TEACHING CULTURE AND DEVELOPING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN SCHOOLS WITH ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract: The development of cultural diversity awareness (CDA) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is recognised as an integral aspect of foreign language teaching and the teaching of linguistic competence due to the inevitable social and cultural connections that stem from globalisation and mobility. Parents who send their children to international schools expect them to become global citizens. Therefore, international schools in which English is used as the lingua franca follow curricula and use teaching materials that can be adapted to the teaching of culture. At the same time, they endeavour to employ teachers who have the experience or flexibility to work with students from different cultures in multicultural settings. The present study explores teachers' attitudes and practices with respect to the development of CDA and ICC, as well as their students' responses. The study piloted classroom observation procedures for subsequent use in larger-scale research by the author on the development of CDA and ICC. The pilot study is based on the thematic content analysis of classes in literature and English as an additional language (EAL), observed in an international school in Budapest. The findings reveal that both types of classes included a variety of culture-related activities, although these were mainly limited to English-speaking countries and lacked a critical approach. However, the cultural activities explored and described in the present study can be transferred to the context of the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL).

Keywords: cultural diversity awareness, intercultural communicative competence, lingua franca, English as an additional language, literature

1 Introduction

Culture teaching to develop students' cultural diversity awareness (CDA) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is recognised in the literature as an essential aspect of foreign language teaching, since accelerated globalisation and mobility have necessitated social and cultural interactions in multicultural contexts (Byram et al., 2002; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008). International schools that use English medium instruction (EMI), therefore, design their curricula and textbooks to be compatible with the development of CDA and ICC. They also employ teachers who are familiar with a variety of cultures and who are able to manage culturally diverse classes.

The components of ICC were listed by Byram (1997) as *knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovering and interaction,* and *critical cultural awareness/political education.* Barrett et al. (2014) added *action* to the list, as a way of creating interculturally competent individuals who have "the ability to communicate

effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 149). Barrett et al. (2014) claimed that the *action* component of ICC provides learners with a basis for becoming global citizens, since it enables them to take action in the world. Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) advised a critical approach to the teaching of culture and the adoption of a contentious and controversial perspective in order to study implicit meanings in the target culture. He recommended using debates and arguments to explore profound and complex cultural patterns, making it possible to be critical of the controversial cultural norms that exist in every nation. He also suggested that teachers should encourage their students to research the deeper aspects of cultures and discuss deviations from cultural norms. Gómez Rodríguez (2015b) referred to Kubota's (2004) critical multiculturalism and Byram's (1997) ICC components as ways to help students achieve critical ICC. With respect to the former, he mentioned in his study raising students' awareness about social inequality related to the gender, race, class, politics, ideologies, and power of specific cultural groups. He also pointed out how critical multiculturalism was supported by Pennycook (1999) and Kumaravadivelu (2001), who recommended encouraging students to critically discuss issues of power, oppression, marginalisation, and exclusion to raise their awareness of oppression and to generate social change. He emphasised how this critical multiculturalism is associated with the *knowledge, skills*, and *attitudes* proposed by Byram (1997). These frameworks help to raise students' *critical cultural awareness*, leading them to critically examine the similarities and differences between their own and the target culture. The study by Gómez Rodríguez (2015b) also suggested that *critical cultural awareness* can enable students to analyse complex elements of *deep culture* that are not homogeneous.

One of the main aims of the present study was to pilot a classroom observation procedure for later use in the author's larger-scale research. It is worth saying here that the pilot study was conducted to understand the feasibility of an approach to be followed in the researcher's larger-scale study. Consequently, the pilot study contributed to the understanding on how the data collection and analysis could be done without using an observation protocol and what further steps would be necessary to obtain additional details about the phenomena. The present pilot study primarily investigated teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to aiming to develop students' CDA and ICC in an international school in Budapest in which English is used as the medium for intercultural communication. Another aim of the study was to explore the students' responses to the development of CDA and ICC. Although no specific observation instrument was used, the study was based on ICC theories, approaches, and techniques, including practical activities recommended in the literature (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014; Byram et al., 2002; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2004; Reid, 2015). It also took the ICC components proposed by Byram (1997) and Barrett et al. (2014) as references to determine which ICC components students displayed in response to the development of CDA and ICC. *Critical cultural awareness* (Byram, 1997) and *critical intercultural competence* (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015a; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015b; Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013) were also considered as ways to help students think deeply about and adopt critical attitudes towards their own and other cultures and examine the reasons behind cultural norms and behaviours.

This paper begins with a presentation of the theoretical background and a definition of the relevant terms, including culture, CDA, ICC, components of ICC, and the development of ICC through English language lessons. Relevant studies that have included the development of CDA and ICC are then presented. The paper also includes a description of the methodology used for data collection and analysis; findings and discussion; limitations; and a conclusion.

2 Theoretical and empirical background

2.1 Key terms and definitions

In this section, the key terms and definitions on which the study depends are presented with respect to culture teaching and the development of CDA and ICC. More specifically, culture, cultural diversity awareness, communicative competence, and intercultural and intercultural communicative competence, which are the pillars of the study, are defined and explained.

2.1.1 Culture

The concept of culture has been described in various ways and is seen as a difficult term to define (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Useem et al., 1963). Useem et al. (1963) point out that "culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings" (p. 169). Thus, if culture is acquired and learned, it can also be taught. As Lustig and Koester (1999) stated, "culture is also taught by the explanations people receive for the natural and human events around them" (pp. 31–32). The definition of culture given by Turner (1999) is also relevant to the present study. Focusing on language as a tool by which culture is presented and transmitted from one generation to the next, he stated that "language is the major mechanism through which culture produces and reproduces social meanings" (p. 52). Importantly, from the perspective of the present study, the above definitions also emphasise how culture is learned and taught through a language.

2.1.2 Cultural diversity awareness

Although the term *cultural diversity awareness* is often used in the literature (Brown, 2004; Larke, 1990), it has not been specifically defined. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with *cross-cultural awareness* (e.g., Dasli, 2011; Knutson, 2006). This latter term was used by Kramsch and Widdowson (1998) to emphasise the understanding of "the Other at the other side of the border by learning his/her national language" in the context of "two cultures or two languages" (p. 81). However, Damen (1987) referred to more than two cultures, including one's own, stating that

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

In light of the above, the definition of CDA can be expanded to refer to the state of being conscious of various different cultures as a result of acquiring and internalizing knowledge about aspects of one's own and different cultures, including visible, hidden, and controversial elements, therefore allowing people to compare their own culture with the culture of others in order to identify similarities and differences, helping them to gain criticality, openness, cognitive and affective flexibility, and acceptance. To be more precise, while people may not always understand or accept certain cultural norms of their own or

others' cultures, they can accept the existence of cultural differences or the reasons for people's behaviors that possibly originate from their cultures.

The following section elaborates on the concepts of intercultural competence (IC) and ICC, demonstrating how communicative competence is taken as the starting point by theorists of IC and ICC. The components of ICC and aspects of culture, which are essential to the development of students' (critical) CDA and ICC, are also presented.

2.1.3 An overview of communicative competence, IC, and ICC

Byram (1997) proposed the concepts of IC and ICC, taking van Ek's (1986) six competencies that he expanded the components of communicative competence, which are adopted from Hymes' (1972) concept of communicative competence and developed by Canale and Swain (1980). The communicative competence components that Canale and Swain (1980) listed are *grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence,* and *strategic competence, and* van Ek (1986) added *sociocultural* and *social competence.* However, Byram (1997) and Soler and Jordà (2007) criticized these models since learners' social and cultural identities and competencies are not considered, and native speakers of English and first language acquisition are taken as models, which makes foreign language learning difficult.

