TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A PILOT STUDY IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN HUNGARY

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Abstract: As a result of globalization and mobility around the world, the need for effective communication in multicultural contexts has brought the recognition of culture teaching into the field of foreign language teaching. On top of teaching language skills, teachers are now expected to develop students' cultural diversity awareness (CDA) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This study describes a study aimed to pilot a research instrument designed to be used later in the author's larger-scale research on the development of students' CDA and ICC. The pilot study is based on in-depth interviews with three teachers. The interview study aimed to investigate how teachers perceive the concept of culture, what they think about culture teaching and how they develop CDA and ICC in their practices of teaching English. Findings indicate that teachers are aware of cultural diversity and they have positive attitudes towards learning and teaching different cultures. However, they need to be encouraged to teach cultures more explicitly in various ways recommended in the theoretical background. In terms of piloting the research instrument, findings also show that the interview schedule successfully probes teachers' attitudes and practices about the development of CDA and ICC.

Keywords: culture, cultural diversity awareness, intercultural communicative competence, pilot study, validation, teachers' attitudes and practices

1 Introduction

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

Another aspect of the process of ICC development is the need to raise language learners' *cultural diversity awareness* (CDA). A number of scholars articulate theories and methods of an intercultural approach to language teaching (Beneke, 2000; Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002; Kramsch, 2013; Liddicoat, 2005; Peck et al., 2007; Reid, 2015; Sercu, 2002). However, despite a number of theories on intercultural education, relatively little is known about teachers' attitudes towards culture teaching and their practices of developing CDA and ICC in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. For this reason, this pilot study aimed to investigate how teachers perceive the concept of culture, what they think about culture learning and teaching and what practices they use in the development of CDA and ICC. The main aim of the current study was to pilot an interview schedule which is intended to be used in a later, larger-scale research project on the development of students' CDA and ICC.

The current pilot study is part of a case study to be conducted in an English medium instruction school located in Budapest, Hungary using an exploratory approach with interview studies. The participants in the study are both native and non-native teachers of English who teach English as a first language and as an additional language. While most studies about teaching English language and culture are conducted in English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) settings, the choice of an international school with English medium instruction (EMI) and English as an additional language (EAL) promises new insights that may contribute to the existing ways of developing CDA and ICC in the context of teaching EFL.

The present paper starts with the theoretical background which defines the terms culture, CDA and ICC, and then presents theories and practices regarding teaching and developing CDA and ICC, with an overview of relevant empirical studies. Then the piloting process is explained in detail with some preliminary outcomes. The paper is concluded with the discussion and the implications of the findings, this study yields for the above mentioned larger-scale research project.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Key terms and definitions

2.1.1 Culture

The notion of culture has been described in various ways although it is seen as a difficult term to define (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Useem et al., 1963). The following definitions serve as pillars in this pilot study, since they describe culture as shared values, beliefs, and practices of social groups and they give importance to language as a tool by which culture is presented.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) defines culture as "a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her

interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (p. 4). On the other hand, 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). Similarly, Turner (1999) describes culture as:

> a dynamic process which produces the behaviours, the practices, the institutions, and the meanings which constitute our social existence. Culture comprises the processes of making sense of our way of life. […] language is the major mechanism through which culture produces and reproduces social meanings (p. 52).

The definition of culture is overly complex; however, the role of culture in language learning to develop CDA and ICC is central to the pilot study. Given the importance of language through which culture is represented, culture and language are inseparably connected for some scholars (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1993).

Language learning is no longer considered as simply performing linguistic tasks; rather, the ultimate goal of learning languages is to communicate in another language, including understanding the culture or cultures of that language. According to Liddicoat (2005), Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), and Sercu (2002), when people start to communicate in a second or foreign language, they do not use linguistic codes and lexical knowledge only, they also perform functions of the language in a cultural context in which cultural knowledge is required as much as knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, language learning needs to include the cultural dimension of the language in order not to be a "fluent fool" as described by Bennett (1997, p. 16) who speaks a foreign language very well but does not understand the meaning of the content of that language. However, as indicated in the literature, the integration of culture into the context of language learning is not achieved by merely providing knowledge of the target culture or cultures. It must also focus on attitudes, cultural skills and awareness and relevant actions to raise learners' CDA and develop their ICC (Barrett et al., 2014; Knutson, 2006; Liddicoat, 2005; Soler & Jordà, 2007). In order to develop ICC, the first step is to raise learners' awareness of cultural differences and cultural diversity.

2.1.2 Cultural diversity awareness

Cultural Diversity Awareness is a term often used in the literature (Brown, 2004; Larke, 1990), yet no particular definition has been proposed for it. Sometimes, the term is used interchangeably with "cross-cultural awareness" (e.g., Dasli, 2011; Knutson, 2006). The reason for many researchers to digress from the well-defined phrase of cross-cultural awareness is perhaps that cultural diversity awareness is more concrete in its meaning focusing on the multifaceted nature of culture and cultural patterns, and thus is easier for the reading public to grasp than the more abstract term of cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness is used by Kramsch and Widdowson (1998) as an approach in foreign language teaching to explore the ways of understanding "the Other at the other side of the border by learning his/her national language" in relation to "two cultures or two languages" (p. 81). However, Damen (1987) highlights more cultures, including one's own in her definition:

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 recognizing the givens of the native culture (p. 141).

In the light of the aforementioned definitions above, CDA can be defined as learning and understanding the meaning of shared behaviours, values, beliefs and patterns of other cultures, as well as one's own. In other words, CDA requires understanding one's own language and culture to be able to understand other cultures. In the study, CDA is used to refer to multiple cultures rather than two cultures including one's own.

Several studies indicate that the number of international schools which offer education through the medium of English has drastically risen as a result of globalization and mobility. As the number increased, so did the diversity of students who come from different racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, language etc. backgrounds (Hayden, 2011; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Larke, 1990). For many researchers, with the increased diversity, awareness of cultural diversity for both teachers and students has become a more critical need than ever before (Acquah & Commins, 2015; Angelova & Zhao, 2014; Gay, 2013; Knutson, 2006; Larke, 1990). However, it is reported in the study of Young and Sachdev (2011) that the lack of teacher training programmes, curricular support and teaching materials restrain teachers in teaching culture and developing their students' CDA. For this reason, the pilot study described here seeks to find some possible ways for the integration of culture into language learning and teaching to raise teachers' and students' CDA.

One of the best-known approaches to teaching language and culture to raise cultural awareness and develop intercultural competence has been described through the steps of *awareness-raising, skills development, production and feedback* by Liddicoat (2005).

(1) A*wareness-raising* refers to the new input about language and culture which encourage students to compare the new culture with their own. Comparison between the cultures gives learners the opportunity to notice the differences and understand what lies beneath the differences in the target culture practices. For this stage, some authentic videos can be used to raise students' awareness.
(2) The *awareness-raising* stage is followed by *skills development* to start working with the knowledge of the new culture by way of acting or speaking. It includes communicative tasks to practice the new input for experiential learning.
(3) *Production* allows students to act out cultural and linguistic knowledge they practice in the experimentation stage. They act like a native speaker of the language to experience the culture of that language.
(4) *Feedback* is a phase in which students discuss with their teacher how they felt about acting out the particular language or cultural patterns. Students express their experience and comfort or discomfort that they feel about being between the first language and culture and the new language and culture.

