activities represented the core of our teaching. Traditional lectures were also integrated in the course, but we reduced their number to a minimum, and they always functioned to sum up a sequence of lectures over a similar theme, not to start one.

Below, we reflect on the implementation and the outcomes of our course and describe the positive aspects, but also the challenges we have faced. We divide our discussion into two parts, the teachers' perspectives and the students' perspectives.

Teachers' Perspective

In this part, we discuss four topics: first, how our teaching has evolved, second, the use of theories in our teaching, third, the challenges of teach-

ing in a culturally diverse classroom and finally, the use of English as a *lingua franca* in the classroom.

First, our course is the result of a 'critically reflexive teaching' (Jack, 2009) in which the notions of teaching and learning are inextricably linked. Thus, based on earlier successes and failures, the activities we have implemented as well as the assessment form have been modified from one year to the other. The first year, the students were partly assessed by a final 3-hour exam. We realised, however, that such a form of assessment was not efficient in order to develop the reflection skills of the students. The second year, the assessment type was, therefore, changed into a portfolio assessment, where the students handed in papers that were commented on throughout the semester, so that they may have time for their reflection skills to mature.

An aspect of the bottom-up approach is direct observation of situation-bound practices. One might wonder why we focused on observation through casework in the classroom instead of fieldwork in the business world. We did, in fact, try out fieldwork. Originally, we wanted the students to observe directly and record business interactions among East Asians and Westerners. However, access to such data is challenging for experienced researchers, let alone bachelor students (see the discussion on the challenges to collecting naturally occurring data in companies (Ly, 2015). Thus, we asked the students to interview an East Asian or European business executive with experience of doing business with/in Europe/East Asia. However, we encountered several problems: First, when interviewing their informants, the students often found themselves observing a business executive living in 'an expatriate bubble', unable to see the Other from the inside as the students themselves had been encouraged to do. Thus, the students were frequently met by simple stereotypes about the Other; East Asians and Europeans alike. Second, in spite of the fact that the students were developing their critical thinking towards existing theories and texts, they remained rather uncritical when listening to their informants. In our opinion, this can be explained by the fact that many of our business students had the tendency to admire their informants, usually a successful businessman working in an international company. Observation through casework in the classroom, on the other hand, gave the lecturers a better opportunity to stir the focus towards the course objectives and avoid ending up with essentialist notions of culture.

A second point of our discussion is the use of theories in our teaching: Should we put them aside? In his 'bottom-up approach', Holliday

suggests that one should start by being aware of the influence of theories, profiles and stereotypes and try to put them aside. We understand the notion of putting theory aside not as abandoning theory, but as postponing its introduction until after observation, and then examining it and using it critically and reflectively. We believe that our students already have (potentially stereotyped) ideas about East Asians from other academic or popular sources, exchange programmes, travel, friends and so on prior to the course. Rather than setting all theories aside, we encourage the students to acquire a critical distance to established theories/ideas through the activities presented above such as the reflection texts.

We agree, however, that theories should be introduced after observation, and that is what we have strived to do in this course, even though we have sometimes experienced getting trapped in old habits (see the essentialist trap, described by Ferri, Chap. 6, this volume), as elaborated on in the first part of Example 2. Had we started a new topic with a theoretical introduction, there is a chance that the students would have forgotten, as people frequently do, that theories are simplistic representations of reality. As explained above, existing literature on intercultural communication often depicts the other as strange, lacking abilities or qualities that the Westerner possesses. De Mente (referred to in Holliday et al., 2010, p. 136), for instance, an acknowledged specialist on Japanese business culture, claims that:

> From an American viewpoint, one of the most irrational and frustrating of these cultural chasms is the difference between the Japanese and American view and use of logic – *ronri* in Japanese […]. The main point of difference in Western logic and Japanese *ronri* is that in its Japanese context logic does not necessarily equate with rationalism. It can, in fact, fly in the face of reason so long as it satisfies a human or spiritual element that the Japanese hold dear.

If the students in Example 3 had started to read De Mente's text before solving the problem, there is a real danger that the Japanese demand for 200 tests would have been put down to Japanese lack of logic, and that would have been the end of discussion. Thus, the students might no longer have been motivated to look for or be able to see that there is more to the Japanese way of thinking than the theories suggest. Contrary to the impression gained from De Mente's text quoted earlier, the fact that the students found sense in the Japanese way of thinking, made them think of

the Japanese as sensible people, that is, sharing a common ground (Guo et al., 2014, p. 170). Some of the students may even choose the Japanese approach when having to make job-related decisions in the future, because they have seen its benefit. In this sense, we acknowledge that people reconstruct their own 'culture' throughout life and that a course in intercultural communication also can make its contributions in this respect.

However, if we had not supplied any theory after the case, the students would have had few tools other than their own (ego/ethnocentric) intuition and common sense to interpret other's behaviour. Thus, we believe that theories provide the students with a wider range of interpretation tools to understand and conceptualize their experiences as long as they also are taught to use them with caution.