Byram (1997) stated that IC is the ability to interact with people from different countries and cultures in one's own language. However, according to him, ICC refers to communication with people of other cultures in a foreign language. Although IC and ICC are generally used interchangeably, ICC is instead used to describe and interpret the interaction of linguistically and culturally diverse students in English, which is used as the lingua franca and medium of instruction at the observed school throughout the study.

2.1.4 ICC and the components of ICC

ICC is defined by Bennett and Bennett (2004) as the ability for effective communication in cross-cultural situations. Likewise, Byram (1997) stated that ICC refers to interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds in a foreign language. Byram and Fleming (1998) also claimed that an interculturally competent person "has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly" (p. 9). In light of the explanations, it can therefore be said that ICC allows people to communicate effectively with others from different countries in various cultural settings. The present study primarily focuses on the development of ICC in language learning contexts.

With respect to the development of ICC in language learning, Byram (1997) identified the components of ICC as *knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating*, and *skills of discovering and interaction*, as well as *critical cultural awareness/political education* for the integration of intercultural communication. Byram (1997) described the components of ICC as follows:

- *Knowledge:* "Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (p. 51).

- *Attitudes*: "Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (p. 50).
- *Skills of interpreting and relating:* "Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own" (p. 52).
- *Skills of discovery and interaction*: "Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (p. 52).
- *Critical cultural awareness / political education*: "Ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (p. 53).

Similarly to Byram (1997), Barrett et al. (2014) listed the components of IC as *attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills*, and *actions.* According to the authors, *attitudes* include valuing different cultures, respecting people from different cultural backgrounds, being open to/curious about, and enthusiastic to learn about/from people who belong to different cultures and perspectives, being willing to empathise with people who have other cultural affiliations, questioning what is 'normal' in one's existing knowledge and experience, being willing to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, and finding ways to communicate and cooperate with people from a different culture to one's own.

Barrett et al. (2014) asserted that *knowledge and understanding* contribute to IC and include an understanding of all cultural groups; an understanding and awareness of other people's and one's own stereotypes, preconceptions, discrimination, and assumptions; and an understanding of the impact of the individual's own language on their experience of other people and the world. In addition, they listed communicative awareness; verbal and nonverbal communicative conventions; a knowledge of the values, beliefs, discourses, and practices of different cultures; and an understanding of cultural, individual, and societal processes.

Barrett et al. (2014) listed *skills* such as multiperspectivity; the skill of discovering other cultures; the skill of interpreting and relating the values, beliefs, and practices of other cultures to one's own; empathy; cognitive flexibility, critical evaluation, and judgement regarding cultural practices, products, discourses, beliefs, and values; the skill of adapting one's own behaviour to a new cultural context; linguistic, discourse, and sociolinguistic skills; plurilingual skills; the skills of interpreting, translating, and explaining; and the skill of acting as a mediator in intercultural exchanges.

The last intercultural component proposed by Barrett et al. (2014) is *action*. According to the authors, all four components – *attitudes, knowledge and understanding*, *skills,* and *action* – are crucial for IC. However, they highlighted that *action* is essential for putting all the other components into practice. They suggested that *action* includes seeking opportunities to engage with people from other cultural affiliations; communicating and cooperating effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds; discussing different perspectives and views so as to construct common ones; taking action and defending human rights regardless of cultural differences; expressing opposition to discrimination and prejudice; taking a stand against cultural stereotypes and prejudices; encouraging positive attitudes towards cultural affiliations; and being a mediator in cultural conflicts in different situations. Barrett et al. (2014) claimed that the *action* component of IC provides learners with a basis for being global citizens, since it enables them to take action in the world. They described how education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE) empower

learners to play an active part in democratic life and contribute to building and defending human rights in society in the same way as the *action* component.

The intercultural components and items described above are used in the present study as criteria to explore how culture is presented and how the development of ICC is targeted. In addition to the ICC components, aspects of culture were also explored in the present study. The following section introduces aspects of culture, including *big C, little c,* and *deep culture*.

2.2 Aspects of culture

The present study focuses on how culture is perceived and taught by language teachers and how it is (re)presented in language classes and teaching materials. Aspects of culture, and what they refer to in language education thus require a detailed explanation to clarify the analysis that is integral to the present study.

2.2.1 Big C culture, little c culture, and deep culture

When discussing the teaching of culture in language education, it is essential to define the different aspects of culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) reported that some language teachers associate culture with history, geography, literary works, or works of art. Lázár et al. (2007) stated that the subjects listed by these teachers, which are undoubtedly important, can be categorised under the umbrella term 'big C culture' or 'civilisation', as used by Halverson (1985) (p. 7). *The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project* (1996) defined *big C* culture as products such as politics, economics, history, literature, science, and the fine arts. Lázár et al. (2007) argued that there are equally vital elements of culture that should have a place in language classrooms. According to them, *little c culture*, as opposed to *big C* culture, includes less visible and tangible aspects of cultures. Elements of *little c* culture are listed by Xiao (2010) as food, lifestyles, holidays, values, and customs. Likewise, the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996) referred to *little c* culture as "housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all the patterns of behaviour" (p. 44). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) also added attitudes and behaviours to the elements of *little c* culture.

Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) described *surface culture* as static and immediately visible. He pointed out that EFL textbooks often include the static and congratulatory themes of surface culture. He listed the topics of surface culture that are typically included in EFL textbooks as holidays, food, tourist attractions, and famous people. These elements, he argued, are insufficient to give students an understanding of the target culture because they do not provide opportunities for dealing with sociocultural communication in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, he stated that culture is not static but transformative, since it is constantly changing in multiple ways in the process of global communication. He therefore argued that if cultures are considered and presented statically, as is the case in the EFL field, it leads to the creation of stereotypes, since not all communities share and follow the same cultural norms. Regarding the congratulatory nature of surface culture, Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) indicated that although culture is contentious rather than merely congratulatory, EFL education focuses on the positive characteristics of other cultures and emphasises the most symbolic elements that define those cultural groups. As a result, students never learn about the authentic cultural behaviours of nations in all their conflictive sociocultural reality.

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

The following section introduces some of the approaches and techniques that are recommended in the literature for the development of CDA and ICC. Practical activities that can be used in any context in which English is taught are also introduced and described.

2.3 The Development of CDA and ICC in teaching English as a second or foreign language and EMI: Approaches and techniques

ICC components include *attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness/political education,* equip learners with intercultural competency skills to take *action* for mutual understanding and effective communication in different cultural contexts in a foreign language (Barrett et al., 2014; Byram, 1997). This section covers possible pedagogical and educational approaches, techniques, and activities for developing ICC, based on theories of teaching culture and developing ICC (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014; Byram et al., 2002; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2004; Reid, 2015). In what follows, these approaches, techniques, and activities are grouped according to their content.

2.3.1 Ground rules and principles

Byram et al. (2002) argued that promoting an intercultural dimension in the classroom requires "procedural ground rules" for discussion and debate tasks, which should be established on the basis of human rights (p. 20). According to the rules outlined by the authors, students need to listen to one another and take turns; the person who moderates the discussion deserves respect; the use of polite language is a must; racist, sexist, and homophobic comments or expressions are unacceptable; students need to show respect when they comment on or describe people; students are expected to challenge stereotypes; and a respectful tone is required. The authors also maintained that learners and teachers are expected to challenge generalisations and stereotypes, as this is essential for developing IC. Since the authors argued that IC is developed by sharing knowledge and discussing values and opinions, they recommended peer learning, which takes place when students learn from each other by comparing their own culture with that of their interlocutor. The authors also recommended teaching students to critically analyse the stereotypes and prejudices in the texts or images they read or see.