These stages are similar to the well-known *presentation – practice – production* process in communicative language teaching but the feedback stage provides an opportunity for the students to understand their cultural experience while also practising the target language.

The approaches, as mentioned above, present teaching language and culture to raise cultural awareness and to develop intercultural competence. The following section elaborates intercultural competence (IC) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with communicative competence taken as a starting point by the theorists of IC and ICC.

2.1.3 An overview of the concepts of communicative competence, intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence

The concept of *communicative competence* was introduced by Hymes (1972) emphasizing, besides grammatical competence, using the language culturally appropriately among native speakers. Canale and Swain (1980) took up Hymes's (1972) idea, with the aim of developing communicative language teaching, and identified the elements of communicative competence as *grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence,* and *strategic competence*. Later, van Ek (1986) added *socio-cultural, and social competence* to Canale and Swain's (1980) competences listed above. However, Byram (1997) and Soler and Jordà (2007) claim that these models, which mainly focus on the use of language and the acquisition of communicative skills, neglect the importance of social identities and cultural competencies of learners. Therefore, these models present a challenging and impossible target for foreign language learners since first language acquisition and native speakers were taken as a model. Consequently, after some time, some teachers needed a cultural approach to foreign language teaching to be able to prepare their learners in a better way for real-life communication in a foreign language.

Byram (1997) took van Ek's (1986) six competences as a starting point and proposed the concepts of IC and ICC. As stated by Byram (1997), IC is to refer to the ability to interact with people from different countries and cultures in their own language; on the other hand, ICC is required to interact with people from other countries and cultures in a foreign language. However, IC and ICC are generally used interchangeably. In the current study, ICC will be used to describe the linguistically and culturally different students' ability to interact with one another in English as a *lingua franca*, which is the vehicle of communication for many of the students in the observed school.

2.1.4 Intercultural communicative competence

ICC is defined by Bennett & Bennett (2004) as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 149). Similarly, someone who has ICC is described by Byram (1997) as being "...able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (p. 71). As the definitions highlight, the ability for effective communication with people from different countries in a foreign language in all kinds of cultural contexts is certainly needed for everyone, but the current

pilot study mainly focuses on its development in the context of language learning. Regarding the development of ICC in language learning, Byram (1997) identified the components of ICC as attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness, which he also described as political education, in addition to communicative competences in a foreign language to be acquired by the learners. Based on his definition, the components of ICC are explained as follows.

The *attitudes* interlocutors (teachers and students in the current study) need to acquire are curiosity, openness, and willingness not to judge others' cultures and one's own. The required attitudes also include respect, empathy, acceptance, and awareness toward other cultures without prejudice and stereotypes. The *knowledge* that interlocutors bring to their communication is described as knowledge of products and practices of social groups in one's own and the interlocutor's country with the general process of social and individual communication. Byram (1997) categorizes *skills* as the *skill of discovery* which comes into play when people have no or only partial knowledge of another country and the *skills of interpreting and relating* through which individuals draw upon their knowledge to interpret a document or behaviour from another country and relate it to documents and behaviour from their own. C*ritical cultural awareness/political education* refers to an ability to critically evaluate perspectives, products and practices of one's own and of other cultures based on explicit criteria. Every component of ICC matters in the development of students' CDA and ICC. Therefore, the pilot study investigates whether the teachers possess and teach these components. The next section summarizes possible ways of integrating ICC components into language teaching.

3 The development of ICC: Approaches and techniques

The main aim of developing ICC in language teaching is to enhance students' attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness toward their own and other cultures with the purpose of gaining and using effective communication skills for a mutual understanding in various cultural contexts in a foreign language. This section covers possible approaches and techniques of ICC development in language teaching based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the theory of teaching culture and developing ICC.

Although there are a number of activities for teaching culture and developing ICC, this section introduces practical ways of the following five concepts proposed by Barrett et al. (2014) and Reid (2015). These concepts are *comparison*, *experience*, *analysis*, *reflection* and *action*.

(1) Comparison: One of the most often used techniques, the comparison method focuses on differences and similarities between the native and the target culture. Activities embedding comparison methods encourage students to compare unfamiliar features of other cultures with familiar aspects of their own culture to understand differences and accept the differences with a non-judgmental way and respect (Barrett et al., 2014). The following comparison activity develops students' socio-cultural, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and non-verbal competences:

Students watch a video which shows a school day in the target culture including school routines, uniform, food, students' behaviours, lessons etc. The video shows how students greet each other and address the teacher, use the language, make a request, use formal-informal register, how they get permission to speak, e.g. by raising their hand or how they raise their hand, etc. Students can discuss the differences between all the verbal and non-verbal behaviours of the target culture and their own (Reid, 2015).

(2) Experience: This method develops students' attitudes; openness, curiosity, respect and knowledge of other cultures through presenting their experience based on critical incidents (Barrett et al., 2014). For instance, the ways of greeting differ in different countries. Teachers, on the one hand, can introduce types of greetings with the explanation that it occurs differently across the world. Students, on the other hand, can be asked how particular greetings occur in their country and they can, later on, discuss those differences (Reid, 2015).

(3) Analysis: In the process of analysis, students think and discuss the reasons that lie beneath cultural practices. Explanations of values, beliefs and practices of cultures are analyzed through written or video sources (Barrett et al., 2014). Eating habits or other customs and behaviours in two or more cultures and their reasons can be discussed and analyzed with a set of questions prepared by the teacher (Reid, 2015).

(4) Reflection: Reflection follows comparison, experience and analysis encourages students to write, draw or share what they have learned about cultures as a response to the development of ICC. They can create posters about anything related to acquired cultures and display them on the walls of their classroom. Additionally, students may be encouraged to discuss their experiences or keep a diary to track their culture learning (Barrett et al., 2014).

(5) Action: Action refers to cooperation with people of different cultural affiliations in the social or physical environment. Schools and teachers should take responsibility to organize a platform in which students can act, i.e., communicate in an intercultural situation (Barrett et al., 2014).

In addition to the culture-related activities above, students can act out cultural experiences, do research about cultures that they are interested in and present it to their classmates and parents. Role-plays to practice situations in a restaurant, shop or post office and storytelling to predict the second half of the story which is about cultural aspects of any country are other ways of developing students' ICC (Reid, 2015). Teachers' attitudes and practices in some of the relevant empirical studies are presented in the following section.

4 Teachers' attitudes and practices in relevant empirical studies

The roles of teachers have always been decisive in language teaching and learning. The growing need in teaching culture and developing ICC extends teachers' roles to develop cultural awareness and ICC. Diamond and Moore (1995) categorized teachers' roles as *cultural organizers, cultural mediators, and orchestrators of social context for learning*. For Barrett et al. (2014) teachers are *facilitators* to develop intercultural competence. Additionally, the role of language teachers is explained by Byram et al. (2002) as a responsibility – beside other

obligations – to develop knowledge, skills and awareness of values as well as to develop knowledge of a target country or culture. Larzén-Östermark (2008) states that although there is a large volume of theories and research on culture in foreign language teaching and the roles of language teachers, little attention has been paid to how teaching culture is seen by teachers.