A third point of our discussion is related to the challenge of teaching intercultural communication in a classroom that is culturally diverse. Some students appreciated the course format based on interactions and discussions more than others who are more used to traditional lectures. The critical aspect in our teaching method has also appeared to be challenging for some students who are not used to criticizing theories. One of our exchange students, for instance, came to us at the end of the semester and asked us: 'Is it OK not to agree with Hofstede?'

Finally, our teaching was centred on oral activities using English as *lingua franca*. However, in order to participate, the students needed to be able to understand the many different 'Englishes' in class and also to have a good proficiency themselves. Sometimes, this hindered participation. Some exercises to break the ice and get acquainted (from the second lecture, everyone knew their classmates' given names) were necessary to decrease the stress related to having to speak up in front of their peers.

Students' Perspective

We have received oral feedback from students during the whole semester and at the end of the course, a final course evaluation (to be filled out voluntarily and kept anonymous) was made available online. Besides student comments such as 'I appreciated the interactive approach' or 'you encouraged us to see that there is no right or wrong in terms of cultures', there are no comments that show that they are aware that they became more reflective. However, if we look at oral feedback during the course, it seems that they did. At the end of the first year, many students complained about a textbook on Japanese business culture that was part of the reading

list. This was a textbook that had been used without complaints on several courses on Japanese language and culture before. It contained much practical information about how to communicate with Japanese business executives, and was even written by a native Japanese. Two randomly chosen quotes from the book are:

> Since the Japanese are extremely concerned about interpersonal harmony and protection of each other's 'face' in face-to-face encounters, they use a variety of ingenious tactics of interpersonal communication […]. (Nishiyama, 2000, p. 13)

> Japanese businessmen value the use of all five human senses. In addition, they rely even more heavily on their sixth sense (*kan*) or 'intuition'. (Nishiyama, 2000, p. 71).

After experiencing being Tanaka (Example 2) and other Japanese individuals through casework, the textbook's perspective seemed to cause offence. In retrospect, it seems that through casework, the students had gained insights that collided with the textbook's essentialist perspective. The textbook seemed to be perceived as 'a return' to seeing the Japanese from an outsider's perspective and too stereotypical to the students who had experienced 'walking in Japanese shoes' through role-play. The textbook was discarded from the reading list the second year.

It is also fair to say that the 'bottom-up approach' has been perceived as challenging and sometimes frustrating for students who could not free themselves of the idea that theories can and should predict people's behaviour. Thus, we agree that it is hard to get rid of 'the Hofstedian legacy' (Holliday et al., 2010, p. 7) as the systematic, precise and predictable nature of theories remain attractive when dealing with national cultures. Some scholars also argue that to categorize people in an essentialist manner is a natural human process (Barrett, 2001; Brumann et al., 1999). Thus, a couple of times, we have gone through all the different activities only to have a student ask: 'so, how are the Japanese, really?' as if they were still craving for simple answers.

However, all in all, we have received encouraging feedback from our students who enjoyed our pedagogical approach. Thus, in 2014, our course was elected by the students as one of the four most innovative and engaging at NHH. Following this, we presented our teaching methods in a pedagogical seminar 'Best Practise at NHH' organized for the teaching staff of the school. Preparing the presentation became the starting point for this article.

Concluding Remarks

Intercultural business communication lecturers often hear criticism of the traditional approach to intercultural communication, with little assistance on how to implement training that responds better to the complex and dynamic multicultural world that many of us experience today. Starting a course from scratch in a field that has recently undergone so many 'turbulences' (Dervin & Tournebise, 2013) has been an opportunity, but has also presented many challenges. In this chapter, we have described and discussed the creation, implementation and outcomes of our course on intercultural communication, focusing on the activities we have implemented.

After teaching the course for three years, trying new activities and reflecting on the pedagogical and theoretical issues involved, we feel that we have gained a good idea of what the objectives of our course are and how they should be implemented. We have decided to limit the number of course participants to 40 mainly because of the workload related to giving individual feedback on the reflection texts. We also think that students are more eager to participate when they are in a smaller group. This course, however, could probably be taught to larger classes. However, in order to encourage student participation and discussion in a non-threatening environment, we suggest that larger classes be divided into smaller groups (see for instance the course structure related by Cockburn-Wootten and Cockburn (2011).

Notes

1. This activity was inspired from Piller (2011).
2. The cases in this article are from 42 in-depth interviews with Japanese and Norwegian business executives interviewed in Tokyo in the autumns of 2007 and 2008 about their work experiences from Rygg (2012).

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CHAPTER 12

Intercultural Competence: Value Disembedding and Hyper-flexibility

Karin Zotzmann

Intercultural Competence: Value Disembeddeding and Hyper-flexibility

In this chapter I want to explore, critically, what kind of human being we aim to prepare when we adopt 'intercultural competence' (IC) as our educational objective in higher education. This self-reflective question is essential, I argue, if we want to arrive at justified and ethically sound decisions in our academic and pedagogical practices. To be sure, I do not want to suggest that through intercultural education we educate sociopaths or even that 'sociopathy' exists as a clinical condition, like M. E. Thomas in the following quote. Nor do I subscribe to the rather sexist portrayal of women the author perpetuates in her self-description:

> You would like me if you met me. I am quite confident about that because I have met a statistically significant sample size of the population and they were all susceptible to my charms. I have the kind of smile that is common among television show characters and rare in real life, perfect in its sparkly-teeth dimensions and ability to express pleasant invitation. I'm the sort of date you would love to bring to your ex's wedding. Fun, exciting, the perfect office escort—your boss's wife has never met anyone quite so charming.

