The Place of Culture in English Language Teaching: An Exploration of Non-native ESOL Teachers' Attitudes towards Intercultural Competence

by:

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

February 2018

Declaration

I, Simin Sasani, here by confirm that all work presented here is my own. Where information has been used from other sources, I confirm that this has been clearly stated within the thesis.

Signed: **Simin Sasani**

Date: **26th February 2018**

I dedicate this thesis to my precious husband, Alireza, who has given me wings

and taught me to fly towards my dreams.

Abstract

In this study, I have tried to explore how a group of non-native English teachers, first of all, define culture in relation to their English language teaching practices. In addition, I have tried to understand how they perceive 'intercultural competence' to find out if they are aware of the concept and how important it is for them. I have also explored to what extent they are concerned about the challenges that learners might face in intercultural communications and, finally, to what extent they can help learners overcome these barriers and increase students' insights into cultural differences. More specifically, the research has considered the how and why of incorporating intercultural competence into English language lessons and how, in particular, non-native teachers think they can improve their learners' knowledge, attitude and skills in this domain. The participants of this study were nine non-native ESOL teachers from different language centres in the UK. The main methods of data collection were semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. A qualitative interpretivist approach was adopted and the data was analysed using theme-based content analysis. The findings of the study suggest that the teachers' attitude towards the concept of culture could be divided into four main categorisations of culture: as transferable facts, as modes of thought, as skills and as two-way beliefs. The participants also identified some challenges that their students might encounter in their intercultural communication. Their attitudes in this regard were explored under two broad concepts of the effects of globalisation and the effects of glocalisation on intercultural communication. This study illustrates that although the teachers welcome the approach of intercultural competence and they generally have positive attitudes towards it, they are not certain how to integrate it in a systematic and explicit manner. They also identified some restrictions regarding the integration of this approach. Time constraints, level of students, lack

of theoretical and practical contents of teacher training programmes regarding intercultural competence were some of the restrictions they asserted.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Andrey Rosowsky for his continuous support and insightful comments. I am extremely grateful for the time, patience, immense knowledge and constructive input he has given me throughout this study. Without his precious guidance and advice, it would not be possible to conduct this study.

I would also like to thank all the English language teachers who kindly agreed to spare their precious time to participate in the interviews and allowed me to observe their lessons. This thesis would have never been completed without their engagement and cooperation.

My sincere thanks are also extended to my colleagues and lovely friends at the School of Education. They have always been encouraging and supportive. Being part of such a great research group has motivated me to achieve the best I can.

Above all, my heartiest love and appreciation to a very special person, my husband, Dr Alireza Tatari. I would have never even started this study without his invaluable encouragement and support. Thank you to your selfless love, care and dedicated efforts throughout my PhD journey, which significantly contributed for completion of my thesis. Thank you for always being there for me when I needed a shoulder to cry on and at times I thought that it is impossible to continue, you helped me to keep things in perspective.

Finally and most importantly, my profound thanks goes to my lovely family, my mother, my father and my only brother, Goodarz, for always being there for me. The support I have had from them throughout my life has always made me want to be the best I can possibly be. They are the reason why I wanted to do a PhD, and their advice has always been well placed, reasoned and motivating. I would also like to appreciate the love and support I received from

my husband's family. Their devotion and understanding throughout the whole journey of this thesis is greatly appreciated.

Simin Sasani
26th February 2018

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List of Abbreviations and Definitions

ESL: English as a Second Language. ESL focuses on English as a language for those who intend to settle and work in a country where English is the dominant or official language (Young, 2015). For instance, immigrants from non-native English-speaking countries who come to the UK to stay for the rest of their lives or for an extended period of time.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language. EFL focuses on English as a language for foreigners who intend to stay in English speaking countries for a short/temporary period of time and would like to learn English for general or academic purposes (Young, 2015). For instance, a Spanish person who travels to the UK to attend a summer course in a private language school.

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages. ESOL applies to both EFL and ESL (Young, 2015). As the participants of my study are both EFL and ESL teachers and I have not purposefully focused on their distinct positions as ESL or EFL teachers, I have chosen to use ESOL as a comprehensive term which incorporates teaching English as second language for those who are settling in the UK and also teaching English as a foreign language for those who tend to be in the UK temporarily for different purposes.

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. TESOL is a course and a teaching qualification which aims at training and preparing teachers to teach English to the students who learn English as their second or foreign language (Young, 2015).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is on the contribution of English language teaching to the development of learners' intercultural competence. With borders having been more regularly opened for the physical movement of many people in the world, human interactions together with a significant increase in virtual interactions have significantly increased and the ability to communicate with people of different cultures has gained particular importance in recent decades. In sociolinguistics, this kind of communication is called intercultural communication. According to Grundy (2008), intercultural communication happens when interactants do not have a shared culture but share a language. A particular situation is when someone from one cultural context meets someone from another cultural context and communicates in a language which is a foreign language for one or both of them. As language is considered the best bridge to connect people, the intercultural dimension of second or foreign language education as a field of study has been recently recognised in many educational systems.