Liddicoat (2004) listed five pedagogical principles for intercultural language teaching and learning: "active construction, making connection, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility" (p. 21). He described these principles as follows:

- *Active construction*: Learners need to acquire knowledge of their own and the target culture they are learning. They also need to be able to recognise differences between cultures and develop solutions to intercultural issues.
- *Making connection*: A comparative perspective that allows students to compare and contrast cultures is essential. Learners are motivated to make a connection between their culture, language, and knowledge and the target culture they are learning about in the classroom. The students' own culture thus needs a place in the context of learning about other cultures.
- *Social interaction*: Learners learn and explore cultures through communication. Therefore, social interaction allows them to experience, share and discuss differences, understandings, and possible responses during conversation. It focuses on the idea that language is learned for communication.
- *Reflection*: Reflection plays a crucial role in intercultural language learning. It provides students with opportunities to respond to the target culture they are experiencing and to recognise the impacts of their new knowledge on their understanding of their own culture and that of others.
- *Responsibility*: Learners need to know that they are responsible for successful communication and need to value other cultures and languages.

2.3.2 Technique and classroom activities

Lázár et al. (2007) recommended techniques and activities to help teachers and trainers to plan or organise intercultural communication courses. They advised "brainstorming, short presentations, critical incidents, role plays and simulations, project work, ethnographic tasks, quizzes, pair and small group discussion, and discussion" (Lázár et al., 2007, pp. 16–17). The authors write the following concerning various task types:

- *Brainstorming* helps teachers and facilitators find out what participants think about specific issues.
- *Short presentations* give participants an opportunity to examine their existing knowledge and experiences and provide further information.
- *Critical incidents* raise CDA, while *role play* and *simulations* offer participants opportunities to understand what it is like to communicate with people from different cultures.
- *Projects* enhance cultural knowledge through work that participants do either together or with their teacher/trainer.
- *Ethnographic tasks* provide ideas for learning about cultures through interviews and observations.
- *Quizzes* provide precise information about cultures and motivate discussions in small groups.
- *Pair and small group discussions* prepare participants for the class discussion.
- *Discussion* is essential after each of the activities highlighted above as it allows students to exchange ideas and share their experiences and thoughts.

2.3.3 Project work

Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008) proposed a cultural project to develop students' communicative competence through four skills focusing on IC. The proposed project

comprises three stages: "explanation, collection, implementation" (p. 162). The first stage, *explanation*, requires teachers to explain to their students the concept of IC and to familiarise them with the culture of the target language they are studying. In the next step of Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2008) first stage, students are asked to explore the target culture and present it through different aspects such as family, law and order, education, power, and politics. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor referred to Cain's (1990) five-word technique, which involves students being asked to write down the first five words they think of in relation to a topic presented by the teacher. The authors claimed that this task helps students to activate their own cultural background. The second stage in Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2008) cultural project is *collection*, where students are tasked with collecting materials related to the topic that they decided to explore in the first stage. The authors recommended that learners be guided to collect materials from a variety of sources. According to the authors, this kind of task helps enhance learners' cultural awareness, since students need to ask themselves what is culturally representative of the researched topic while they are collecting the materials. In the third stage, *implementation*, learners are involved in various activities based on four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – to develop their communicative competence and cultural awareness and understanding (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008).

Project work is an approach proposed by Barrett et al. (2014) and includes topic- or theme-based tasks that can be used in schools for teaching any subject, age, and level. The authors stated that project work helps students to decide on the goals and content of the task, design their own materials, and present and evaluate them together.

2.3.4 Experiential and cooperative learning

Barrett et al. (2014) proposed three approaches to the teaching of IC in formal and informal educational settings: experiential learning, project work, and cooperative learning. *Experiential learning*, they suggested, refers to learning by doing, including "experience, comparison, analysis, reflection, and cooperative action" (p. 21). According to the authors, these are the most effective methods for developing IC if supported by the education authorities and the national/local curriculum.

Project work was presented in the previous section thus will not be discussed here. The final pedagogical approach to the development of IC recommended by Barrett et al. (2014) is *cooperative learning*. The authors suggested that cooperative learning applies certain principles of "constructivism" and an "inquiry-based approach" (p. 22). In cooperative learning, the authors argued, learners are individually responsible for their learning and all members of the class interact with one another inclusively and contribute to the task. The authors also stated that learners develop many components of IC, such as *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitudes*, through cooperative learning.

2.3.5 Emphasis on communication skills development

Reid (2015) introduced various techniques for teaching aspects of culture. Based on her research findings, she claimed that teachers primarily teach the sociocultural elements of culture, such as food, traditions, and housing. She argued that little attention is paid to sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and nonverbal communication skills and therefore recommended

the following techniques for teaching aspects of culture and developing ICC (Reid, 2015, pp. 941–943):

- *Comparison* is the most widely used technique for culture teaching and focuses on discussion of the differences between one's own culture and the target culture. Comparison within a single culture is also recommended by Reid (2015), since culture is not static but is constantly changing. She suggested that related activities can develop students' sociocultural knowledge and their sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and nonverbal competencies.
- *Cultural assimilation* is a technique that involves students being presented with a critical incident that is open to misunderstanding. The teacher explains how the incident in question differs in different cultures, including from region to region within a country.
- The *cultural capsule* focuses on a custom that is different in two cultures. Reid (2015) recommended discussing the main meal of the day in various cultures. She also suggested presenting pictures of typical meals in different countries. According to her, this kind of activity in relation to eating habits helps students develop their pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills.
- The *cultural island* is an effective technique focusing on sociocultural knowledge. Reid (2015) recommended pinning up pictures of singers, films, books, famous places, and writers to attract students' attention and create a cultural atmosphere in the classroom.
- *Reformulation* involves students telling a partner a story related to any of the activities mentioned above, while *noticing* involves paying attention to aspects of that story. Both techniques can be used to develop sociocultural knowledge and sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and nonverbal competencies.
- *Prediction* involves guessing the other half of a story or the content of a book or article based on the title, headline, or a given piece of information. It is recommended to have a more profound discussion on the topic, although this requires advanced, mature learners.
- *Teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling* (TPRS) involves acting out songs, stories, and even grammatical structures. Nonverbal communication skills, such as gestures, body language, and their meanings in different cultures, can be developed through TPRS.
- *Role play* is an effective way to practice important real-life situations – in a restaurant, shop, bus station, etc. – using intercultural communication.
- A *treasure hunt* is a research task in which students research any aspects of the target culture they are interested in and then present their projects to the class and their teacher.

The approaches and techniques presented above were investigated in the observed classes to explore the development of CDA, ICC, and ICC components. The following section introduces empirical studies that report teachers' practices regarding the development of culture teaching, CDA, and ICC.

2.4 Practices for teaching culture and developing CDA and ICC in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language and EMI: Empirical studies

Baroudi (2017) undertook a case study to investigate ICC in ELT classrooms at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in Cyprus, including practices for the promotion of

ICC. To investigate practices related to culture teaching, cultural awareness, and the development of ICC, the researcher carried out an interview-based study involving 10 instructors working at EMU and analysed the university's ELT course policy fiches. Qualitative data were collected and analysed by coding and categorising the responses. The findings of the study revealed that one in three course policy fiches addressed ICC. According to the findings of the study, the participating instructors used the following ICC-related activities in their ELT classrooms:

- Activities covering aspects of different cultures and the role of culture in the perception of ideas or attitudes.
- Activities aimed at increasing students' cultural awareness.
- Presentations, lectures, or discussions about cultural issues.
- Discussions about the similarities and differences between the students' own cultures and other cultures.
- The reading of articles about culture teaching and the development of ICC and asking students to present them in groups.
- Problem-solving tasks.
- Compare/contrast activities, in which students analysed the morphological and syntactic structure of different languages to familiarise themselves with the cultural aspects of those languages.
- Talking in pairs about how the same ceremony is celebrated in two different countries.
- Language use – learning how to invite or turn down invitations in different cultures.
- Investigating differences in perceptions and attitudes among cultures.
- Talking about Cypriot culture.