The current pilot study intended to investigate teachers' attitudes including their conception of teaching culture, feelings and opinions about why cultural elements are or should be taught, and their practices in applying their conceptions, feelings and opinions in action in their daily teaching to develop their students' CDA and ICC. For this reason, in this section, relevant studies about teachers' attitudes and practices are presented to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon for the current study.

Larzén-Östermark (2008) interviewed 13 teachers from a Finland-Swedish comprehensive school to investigate teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture in English foreign language teaching with the aim of promoting intercultural understanding. The results of the study indicate that most of the participating teachers found culture important. However, they saw culture as a traditional paradigm which is connected with the target language area. Therefore, teaching culture was perceived by the teachers as transmitting information about English-speaking countries. Few teachers talked about how cultural practices could be used to develop students' attitudes towards otherness and only a few teachers knew how to teach culture. Therefore, the researcher concludes that curriculum designers, teacher trainers, textbook authors, teaching material designers and organizers of in-service training for teachers play a crucial role in developing teachers' attitudes and practices of the development of intercultural competence.

Another relevant study conducted by Eken (2015) aimed to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about the development of ICC through semi-structured interviews. Non-native practising teachers working at a university in Turkey were asked about the definition and practices of ICC. The analysis of the study reveals that all participating teachers described ICC very well and they all believed in the necessity of developing their students' ICC. However, the participants claimed that the school curriculum, crowded classrooms and uninterested students prevent them from teaching ICC. Moreover, although the teachers had some ideas about practices of ICC they did not seem to know how to apply them.

Sercu (2002) carried out a questionnaire study with Flemish English, French and German teachers including open-ended questions to inquire about the teachers' professional self-concept and practices of ICC. The first part of the questionnaire was about the professional self-concept investigating the aim of the teachers' profession, the extent of their socio-cultural knowledge, the foreign language and cultural profile of their students, and the degree of their willingness to teach intercultural competence. The second part of the questionnaire revealed the implementation of teaching language and culture in their classrooms. All the teachers of English, French and German defined the perception of the aims of their profession with linguistic statements. Culture teaching was similarly defined by the teachers in terms of providing information such as daily life, history, big C culture, geography, and politics. Regarding the teachers' perception of their students' foreign language and culture learning profile, the teachers claimed that their students were familiar with the culture of the language they were taught. The data of the responses of Flemish English and French teachers revealed that their students had favourable attitudes towards

the people of the foreign language they were learning. And finally, all the participating Flemish foreign language teachers showed willingness to be teachers of ICC.

The second part of the questionnaire also focused on the frequency of culture teaching activities and the different kinds of activities used in language classes. According to the results, the most common practice that the teachers of English, French and German followed was asking their students what they heard or read about the foreign culture and why they found them fascinating or interesting. However, they did not talk about the stereotypes of foreign cultures or illustrate aspects of a foreign culture with visual aids. Moreover, the activities were mostly teacher-centred, and the role of students was confined to that of a listener. To summarize, the Flemish English, French and German teachers supported culture teaching and they were willing to develop ICC; however, their practices of teaching cannot be considered adequate practices of developing ICC.

The results and findings of the relevant studies shared a common conclusion regarding the development of ICC; teachers' attitudes are positive towards culture teaching, but they do not know how to make use of culture-related activities due to lack of cultural elements in the curriculum and teacher training programmes, insufficient content of teaching materials, crowded classrooms and uninterested students. The pilot study aimed to explore the possible ways of developing ICC in the context of an English medium instruction school observed in Budapest.

5 Research design

5.1 Overview

The purpose of this study was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed to pilot a research instrument and the attached research processes to be used in the authors' larger-scale study on the development of students' CDA and ICC in an English-speaking international school in Budapest. Therefore, an interview schedule was designed to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' attitudes towards culture teaching and practices about developing CDA and ICC. For this purpose, three teachers were interviewed: two class teachers, who teach all primary core subjects in English, and an English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher, who teaches intensive English to students who cannot attend regular classes due to their low proficiency skills in the English language. On the other hand, the study also aimed to gain an initial insight into ways of developing CDA and ICC at the school observed. Doing the research in a school of English medium instruction where English is taught both as a (quasi) first[1] and an additional language allows the researcher to see how these two types of instruction are used for CDA and ICC development, since the students' language skills, way of thinking, concept formation are developed in both contexts. This is relevant as these forms of teaching may have transferable results for EFL and ESL settings, too. In order to obtain relevant patterns, the collected qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

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[1] '(quasi) first language' refers to the English language at the observed school: Apart from EAL classes, it is taught and used as if the learners were native speakers but not all of them are.

5.2 Research design

The current pilot study is exploratory and descriptive following a qualitative research approach which provides thick descriptions of teachers' attitudes and practices and also allows for emerging research design during data collection and analysis in the spirit of open inquiry as advised by De Costa et al. (2019) and McDonough & McDonough (1997). To do so, a long, semi-structured, one-on-one interview study was designed to answer the following research questions:

(1) What are the English language teachers' *attitudes* concerning the development of their students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural diversity awareness (CDA) at the international primary school observed?
(2) What are the English language teachers' *practices* concerning the development of their students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural diversity awareness (CDA) at the international primary school observed?

The interview study was planned to be conducted twice with each participating teacher, once before and once after their classes were observed from February to November in 2020. The purpose of the pre-observation interview study was to explore and describe teachers' attitudes to the concept of culture, learning and teaching different cultures, including teachers' practices of culture teaching. The post-interview aimed to probe an explanation of the teachers' relevant attitudes and practices in the observed lessons. However, the research design had to be altered due to the schools' closure because of COVID-19, which caused a restriction of the teachers' availability and accessibility. Thereby, only the pre-observation interview study could be done with three participants in March and April 2020.

5.3 Setting and participants

As mentioned earlier, the current study was conducted in an international school located in Budapest, Hungary. The school offers education in the so-called 'early years', 'key stage 1' and 'key stage 2' of the British national curriculum at present. The early years which are called by the school as 'nursery and reception' include the age groups from three to five. Pupils aged six and seven belong to key stage 1 while key stage 2 includes children in the seven to eleven age range. Thus, the key stages with the year groups are as follows:

- Nursery and Reception: 3-5 years
- Key Stage 1: 6-7 years/ Year 1, Year 2
- Key Stage 2: 7-11 years/ Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6, Year 7, Year 8

Both key stages provide subject areas which are taught in English including English language, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Art, Music, Physical Education and Information Technology (IT). English language lessons in each key stage are taught in English as a first language. However, students who join the school with little or no experience of English are supposed to take EAL courses to help them attain the general English proficiency level in the

areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding to enable them to access the academic curriculum. The school uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to measure the level of EAL students with a combination of assessment methods such as a standardized test, oral interview, short reading/listening comprehension, informal discussion based on pictures/object prompts and short writing exercises in response to a topic or series of questions. Children are no longer required to take EAL lessons once they attain the level of A2[2].