In the world at the present time, English is generally considered to be the most frequently used language of wider communication among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Crystal, 2003). Crystal defines English as an international language which is spoken by over 1.5 billion people in many countries as either a native, a second or a foreign language. It is taught in schools in just about every country in the world (2003). Therefore, regarding intercultural communication, English language teaching in particular has been obliged to further improve the quality of its methods for teaching English. It could be claimed that the traditional aim of English language teaching was an emphasis on pure linguistic

competence. However, "[l]inguistic competence alone is not anymore enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language" (Krasner, 1999, p.80). Consequently, since the 20th century, communicative competence has become the primary aim of English language teaching (Van Ek, 1986). Scholars recognise that linguistic competence helps to master grammar, vocabulary and phonology of a language but a more important process is how to use that language in real life. As communications have become more globalised, particular attention is now being paid to enable learners to communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in this multicultural world (Byram, 1997).

The needed shift from traditional methods of English language teaching is due to the realisation that intercultural communication can be challenging. The challenges that most researchers have discussed can mainly be put into two categories. One of them is the fact that people of different cultures tend to have significant differences in their values, beliefs, attitudes to time, life style and in many other ways (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). According to Ferraro (2006), it is a human's nature which tends to compare everything and everybody with his or her own criteria. While growing up, people set up certain standards for themselves which build their identity. There is also a tendency in people to think that their own culture is superior to others and they try to evaluate others' behaviour against their own standards. These tendencies often make problems in intercultural communications (Ferraro, 2006).

Secondly, meanings are usually culturally situated and any exchange of meanings between different cultures can also be a challenge (Grundy, 2008). In intercultural communication, it is likely that people from other cultural contexts interpret similar situations differently (Cohen et al., 2003) and this may cause misinterpretations and misunderstandings. This problem in communication is related to the study of pragmatics. "Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)" (Yule, 1996, p.3).

What people say is not necessarily what they really mean. Sometimes words and phrases which are being uttered do not mean their literal meanings. Pragmatics is the analysis of what is meant by what is said (Yule, 1996). Although this might be true in any type of communication, it is more common that a meaning be interpreted differently when people from different cultural contexts communicate and the meaning listeners capture might not actually be the intention of the speaker (or writer).

In order to overcome these barriers and have successful intercultural communication, having certain abilities is required. Intercultural competence is a term introduced by Byram (1997) which can be described as the "complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Byram, 1997, p.31). In this respect, intercultural competence is the capability of a person to handle the main challenging features of intercultural communication when a person faces cultural variation and unfamiliarity. This approach does not emphasise dealing with one particular culture but it is explained as "the cognitive, affective, and operational adaptability of an individual's internal system in all intercultural communication contexts" (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009, p.52). There is usually the assumption that learning a foreign language involves becoming similar in some way to a person in another country. Intercultural competence, however, is not about imitating another person neither from linguistic nor cultural aspects (Byram et al., 2002). It is about developing learners who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and avoid stereotyping. It is recognising the communicator as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of a country. Intercultural communication is communication based on respect for individuals and equality of human rights (Byram et al., 2002).

The central concern of English language teaching is communication. In this sense it is important to see how communication is understood in intercultural situations. Byram (1997)

explains that communication is more than the exchange of information and sending of messages since the exchange of information depends on how it is interpreted in another cultural context. He adds that successful communication is evaluated not only in terms of accuracy and efficiency of information exchange. It is focused also on interpreting along with establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

As communication is the main aim of language learning and teaching, English language classrooms might be a good place to develop learners' intercultural competence and help them overcome the aforementioned barriers. Many English language teachers, however, have had no formal training in integrating intercultural competence into their teaching, and there is no universally accepted set of criteria that instructors can use as a guide (Sercu et al., 2005). Although there are activities which can be used in the classrooms in order to develop these skills, the inclusion of these activities is usually neglected due to a lack of a clear insight about the necessity of intercultural competence and its place in language teaching (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Neuliep, 2006).

Bearing this in mind, teachers have a crucial role in language classrooms. They can prepare their students to have an awareness of all the challenges they will face when they start living in a different cultural society or when they are communicating with people from culturally different backgrounds. When English is being taught, part of the job should be preparing students for the challenges they may meet. Teachers, however, might have difficulty understanding the diversity and complexity of cultures and might focus purely on the linguistic aspects of English. I believe focusing on English language teachers and considering their points of view about intercultural language learning is a valuable way to investigate the place of intercultural competence in English language teaching.

In my own experience, I sometimes realise that people of other nationalities who do not feel confident building relationships with native British people or people from different nationalities usually stick to their own community. Furthermore, vice versa, some people who travel to other countries try to hide their own cultural values and behave like somebody else in order to become like the local people. However, as Smith (1987) agrees, communicating with people from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds does not mean that a person should lose their identity and become like others and neglect their own cultural frames. It means considering differences and similarities to see how they affect the process of communication. Intercultural competence as an approach in English language teaching tries to promote the idea that learning English as a second or a foreign language is not about committing oneself to a particular culture, rather it is about respecting cultural differences and filling gaps through relating and discovering in order to help the communication be effective (Alptekin, 2002).

The significance of intercultural competence within language education has been recognised by many scholars (Byram, 1997; Secru et al., 2005; Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009; Corbett, 2003). They basically believe incorporating intercultural competence in English language teaching might remove some of the issues individuals have when communicating, travelling or living outside of their own cultural community or context. If language learners become more familiar not only with their own culture but also with the differences and similarities of others through classroom activities, and if they are aware that these differences exist and give respect to these differences, their intercultural competence can develop. To achieve this goal, teachers play an important role in classrooms. Therefore, my study is focused on the teachers of English. My positionality and the context of the study are discussed in the following section.