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> And I'm just the right amount smart and successful so that your parents would be thrilled if you brought me home. (Thomas, 2013: *Confessions of a Sociopath*, p. 5)

What the description above, however, brings to the fore is the relationship between values—understood here as reasons for action—and actual behaviour, a nexus that is central to any theoretical perspective on, or pedagogical approach to, intercultural learning. As the self-diagnosed sociopath M. E. Thomas (the name is poignantly chosen) explains, she does not necessarily behave in socially undesirable ways but is rather motivated purely by instrumental reasoning. As others and their well-being are of no interest to her, her deliberations are devoid of social or moral concerns. Her highly successful adaptation to different expectations, interpersonal relations and circumstances, as described in the quote above, is thus driven by the sole purpose of enhancing her own personal gains. M. E. Thomas behaves like a self-centred, rational calculator.

I assume that academics and teachers who work in the area of intercultural communication and education care about the welfare of their students and those they come into contact with. Despite the variety of theoretical and pedagogical approaches in the field, there seems to exist a normative consensus that tolerance, open-mindedness and self-reflectivity—to name but a few qualities—are to be fostered in order to counteract the ills of stereotyping, prejudices and ethnocentrism. Instrumental reasoning, however, effectively overrides and distorts attempts for mutual recognition and increased understanding as it takes its own premises—strategic goals that are external to the communication process—as *a priori*. As M. E. Thomas, who situates herself at one end of the spectrum, puts it, 'to have the ability to measure with such stark precision the utility of a person—just as any other thing—made it senseless to regard that person in any other way' (Thomas, 2013, p. 29).

The question I pursue in this chapter is whether the concept of IC is actually conducive to the humanistic endeavour we seem to set out in our academic discourses or whether it frames our academic and pedagogic practices in a way that is detrimental to these pursuits. Intercultural education is, as many authors (Blommaert, 1995; Dervin, 2010; Holliday, 2011; Lavanchy, Dervin, & Gajardo, 2011; Risager, 2011) have pointed out, never a neutral practice, instead it is always based on particular assumptions and shaped by epistemological, ontological, normative and political commitments. I take the competence approach to intercultural learning

to be part of a wider strand of Competence-Based Forms of Education (CBE), which are based on a set of premises that draw our attention and pedagogical efforts to the creation of particular kinds of knowledge, behaviours and disposition, and thereby unavoidably marginalize others.

The chapter begins with examples of how 'IC' is articulated on university websites that promote postgraduate degrees in intercultural education/communication in the UK. Given the limited space of this chapter, the selection is necessarily constrained but nevertheless indicative of the discourse higher-educational institutions in the UK and elsewhere employ in order to justify and promote degrees, or parts thereof, in this area. I then set these outward-facing promotional texts in relation to the diversity of academic perspectives that can inform such programmes.

The following section, 'Globalization, the Global Graduate and IC', historicizes the trend towards CBE in education in general and outlines its general features. It provides answers to the question of why we conceptualize the outcomes of intercultural learning as 'competence' at higher-education institutions at this moment in time. The output and performance orientation of CBE stands, I argue in the third part of this chapter, in stark contrast to the idea of intercultural learning as a reflective engagement with difference, and hence with the reasons we and others have for being, acting and relating to each other the way they do. The last section draws the different threads together and explores an alternative and potentially more desirable view of intercultural education.

Globalization, the Global Graduate and IC

Curricular objectives are commonly justified in relation to the contemporary demands of society, however these may be defined. Intercultural education, in particular, is usually legitimized by references to 'globalization' or, to a lesser extent, 'internationalization'. Students, it is argued, should be prepared for the exigencies of a rapidly changing and interconnected world and labour market. The University of Durham, for instance, describes on its website how the MA in *Intercultural Education and Internationalisation* will provide students.

> with the resources for reflecting on and responding to the growing need for intercultural education and communication in an increasingly intercultural/international world. […] Throughout the programme you will be encouraged to reflect on your own knowledge and experience of education,

> and the challenges of developing learners who are interculturally competent for the contemporary world.

Likewise, the University of Manchester emphasizes the need to 'function effectively' in the 'global era' for their MA in *Intercultural Communication*:

> The global era has stimulated transnational cultural flows (of people, practices and products) and local cultural complexities that were inconceivable even a generation ago. Nowadays, individuals increasingly recognise not only their own cultural complexity but also the need to function effectively in culturally diverse contexts ranging from the home and neighbourhood, to places of worship and recreation, to organisations and workplaces, and to societies and regions.