Rezaei and Naghibian (2018) investigated the role of literary texts in developing learners' ICC at the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. For this purpose, they designed an intercultural syllabus for a 14-session course on American English short stories covering various cultural topics. Thirteen volunteer undergraduate students from the science and engineering departments, with intermediate- to upper-intermediate-level English, were taught the short stories by one of the researchers. Course activities to develop learners' ICC were designed based on the researchers' experiences and the recommendations made in the study by Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011). These activities included the following:

- *Intensive reading* to identify the hidden cultural points and agenda in particular paragraphs for subsequent discussion.
- *Extensive reading* to be able to answer comprehension questions about the content of the text.
- *Cross-cultural discussions* to identify how the values, behaviours, and customs in the given culture were similar to or different from the students' own culture.
- *Critical thinking* to encourage students to think deeply and reflectively about the cultural and historical facts presented in the short stories.
- *Role play* to identify how students would act in situations similar to those depicted in the stories.

The participating students were also asked to write journal entries every week recording their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and anecdotes after each session. The journal entries were prompted by questions, based on Byram's (1997) ICC components, about the short story that the students had read. Students were asked to respond to these questions, allowing the researchers to trace the development of ICC in the participating learners. Besides

the journal entries, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the learners to shed light on issues that could not be covered by the questions reflected on in the journal entries. The data collected from the two sources – the journal entries and questions, and the interviews – were subject to content analysis. The study revealed that ICC and respect for local and Western cultures had developed among the participating students. The authors therefore stated that, based on the findings of the study, short stories taken from literature helped raise cultural awareness and develop ICC. The authors also recommended that textbook writers should include more local cultural topics.

Safa and Tofighi (2021) conducted a study to investigate ICC attitudes and practices among Iranian EFL teachers. To do this, they interviewed 100 pre-service teachers majoring in applied linguistics at MA level in different universities, as well as 100 in-service EFL teachers holding MA degrees in applied linguistics who were working in private institutions in Iran. In addition to the interview study, the researchers carried out an observational study, observing 30 randomly selected 90-minute EFL lessons. The instrument they used for the interview study was based on Byram's (1997) ICC model and Sercu's (2005) Intercultural Foreign Language Questionnaire. To analyse the collected data, factor analysis and Cronbach's internal consistency measures were applied. The findings of the study revealed that EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards the development of ICC and the components of ICC. However, they failed to develop ICC, and their practices were limited to knowledge presentation. Based on their reported findings, the researchers maintained that the teacher training programmes and the teaching experience of the EFL teachers contributed to an understanding of the need for and significance of ICC in foreign language teaching, although they did not provide teachers with adequate pedagogical skills and encouragement to implement culture teaching in practice.

Eken (2015) investigated the views and practices of EFL teachers working at a university in Turkey with respect to the development of students' ICC. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participating teachers, all of whom had a bachelor's degree in English language teaching. The data were analysed by comparing each teacher's answers with the responses given by the other participants and relating them to the research questions. The findings of the study showed that the participating teachers recognised the need to include ICC activities in their practice. The teachers suggested the following activities as ways to develop their students' ICC: inviting students to do projects with teachers from different countries; teaching students about how people live in other cultures; asking students to discuss different cultures as well as their own; getting students to read texts from different cultures; asking students to carry out research into other cultures and present the results to the class; and raising their students' awareness of world Englishes. However, the researcher reported that although the participating teachers had ideas about developing ICC, they did not know how to implement those ideas in practice. The researcher recommended that teachers read articles and books featuring the tasks and activities proposed by ICC theorists.

Although the activities listed in the above-mentioned studies were primarily used in higher educational institutions in different countries, they are commonly recommended by scholars to facilitate culture teaching and the development of intercultural competency skills (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014; Lázár et al., 2007; Liddicoat, 2004; Reid, 2015) in any level of (foreign) language classes. Therefore, they are presented as examples of developing CDA and ICC to compare if similar recommended activities were conducted and explore if different activities than the exemplified ones were discovered in the observed classes.

3 Research design

3.1 Overview of the study

The primary aim of the present paper was to pilot a classroom observation procedure that forms one of the pillars of the author's larger-scale research on the development of students' CDA and ICC in an international EMI school in Budapest. The second aim of the paper was to answer the following research questions:

(1) What attitudes and practices in relation to the development of students' ICC and CDA are demonstrated by English language teachers at the observed international school?

(2) What elements of ICC and CDA do the students demonstrate in response to the development of ICC and CDA in their English language classes at the observed international school?

The present pilot study followed a descriptive research approach in which qualitative research methods were used to explore culture teaching and the development of students' CDA and ICC in the observed school. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) stated that the main aim of using a qualitative research approach is to gain a deeper and better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, to explore and describe the English language teachers' attitudes and practices with respect to developing their students' CDA and ICC and the students' responses to the development of their ICC and CDA in their English language classes, the researcher observed classes in literature and English as an additional language (EAL) and took comprehensive descriptive field notes that were supplemented by follow-up interviews with the teachers. The data were examined using thematic content analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

3.2 Context

The present pilot study was conducted in an international school located in Budapest in which English is used as the medium of instruction. The aim was to investigate the development of students' CDA and ICC. The rationale behind choosing an EMI school for the study was the school's culturally diverse environment, as it attracts students from more than 50 nationalities.

The observed school follows the National Curriculum for England and is organised into blocks of years referred to as key stages (KS): KS1 classes include year groups 1 and 2 (i.e., children aged between 5 and 7); KS2 includes year groups 3, 4, 5, and 6 (children aged 7 to 11); KS3 includes year groups 7, 8, and 9 (children aged 11 to 14); while KS4 covers year groups 10 and 11 (children aged 14 to 16). For the purposes of the pilot study, literature classes and English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes in year groups from KS3 and KS4 were observed due to the author's familiarity with these year groups and expectations regarding the variety of cultural activities in higher primary classes. The observed classes were organised according to the teachers' schedules and were selected to avoid clashes with the author's timetable, as she works as a teacher at the same school. This meant that the

periods of class observation did not take place at regular intervals. However, literature and EAL classes for each year group were observed three times during the first term of the academic year, before the school closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown (from September 2020 to November 2020). It is worth noting here that students at the observed school mainly study works taken from British and American literature, focusing on spelling, punctuation, and grammar (SPaG) in their literature lessons. The EAL classes are organised for students who are unable to attend regular classes due to their lack of proficiency in the English language, and each year group has its own EAL class (i.e., there is one EAL class for KS2, one EAL class for KS3, etc.). The content of the EAL courses is designed for the intensive teaching of English language skills.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

Three literature classes taught in year groups 9 and 10, together with EAL classes involving year groups 7 and 8, were observed during the semester. (Students in years 9 and 10 were merged in literature lessons, while years 7 and 8 were combined in EAL classes in the observed school.) The pilot classroom observation took place on three occasions in literature classes (9&10) and in EAL classes (7&8) during the first academic term. Each observed class lasted for 90 minutes (so-called block lessons) or 60 minutes. There were 10 to 15 students in each class. The students were aged between 13 and 14 in the literature classes, while the EAL classes involved students between the ages of 11 and 13. Students came from different cultural backgrounds. The classrooms were simply designed and featured a teacher's desk, students' desks, a whiteboard, a projector, bookshelves, and posters on the walls. The researcher's presence was not disruptive for the students as they were familiar with her and with the concept of classroom visits by other teachers.

During the observations, detailed field notes were taken describing the content of the lesson (i.e., what was being taught), activities, teacher–student and student–student interactions and communication, classroom demographics, and the physical features of the classroom in relation to the examination of culture teaching and the development of CDA and ICC at the observed school. In addition to the rich field notes, the researcher sketched the observed classes, including the seating plan, furniture, and equipment, and the posters, paintings, notes, etc., on the walls. Moreover, follow-up interviews were conducted with the teachers to clarify issues that were not apparent to the researcher after the observation study.