1.2 Background to the study

My interest in the study of intercultural competence and its place in English language teaching originated from my background as a learner and a teacher of English as a foreign language. I have been learning English from childhood and my interest in this language led my education towards the field of English language teaching. Even though I came to the UK to do my MA in TESOL and I have been living in this country for a number of years, the initial idea of this study came to my mind when I taught English for two years in my home country (Iran) and realised that the concept of culture in relation to the English language is a rather controversial issue. There is a longstanding debate about the cultural content of English language teaching as well as the cultural content of English textbooks among Iranian language policy makers and practitioners (Mahboudi and Javdani, 2012; Dahmardeh, 2009; Aliakbari, 2004; Sarab, 2006). Some (e.g., Aliakbari, 2004) believe a language cannot be learned without culture and that authentic English or American materials should be taught and the focus should be on target culture. On the other hand, others (e.g., Zarei and Khalessi, 2011; Sarab, 2006) believe English as a foreign language should not be a vehicle to spread any particular culture, especially westernisation, and there is no need to focus on one nation whose cultural frameworks are different from ours. They think learning English should not be a pathway to import western culture (See Secretariat of Education, 2006). Although the current political system strongly supports the second point of view and they localise contents of materials, it has many opponents as well. This was where I started to think about cultural aspects of English as an international language more deeply. My interest in this aspect of language teaching expanded when I moved to the UK and experienced living in a multicultural environment. This experience helped me realise cultures are more dissimilar than what I used to think and the dissimilarities might sometimes be problematic. In addition, I started to relate my experience to the existing debates

(See Aliakbari, 2004; Mahboudi and Javdani, 2012; Zarei and Khalessi, 2011, Sharifian, 2013) in my country about English culture and local culture.

While doing my MA degree in the UK, I volunteered for SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English). I was teaching English in this institute and my students were mainly Asian and African. The point that I realised while working there was that, nowadays, it is not easy to distinguish target and source culture as individuals are now members of very diverse cultural groups. Moreover, I realised that current teaching approaches and classroom materials do not devote enough attention to the complexity of cultures. I believe focusing only on the cultural content of textbooks or talking about visible aspects of one specific culture in classrooms are not sufficient for the students to be more insightful about the differences and their potential impacts on communication. The current conventional approaches undertaken in English language teaching do not remove all the communication problems that students usually have in today's multicultural world. Culture is like software in the mind (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005) and shapes an individual's identity. People carry patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that are part of their culture and which have been learned throughout their lifetime. Much of this has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most sensitive and capable of learning (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Culture from this point of view is something more than what a group of people wears, eats or plays. Although these elements are also a part of a culture, what makes intercultural communications more complex are people's behaviour patterns, values, attitudes and the meaning systems in their minds. These elements could not be easily changed or taught through traditional teacher-centred methods.

Intercultural competence has attracted my attention as I think it is an approach which takes a more complex look at definitions of culture. I believe this approach adopts a moderate stand which acknowledges local cultures, disputes the superiority of western cultures and promotes

diversity and equality. As Sercu et al. (2005) agree, it might help us to develop a willingness to engage with self-awareness, the ability to cope with uncertainty and see the world through the others' eyes. It might help all of us to be more ready, open and have judgeless attitudes toward differences. Although intercultural competence is important all over the world, it gains more importance in multicultural countries like the UK. This is because intercultural communication in diverse societies is more crucial than in other societies. In other words, people, who are already in the UK, learn English to live, study and work there and they are in contact with people of different cultures on daily basis, whereas people in other countries may learn English for purposes which do not require substantial cultural knowledge and awareness. Therefore, English lessons in the UK need to consider intercultural competence significantly as those lessons are preparing the learners to interact and build relationships with people from all over the world both within and outside classrooms.

Even though there has been a wide range of studies on intercultural competence in English language lessons (e.g., Sercu, 2005; Beltrán-Palanques, 2014; Hismanoglu, 2011; Reid, 2015; Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003; Moeller and Nugent, 2014; Al Qahtani, 2004), only few have focused on the UK. Among these few studies, almost all of them are large scale quantitative studies focusing on some European countries including the UK (e.g., Byram and Risager, 1999; Young and Sachdev, 2011). Therefore, I believe there is a significant need for more qualitative studies focusing only on the UK as one of the main student and immigrant attracting countries (Van Oudenhoven, 2006). Furthermore, my study focuses specifically on non-native English language teachers who teach in the UK and, to my knowledge, will be the study's main contribution to the current literature.

My choice of focusing particularly on non-native English teachers could be explained through two main reasons. The foremost one is about myself as a non-native speaker whose profession is teaching English. As any qualitative study attempts to provide meaning to the voices of

participants (Austin and Sutton, 2014), it is vital to the researchers to know that the process of collecting and interpreting data could be affected by their own backgrounds (Agar, 1996). I believe I would have been an outsider if my participants were native speaker teachers and this might have adversely affected the legitimacy of my interpretation or it might have led me to be somewhat detached from the collected data. I still cannot claim that I am now an insider in the study as my participants are from different cultural backgrounds and they are not my colleagues but I can claim that the data is not too alien to me as my participants and I probably have some experiences in common. I possess some knowledge about the community of non-native English teachers that could be difficult to be accessed by someone who is completely an outsider. Myself as a researcher and my participants have all been through the process of learning English as a foreign language and we are all teachers of English while being non-native speakers. The challenges we face while living and teaching in the UK might be different from native speaker teachers' challenges. I believe having this kind of shared understanding and experience contributes to the validity of data analysis and interpretation (Agar, 1996).