The aim of the MA in *Intercultural Communication* at the University of Sheffield is, according to the departmental website, simply 'to prepare you for work. We look closely at best practice and show you how to apply theory to real work situations'. A similar pronouncement can be found on the website of the University of Warwick, which justifies their MSc in *Intercultural Communication for Business & the Professions* by claiming: 'Employers need graduates who can compete in global marketplaces and meet global challenges'. Their website provides a wealth of information, partly based on a collaborative eLearning project staff members conducted with Chinese partners (http://www.echinauk.org/intro.php). According to the *Global People Competency Framework* developed on the basis of this project, IC includes 'knowledge and ideas', 'communication skills', the ability to build and maintain 'relationships', and 'personal qualities/dispositions'. The personal qualities, for instance, revolve around flexibility and adaptability, balanced by coping strategies and closely tied to strategic goals:

> We need to have the motivation to seek out variety and change (**spirit of adventure**) while having a strong internal sense of where we are going (**inner purpose**). Emotionally we need to possess well-developed methods of dealing with stress (**coping**) as well as remaining positive when things go wrong (**resilience**). We also need to be conscious that are [sic] own behaviour, while normal for us, may be considered strange in another cultural context (**self-awareness**) and positively accept different behaviours that may immediately seem to go against our sense of what is normal and appropriate

> (**acceptance**). We thus need to be willing to adapt our behaviour to suit other cultural contexts, and to sustain trust with key partners. [emphasis in the original]

Websites of other post- and undergraduate programmes in intercultural education/communication in the UK and other Western European countries show a similar argumentative pattern (see, e.g., Zotzmann, 2011). 'Globalization' or a variant of the term is presented as a quasi-natural cause that generates change and requires an immediate educational response: vocationally relevant and applicable knowledge that is delivered in the form of 'competence' and its subcomponents. Given the limited space of this chapter it is not possible to analyse these representations and their rhetorical function but we need to bear in mind that globalization is a highly contested term that can refer to a multitude of different, often contradictory developments in the domains of business, politics, society, culture, technology, media, and the environment. As Jessop (2013, 1999, see also Hirst & Thompson, 2009) has pointed out, there is actually no single causal force that cuts across changes in all social spheres on a global scale and produces the same effects on people in different locations. The idea of an acceleration and intensification of global interaction, communication and mobility in particular—as articulated in the above pronouncement and many academic publications (e.g., Ehrenreich, 2011; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011, p. 303)—seems to reflect only the reality of rather privileged segments of society. In the wake of the 'Great Recession' and concomitant austerity regimes, international travel, higher education and high levels of consumption have receded into a dim distance even for many in the 'Global North'.

Instead of illuminating the nature of social change, the term 'globalization' is hence often employed as a short-hand rhetorical device or 'imaginary' that legitimates particular courses of action: For the case of higher education, it is used to justify the claim that students shall be enabled to act and to function effectively in contexts characterized by diversity. Again, it is important to remind ourselves that human diversity is neither new nor a 'by-product of globalization' (Cogo, 2012, p. 288), instead it is part of the human condition (Parekh, 2000). What is, however, relatively new and contentious is the emphasis on competent *performance*, which links the concept of IC with the current employability and internationalization strategies of universities. These strategies in turn are largely driven by the marketization and privatization of higher education.

Despite the discursive similarity of university websites, the pronouncements regarding the specifics of IC and its sub-components vary. This is mirrored in the academic literature: IC can include attitudes and dispositions (such as self-reflexivity, respect, tolerance, curiosity, flexibility, openness, empathy), knowledge (for instance of foreign languages, or about similarities and differences in communicative conventions and practices), and behaviours, skills and strategies (related to communication and the effective interpretation and negotiation of meaning, for example). Models of IC can either be 'compositional' (specifying individual components without necessarily clarifying the relationships between them), 'developmental' (emphasizing the sequence of acquisition), 'causal' (focusing on causal relationships between different components and stages), 'co-orientational' (stressing the procedural aspects) or adaptational (accentuating the adjustment of attitudes, understanding and behaviours towards others (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

The respective view of what IC actually exists of depends on a range of decisions taken on the theoretical, methodological and political-normative level (for overviews see Risager, 2007, 2011; Zotzmann, 2014). Theoretical assumptions about underlying concepts such as *culture*, *identity*, *language* and *communication* and their interrelationship can be articulated from rather essentialist perspectives at one end of the spectrum to postmodern or poststructuralist (anti-essentialist) understandings at the other. Whereas proponents of the former (e.g., Hofstede, 1991, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) view culture as a mindset of people who live in a particular national or regional territory, authors influenced by postmodernism and poststructuralist thinking strongly object to the idea of homogeneous groups and emphasize the inherent fluidity and diversity of all cultural processes. Authors such as Byram (1997, 2009) seem to have moved to some degree from the former perspective to the latter over time.

Notwithstanding, the term competence cuts across ontological and normative differences and has been embraced by a variety of authors. The most influential model was developed by Byram in his book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (1997). Commissioned by the Council of Europe, the model was intended to provide clearly defined and measurable components of IC in the context of foreign-language learning. Byram divided IC into five *savoirs*: Knowledge about different cultures, the ability to 'to operate' the 'knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and

interaction' (p. 61), the willingness to learn more about other cultural practices, openness towards relativization of taken-for-granted assumptions, and the ability to critically evaluate cultural products and practices.