Qualitative data analysis was used in the present study to obtain insights into how culture is taught, and into teachers' attitudes and practices with respect to the development of CDA and ICC in KS4 literature and KS3 EAL classes in an international school in Budapest. In addition to the teachers' attitudes and practices, the students' responses to the development of CDA and ICC were also observed, taking detailed notes on their behaviors and interactions with each other and the teachers.

As is common to all qualitative designs, thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) was used as a method for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The purpose of thematic analysis is thus to identify themes in the data that are essential for answering the research questions, and to interpret and make sense of those themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

No research instrument was used in the present study, since it follows an unstructured observation approach (Dörnyei, 2007). However, the study did investigate types of culture

(the target or international cultures), aspects of culture (*big C* and *little c* culture), and the intercultural components listed by Byram (1997) and Barrett et al. (2014) as *attitudes*, *knowledge and understanding*, *skills*, *critical cultural awareness / political education,* and *actions,* which are essential for the development of ICC. In addition, the present study investigated *deep culture,* which is associated with the invisible or hidden items listed among the elements of *little c* culture by Gómez Rodríguez (2015a). Although the study focused on the elements of CDA and ICC listed above, during the observation detailed notes were taken of all incidents related to culture teaching and the development of CDA and ICC.

In the present study, the thematic levels referred to by Braun and Clarke (2006) as the semantic and latent levels were used. The semantic level refers to the surface or explicit meanings of the data. By contrast, thematic analysis at the latent level identifies the underlying implications that extend the semantic content of the data. Although Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained that thematic analysis focuses on one level, both semantic and latent themes were used in the present study. In particular, the latter themes were used to examine *deep culture* and the critical approach to (either the target or international) cultures in the observed classes. After identifying the themes in the data, each theme was qualitatively described and interpreted.

3.5 Quality control and ethical issues in the study

The present pilot study followed a nonparticipant and unstructured observation approach (Dörnyei, 2007); thus, no analytical criteria were used for the classroom observation. However, the investigation was based on an extensive literature review in the field of culture teaching and the development of CDA and ICC. To ensure the credibility of the study, as recommended by Dörnyei (2007), a detailed description of each observed class was written. The field notes were then carefully reviewed, digitalised, and sent to the participating teachers for "response feedback" or "response validation", as recommended by Dörnyei (2007, p. 60). The teachers were then asked to comment (in a written form) on the draft research report to reinforce the study's credibility. Taking into consideration the participants' feedback and their explanations concerning certain aspects of the report, the field notes were meticulously reviewed and a fair copy was created. In addition to the teachers' feedback, short follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify any points that had been unclear to the researcher during the observation, to ensure confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

With respect to the data coding, it is important to point out that a co-coder should be asked to code the same data to ensure the reliability of the study. However, it is not always easy to find an available co-coder, as Dörnyei (2007) also mentioned. Where inter-coder reliability could not be provided, as was the case in the current study, the data were coded at least twice by the researcher to ensure consistency.

Before the observation took place, the school management had signed a consent form allowing the researcher to observe the designated classes. A fair explanation of the purpose of the study was provided in the consent form. The participating teachers had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Nothing was videotaped or audiotaped during the study, although hard and soft copies of the classroom materials used by the teachers were collected or photographed. After the observed classes, the teachers were asked about the activities, incidents, or words/sentences used to ensure correct understanding of their intentions or for the purposes of clarification.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to the development of CDA and ICC in KS4

Literature lessons in years 9 and 10 were taught by two different teachers. Two of the observed literature lessons, lasting a total of 120 minutes, were taught by one teacher, while the other teacher took the other literature lesson, lasting 60 minutes. The class consisted of 11 students from China, Nigeria, Singapore, the USA, Qatar, Turkey, Iraq, and Georgia. The first teacher began the lesson with riddles, as a warm-up activity. She then talked about genres in literature. She mentioned works of fiction and nonfiction, including figurative language. She also talked about symbolism in literature. Having reviewed the previous lesson, she wrote "language and communication" on the board. She asked the class to find advertisements on the Internet, focusing on the communication skills that brands use to advertise their products to customers. After assigning the task, she gave an example of stereotyping in advertisements. She talked about how washing-machine advertisements in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s were aimed at women, which is an example of gender stereotyping.

The teacher then asked: "How do we communicate?". The students' responses included *talking*, *conversation*, *social media*, *pictures*, *written messages*, *symbols*, *gestures*, *sign language*, and *the Internet*. The teacher then explained how means of communication have changed, pointing out that people used to write letters to each other, or send Christmas cards to their loved ones. One of the students argued that people still do this, but electronically. The class talked for a while about how people communicate nowadays. The teacher seemed to be in favour of writing letters and sending them by post, while the students said they believed everything that was done in the past could now be done via the Internet. The teacher then returned to the topic, which was the power of advertisements. She asked what came into the students' minds when she said, "Just do it!". All the students shouted "Nike". Emphasising the power of advertising, she pointed out how brands communicate with their customers. The teacher's next question was about the students' favourite ways of communicating with one another. All the students said that the best means of communication was via social media. The teacher handed out worksheets related to communication skills, and the students worked on them individually.

Culture teaching took place implicitly, without in-depth discussion. The lesson obviously contained elements of culture, such as communication skills, but it was limited to the transferring of knowledge to the students by asking questions. The teacher could have asked about how people communicate and what kind of misunderstandings can arise, as well as about miscommunication, nonverbal language, and body language in the students' own countries. The students could also have talked about advertisements in their countries, and differences and similarities could have been discussed to allow students to compare and contrast the cultural elements that affect the power of advertising.

The following lesson, given by the same teacher, was about attitudes to animals. She had asked the students to write an essay on the topic in their previous lesson. One student from Qatar talked about how they slaughter animals. He described how a scarf is placed over the animals' eyes before they are slaughtered. He also added that they do not like dogs, although it was not clear whether he meant his own family or people in Qatar in general. The teacher's reaction was critical. She said, "You kill the animals humanely? Oh, God!". Two

Muslim students tried to explain why they slaughtered animals on their holy days, but the teacher interrupted them, saying "No!", indicating that she did not like what they were saying. The two boys were prevented from continuing. A Chinese boy in the class wanted to talk about people's attitudes towards animals in China. The teacher said, "You eat dogs. That's another grim story!". After that, nobody wanted to talk about the topic, even though the teacher asked them insistently to read out their essays. She collected the essays and said she would read and grade them later. In her interview, the teacher introduced herself as an animal rights advocate and explained her attitudes towards killing animals. However, her critical attitude had made the students hesitant to talk about their own cultural norms with respect to animals. The incident can be a good example of how difficult it is to become open and curious in areas where people have strong convictions. It would be fair to say that teachers can have difficulties disposing of their own prejudices when they are expected to be non-judgmental and not to apply negative stereotypes to the class. In this case, teacher training programs are crucial to educating teachers on how to adjust and manage their own stereotypes and prejudices and suspend their disbelief and judgment towards other cultures in classrooms, as Sleeter (2008) and Sleeter and Owuor (2011) similarly stated in their study.

The class then focused on a story by Jane Adams. The teacher handed out worksheets containing an extract about the first settlers who had moved to North America from England. She highlighted certain words such as *pilgrims* and *immigrants*. As they read the text, she provided definitions of the unfamiliar words and explained the reason for the pilgrims' journey. She drew a map on the board showing their route to America. She briefly mentioned social problems related to immigrants, although this was implicit and superficial. The teacher could have asked about the issues raised in the text and about the reasons why people immigrate.