The second reason that I decided to do a study on non-native teachers is regarding the status of English internationally and the number of non-native English teachers in the world. Nowadays, English is being taught all over the world and obviously the number of teachers who are from outer or expanding circle countries (Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006) are much more numerous than teachers from inner circle countries (see Literature Review, p.36). Language scholars and practitioners are increasingly focusing on the fact that English is spoken and taught by more people as a second or foreign language than as a first language or mother tongue, and accordingly, they have started to embrace the idea that the ownership of English has changed and it is not exclusively owned by the native speakers (Alptekin, 2002; Sharifian, 2013). The ownership of English is now shared by a non-native speaking community and, consequently, their voices should be heard in matters affecting the language itself and its education (Llurda,

2004). Therefore, deciding to focus on non-native speakers in this research has allowed me to play a part in the process of respecting the rights of non-native teachers to be heard and to be regarded as owners of the language.

All the above mentioned considerations and interests led me to develop my PhD research aim, objectives and questions which are explained in the following section.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

This study was carried out in the UK and is concerned with cultural differences, their impact on communication and the role of English language teaching in helping students to have successful intercultural communication. As mentioned earlier, English language teaching has been viewed as a way to achieve the goal of effective intercultural communication (Byram, 1997; Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). However, there has not been sufficient investigation into teachers' awareness and also few practical strategies have been offered. Moreover, a lack of definition of what to teach and what to select from the complex concept of culture can easily lead educators to dissatisfaction and make them revert to the priority of the conventional teaching approach (linguistic) and the teaching of the four language skills (Byram and Fleming, 1998).

In this study, I have tried to explore how a group of non-native ESOL teachers, first of all, define culture in relation to their English language teaching practices. In addition, I have attempted to explore these non-native English language teachers' understanding of 'intercultural competence' to find out if they are aware of the concept and how important it is for them. I have sought to discover to what extent they are concerned about the challenges that learners might face in intercultural communications and to what extent they can/ should help learners overcome these barriers and increase students' insights into cultural differences. More specifically, the study has tried to consider the how and why of incorporating intercultural

competence into English lessons and how, in particular, non-native ESOL teachers think they can improve their learners' knowledge and skills in this domain.

Based on these aims and objectives, the following research questions are proposed:

1) How do some non-native ESOL teachers understand the relationship between culture and language in their English language teaching practices?

2) To what extent do teachers acknowledge the term 'intercultural competence'?

3) Regardless of (2), to what extent do teachers integrate 'intercultural competence' into their English language teaching practices?

4) What problems do teachers identify that could be construed as related to the integration of intercultural competence?

1.4 Thesis organisation and structure

This thesis includes five chapters beginning with an introduction which is this chapter and ending with a summary and conclusion which is Chapter Five. Below I summarise each chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the whole study including the aims and objectives of the study, research questions, my positionality and background of the study along with my justifications for conducting this study and my choice of participants. The chapter also presents an outline of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter tries to review the literature on culture in relation to English language teaching, potential intercultural communication barriers, the status of English language globally and the effects of local languages and cultures on this language. This chapter also reviews literature on the shifts that have happened in teaching approaches and methods in the field of English

language teaching from linguistic competence to intercultural competence, and discusses some of the well-known models of intercultural competence. In addition, the chapter provides some examples of the practical activities from the literature that could be utilised in English lessons. The Literature Review chapter also explores the concept of teacher attitude and how it is defined in my study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The chapter provides a detailed account of the study's methodology, methods of data collection and data analysis. It also provides a short biography of the participants. More specifically, the chapter explains the different phases of the process of my study and provides a justification for choices and steps taken. I realised that for this study the choice of a qualitative and interpretivist exploratory study was suitable to achieve the aim of the study. This chapter also explains the process of recruiting participants and how data were collected through semi-structured interviews with nine non-native ESOL teachers and classroom observations. The chapter also discusses the process of transcribing, analysing, interpreting and presenting the findings to the readers. Moreover, it addresses ethical considerations such as confidentiality and anonymity. The issues related to the trustworthiness of the study are also referred in this chapter which are mainly about credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and transparency.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussions

This chapter provides the findings of the study and interpretation of the data collected from interviews and observations relating them to the relevant literature. In Chapter Four, I try to explain the findings through relevant categories and themes, and discuss them. I also focus on the collected data to answer the research questions. I try to address each research question though drawing on the voices of my participants and providing examples from the transcripts and field notes.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the whole study and some important conclusions and implications drawn from the study. It also offers recommendations for future studies and explains the limitations that the study had. References and appendixes are also provided at the end of the thesis.

1.5 Summary

The first chapter of this study has offered an introduction to the main study. A review of the significance of intercultural competence in English language education was discussed followed by an explanation of the study's background. The introduction of the aims, objectives and research questions for the study followed by the organisation of the thesis and a summary of all chapters were provided. The next chapter provides a theoretical and conceptual review of relevant literature with which my study was underpinned.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the Introduction of my thesis, I introduced the background and the rationale of this study. In this chapter, my aim is to explain its theoretical foundations. I intend to critically review the relevant literature and present an overview of what other scholars have studied in the field of intercultural competence. For these purposes, I begin with discussing the essence of intercultural education in general and then I narrow it down towards language education in particular. Before beginning with reviewing relevant literature on the integration of intercultural competence into English language teaching, I discuss the concept of culture. As is self-evident from the term, 'intercultural' means 'between cultures'. It is necessary, therefore, to explore the various definitions of culture. Since 'Intercultural competence' deals with communication between cultures and the main tool of communication is language, the discussions in the section on the concept of culture also include arguments around the relation between language and culture. This section is followed by another section on the place of culture in English language teaching.