The participants of the pilot study consist of an EAL teacher teaching intensive English to all age groups and two class teachers who teach primary core subjects in English, Maths and Science in key stage 1 or key stage 2. The non-probability, the purposive sampling method, was used in selecting the participants (Dörnyei, 2007). Participating teacher 1(T1), whose mother tongue is English, is bilingual in English and Danish, and has ten years of teaching experience. Participating teacher 2 (T2), who grew up and studied in an English-speaking country, is bilingual in English and Hungarian and native-like speaker of English with eleven years of teaching experience in anglophone countries around the world. Participating teacher 3 (T3) is a non-native speaker of English who has been living in Hungary for quite a long time with more than 20 years of teaching experience. All of the participating teachers either took an intercultural/multicultural course or seminar/workshop during their higher education or after they started teaching.

5.4 Instrument

A semi-structured interview was designed to explore the attitudes and practices of the participating teachers in the following areas: (i) the concept of culture (questions 1 to 7); (ii) teachers' attitudes (questions 8 to 11); and (iii) teachers' practices (questions 12 to 21) (see Appendix A).

The questions relating to the concept of culture in the interview schedule intend to elicit
- how teachers perceive culture,
- how they see the relationship between language and culture,
- how intercultural situations influence their thinking,
- how they think culture and language classes are interrelated,
- what they think about the place of culture in teaching English,
- what aspects/elements of culture they think should be part of English classes, and
- how intercultural situations can appear in their English classes.

The questions, which seek out teachers' attitudes, are to inquire about two issues: teachers' attitudes to learning different cultures and teaching culture and developing ICC. To probe their attitudes, teachers were asked about the experience they have had in learning about

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[2] A2 is defined by CEFR as the level of basic users who can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography and employment. https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale

different cultures, different ways of learning cultures they prefer, learning new things about different cultures they like and cultural misunderstandings they have experienced.

The last section of the schedule investigates teachers' practices about the development of CDA and ICC in their teaching English. The participating teachers were asked to share their views about:

- the ways of helping students with learning different cultures,
- using the opportunity of having a multicultural class in developing CDA and ICC,
- the effects of curriculum and syllabus on teaching culture,
- the ways of teaching culture that they find effective,
- difficulties of culture teaching,
- cultural elements and aspects they like to teach.

The interview schedule (see Appendix A) has also got demographic questions eliciting the teachers' level of education, years of teaching experience, and intercultural or multicultural course, workshop or teacher training program that teachers have taken during or after their higher education.

5.5 Procedure in designing the interview schedule

The interview schedule was established based on three main constructs: the concept of culture, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' practices. The first step of designing the instrument was creating the relevant questions together with probes and as many follow-up questions as possible for each construct. After that, similar or overlapping questions were merged and grouped while some questions, which were found judgmental, were changed into non-judgmental ones or were deleted. Questions that seemed to be didactic, ambiguous or loaded were eliminated, instead, questions were intended to be simple, natural and direct as advised by Dörnyei (2007). Throughout the creation and validation process expert researchers' help was sought to refine the questions. However, even after making all those changes, the first pilot interview showed that there were still a few questions the interviewees barely understood. For instance, question 3, *"What is the relevance of interculturality to you?"* was not clearly understood by two of the three respondents. So, a clarification was added to the question. (*"in other words, how do intercultural situations influence your thinking?"*) Similarly, question 4, *"What do you think is the place of culture in teaching English?"* was not clear enough for the participants, so adding *"How do you think culture should appear in teaching English?"* helped understanding. Moreover, questions 5, 6 and 7 were asked as one question but they were not all given equal attention in the answers. Therefore, that question was divided into three to elicit proper and rich responses for each. Question 13, *"How do you think the following things can be developed in the students in the process of teaching English?"* was asked to investigate practices of the participating teachers. However, the teachers did not mention their practices, instead, they talked about their opinions. So, in order to obtain what they do in their English classes to explore the relevant practices, the question *"How do you think you are developing the following things?"* was added. After the first interview, the researcher was able to determine which questions needed additional probing to elicit elaboration on certain topics in the second and third interviews.

5.6 Data collection and analysis

The piloting of the interview was conducted with three participating teachers working at the observed school. Two teachers were interviewed face to face; however, one teacher was interviewed online after schools shut down due to COVID-19. The participants were asked open-ended questions, including probes and follow up questions which allow the interviewee "to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner" and "to increase the richness and depth of the responses" (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 136-138). The average length of the conducted interviews was about 40-45 minutes, and the audio of each interview was recorded with the participants' consent. The audio recorded data was transcribed verbatim through YouTube's speech-to-text feature and transcriptions were checked by the researcher twice by listening to the audios.

A thematic analysis based on the research questions was followed by generating initial codes, then searching, reviewing, defining and naming themes and sub-themes from the answers given by the participating teachers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The teachers' age and gender were not taken into consideration in the data analysis. The thematic analysis was carried out with the following themes and sub-themes as the initial categories:

   (1) Main theme: The concept of culture;
        Sub-themes:
              a) Big C (food, celebrations, holidays, literature etc.)
              b) Little C (communication styles, verbal/non-verbal language symbols, values, beliefs, religion etc.)

   (2) Main theme: Teacher's attitudes;
        Sub-themes:
              a) Teachers' attitudes towards learning different cultures
              b) Teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture and developing ICC

   (3) Main theme: Teachers' practices

In addition to the themes and subthemes highlighted above, teachers' cultural identity and cultural diversity awareness were taken into consideration in the data analysis since all of the interviewees mentioned these two points.

5.7 Quality control in the study

To establish the internal validity of the study, the researcher's supervisor and four fellow researchers were invited to make their professional comments on the interview schedule. Some recommendations were given about wording issues, clarity of the items and technical problems (formatting, grouping, numbering and ordering of the questions etc.). Based on feedback, new questions were added, and some questions were changed or deleted. Obtaining the respondents' feedback on the transcribed documents was the strategy to ensure instrument validity through member checking. Therefore, after transcribing the audio recording data and checking the texts meticulously, the transcribed documents were sent out to the participants to check if they match with what they had said. The participating teachers verified the transcriptions and corrected some

words that the mentioned converter program and the researcher could not transcribe accurately due to imperfections in the audio recording or unstable internet connection. One of the participants even added some more words to some answers to clarify what she wanted to say.

Prolonged engagement which refers to spending sufficient and adequate time in the field to understand the phenomenon and build a good relationship with participants assures credibility of the study as stated by Lincoln & Guba (1985). The researcher's current position (working as a class teacher) at the observed school allowed her to have prolonged engagement by observing the classes and teachers and asking the teachers for clarification about their responses to the interview questions. Additionally, long and in-depth interviews (40-45 minutes), including probes and follow up questions were conducted to explore teachers' attitudes and practices in the development of CDA and ICC.