In 2013, Houghton attempted to revise Byram's model by adding *savoir se transformer*: the ability to change based on conscious decisions (Houghton, 2013, p. 313). Her approach is interesting as it emphasizes the importance of values in intercultural learning. The author assumes that particular stages in the development of IC are identifiable and can, therefore, potentially be subjected to formative or summative assessment. The five distinct and sequential phases which, according to her, can be made 'visible in potentially assessable ways' (Houghton, 2013, p. 311) include at the lower end an 'analysis of self', in particular one's own values, followed by 'analysis of Other': an exploration of the values of the interlocutor by using non-judgmental, empathy-oriented communication strategies' (Houghton, 2013, p. 312). In stage 3 ('Critical Analysis') students are guided towards the identification of similarities and differences between these two different sets of values, which they then evaluate in stage 4 according to 'explicit criteria'. In the final stage ('Identity-Development') they decide whether or not to change in response to the dialogue with the interlocutor. Note that change is at the centre of this framework, a point which I will come to back later.

Authors who are informed by postmodernist and poststructuralist ideas share the idea that culture and identity are always multiple, complex and in a constant state of being made and remade (Blommaert & Backus, 2011; Dervin, 2011; Kramsch, 2009; Risager, 2007). The focus is on what culture *does*, namely the active construction of meaning. Culture, as Street (1993, p. 23) famously phrased it, 'is a verb'. Kramsch (2009, pp. 118, 2011), for example, stresses the need to see beyond the dualities of national languages and national cultures and calls for the development of 'symbolic competence', which she defines as 'less a collection of *savoirs* or stable knowledges and more a savviness, i.e., a combination of knowledge, experience and judgment'. Holliday (2011), Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Canajagarah (2012) likewise argue, albeit from different philosophical positions, that culture is not an entity that pre-exists communication but a category that individuals draw upon when they co-construct identities in instances of communication. All three authors, therefore, call for critical cultural awareness and the ability to deconstruct (neo)essentialist and unjust discourses and representations of 'self' and 'other'. My position is probably closest to this group of authors—diverse as they are.

I agree for example with Kramsch's (2009) poststructuralist view that we need to understand the 'discursive practices between people who speak different languages and occupy different and sometimes unequal subject positions' (p. 360), but in order to so, I argue later in this chapter, we actually need to understand the social, economic and political conditions that enable particular subject positions.

A very different perspective on IC is advanced by researchers inspired by postmodernism who investigate the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF). Jenkins et al. (2011, p. 297) for instance, in their account of IC, emphasize flexibility above all, and the willingness and ability to accommodate and negotiate meaning in complex situations with speakers from different 'lingua-cultures'. In a similar vein Nunn (2011) claims that IC includes the abilities to 'negotiate interim pragmatic norms with interlocutors' (Nunn, 2011, p. 11) and to 'adjust to unpredictable multicultural situations' (Nunn, 2011, p. 8). According to this author, transferability between contexts is key:

> Transferability is the ability to use, adjust or develop knowledge and skills learnt in one context in unknown and often unpredictable contexts. All communication can require us to deal with the unpredictable but Intercultural Communicators need to be even more prepared for the unexpected. (Nunn, 2011, p. 11)

The decontextualization of IC and the decentring of the subject is particularly pronounced by Finkbeiner (2009), who uses the metaphor of the *Global Positioning System* (GPS). She argues that currently we are being 'exposed, surrounded and influenced by many different cultural representations and perspectives' (Finkbeiner, 2009, p. 152) and, therefore, need to be able to process and adapt to this multiplicity. One's 'prior knowledge, belief system and values' (Finkbeiner, 2009, p. 155) has, therefore, to be constantly relativized in relation to incoming 'new data' from other incongruent perspectives.

The perspectives reviewed here show that the term IC is an 'empty signifier' that can be filled with a variety of meanings depending on the ontological, epistemological and normative position of the respective author. Despite substantial differences in theoretical perspectives, there is a noticeable shift from defining IC as cognitive knowledge to more procedural views. My present concern, however, cuts across the structuralist or poststructuralist/

postmodernist divide. I engage with views that hold that dispositions, knowledge, behaviour and strategies are identifiable, predictable, teachable, learnable and, at least in principle, measurable (Stevens, 2010, p. 190). The common focus on outcomes and performance is, as I outline in the following section, characteristic of CBE.

CBE and Intercultural Education

CBE emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of vocational education and training in the USA and Europe. They have since become ubiquitous in a large number of countries and a variety of institutions, covering the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Arguelles & Gonczi, 2000).

The salient feature of CBE in comparison with other educational discourses is the emphasis on competent performance and applicability of knowledge. Students are meant to be able to *act* on the basis of what they learned; knowledge that is not 'useful' for real-world tasks becomes marginalized. CBE is thus closely linked to the idea that educational institutions have to respond primarily to the demands of the economic sphere rather than, for example, civil society. As the University of Warwick expresses it: 'As employers' requirements for their global workforce change, graduates […] must adapt to prosper' (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/degrees/msc/). In the wake of this shift of focus, the arts and humanities, the social sciences and physical education—all of which do not generate tangible surplus value—have experienced cuts in funding across a variety of contexts in the UK higher-education system. Internationally, curricula have become strikingly similar in their emphasis on vocationally relevant knowledge that is immediately applicable in real-world contexts ('employability'), that can be assessed for its market value ('competence'), and that needs to be constantly updated ('lifelong learning').