Considering the fact that many factors are involved in causing problems in communication between people of different cultures, a large section of the literature review focuses on these types of challenges in intercultural communication. This section is divided into two parts, non-linguistic challenges and cultural linguistic ones. The section also includes a discussion on the globalisation of English and the recently emerging phenomenon of glocalisation of English which have been observed as one of the major reasons for miscommunication.

The above-mentioned discussions lead my arguments towards the essence of intercultural language education and the necessity for promoting intercultural competence amongst language learners, especially through the intercultural encounters they face within their international societies. I then explain the importance of paradigm change in English language teaching from linguistic competence to intercultural competence. For this purpose, I start with a brief historical background of 'intercultural competence' and definitions around it. Relating what is discussed in this chapter to the aims of this study, it is necessary to look at the literature which has tried to relate intercultural competence to foreign language education, particularly English language teaching, and the practical techniques and activities they suggest. Even though these are not large in number, I try to review the ones which exist and discuss the integration of intercultural competence into English language classrooms as this is the main concern of my study.

Last but not least, I try to look at the features and characteristics of 'attitude', particularly 'teacher attitude'. Since the main aim of my study has been to explore English teachers' attitudes regarding intercultural competence, I think it is important to discuss this from different perspectives and explain its elements before I start introducing the methodological standpoints and choices for my study.

2.2 The essentials of intercultural education

As I have mentioned, the term 'intercultural' literally means 'between cultures'. "An intercultural situation is one in which the cultural distance between the participants is significant enough to have an impact on communication, an impact which is obvious to at least one of the parties" (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009, p.41). The year 2008 was appointed the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue by the European Union (Jackson, 2009). The attention of teachers, professionals, and linguists was attracted to intercultural problems (Byram, 2008;

Portera, 2008). The goal was to begin a process in which global issues and intercultural communication would come to the foreground and would become a crucial part of general education (Jackson, 2009). The year was beneficial in raising awareness of the importance of intercultural interactions (Portera, 2008). In addition, the notions of intercultural education have been utilised often and now can be seen in European policy documents, some books and school regulations. However, it has been observed that there is still a need to provide a clarified definition or a clear basis for the notion of intercultural education (Portera, 2008; Layne et al., 2015). Teachers and education policy makers are usually misunderstood or are hardly known or acknowledged regarding the basic principles of intercultural education (Portera, 2008; Layne et al., 2015).

Doyé believes that the term 'intercultural education' was first used in America for the reason of creating inclusion among diverse ethnic groups after the Second World War (1999). The term then started to be used more widely in other countries where different cultural minorities could be found (Doyé, 1999). This was because intercultural education aimed at bringing people from different cultures together in order to improve the quality of their lives.

Numerous scholars have agreed that intercultural education needs to be a necessary part of formal education across the world. For instance, Klafki (1997) believes educational practices at schools have to be intercultural education-oriented. He emphasises that schools should pay a particular attention to global, international and intercultural issues. Some of the issues that he thinks the formal education systems should focus on are: environmental issues, war and peace, population explosion, discriminations and the risks of new information and communication media. He believes covering these sorts of topics will help the learners to think critically, develop argumentative skills and develop empathy which are needed themes for a democratic society. In addition, in 2006, UNESCO reported that intercultural education is a response to the intercultural challenges to provide quality education for all:

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Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UNESCO, 2006, p.8)

UNESCO also proposed guidelines on intercultural education in 2006 with a central concern of how to develop solid ideas for an intercultural approach in worldwide education. These guidelines include three main principles (UNESCO, 2006, p.32):

Principle 1: intercultural education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.

Principle 2: intercultural education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.

Principle 3: intercultural education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.

UNESCO also suggests that these principles could be practically achieved through the development of the curricula, teaching and learning materials, development of teaching methods and development of teacher training courses (UNESCO, 2006, P.33). Although the principles and guidelines presented by UNESCO refer to education in general, they can strongly be linked to language education as well. In their guidelines, appropriate language teaching for intercultural education has been mentioned saying that every student should acquire the capability to interact, present themselves, listen and involve in conversation in their first language, the official language(s) of their countries and in one or more foreign languages (UNESCO, 2006, p.32). Moreover, this set of principles helps teachers be prepared for this

new dimension in teaching through promoting intercultural education. It is believed that following these guidelines promotes awareness of cultural pluralism, multiculturalism and the necessity for intercultural dialogue (Batelaan and Coomans, 1999; UNESCO, 2006). Even though these guidelines highlight the significance of intercultural education and offer accompanying aims, they do not offer sufficient practical objectives to achieve these aims. Practical and realistic steps that could assist in reaching the goals of intercultural education are omitted in much of the literature. Filpisan et al. (2012) have conducted one of the very few studies to offer a practical guide to intercultural education. Their research was a one-year experimental study through which they focused on a school where students were Hungarian and Romanian and where they implemented an intercultural educational programme. They organised workshops and lessons throughout a year within which they tried different activities. However, as they conclude their study, in order to have an impact over the students, all parties (including teachers, schools, local and governmental authorities) should collaborate. This kind of collaboration in educational settings which is aimed at intercultural education is still not being strongly supported (Filpisan et al., 2012)

As globalisation and life in a multicultural society are the realities of today's world, it is significant to move on towards the kind of interactions that "contribute to the development of co-operation and solidarity rather than to relations of domination, conflict and rejection" (Portera, 2008, p.483). Although few people would argue that it is not the job of formal educational institutions to prepare their students for today's life, many educationalists (e.g., Halpern, 1998; Kaikkonen, 2001; Bennet et al., 2002) believe that the current century in education should aim at helping students learn new skills and capabilities for real life rather than delivering information, feeding them with isolated facts or expecting them to recite raw facts with no engagement through real and critical thinking (Portera, 2008).