The lesson topic had elements of *big C* and *little c* culture, including *deep culture*. However, the teacher focused primarily on vocabulary and comprehension skills. *Knowledge*, which is one of the ICC components, was facilitated by providing brief information. However, *attitudes*, *skills*, and *action* were neglected. The students were allowed to talk about their culture but were interrupted and criticised and thus seemed hesitant to speak on the given topic. There was no in-depth discussion and no compare/contrast activities. The teacher's attitudes towards certain cultural norms, such as the slaughtering of animals by Muslims on their festival days and the custom of eating dogs in China, hindered students from presenting their cultures without restraint.

The second teacher focused on the topic "How to disagree" during the hour-long literature lesson. One of the students mentioned *physical violence*, which they had learned about in relation to the topic in their previous lesson. A Chinese boy then mentioned the absence of free speech in China, but neither the teacher nor the students talked about it. The teacher gave brief examples of how people disagree and illustrated how this happens in different countries. He then wrote down other methods of disagreement on the board, including "attack the speaker", "respond to tone", "contradict", and "explain". The teacher asked, "What is the best way to disagree with someone?". The students could not remember, so he provided the answer "refutation", meaning to prove a statement or argument wrong. He then mentioned the recently televised debate between President Donald Trump and presidential candidate Joe Biden. The students were interested in talking about politics, and almost every student commented, since it was a hot topic at the time the observation was conducted. Many of the students criticised Trump's attitudes and supported Biden. The teacher even imitated Trump's speech and made the students laugh. The teacher then

presented the class with a list of topics on which to develop arguments. The tasks were the following, "Your mother asks you to clean your room, but you don't want to"; "Your physical education (PE) teacher thinks you are not doing well enough so you need to go back to Year 5"; and "Older students have to study for their exams and need extra time, so it has been decided they should start school at 7 a.m.". The Chinese and Nigerian students were against developing arguments for the last topic, since in their countries it is usual to start school at 7 a.m. The Chinese boy explained that students were familiar with this situation in China, so he did not see any point in arguing about it. The students worked on the topics individually but helped each other when needed. The teacher walked around the classroom, checked the students' work, and guided them through the stages that he had highlighted at the beginning of the class. The students' interactions with each other and with the teacher were relaxed and the teacher was responsive at all times. The students were allowed to use their own language when necessary to understand the meaning of the words or concepts being used in the class. Since the focus of the class was on arguments and on how to disagree, the teacher tried to provoke the students into contradicting what he said. However, the students did not argue with him as he had hoped, possibly because of their English proficiency level, personality, or culture. The most likely reason might be cultural, since the students talked to their teacher independently throughout the observed lesson and many of them were speaking English fluently. Their hesitation can perhaps be explained by Hofstede's (1994) four dimensions – "Individualism versus collectivism; large versus small power distance; strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance; and masculinity versus femininity" – which affect student/student and teacher/student interactions based on cultural differences (p. 301). Although these dimensions will not be discussed in detail here, the important point is that cultural differences seem to have affected the students' interactions with the teacher and prevented them from arguing with him.

Another incident during the lesson that may explain why the students were hesitant to argue was when one of the students said that Black people in the USA behaved violently when talking about politics. An African boy in the class kept quiet and did not react. To overcome the students' hesitation, the teacher could have encouraged them by suggesting that it was acceptable to think differently from the teacher and the other students. The kind of procedural ground rules proposed by Byram et al. (2002) could have been established to provide a safe platform for arguing without offending anyone. Cultural norms could have been articulated around the topics proposed by the teacher. For instance, the teacher could have asked the students what the consequences would be if they were to say "no" to their mothers or teachers. They could also have discussed how they would react to a PE teacher who said they needed to go back to Year 5. Differences and similarities between the students' responses could then have been discussed, including the reasons behind their attitudes.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this class is that the students' reluctance to argue with the teacher and with one another can be explained by cultural differences. Hofstede (1994) explained the dimensions of culture with small power distance and large power distance. According to his explanation, power distance is the degree of hierarchy and dependence in society. As he stated, people in small power distance cultures live a more democratic life, resolving their problems through consultations and discussion. In contrast, large power distance cultures depend on the orders given to them to solve their problems rather than discussing issues. They are more autocratic and paternalistic.

It should also be noted that opportunities for potential culture-related activities were inevitably missed since the teacher's priority was to teach English, thus they justifiably had other plans for their lesson.

4.2 Teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to the development of CDA and ICC in EAL classes

Classes in EAL are designed to develop the proficiency level of students who are unable to participate in regular English classes. The content of the EAL classes is based on the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. To investigate the place of culture teaching, EAL classes given by the same teacher were observed, covering two block periods lasting a total of 180 minutes. The observed EAL classes included students from year 7 to year 8 (KS3, students aged between 11 and 13).

The first EAL lessons were based on international food, including croissants, mooncakes, noodles, bread etc. The teacher started the lesson by asking what students ate for breakfast. The students' replies included bread, honey, eggs, noodles, rice, and cereal. The teacher explained that bread is different in different countries. "For instance," he said, "bread is like a long stick in France, but there are different kinds of bread in Italy." After that, he talked about croissants, what country they come from, and how to pronounce the word. Later, the teacher asked the students how they ate rice or noodles. A Chinese boy said that they ate noodles with chopsticks. The students talked about how difficult it might be to eat with chopsticks. The teacher also asked the Iraqi boy if they used their hands for eating. He told the class that they sometimes eat rice with their hands. The class was surprised and interested to learn about eating without a spoon or fork. The teacher then talked about his own experience of how people eat in India. Almost everyone was engaged with the topic and asked questions about whether this way of eating was difficult. Finally, the teacher handed out a reading passage about international food along with comprehension questions and vocabulary tasks.

In the two EAL lessons given by the EAL teacher, the students mainly learned elements of *big C* culture. However, this learning was at a superficial, implicit, and knowledge-oriented level (Shin et al., 2011). Although there were opportunities to learn about other cultures, only general information about specific countries was randomly given. The students were not given a chance to talk about their own cultures deeply, even though the topics taught were appropriate for the presentation of their cultures. No in-depth discussions or compare/contrast activities were observed, and no critical approach to anything related to culture was recorded. The students were not asked to think or talk about cultures analytically, and there was no opportunity to analyse cultural practices and their meanings (Byram, 1997). Possible reasons for not teaching *little c* and *deep culture* might include the absence of guidance on cultural elements in the teaching materials or curricula, students' unwillingness to acquire IC, and a lack of preparation on the part of the teachers, as Sercu (2002) reported in her study. Teachers' feelings of inadequacy in terms of their *knowledge* and *skills* to teach culture from an intercultural perspective could be another reason for not focusing on culture teaching (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). Finally, the age of the students and their low level of language proficiency may have affected the teacher's perception of their realistic aim in terms of developing IC.

The second EAL lesson given by the same teacher was observed over two periods, lasting a total of 90 minutes. The lesson focused on reading and vocabulary learning. The teacher handed out a worksheet taken from the British Council website containing a text about robot teachers. The class read the text together and the teacher explained the unfamiliar words. He also played a short video related to the topic. The students worked on the comprehension and vocabulary questions on the worksheet, and the teacher helped them as they worked. The teacher highlighted two words from the text in connection with intercultural

components: *empathy* and *adaptation*. This part of the lesson was relatively short and inefficient since the students, later as part of vocabulary exercises, were unable to match empathy with the correct definition. After the class observation, the teacher was asked why he thought the students had been unclear about the two words. He replied that he had not done sufficient preparation to explain the words and was aware that they had remained unclear.

The 90-minute lesson could have incorporated ICC development by giving the students an opportunity to talk about teachers in their own countries. A class discussion did take place when students were asked if they would prefer having a robot teacher. However, people's potential reactions or attitudes to robot teachers in their countries could have been discussed. Similarities and differences between the students' feedback and the possible reasons for them could also have been addressed in the class. The word *empathy*, for instance, could have been better explained using specific examples or questions related to robot teachers. Asking the students how they would feel if they had a robot teacher might have been helpful in explaining the meaning of empathy. The teacher's lack of preparedness, which he acknowledged after the class, explained the failure to develop ICC, as was the case in the studies of Sercu (2002) and Young and Sachdev (2011).