Thick descriptions taken and recorded during and after the interviews, which describe the details of the field experiences, ensure the external validity of the study and applicability of transferability. The credibility of the study was established with a co-coder, who is a PhD student working on an intercultural study, who coded the data of one of the transcribed interviews separately. In the portion of the recorded material 5% of differences occurred, and new/different categories that the co-coder suggested were adopted. The rationale of the choice relies on her recent experience in coding qualitative data. An audit trail, which provides a detailed account of the steps taken for data collection and analysis, including the development of the coding system was set up to eliminate validity threats and generate confirmability as advised by Dörnyei (2007).

6 Outcomes

The following sections discuss the outcomes of the piloting process and the teachers' attitudes towards culture teaching and practices of the development of CDA and ICC. First the outcomes of the piloting process will be discussed and then the content outcomes.

6.1 Results of the piloting of the interview schedule

Piloting the research instrument revealed that there were minor wording and technical issues which needed to be improved to gain a fuller understanding of teachers' attitudes towards culture teaching and practices of the development of CDA and ICC. However, the responses of the participating teachers display that the interview schedule produces consistent findings for the main study to be conducted with the now finalized instrument.

The pilot study, on the one hand, assisted the researcher to gain experience in conducting in-depth interviews and obtain skills in interviewing such as building a rapport with the interviewees. According to Dörnyei (2007) interviewing is not solely asking questions and getting answers. Instead, it is a social exchange which is helpful in dealing with sensitive topics and eliciting the answers more honestly. On the other hand, each interview showed that it was difficult to determine how the participating teachers were going to answer the questions. Therefore, the skills for further probing in particular areas (for instance, what cultural-oriented

practices teachers precisely do in their English programs) were gained which would undoubtedly be beneficial for the main study.

In the process of transcribing data, the participants were asked to confirm the transcriptions if they were the same as what they had said. Allowing the participating teachers to correct or explain some words or phrases which were not understood clearly or captured by the transcription program was a big contribution to the interpretation of the responses. Therefore, the teachers, in advance, could be informed that they would be asked to clarify their words (if they are not clear enough) after the interview. Additionally, the quotations, which are used in the outcomes section, reflect the way that they were uttered with grammar mistakes and show the interviewees' spontaneity and reflections while they were talking. The participants could also be asked to correct some parts of their sentences which would be quoted later in the main study.

The field notes taken during the interview studies (besides the recorded data) showed how helpful they were in establishing the categories for coding, so thick field notes considering to create themes and sub-themes for coding can definitely be used in the researcher's larger-scale study.

Co-coding process was one of the important parts of the pilot study to provide valid and reliable outcomes. Therefore, selecting a PhD student who works in the same field and has experience in coding facilitated re-organizing themes and subthemes of the data. However, a fellow researcher who studies in a different field (than cultural studies) should be also involved to be able to see how a different perspective can benefit presenting and interpreting the data in the main study.

6.2 Outcomes of teachers' attitudes

6.2.1 The teachers' concept of culture

The first research question aimed to investigate language teachers' attitudes concerning the development of their students' ICC and CDA. Therefore, the first seven questions of the interview were designed to elicit how teachers perceive the concept of culture in general and how they see the relationship between culture and language.

When teachers were asked about the meaning of culture, they mostly talked about 'big C' culture, including subjects like literature, geography, and arts as opposed to 'little C' culture which contains less visible elements such as values, beliefs, attitudes, communications styles, perceptions etc. (Peck at al., 2007). However, the common features of how culture was perceived by the participating teachers were mostly about the elements of little C culture. The possible reason for talking about the components of little C culture might be the teachers' extensive experience of teaching in intercultural and multicultural environments. Some of the responses to the concept of culture also include awareness of the teachers' own cultural identity as in these extracts:

> I guess culture to me is something that comes from your environment, but also your home life. You know, I grew up in a family where my parents are Hungarian, but we didn't live in Hungary a lot, but my culture was evident in different things that I did. You know, I take my shoes off before I walk into someone's house. (T2)

> Culture is a definition of something that is hard to define actually, but it's something that can be created between humans and it can be related to both traditional or new ideas or concepts that a group of people connect around. For me, personally, culture is something that's ingrained in me from growing up in Denmark, the Danish culture is strong within me which is a set of values. (T1)

> Culture is the set of instruments based on the experience of a certain group of people either it is people who live in this country or people who belong to a certain field or set of values of… and instruments of the group of people. (T3)

However, they also touched upon the elements of big C culture, mostly about language, geography, celebrations, traditions and food.

When the teachers were asked about the relationship between language and culture, two of them said that they were interrelated; in contrast, one found it unrelated. The two of them said:

> For example in Denmark or Scandinavia, we are a group of closely mixed people who understand the same language although we are different nationalities and different cultures, we do differ but over the overarching language we do share, so I think there is a relationship between language and culture that makes people connect depending on where in the world they are of your geography. (T1)

> I think there's a substantial difference, especially if you look at sort of the English language. I think the English language has no real culture, so many people speak it and there are so many variety (sic!) of varied ways of speaking the English language that I feel it's almost lost. (T2)

The latter claims that so many people use English as an international language for multinational functions without its culture, so it has lost its value. She supported her idea as follows:

> It is a very varied language and it could be spoken very nicely and very cultured but I think because of either its multinational function or because of its I don't know um...because it's the language that everyone picks up I think it's lost some of its value. (T2)

Alptekin (2002) stated that much of the world uses English as lingua franca as a result of different purposes in the context of native speaker and non-native speaker interactions which is not recognized. He also questioned how British politeness or American informality can be relevant to the Japanese and Turks in business, or Anglo-American eye contact or social distance in conversation to Finish or Italian academicians in a professional meeting. Therefore, it can be said that the English language does not lose its culture when so many people speak it, but it is used with its culture depending on how relevant it is to its users.

The views of the participants with respect to the place of culture in English classes were varied. In their responses, the teachers highlighted that other cultures have value to be taught although it is hard to bring it into teaching. Moreover, to probe culture teaching, the interviewees were asked about what elements or aspects of culture should be taught in English classes. There was no consensus in the teachers' answers about explicit examples of the elements and aspects of culture, which might have resulted from the lack of clarity in the question. The tendency of the teachers' responses was more about why and under what conditions cultural elements and aspects should take place in their English classes. Their responses are as follows:

> I do think it's important to drag in and use other cultures as well, sidelined in with English because as cultures they are different and if you look from another perspective than English, you can gain good knowledge from other cultures even in an English class by researching other cultures. (T1)

> I think that world knowledge is one of the important things that we can impart on our kids...You know, different modal verbs and to go through all of this, but if they have nothing to connect it to then I think it's almost lost on them...There are different aspects to people not just because of their personality, but also because of their culture, so exposing children to that is something that can improve not just their learning in school,...but more preparing them for life. (T2)

> You know, it depends, I mean it depends on the age, it depends on the level of the group, it depends on the...I mean, the entry-level, so it depends on the readiness of the group… (T3)

According to the interviewees, different cultures and elements/aspects of cultures should be taught to gain knowledge from other cultures linking with real life, but it depends on readiness, level and age of the group they teach.