Intercultural education is a general term that includes both teaching and learning aspects. In respect of teaching it mainly includes curricula, teaching methods and materials and in respect of learning it involves acquiring relevant knowledge and skills. It tries to enable the learners to understand culture and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Kaikkonen proposes some factors which contribute to the essential of intercultural learning in today's world (2001). One of them is about an individual's own culture. He believes that an individual's own cultural identity, their awareness of it and their intention to strengthen and hold on to it, is related to one's roots and that roots are the foundation for intercultural learning. A person's roots include one's ethnicity, the cultural mould which is shaped by the social environment the person is habituated to, and their perceptions and value judgments. Another factor that Kaikkonen suggests is the individual's descriptions of their own culture, their opinions about other cultures and others' opinions about their own culture (2001). He asserts that we need intercultural learning because the reality of today's life is being multicultural and this multicultural reality requires the awareness of cultural differences.

Although in my study the core focus is on teaching aspects of language education, the learning aspects cannot be avoided as teaching and learning have always been interrelated and it is usually not possible to draw a clear distinction between the two (Tabulawa, 2013; Vermunt and Verloop, 1999; Shuell, 1996). Matters related to teaching cannot be studied without taking learning into consideration and vice versa. For example, for my study, I observed some language lessons. Even though the main intention was to explore the teachers' practices, it was not possible to avoid looking at the learners' behaviour, feelings and actions in the classrooms. Teaching becomes meaningless without learning and learning becomes meaningless without teaching, and both of these two constitute education (Tabulawa, 2013).

Learners can benefit from intercultural education in numerous ways in today's world. One is about developing their understanding of other nations and being alert and open-minded about

differences (Bennett, 2009). Another one is about helping students learn how to live together in diverse societies which has been understood as one of the main issues in today's education (Hammer et al., 2003; Byram, 1997; UNESCO, 2006). Following the changes that have been happening in the world in terms of greater globalisation and growing diversity, teachers' roles have significantly changed in recent decades (Finley, 2000). Their role is now to prepare students for life and not only to feed them with information which some of the students may remember for a while but most of them will forget. Teachers have been changing their conventional roles and now are often in the process of transferring to new roles. They are becoming active participants, helpers, guides and facilitators in their lessons when they work closely with their pupils (Yang, 1998; Nunan, 1993; Wenden, 1991). Teachers now regularly allow their students to use their own learning strategies but at the same time they suggest and direct them in the use of these strategies (Yang, 1998). Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8).

In addition, teachers should take time to train the students' social competences or prepare them for life in this multicultural world. This kind of education (teaching in particular) may help everyone consider diversity in a positive way and see the advantages of it instead of seeing it as a problem. In other words, it will lead everyone to not only tolerate diversity, but also take advantage of all the potential and fruitfulness that a diverse classroom and diverse societies in general offer to both learners, teachers and other members of a society (Bennett, 2009; Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Sleeter, 2001).

Intercultural education might also provide extensive opportunities for students to be inspired to learn and share knowledge with other people from all over the world. In this process, English language teaching and learning is one of the key tools enabling the practice of intercultural education and it is often represented in the planning process of the English language

curriculum, in training English language teachers or in the textbooks being used in language classrooms. (Reid, 2015; Hismanoglu, 2011; Karabinar and Guler, 2013). Since English is the most widely-spoken and used language in the world and it is the main tool of communication among people from different cultures, it has attracted more attention within the field of intercultural education (Hülmbauer et al., 2008; Byram, 2008). It should be noted that real intercultural encounters may be regarded as the foundation of the teaching and learning process rather than educational arrangements and that is why both inside classroom (formal learning) and outside classroom (informal learning) situations are relevant (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Before I begin with discussing the issues that intercultural encounters might bring up and also the terminologies that have been developed as the result of globalisation and diversity, it is important to explore the term culture as it is a key concept in the discussions on intercultural communication.

2.3 The concept of culture

The word 'culture' is important to discuss in this literature review as it will help to better understand the process and principles of intercultural communication. Culture is a broad notion which, in its anthropological sense, may include almost all aspects of human life, and many researchers from a wide range of scientific disciplines have tried to formulate definitions (e.g., Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Schwartz, 2009; Cole and Parker, 2011; Hong, 2009). However, there is still no agreed one definition (Sewell, 2005). The difficulty in coming up with a definition is no doubt due to the complexity of this concept. Even in the field of foreign language teaching, culture has been seen from various perspectives and has been approached differently by different scholars and practitioners (e.g., Robinson, 1985; Kramsch, 1998; Sun, 2013; Risager, 2007). From a traditional perspective, cultures are distinguished by nations and cultural differences mean differences between nations. This view of culture is no longer acceptable and is not valid in many nations as countries (with very few exceptions) have

become more multicultural and are not homogenous from the aspect of culture (Jandt, 2013). A culture in this sense might mean a nationality, a region or a country or it might cross numerous regions and nations. Therefore, the concept of culture could be defined and used differently depending on the context.