4.3 Students' responses to the development of CDA and ICC in terms of demonstrating ICC components in literature and EAL classes

The students in the observed classes demonstrated good communication skills while working in groups or with peers and with the teachers. Although the students did work individually during the classes at the observed school, group work and teamwork were more common. The students, who came from different cultural backgrounds, worked harmoniously in groups, discussed the given tasks/topics, exchanged ideas, waited for their turn, listened to each other, asked for help from the teacher when needed, researched the assigned task together, divided the work among the members of the group, decided what to present to the rest of the class and the teacher and how, agreed or disagreed on particular points with respect and acceptance, translated specific words into a student's first language (L1) if they were stuck. One of the most crucial attitudes observed in the classes was the students' independence. Even with a low level of English proficiency, the students were able to speak freely with each other and the teacher. However, it can be stated that the students in the lower primary classes were more talkative, engaged, and involved than those in the higher primary classes. This can perhaps be explained by young adults' unwillingness to make mistakes when speaking, as Savaşçı (2014) concluded in her study.

The students were keen to talk about their own cultures. In all the observed key stages, almost all the students willingly introduced their own cultures when they were given a chance, in connection with holidays, food, history, literature, education system, religion, etc. They were also curious about different cultures and showed great interest in learning about them. When anything related to culture was brought up, many of the students, even the less talkative ones, participated in the class. They listened attentively when someone talked about their culture, and they asked questions.

A few critical incidents occurred during the observation that demonstrated students' and teachers' attitudes towards different cultures. One such incident took place when the KS3 class was talking about politics: one boy said that Black people's behaviour was just as violent as White people's behaviour (referring to the Black Lives Matter movement). The

Black students in the class kept silent and did not react to the statement. The other incident happened when a Chinese boy responded to the teacher's question about what he ate for breakfast. Everyone in the class laughed at him when he said he ate rice for breakfast. However, in both these incidents the teacher failed to intervene and point out the stereotypical attitudes. The last and most critical incident occurred in relation to the teacher's attitude to the students' presentations about animals. A Muslim boy stated that they sacrificed animals in the name of God on their second biggest holy day. The teacher's reaction to "killing animals" (as she put it) was aggressive and critical, thus the student was unwilling to continue talking about it. Instead, he simply handed in his essay on the topic to the teacher. A similar incident occurred in the same class when a Chinese boy talked about whether the Chinese eat cats and dogs. The teacher's attitude was again critical, so the Chinese boy refused to talk further and kept silent throughout the class. It can be concluded from the incidents mentioned above that teachers' attitudes have an enormous impact on students' presentation and interpretation skills, particularly when talking about their own cultures. The teachers' attitudes may also affect the attitudes of the other students to different cultures and may reinforce stereotypes.

The students were given research tasks or projects related to the topics, which targeted their discovery *skills*. They were also asked to present the projects to the teacher and the class. However, they were not expected to interpret or relate the given tasks to their own culture or country. They were rarely asked to compare familiar features of cultures with unfamiliar ones. It would thus be difficult to say precisely that the students' interpreting and relating *skills* were addressed (Barrett et al., 2014).

The students' *knowledge and understanding* of other social groups were implicitly promoted, although these were limited primarily to elements of *big C* culture. Byram's (1997) *critical cultural awareness*/*political education* and Barret et al.'s. (2014) *action* were the least observed ICC components, since nothing was recorded in terms of the students' development of *critical cultural awareness* and intercultural skills. Regarding *critical cultural awareness*, the students were not invited to think and discuss the possible reasons behind their own and others' cultural and social norms, or to evaluate those norms by relating them to one another's cultures. In relation to *action*, no activities were observed that would have enabled students to challenge attitudes and behaviours that violated human rights or to defend and protect those rights, regardless of cultural background.

In conclusion, the students in the observed classes demonstrated ICC skills. To some extent, ICC components were targeted through classwork, class discussions, games, debates, group work / pair work, research tasks, and presentations. Although compare/contrast activities were rare, the students talked about their own experiences, cultures, and countries. Their interactions with the teachers were generally relaxed and effective. They talked freely with each other and with the teachers. Some students spoke in their first language to translate unfamiliar words, and they were mostly allowed to do so. Apart from the incidents referred to above, most of the students expressed their opinions and feelings freely. Respect and acceptance were the main *attitudes* observed during the study. Discovery *skills* were the most recorded ICC components. *Knowledge* was constantly given, although it was neither deep nor critical. *Action* was observed only in terms of getting students engaged in interaction (e.g., asking questions), while *critical cultural awareness / political education* was not observed.

5 Conclusion

The goal of the present study was to explore through unstructured observation the teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to aiming to develop their students' CDA and ICC, including the ICC components demonstrated by the students in response to the development of CDA and ICC at the observed international school in Budapest. For this purpose, three periods of literature and EAL classes, each lasting 90 or 60 minutes and taught to year groups 7 and 8 and year groups 9 and 10 (students aged 11 to 14), were observed over three months. The findings revealed that both the literature and EAL teachers showed mostly positive attitudes towards different cultures and culture teaching. They appeared to be familiar with students from different cultural backgrounds, had a knowledge of other cultures and experience of cultural incidents, and shared their knowledge and experiences with their students. However, despite their positive attitudes towards different cultures, their practice in terms of culture teaching remained implicit, was limited to knowledge presentation, and lacked elements of *deep culture*.

The most common activity related to culture teaching in the EAL and literature classes took the form of culture presentations, which mainly included elements of *big C* culture. For this purpose, reading comprehension texts, literary works, and short videos were primarily used in the observed classes. The presentations were followed by classroom discussions, during which the students expressed their ideas and had a chance to talk about their own cultures. Another typical activity in all the observed classes was pair or group work. The students were divided into groups and given projects to work on together. They discussed, researched, and created the project, and kept notes during the assignment, all of which are recommended as ways to develop students' CDA and ICC. Quizzes (mostly) conducted by the students, including general knowledge about other cultures, were also observed. The short presentations, research projects, group/pair work, class discussions, and quizzes observed during the study were all recommended by Lázár et al. (2007) as ways of helping teachers and trainers to organise ICC courses. The activities listed above are also pedagogical approaches to the development of ICC suggested by Barrett et al. (2014) in the form of cooperative learning, which includes constructivism and an inquiry-based approach. Literary texts, or extracts taken from literature, are seen by many researchers as valuable materials for improving ICC (e.g., González Rodriguez & Puyal, 2012; Piątkowska, 2015; Rezaei & Naghibian, 2018; Wang et al., 2021). The practices observed in both the literature and EAL classes aimed to develop students' *attitudes*, especially curiosity and openness towards other cultures. *Knowledge and understanding*, including *skills of discovery and interaction* and *skills of interpreting and relating* were also facilitated through literary works, research projects, class discussions, presentations, and general knowledge quizzes. However, no in-depth discussion based on the multidimensional expression of *deep culture* (e.g., power, hegemony, discrimination, justice, etc.) was observed, nor was there any discussion of the reasons that lie behind cultural norms, which would have targeted the students' *critical cultural awareness* as recommended by Gómez Rodríguez (2015a) and Byram (1997). The comparative and constructive approach recommended by Reid (2015) and Piątkowska (2015), which fosters awareness of the similarities and differences between the students' own culture and other cultures and develops their critical intercultural skills, was rarely recorded in the study. No activities were observed in which the students' *action* was aimed to help them defend human rights, stand up against cultural stereotypes and prejudices, encourage positive attitudes to cultural affiliations, and be mediators in cultural conflicts, as Barrett et al. (2014) proposed.