Finally, the participating teachers were asked about the relevancy of interculturality to them and how intercultural situations appear in their English classes to gain insight into their perception of culture. The common response was that working in an international school with a lot of international students exposed them to other cultures, so they understand and learn about different cultures through their students. This might be connected with the attitudes of "being open to, curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own" (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 19). This might happen naturally, as it was indicated in the answers, in the context of a multicultural environment if a teacher is open to learn and understand different cultures. Some related responses are as follows:

> Well, working in a school with a lot of different international students, it's very important to me to understand the different cultures, the different personalities, and the different histories they come with. I think it's important to know that when you work with different cultures, it's important to know a little bit about them that you can understand where they come from....have knowledge of their values, so that you can optimize both your teaching, but also your social interactions and your overall working and being around other cultures. (T1)

I think we're in a very unique situation of having all these wonderful cultures in one place and you know, all these students and parents bring their sort of positive things to the school... I think there could be a great deal that could be learned because we're so international. You know, some of these kids come from countries that I don't even really know where to place like-I know around about where they are- but I haven't even heard the name, so there could be extensive things that could be learned. (T2)

...when people from different cultures just came here it became a multicultural place, so I am the carrier of my own culture. I am in another country which has another country's culture and has been exposed to a multicultural environment. (T3)

These responses indicate that the teachers were highly aware that intercultural situations naturally occur in their classes as a consequence of being and working in a multicultural setting. Moreover, they found the relevancy of interculturality unique and important to learn and understand many different countries and cultures in one place so that they could develop their teaching and communication skills with other people from different cultures.

6.2.2 The teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture and developing intercultural communicative competence

The second part of the interview schedule examined the teachers' attitudes regarding the development of their students' CDA and ICC. The responses of the participating teachers to the questions in the second part were categorized as teachers' attitudes towards learning about different cultures and teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture and developing their students' CDA and ICC.

6.2.2.1 The teachers' attitudes towards learning about different cultures

The outcomes of the pilot study revealed that all participating teachers have positive attitudes to cultural diversity and learning about cultures. The teachers showed openness and willingness to learn about people from different cultural orientations with readiness to see other cultures without judgement in their responses:

In my role as an educator, I have found that being patient and listening and open, being open-minded to people from all over the world is the best thing that you could do if you want to learn about other cultures. (T1)

I think it opens your mind, so the reason I've been able to work in the positions that I've worked in is because I have been in so many different cultures and I understand that not everyone will think like me... (T2)

...in a multicultural environment, people have to be sensitive, they have to be curious about it, they have to be tolerant, they have to be open-minded, I believe. So, this is a

very, very rewarding issue because, as I said before, as I mentioned, so, if you go through that then you get rid of phobias, of different complexes… (T3)

They all stated that they need to have knowledge of their students' cultures to be able to optimize their teaching and social interactions. However, the way of learning cultures differs from each other depending on their needs and personal preferences. The following answers display the differences:

I do like (to learn) from people directly from that culture. (T1)

I travel a lot...I think travelling is great as a holiday, but I don't think you really immerse yourself in a culture, you can see glimpses of it... so, living in places has given me a great understanding of some cultures. (T2)

I am in another country which has another culture and been exposed to a multicultural environment, so I had a lot of challenges but it was interesting for me...I even addressed this issue specifically because I studied professor Hofstede and it was a part of my work as well. (T3)

The first quotation emphasizes learning from people, the second emphasizes learning by living in places, and the third emphasizes learning by studying. Therefore, the teachers' responses show that learning about cultures is varied based on their interests.

In order to obtain an even deeper understanding of the teachers' attitudes, they were asked about any intercultural misunderstanding they have had. One of the teachers stated that she was misunderstood by her classmate and teacher when she described her friend as "black"; however, she, herself, was not offended in a way of being described as white. She recalls:

...we were doing a description about students and I had said that the girl in question that her skin tone was black, and this raised a huge problem in the classroom that I wasn't at that time aware of... I've been more aware of it since. (T2)

She said that she had not understood what the problem was because she was not aware of the issue back then. This underlines the importance of being aware of the culture and cultural aspects – for this example, taboos – in the contexts that people live in so as not to be misunderstood by others.

Another intercultural misunderstanding that one of the participating teachers had was about religion. The teacher did not say what exactly happened, but he said that he had had experiences where he had to show respect. His reaction to the mentioned incident can be an indicator that respect and respectful behaviour were considered to be important by the respondent.

The response of T3 to the question about intercultural misunderstanding was an issue which was caused by the lack of her local language knowledge. However, all the above-mentioned intercultural misunderstandings raised the respondents' cultural awareness and understanding of the cultural differences.

6.2.2.2 The teachers' attitudes towards teaching cultures

In their responses, the participating teachers showed an agreement on the challenges of bringing culture into their lessons although they all believed that not only English culture but several different cultures should be taught in English classes. However, the reasons for finding culture teaching difficult are distinctly different from the reasons for omitting culture teaching in the relevant studies (e.g., Eken, 2015; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, 2002). In the mentioned studies, the participants listed the reasons as lack of cultural elements in the curriculum and teaching materials, teacher training programs without intercultural/multicultural education, crowded classrooms and unmotivated students etc. The teachers in the current pilot study expressed their opinions about the difficulties in teaching cultures as follows:

> ...you know I haven't been everywhere; I haven't lived everywhere and I'm certainly not of every culture. I only have my own experiences to go on, so teaching someone about Indian culture is very difficult. It's very difficult for me to say that they use these spices in these foods and they celebrate things like this because for me it's only secondhand that I know this information...so it's a very difficult thing to do. (T2)

Byram et al. (2002) affirm that "a teacher does not have to know everything about the target culture" since teaching culture is not "the transmission of information of a foreign country" (p. 10). What teachers need is to provide their students with some factual information about the lifestyles of cultures and encourage them to compare and analyze the target cultures with their own.

T1 mentioned the level of students' English proficiency when he was asked about the difficulties of teaching culture in his English classes. He said the following:

> I have experienced fairly few problems, the main being the level and ability of English...that is super important that they need to have that base of English understanding, so that they can at least understand what I'm telling them, so I think that would be the most difficult obstacle in general. (T1)

Reid (2015) listed some techniques for culture teaching in foreign language teaching. Some of them were designed for young learners such as Total Physical Response (TPR), which is suitable for non-verbal communication, including songs, stories, grammar structures to act out different gestures in different cultures. So, it might be concluded that teachers need to be trained about what techniques can be applied with different ages and levels of English groups.

Another reason why culture teaching was found difficult, as stated by T1, is the hesitation to talk about cultures due to the related stereotypes: "...There are these stereotypes that you want to say but not step on any toes" (T2). In relation to the teacher's hesitation about talking about stereotypes, Barrett et al. (2014) maintain that the components of intercultural competence, knowledge and understanding contribute to "awareness and understanding of one's own and other people's assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert

discrimination" (p. 19). Therefore, teaching the components of intercultural competence would definitely be helpful in understanding the stereotypes.

All participants claimed that the curriculum they follow allowed them to do culture-related activities and they had a free hand to use any materials compatible with the curriculum. Regarding the curriculum, one of the teachers said the following:

> I think that there is an opportunity here to have a fantastic curriculum, very diverse, giving these kids some hands-on knowledge and some real-world knowledge ... There's a bigger and bigger focus on celebrating or making students aware of those holidays or things.