According to Brogger (1992), in the first half of the 20th century, it was usual in academic works to emphasise empirically visible features of culture such as customs and artefacts. However, it was soon realised that this way of looking at culture was rather restricted (Brogger, 1992). Compared to the humanities which tend to pay more attention to the materialistic dimensions of culture, the anthropological concept of culture has been an open and collective one which includes norms and assumptions that people adopt and share as a result of growing up and socialisation (Geertz, 1973, cited in Lizardo, 2016). In addition, some definitions detail culture in terms of beliefs and values shared by members of a certain community or a social group (Brislin, 1990).

Scholars have stressed the importance of culture as a vital feature which must go hand in hand with language teaching and they have formulated different definitions of culture throughout the years (Brislin, 1990; Huebener, 1965, Chastain, 1976; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It has generally been defined as "widely shared ideas, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal- directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as 'right' and 'correct' by people who identify themselves as members of a society" (Brislin,1990, p.11). Apart from these general definitions, different types of models and categorisations have been designed and utilised to explain this complicated notion. Scholars have tried to explain the concept of culture by dividing its different elements into different categories as such a categorisation might help with simplifying to some extent the complex notion of culture. Below I am going to present some of the categorisations that I think

are applicable within the context of foreign language education and are also relevant to the concept of intercultural competence which is the main aim of my study.

2.3.1 Models of culture

Huebener (1965) explains that culture can be understood in three ways: the sociological or social sciences dimension of culture, which includes history, geography, economics, and the political development of a nation; the artistic dimension of culture, which consists of literature, music, art and some other elements; and the anthropologically oriented dimension of culture, which covers aspects such as the behavioural patterns of people such as customs, daily life, standard of living, religion and language. Another categorisation divides culture into two categories: "large or capital-C Culture" and a "small-c or small culture" (Chastain, 1976, p.338; Doyé, 1999, p.19). Large C culture, or objective culture, focuses on the major products of a country such as clothes, music, art, literature, heroes, and food (Triandis, 1989). This definition of culture is restricted as it does not include values, customs, attitudes and so on. Small culture, or subjective culture, as Triandis (1989) calls it, however, is a broader definition which refers to the way of life of a society, the ways of thinking, habits, customs, and traditions whereas large C culture includes only the parts of culture which are observable. Linking this to the definition of Huebener (1965), sociological and artistic dimensions of culture can be called large C culture and the anthropological dimension considered as small c culture. As is clear from their definitions, the anthropological dimension of culture contains components that might be less observable and less tangible. This probably suggests that small culture is in fact 'bigger' than large C culture as someone might be well-informed about a particular culture, but unable to communicate with its members.

To explain tangible and less tangible elements of culture more clearly, Hall (1976 cited in Dignen and Chamberlain, 2009) made a comparison between the notion of culture and an

iceberg. This indicates that the largest part of culture is invisible. Similar to an iceberg, both visible and invisible aspects of culture are related to each other and the invisible part is the foundation. I believe these definitions are important as they suggest that the main factor in having successful intercultural communication is first to understand that there are many invisible factors which drive communication behaviour; second, it is to be prepared to deal with these invisible factors before they suddenly become visible in a conflict (Dignen and Chamberlain, 2009).

Scholars began to arrive at the opinion that finding one definition for culture is not adequate and effective because any attempt to come up with a single definition might lock this notion into something static which is not what is now considered acceptable (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009; Schulz, 2007). These days culture is seen as a dynamic concept which is ever changing and persistently re-created. Even though culture has always been changing, the speed of this change has recently accelerated as the interactions among people of different cultures have increased through technology, immigration, business, exchange of information and other factors (Bruner, 1996; Spisak, 2009; Byram, 2003). Therefore, a re-evaluation of the notion of the culture is vital in today's globalised world where borders between nationwide cultures are slowly being erased and cultural phenomena seem to merge into each other.

Based on the reviewed literature, I believe culture is something that brings some people together and divides others and its definition greatly relies on its context. One definition in one context might not be meaningful and valid in another context. Culture could be considered as a power that unites people and at the same time there would be no need for interactions if cultures were not different. Through their culture, certain people share common ideas, customs and values to identify themselves. Culture is primarily and basically a social phenomenon which is generated by humans for particular determinations, in particular contexts and particular times. This is to say that culture is also a historical concept. People acquire culture

through their interaction with others and through the existing world around them. It is appropriate to compare culture to a web that people themselves create (Sergiovanni and Corbally, 1986; Al Mawoda, 2013). When a person is in the middle of the web, it is difficult for that person to recognise the cultural features as the result of simply not seeing them, overlooking them or taking them for granted. These features only emerge when the person suddenly realises that other webs exist too. What is important is that a person needs to notice that 'right' and 'wrong' cannot be restricted to any one culture and no culture can claim to be seen as better or higher than the others (Al Mawoda, 2013).

Moreover, these days, it does not seem to be logical to define a culture or treat cultures separately and detached from each other as cultures tend to be hybridised from cultural features in the age of globalisation (Al Mawoda, 2013). As a result, it can be claimed that an individual may belong to numerous associations which could be known as cultures. For instance, in spite of being a member of a national or ethnic culture, individuals are categorised by gender, level of education, race, social class, living environment and various other elements that all together form people's identities. As understanding all aspects of culture is crucial for studies relevant to intercultural communication, in my study I adopt the thorough definition which is presented by Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p.95) to pin down the already presented definitions of culture. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p.95) put all the above mentioned definitions and explanations together and present a relatively comprehensive summary for the concept of culture which I adopt and use throughout the thesis. They firstly present culture as a concept which "is manifested through different types of regularities, some of which are more explicit than others". They also assert that culture is "associated with social groups, but no two individuals within a group share precisely the same cultural features". They perceive culture as a socially constructed concept which is acquired through interaction and communication with others and which influences individual's behaviour and interpretation of behaviour. I

believe this way of looking at culture is relatively detailed and it covers all aspects of culture which are helpful in analysing intercultural communication and understanding cultural differences.