In order to turn novices into competent agents in professional areas, the effective performances of experts in specific task-based situations have to be identified, described and then segmented into competence standards:

> Competence-based education tends to be a form of education that derives a curriculum from an analysis of a prospective or actual role in modern society and that attempts to certify student progress on the basis of demonstrated performance in some or all aspects of that role. (Grant et al., 1979, p. 6, cited in Biemans, Nieuwenhuis, Poell, Mulder, & Wesselink, 2004)

Although descriptors of IC are not usually derived from empirical research on 'experts' (e.g., successful multilingual interlocutors), the identified behaviours, dispositions and knowledge are nevertheless assumed to generate 'effective' intercultural communication. Once identified, these competences and their sub-components suggest objectivity, clarity and accountability of the learning process. Byram and Guillherme (2010, p. 5) have already pointed to the inherent contradiction of the terminology:

> The expression intercultural competence seems to entail quite paradoxical meanings within it. The concept of competence is often used to seize the dynamics of something fluid and unpredictable implied by an intercultural relation and communication with notions of skills, abilities and capacities, and then to describe and evaluate them. On the other hand, the word intercultural expresses the impact of the unexpected, the surprising, the potential rather than the pre-structured, the foreseen or the expectable.

As Jones and Moore (1995, p. 81) describe it, CBE is particularly attractive to administrators and policy makers because of the 'disaggregation of different skills and measurable standards of performance', rather than its 'intrinsic viability'. For the case of intercultural learning this outcome and performance orientation is particularly problematic. Again here, questions arise as to what particular competences and their sub-components such as 'reflectivity', 'open-mindedness', 'flexibility', and 'adaptability'—to name but a few—mean in concrete terms. Rather than abstract and monolithic dispositions that can be taught, observed in performance and validated as 'outcomes', they are highly context-specific attitudes based on people's evaluations of the particular situation they find themselves in. For the same reason, the manifestation of these dispositions is not absolute but gradual:

Individuals might be *more or less* reflective or *more or less* open-minded, depending on an infinite number of situational, psychological, emotional, sociocultural and other factors by which human beings are influenced. Developing explicit criteria for what counts as a successful manifestation of a particular level of disposition in a particular context would constitute a monumental task.

Time and space are other factors that raise concerns. Whereas professional experts, for instance, acquire their knowledge through long-term involvement and practice in real-world contexts, students are assumed to reach similar performance levels in a far shorter time span and mostly inside a classroom, a space that is characterized by entirely different interpersonal

relations from the target situation. In the case of intercultural education this raises a variety of questions, above all how engagement with diversity can be fostered in a social space (the university) that is effectively closed off to the majority of people by gate-keeping mechanisms such as academic entry requirements, language exams, and tuition fees (in the case of for-profit or semi-privatized institutions). Most approaches to intercultural education circumvent this problem through a focus on social constructions of otherness in a variety of written, spoken and multimodel texts. There is little research, to my knowledge, that validates whether deconstruction as a pedagogic strategy influences actual behaviour in the real world, especially in situations of conflict. It is also unclear how a university can 'produce' interculturally competent graduates in the pre-specified time frame of their respective degree programme, that is, what kind of endpoint of intercultural learning can be reasonably reached at the time of graduation. The criteria for a communicative behaviour to count as 'successful' or 'effective' or, for that matter, 'unsuccessful' or 'ineffective' are usually not made explicit.

In addition to this, tasks or problems might be ill-defined. A reassessment and reframing of a particular problem requires, however, knowledge and critical reflection rather than flexibility and accommodation strategies. One has to engage in depth with the specifics of the context and situation, the interests that are at stake, and the values individuals hold in relation to them. The intercultural literature, however, often shies away from an engagement with problems rooted in social and material realities. This applies to both structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives: Whereas the former tend to 'culturalize' socioeconomic issues, postmodern and poststructuralist approaches often focus squarely on the discursive level. As I discuss in the next section, this detachment from the circumstances and conditions people find themselves in and refer to cannot do justice to the nature of lay normativity and is, therefore, ill-equipped to account for the reasons people have for being, acting and relating the way they do.

Lay Normativity and the Nature of Values

As outlined earlier, the ideal competent intercultural speaker is often portrayed as highly flexible, self-reflective, open to accommodate others and willing to change in the process. Altering one's socioculturally influenced taken-for-granted assumptions, habitual practices, and values is, however, not a straightforward matter and can hardly be described as a 'competence'

(Byram, Bribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Coulby, 2006). Values, in particular, are no simple 'social constructs': Humans generally aim to flourish and avoid suffering and, therefore, need continuously to evaluate their environment, themselves and others, their actions and those of others, and the reciprocal effects of these behaviours (Sayer, 2011, p. 18). Values are thus essential to our well-being and integral to our perception and assessment of the world. They refer to.