The results of the relevant empirical studies in section 4 highlight that the lack of cultural elements in the curriculum and teaching materials was one of the reasons why the language teachers feel they are limited in culture teaching in their English classes. However, as it was indicated by all the participants in the current study, the curriculum they follow allows them to practice culture. So, how and what the participating teachers teach concerning cultures by following the curriculum, which gives a free hand for the teachers, will be explained in the following sections.

6.3 Teachers' practices of teaching culture and developing CDA and ICC

The second research question aimed to explore the teachers' practices about teaching culture and developing students' CDA and ICC. For this reason, the questions in the last section of the interview schedule were designed to explore the teachers' personal experience in teaching culture, their views on teaching attitudes which contribute to students' CDA and ICC, the ways they teach culture and develop the students' ICC , as well as the cultural elements and aspects they enjoy teaching in their English classes.

The first question was about how the teachers use their personal culture learning experience in their practice of teaching English. All three participating teachers said that they used their personal experience to link the lesson to real life with the aim of raising students' attention to the topic, to be equipped for better teaching and not to provide so-called superficial knowledge to the students. Their answers are below:

> I have personal experiences that I can add in there. I think that grasps the students' attention, so I think it's a really great teaching strategy to have the kids involved if they have a real-life representation of what they're learning, they're much more inclined to remember it or to pay attention or to want to learn about it especially if the facts interesting, so I think it assists in that way. (T2)

> ... once you gain experience in different cultures you learn and understand how they operate and how some are more sensitive in certain areas than others, so that when you're teaching you are able to on the spot be able to if there's a child that's Muslim or Christian or Jewish that you navigate through sensitive areas. (T1)

I went to London and that was British culture, of course. So… and I definitely needed it because I was teaching civilization and… I mean… teaching civilization, no matter how many books you have learnt, and manuals and videos you have seen you have watched, no matter, so… if you have never been to the country of the culture you're teaching… so… probably it will be sort of superficial knowledge and there is a danger of getting into the situation that your students would know something more. (T3)

The teachers were also asked about the attitudes component of intercultural competence to investigate how they developed in the process of teaching English. These attitudes include empathy, openness, curiosity, respect, acceptance and readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment. The participating teachers responded that all of the attitudes were crucial, and on top of that respect was the most important one in the teachers' views. However, there was no explicit answer to the question about the practices of developing the attitudes in their English classes. This might have resulted from the form of the question; therefore, this question was changed, later on, to inquiring about the teachers' practices in the development of the above-mentioned attitudes. T2 said that many of them should be taught at home, so she cannot help with them. T1 and T3 highlighted being a role model as a way of developing the mentioned attitudes. See their responses below:

I think empathy is something that's very difficult to teach in a classroom. I mean obviously we have situations and you have moments of teaching where something's gone wrong, but I think it needs to come from home. So, if they haven't experienced empathy or if they don't understand it then I don't think I can fix it for them. (T2)

Openness by being a role model...I believe by being open to my students and letting them ask whatever questions and being comfortable in respecting their questions and answers. (T1)

Oh, Respect. This is the number one word at my lessons...this is very important…because you have to give somebody time to speak, you have to respect somebody's time to make mistakes, you have to respect the right of making mistakes, you have to respect the culture… (T3)

The teachers further stated that celebrations, international days and students' presentations/interpretations about their own culture, including the parents' involvement are the best and easiest way of teaching culture and developing the CDA and ICC that they do in their classes.

I try and make sure that we learn about a varied amount of country celebrations and why they celebrate things and how different their celebrations are from ours, how many different things people do, you know there's a light celebration, there's the water celebration, the Chinese New (Year). (T2)

...international days...point to one of your international students, your Italian student, say 'How do you do this in Italy?' and you say 'oh we do this way' and then you point to your Spanish student you say 'How you do it?' 'Oh, no! That's crazy we do like this' and you

point to your African student and they're like 'Oh my god! We don't even know what this is' and so then you're just getting, you get everyone going and engage...(T1)

In relation to the cultural aspects and elements, the participating teachers commented that they enjoyed teaching about historical buildings, food, superstitions and traditions as the following responses show:

I love talking about different historical buildings...I also like food, so it's very interesting for me to talk about, you know the different types of foods or things that different cultures have and why they have them... So, I love kind of bringing all that together. That's my favourite subject to teach. (T2)

I like teaching sort of superstitions or traditions, or I really love the language… so, sometimes I show the etymology of the words or the development of a certain concept. (T3)

I think I enjoy basically every single thing, but as I said before it goes back to …I would like to have it down to a tactile investigative curiosity-based teaching where the students are hands-on where I can pull back and they can investigate themselves. (T1)

In the light of the responses above, teachers are aware of different aspects of cultures and enjoy teaching those aforementioned cultural elements; however, they did not explicitly talk about what and how they exactly teach.

7 Discussion

One of the main aims of the pilot study was to explore teachers' attitudes to culture teaching and practices of the development of their students' CDA and ICC in the process of teaching English. Analysis of the data revealed that the participating teachers are obviously aware of cultural diversity including their own cultural identity. They are open and willing to learn about different cultures because they believe that it would help them to increase the quality of their teaching and communication with the students and their parents. Additionally, the teachers also displayed respectfulness to the differences and willingness to cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds and perspectives from their own. The following extracts reflect this attitude:

...if there's a child that's Muslim or Christian or Jewish that you navigate through sensitive areas and are able to deal much better. The more knowledge you have about the culture or the religion so the more experience you gain if you better equipped to teach… (T1)

There's just a variety of things and I think getting students to talk about their own culture, so going home talking to their parents, always like to make it a parent involvement sort of thing where they come in and they share, they might bring food from their culture, so I think that's the best that we can do along with obviously teaching. (T2)

The common and only response of the teachers to the practices of developing students' CDA and ICC was celebrations and holidays. They think that they are the only real ways of teaching culture although they claim that the curriculum they follow and the teaching materials they use allow them to have a free hand in their practices of English. Letting students talk about their cultures and involving parents to bring food or relevant items to the school on international days are also mentioned by the teachers in terms of developing CDA and ICC in English classes. Group work and teamwork for teaching one another is also recommended by the teachers:

> ...you know international days, things like that are other ways that we can get cultures across to kids the only real way we can show culture. You know we can't travel at the moment, so all we can do is talk about different celebrations. (T2)

Although celebrations and holidays were mentioned as the common practice of culture teaching, one of the teachers even said that they did not celebrate all international holidays: "You know we're an international school but we only celebrate the Christian holidays. Well, that's not really international, is it?" (T2).