The findings of the present study are similar to those obtained in the empirical studies presented earlier. As mentioned, the usefulness of activities such as cultural presentations, classroom discussions, research projects, and reading comprehension texts was also identified in the present study. However, activities such as linguistic, discourse, and sociolinguistic analyses aimed at familiarising students with the cultural aspects of the English language were not observed. Likewise, there were no discussions about *little c* and *deep culture* elements such as values, behaviours, customs, and differences in perceptions and attitudes in different cultures, which develop students' *critical cultural awareness* and intercultural skills. Similarly, the kind of activities that are recommended to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills in relation to the social and historical facts presented in the given short stories, and role play that fosters attitudes such as empathy, were not reported in the present pilot study (e.g., Barrett et al., 2014).

The question arises as to why CDA and ICC were not critically and explicitly aimed to be developed in the observed classes, even though the teaching materials contained cultural elements and the teachers seemed to have positive attitudes towards culture teaching. Based on the findings of the observation and follow-up interviews, it can be concluded that the teachers were hesitant to teach cultures that were not their own. They were reluctant to make mistakes and give incorrect information about countries they had never been to. The other reason might be the teachers' lack of preparation. They believed that the teaching of language skills takes priority over culture teaching, since the school's and the parents' expectations are that the students need to pass the standardised tests. Therefore, they might not need to be prepared for culture teaching. Moreover, the teachers' personalities and the students' profiles should also be considered, as their preferences, interests, and priorities may have affected the integration of culture teaching into English teaching practice. It was also reported that the teacher training programmes taken by some of the participating teachers did not include ICC, and that other teachers had not taken ICC courses during their years of pre-service or in-service teaching. Safa and Tofighi (2021) reported that the teacher training programmes mentioned in their study did not encourage the participating teachers to integrate culture teaching into their practice and did not provide adequate pedagogical skills. They recommended that both the practical and theoretical aspects of ICC be included in teacher training programmes. It can thus be concluded that, in addition to the possible reasons for the implicit, incidental, and superficial culture teaching described above, as the schoolteachers admitted in the interviews, a lack of ICC content and the absence of practical aspects of ICC teaching in teacher training programmes contributed to the neglect of teaching culture.

The findings of the present pilot study suggest that the reported activities are also recommended by ICC theoriest as indicated in the theoretical background for the development of CDA and ICC and can be transferred to EFL contexts. However, the content of the activities was inevitably limited to English-speaking countries, since the curriculum followed by the observed school is the National Curriculum for England. The activities also lacked criticality and elements of *deep culture*. Works of literature, including those from different cultures, reading comprehension texts, research projects, presentations, class discussions, and quizzes can be used in the EFL context to develop students' CDA and ICC. However, they are insufficient without critical analysis and compare/contrast activities.

In summary, the pilot study contributed to an understanding of the need for preliminary and follow-up interviews to obtain additional details about the teachers' attitudes and practices with respect to culture teaching. The pilot study also demonstrated that, for the researcher's large-scale study, the teaching materials should be analysed before the classes are

observed in order to obtain a complete picture of the teaching goals in relation to the development of CDA and ICC. The present study also demonstrated the vital importance of taking detailed notes in the field in order to be able to recall exactly what happened during the classes. Besides the field notes, sketching the classes helped the researcher to remember the classroom, seating plan, and students, the posters on the wall, and the given topics. Highlighting specific culture-oriented words, activities, or incidents during the observations was helpful when it came to coding and categorising the themes and made it easier to link them to the literature. Questions addressed by the researcher to the respective teachers immediately after the classes helped to clarify the observations. It can be concluded that the experience obtained during the pilot study will pave the way towards the researcher's main study.

Like all studies, this study has its limitations. Unwillingness among the teachers to participate in the study greatly affected the number of classes observed. Despite being given a clear explanation of the purpose of the study, some of the teachers were hesitant about being judged by a PhD candidate, which meant that some year groups could not be observed. Another difficulty arose during the study due to clashes in the timetable owing to the author's position as a full-time teacher at the school, which prevented her from observing the classes continuously. More classes, given by different teachers and at equal intervals, without interruptions and restrictions, would provide further insights on the topic. Importantly, the limited nature of the classroom observations makes it difficult to infer profound insights into the teachers' attitudes towards the development of CDA and ICC and their students' responses. Moreover, the critical incidents and the students' responses to them, as reported in the results and discussion section, might be regarded by some as interference. However, the short follow-up interviews carried out with the teachers whose classes were observed made it possible to clarify and explain the respective incidents, which enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the teachers' attitudes towards different cultures and to verify the findings of the present study.

Despite the mentioned limitations, the analysis of the observed incidents and the students' responses revealed the essential need for intercultural education (for both teachers and students), particularly teaching/learning how to suspend disbelief and judgment and manage potential critical incidents in multicultural classes. Furthermore, the present pilot study shows that more classroom observations need to be carried out with other schoolteachers teaching in different year groups with different students to obtain a deeper understanding of the attitudes and potential factors that affect culture teaching practices. Additionally, in-depth interviews also need to be conducted with the students to explore which elements of CDA and ICC they demonstrate in response to the development of CDA and ICC in the classroom.

The last limitation is the subjective nature of classroom observations, which often causes issues for teachers since observers tend to be judgmental and rely on their own judgments, as Williams (1989) says. It is unavoidable that personal ideas, experiences, knowledge, beliefs, perspectives, perceptions, etc., influence people's objectivity in any field they work in, including teaching. Although the researcher has her own assumptions and expectations as a result of working on developing CDA and ICC for quite a long time, she has tried to counteract being non-judgmental but describing the observed classes only. However, she also made some comments on the occasion in which culture teaching did not happen but possibly could have happened particularly in culture-related activities as a reflection on the views of scholars who think language and culture are bounded and cannot be separated (e.g.,

Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 1997; Damen 1987). However, it is understandable since teachers have other agendas and are primarily instructed to develop students' language skills.

Peer learning visits are valuable for teachers' professional development, although not all teachers can be expected to volunteer to demonstrate their classroom practices to others. Teachers might be afraid of being judged by a colleague sitting at the back of their classroom. However, peer visits should be embraced as a way to support the learning of new strategies and teaching methods. In the context of peer learning visits, novice teachers, in particular, would benefit from observing how experienced teachers conduct a lesson. Classroom visits would also contribute to teachers' awareness, knowledge, and skills with respect to culture teaching and the development of CDA and ICC. Likewise, regular meetings during which teachers share their ideas, experience, and practices, as well as the teaching materials they use, would guide and inspire other teachers in terms of teaching both language and culture. Moreover, exchanging constructive feedback about classroom visits might also help raise awareness of culture teaching and enhance the respective teaching skills.

Teacher training programs or professional development courses featuring practical intercultural education, during which teachers could experience how to conduct culture-related activities, should be organized inside or outside the school to support teachers' understanding of the importance of culture teaching. Teachers should be encouraged to include culture teaching in their teaching schedule by raising their awareness of the development of CDA and ICC through teacher training programs or via input from the school authorities. Regarding teacher training programs, many of the teachers who participated in the interview study stated that they did not remember what they had learned about culture teaching in their formal education. Others commented that their cultural education had been very theoretical and that there should be a better balance between theory and practice in the intercultural education in training programs. The analysis of the classroom observation study also showed that teachers need to know how to handle the critical incidents that potentially arise in multicultural classrooms. As observed, the minor incidents that occurred in some year groups revealed the students' or teachers' stereotypes or prejudices towards certain cultures or races, even though they are highly aware of cultural differences. Teacher training and professional development workshops covering interculturalism or multiculturalism should therefore be designed to assist teachers to handle such incidents without offending anyone in the classroom. In particular, teachers should be trained on how to suspend disbelief or judgement with respect to certain cultures in the classroom so as to avoid negative impacts on students' attitudes towards and knowledge of other cultures.

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