> things we consider worth cherishing and realizing in our lives. Since judgments of worth are based on reasons, values are things we have good reasons to cherish, which in our well-considered view deserve our allegiance and ought to form part of the good life. (Parekh, 2000, p. 127)

This means that people usually do not act upon and relate to the world in a hyperflexible manner, ready to constantly accommodate to others and to relativize their own taken-for-granted assumptions. On the contrary, they commonly have a stake in particular situations and morally evaluate what they experience. They might be self-reflective and open to change their perceptions and dispositions but it is neither realistic nor desirable to prioritize flexibility and accommodation as these qualities are largely context-dependent. Tolerance, for instance, is a concept that is often used in descriptions of IC, but tolerance is by no means a transferable disposition; instead it is closely tied to an evaluation of a specific situation. The same individual who might be tolerant in one situation might choose not to be in a different context, and for particular reasons. The same applies to respect: In response to Tony Blair's call to teach school children to 'respect religion' in order to counter religious radicalization, Frances (2014) argues: 'Respect per se cannot provide children with the skills they need to navigate their relationships with each other, or in the wider world outside of the school gates. And in any case, not all ideas are worthy of respect'. Instead of treating—in this case—religion as something problematic that needs 'respect' Frances suggests enhancing knowledge about religion, as well as non-religious identities. This 'religious literacy' would help children to engage critically 'with ideologies and ideas, not just [be] aware of their contours'. The fact that people have reasons for being, acting and relating in particular ways does not mean that these values cannot be misguided, fallacious or ideological. They refer to a reality outside themselves but are also mediated through discourses in specific sociocultural contexts. The appeal to tolerance itself is, for example, very

often imbued with power relations, that is, it is commonly addressed to members of a majority with the resources to exert influence on minorities in the hope that they will refrain from doing so (Mendus, 1989, p. 8). Tolerance is thus very often reduced to 'a form of charity' (MacDonald & O'Regan, 2013, p. 1015). The fact that values are discursively mediated and licensed through specific historically shaped social practices should, however, not lead to the conclusion that they do not have a referent outside their own. As a matter of fact, their fallibility makes it all the more necessary to engage with the aspect of social reality to which they actually refer. Willingness to change is at least partially dependent on the availability of competing accounts.

Confronting individuals with competing or maybe even better accounts will not necessarily bring about transformative learning as Houghton (2013), as described above, seems to assume. The degree and depth of self-reflectivity and willingness to change ultimately depends on the respective subject: Individuals react in different ways to experiences that are incongruent with their current frames of reference; some are more reflective, others might resist taking into account competing viewpoints or refuse to change on the basis of discrepancies (Archer, 2003). Individuals also differ in terms of previous experiences and critical events in their lives, which set the stage for their cognitive and emotional openness. They differ in terms of their knowledge, understanding, judgements and creativity, among a variety of other capabilities that are essential for learning (Sayer, 2011). Thus, while we can encourage intercultural learning, we cannot, on the basis of what we teach, expect students to change, let alone *perform* competently in contexts of diversity—whatever that is supposed to mean. We also need to be very careful not to assume that we, as teachers, enjoy privileged access to a 'rationally ordered "transcultural" totality' (MacDonald & O'Regan, 2013, p. 1008). Our own claims are, of course, also fallible and contested, and we need to constantly turn our attention to these taken-for-granted assumptions in dialogue with others. Ultimately, as the same authors (MacDonald & O'Regan, 2013, p. 1016) argue, 'it is necessary to strive not to finish with just *the one*—but all the time to keep a reflexive eye on *the many*'.

To repeat, I am not advocating that we abolish concepts such as tolerance, open-mindedness or self-reflectivity. On the contrary, I think they are essential for intercultural education, and intercultural education can, in turn, contribute to the common good. My argument is purely that these cannot be conceptualized as context-independent pre-defined

sub-components of 'competence'. Instead, it is important to engage with the reasons individuals have for valuing one form of being, acting and relating in particular contexts. To this end, we have to take seriously the social and material realities people inhabit, refer to and have a stake in, and this requires engagement with economic, political and sociological theory, both in our academic reasoning and pedagogic practice.

The disengagement with the social and material reality people inhabit and with the reasons they have for valuing what they value, does not only lead to conceptual and pedagogic problems, it can also entail ethical relativism. We might perpetuate the idea that values are individual preferences and as such not susceptible to different interpretations and critical reflection. Again, this is a gross misunderstanding of the nature of values, as Dupré (2001, p. 129) explains:

> The most obvious point is that to treat altruism, morality, or accepted social norms simply as tastes that some people happen to have—I like candy and fast cars, you like morality and oysters—is grossly to misplace the importance of norms of behaviour in people's lives. Morality is what for many people makes sense of their lives, not just one among a range of possible consumables. Perhaps there are people for whom what primarily makes sense of their lives is the acquisition of cars or oysters. But most of us, I suppose, would consider this pathological, and would not consider that such lives made much sense.

The reasons for this disengagement are varied. As outlined earlier, over the past decades, research on interculturality has tended towards a predominantly anti-essentialist stance and stressed the fluidity, performativity and inherent hybridity of all cultural processes. Friedman (2002, p. 24) identifies

> a fascination as well as a desire for the hybrid, not just as an interesting meeting between cultures but as a kind of solution to what is perceived as one (if not the major) problem of humankind, *essentialism*, in the sense of collective identification based on similarity, imagined or real, on the shared values and symbols that are so common in all forms of 'cultural absolutism'.