The current pilot study showed that the teachers have hesitations about teaching cultural elements such as stereotypes and taboos because they want to avoid stepping on someone's foot or giving a negative impression to the parents. They also stated that they are not confident in teaching culture since they have not visited the target countries and their familiarity with those cultures is second-hand knowledge for them. Moreover, according to the teachers, teaching cultures without visiting the country would be superficial and disadvantageous if other students have already seen the target country and know more about it than the teacher. Another reason was the level of students' English proficiency which is seen as a barrier to understanding what is taught. It can be said that the reasons for omitting teaching cultures given by the participating teachers in the context of teaching English as a first language and EAL differ from those of the relevant studies conducted in EFL contexts. Perhaps, the reasons can be linked to the needs of teachers in the context of teaching English. However, the reasons for having hesitations in teaching culture in any context could be overcome with the help of some activities listed in the theoretical background. For instance, teaching stereotypes and taboos (as mentioned by one of the participating teachers) would not necessarily be stepping on someone's foot if they are taught with the reasons that lie beneath them as it is stated by Barrett et al. (2014) and Reid (2015). Another reason for omitting culture teaching was the English language proficiency of the students. The *reflection* (Barrett el al., 2014)*,* which includes drawing activities of what students have learned about cultures, is appropriate for young learners and learners with low level of language proficiency. Role-plays (Reid, 2015) can possibly be another option to teach cultures in English classes regardless of having a high level of English proficiency since young learners can imitate or memorize what is said in the lines. One teacher said in her response that she was unconfident to teach some cultures since she had not been to that country. However, Byram (1997) states, teaching culture is not transmitting information of a specific country but rather involving learners in questioning and discovering, so teachers do not have to travel to the target countries to teach the culture of those. The *comparison* (Barrett el al., 2014), one of the listed activities in section three, could be done in English classes, allowing students to talk about their own culture and discuss similarities and differences between the cultures.

The hesitations in culture teaching, limited cultural activities such as celebrations and holidays and the reasons for celebrating only Christian holidays given by the teachers in the responses despite claiming to have a flexible and diverse curriculum and teaching materials need further investigations. For this reason, classroom observations, school documents and teaching material analysis, interview studies with heads of key stages and parents will be conducted for the main study.

8 Conclusion

Language teaching is no longer considered to be limited to linguistic competence only, which is using the language accurately in terms of structure and lexical items. Intercultural competence, which refers to the ability to use the language "socially and culturally in appropriate ways", is also required for effective communication with people from different cultural orientations (Byram et al., 2002, p. 5). Given the necessity of the development of students' CDA and ICC, language teachers are expected to include culture into their practices of teaching English. Therefore, the current pilot study intended to explore how English language teachers perceive the concept of culture, how they see culture teaching and what possible culture-orientated activities they do in their practices of teaching English.

The outcomes of the study demonstrate that the teachers are culturally aware and enthusiastic to learn about different cultures with respect and acceptance. Except for one of the teachers, they think that they can help in the development of the attitudes (empathy, openness, curiosity, respect, acceptance, readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment etc.) to contribute to students' intercultural competence. They implicitly teach cultures by allowing the students to present their own culture and create a group or teamwork to teach one another. They also celebrate international days and their students' holidays to show the cultural differences for establishing effective communication. However, they need to be trained about the various ways of teaching culture mentioned in the literature review (e.g., comparison, experience, analysis, reflection, action) depending on the students' age and level of English proficiency. The teachers also need to be encouraged to be confident that they do not have to have first-hand experience to teach about the target culture. Besides celebrations, which are mentioned in the responses, possible ways of teaching other cultural elements and aspects depending on the students' needs, interests, readiness, age and level of English should be embedded into teacher training or teachers' development programs so that teachers can benefit from them. Finally, cultural elements included in the curriculum and teaching materials need to be guided by the experts-possibly by teacher trainers for the benefit of teachers.

To be able to gain a deeper insight into the reasons for the limited activities of culture teaching found as a result of the pilot study, relevant school documents, the curriculum and teaching materials used at the observed school need analyzing for the main research study. In addition to the analysis of school documents, curriculum and teaching materials, classroom observations are needed to be done to explore teachers' practices and responses of the students to the development of CDA and ICC. Furthermore, the content analysis of in-service teacher development programs and teacher training programs which are provided by the Hungarian universities are required.

As every study, the current pilot study also has some limitations. Exploring the attitudes and practices of the three participating teachers in the development of their students' CDA and ICC may not be enough to have a good understanding of the phenomenon. The large-scale interview study proposed to be carried out shortly may provide different perspectives and insights and might lead to different outcomes. At the same time, it is reassuring to know that the proposed large-scale study involving more teachers can certainly be based on this pilot investigation as both the interview schedule and the processes have proven to be successful in eliciting relevant data.

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APPENDIX A

Interview questions

Part I: The Concept of Culture

1. What is culture to you?
2. How do you see the relationship between language and culture?
3. You probably have extensive experience with intercultural situations and have been teaching in an intercultural school for quite some time. What is the relevance of interculturality to you? (in other words, how do intercultural situations influence your thinking?)
4. What do you think is the place of culture in teaching English (as a first language, an additional language)? (How do you think culture should appear in teaching English?)
5. How do you think culture and language classes interrelated?
6. (As you said before, culture is made up of a lot of things /different things.) What elements of culture do you think should be part of English classes?
7. And how can interculturality/intercultural situations appear in English classes?

Part II: Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Culture and Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence

8. Can you recall an important experience that you had about learning about different cultures? What was it?
9. What different ways of learning culture have you experienced? Which of these have you found useful?
10. How do you (like to) learn new things about different cultures?
11. Have you ever had an intercultural misunderstanding? What happened? And can you remember a case (cases) where you didn't behave as you would have expected yourself to behave? E.g., you couldn't let go of prejudice, etc.

Part III: Teachers' Practices about Teaching Culture and Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence

12. What can you use from your experience of learning culture (or the lack of it) in your practice of teaching English?
13. How do you think the following things can be developed in the students in the process of teaching English? How do you think you are developing the following things?
    A) empathy
    B) openness
    C) curiosity
    D) respect
    E) acceptance
    F) readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment
14. How can you help the students in your classes experience/learn about different cultures?

15. How do you use the opportunity of a having multicultural class for developing cultural awareness?
16. How do you think having a multicultural class helps your students to develop their intercultural communicative competence? How does it help them to communicate successfully?
17. Do the curriculum/ syllabus and the teaching materials that you have been following/using allow you to teach different aspects of culture and intercultural competence?
18. What ways of teaching culture and intercultural communication have you experienced? Which of these have you found effective?
19. Do you think teaching different cultures (different from yours) is difficult? Why/ Why not?
20. What difficulties have you experienced in teaching culture and intercultural communication? Why do you think you have had difficulties?
21. What elements or aspects of culture do you enjoy teaching?

I have no further questions. Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before we finish the interview?
Is there anything else you would like to add?

Demographic features of the participants
1. Gender
   _____Male
   _____Female
2. Level of Education/ What did you study?
   _____Bachelor's
   _____Master's
   _____Education Specialist
   _____PhD
3. Years Teaching Experience
   _____Less than 3 years
   _____3 to 9 years
   _____10 to 20 years
   _____Over 20 years
4. Did your college program include anything about teaching culture or intercultural/ multicultural education?
5. Have you had other training in intercultural/multicultural education?
6. How has your formal education/ education at university helped you in becoming an English language teacher/ teaching English?