According to the same author, anti-essentialists do not only critique nation-based categories in terms of their underlying essentialist concepts, categories and assumptions, they reject the entire 'family of terms that convey closure, boundedness' (Friedman, 2002, p. 25). They attempt to

reveal the constructed nature of such categories, and try to show the 'true' hybrid and contingent nature of societies. Sayer (1999, p. 34, see also Fay, 1996, p. 113) describes this theoretical perspective as 'interpretivism', designating a 'tendency to reduce social life wholly to the level of meaning, ignoring material change and what happens to people, regardless of their understandings'.

While anti-essentialists are right in their critique of discourses and practices that label groups of people in ways that suppress difference, essentialism is neither always associated with nationalist ideas nor is it *essentially* wrong:

> essentialists need not assert that all members of a class are identical, in every respect, only that they have some features in common. It is therefore not necessarily guilty of homogenising and 'flattening difference'; it all depends which features are held to be essential, and it is a substantive, empirical question—and not a matter of ontological fiat—whether such common, essential properties exist. (Sayer, 2011, p. 456)

The problem, as the same author points out, is thus not the assertion of sameness or difference, but the mistaken attribution or denial of particular characteristics. Racism, for instance, is wrong on both counts, as it is based on the one hand on 'spurious claims about differences which actually have no significance, and on the other denial of differences—through the stereotyping characteristic of cultural essentialism—which are significant' (Sayer, 2011, p. 457). Conversely, denying sameness and 'asserting instead difference to the point of implosion into "de-differentiation"' (McLennan, 1996, quoted in Sayer, 2011, p. 455) runs into the danger of overlooking durable structures and power relations that influence individuals.

Evaluations and (mis)representations of others are not exclusively based on essentialist categories in people's minds; they are often rooted in socioeconomic differences and injustices. This, however, is the pressing question that an understanding of culture as fluid and procedural leaves open; namely what kind of meanings become articulated in a particular communicative situation, by whom and for what kind of reasons. In other words, we need to put.

> semiotic processes into context. This means locating them within their necessary dialectical relations with persons (hence minds, intentions, desires, bodies), social relations, and the material world—locating them within the practical engagement of embodied and socially organised persons with the material world. (Fairclough, Jessop, & Sayer, 2001, p. 7)

Conclusion: The Hyperflexible Intercultural Being

My intention in this chapter was to provide an answer to the question of whether it is theoretically sensible and ethically desirable to conceptualize the outcomes of intercultural learning as 'competence'. My argument was twofold. First, CBE prioritizes performance over reflection and thus distort attempts for mutual recognition and increased understanding. Second, CBE is ill-equipped to account for lay-normativity as it ignores the reasons people have for being, acting and relating to others in particular contexts. It is thus unlikely to bring about the transformative learning that intercultural educators seem to strive for.

A competence-based approach to intercultural education seems to have little intrinsic validity. Instead it is driven by the marketization of the education sector and the concomitant pressure to provide a well-trained and flexible workforce. The global graduate is supposed to embody the qualities employers look for in an ideal way: She is internationally versatile, ideally multilingual, and effective in contexts of diversity. Due to her flexibility she can be relocated, will voluntarily go wherever job opportunities arise, and can adapt to local circumstances. She is willing to distance herself from her taken-for-granted assumptions and to relativize her values according to the demands of the situation. In summary, the interculturally competent global graduate is the ideal 'entrepreneurial self' who regulates her own conduct according to the demands of the market:

> she is not just an employee or student, but also simultaneously a product to be sold, a walking advertisement, a manager of her résumé, a biographer of her rationales, and an entrepreneur of her possibilities. […] The *summum bonum* of modern agency is to present oneself as *eminently* flexible in all and every respect. (Mirowski, 2013, p. 108)

This hyperflexibility comes—normally—with emotional costs. As the Competency Framework for Global People, Spencer-Oatey and Stadler (2009) H. & Stadler, S. (2009). has quite correctly identified, global graduates also need coping strategies and resilience.

I would suggest that we need to re-think our own values—or reasons for action—as academics and teachers who aim to foster intercultural learning in our students. In order to contribute to a more just and

equal society—if we choose these to be our aims—that offers better conditions for mutual understanding and recognition, we need to move away from the idea that higher education is there to provide a 'useful', adaptable and flexible workforce for highly volatile labour markets. Although one function of the university is surely to educate competent professionals, higher education also has its own *raison d'être* (Barnett, 1990, p. 8): It has a vital social role in enhancing scientific *as well as* cultural, human and social development. This is particularly important in the current context where few social spheres are unscathed by alleged 'logic' of the market:

> If there are tendencies in modern society for thought, discourse and action to be constrained by a number of dominant forces, higher education has the function of helping to maintain and develop a plurality of styles of thought and action. In this sense, higher education has to be a countervailing force. (Barnett, 1990, pp. 65–66)

In the case of intercultural education, we might start by rejecting the output, performance orientation and concomitant terminology of the competence approach altogether.

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