Language and ways of communication and behaving are also affected by the cultural contexts that one finds oneself in. This is because it is normally via language that the interaction happens (Seelye, 1988). Moreover, language affects the way in which one thinks and understands the surrounding world. This shows that the close linkage between language and culture and this close relationship between them is a key reason for the challenges in intercultural communications (Thorne, 2003). Language is a means for presenting and manifesting culture, for preserving it for future generations, as well as serving as a guide for a related culture.

Although the debate about the influence of culture on language and the influence of language on culture remains, the majority of linguists today are concerned about the way that language and culture interact (e.g., Buner, 1990; Jandt, 2013; Alptekin, 2002). Language is a cultural practice and a means for creating culture. Therefore, when we learn a second or a foreign language, we enter into the cultural world of that language. Kayman (2004) and Fanon (1967) point out that learning to speak a language is learning to assume a culture. When a person speaks a language, s/he automatically reflects the culture of a social group to some extent, because the language one uses represents the culture. However, the point made by Kayman (2004) and Fanon (1967) has been challenged by Jandt (2013) who believes members of any society might share their first language but within that society there are still many sub-cultures which may have significant differences in their values, norms and rules for behaviour.

It is even more complex when we consider how the relationship between language and culture applies to people who learn to speak English as a foreign language for different purposes. English is an international language and it belongs to different cultures. Whether it is possible

and necessary for non-native speakers of English language in all its various varieties to reflect one particular culture or not is still debated (Alptekin, 2002; Sharifian, 2013; Reid, 2015).

In my study, I will try not to enter into a deep discussion of the relationship between language and culture, which though it is important for analysing intercultural communication, for my study what is most important and relevant is that cultures are different and regardless of whether these differences are intra-social or international, they can have effects on the quality of communication. All aspects of culture together with their influence can be found in human interactions, in the course of communication. Communicating between different cultures can be problematic if people are not aware of these differences (or aware that differences are merely possible) and the ways of dealing with them. Typical communicative tasks (e.g., 'asking the way') require regularities and stereotypical phrases used in different situations. In some situations, they are more explicit (e.g., a reply to 'thank you' is usually 'not at all' or 'you are welcome'), whereas in others the reply is not so predictable. The selection of language resources and their application can be strongly associated with social groups, although even within such a group, certain differences can be identified. The way in which people communicate is also affected by their cultural background and so is the interpretation of the message and communication constructed through interaction with others.

I thoroughly explain the effects of cultural differences on intercultural communication and glocalisation more in depth later in this chapter. Firstly, it is important to look at the place of culture in foreign language education and then discuss the potential cultural challenges that could be emphasised in classrooms.

2.3.2 Culture in foreign language education

One of the best known categorisations of culture from the point of view of foreign language learning and teaching is Robinson's definition of culture. Robinson (1985) explains that the

nature of culture is how it is learnt or acquired. He provides different explanations for culture from four different aspects of anthropology, namely, behaviourist, functionalist, cognitive, and symbolic. From the perspective of behaviourist anthropology, culture is constructed of particular forms of behaviour. Customs, habits and rituals can be examples of the forms of behaviour which are always associated with particular social groups. A behaviourist way of understanding culture in foreign language teaching leads teachers to discuss culture in their classrooms through giving examples of forms of behaviour in the countries where the foreign language is being dominantly used. For example, an English language teacher may share stories on how Americans usually spend their spare time or what British people do on Christmas day or how people buy food in shops in Australia. Culture, in this way of looking at it, is understood as something material that can be seen and experienced. A behaviourist approach in foreign language education is relatable to the large C culture or elements of culture which are on the surface of the ice-berg as I have explained earlier (see section 2.3.1). However, not enough attention has been paid to why, or under what circumstances, these behavioural models happen. This way of perceiving culture is seen as rather dated these days.

Functionally oriented anthropology in Robinson's categorisation is similar to the behaviourist anthropology in terms of dealing with culture as a social incident. Nevertheless, it seems to go deeper with regard to understanding and discussing the structure and diversity of the forms of behaviour. A functionalist way of perceiving culture tries to reveal the roles that behaviour forms play in society. In this orientation, teachers try to offer the students a model to deal with the foreign culture. They provide this solid model by explaining why and how a person from the other culture behaves in a particular way. The aim in this orientation is to help students understand culture-specific behaviour. This approach could be helpful for learners to avoid culture shocks in the context where that particular foreign language is being used.

These behaviourist and functionalist approaches signify that comprehending what lies behind specific acts and behaviours, such as using particular body language or eating a certain kind of food, may contribute to a better understanding and tolerance in students. In addition, as Robinson (1985) suggests, these two approaches represent a 'product' perspective on culture which has had a tendency to rule foreign language teaching. Robinson also asserts that these approaches have limitations as well. One of them is that the underlying reasons for culture specific forms of behaviour usually depend on individuals' personal observations and the reasons behind these behaviours are usually assumed by the observer (1985). This is a fault in his point of view because behaviours are open to interpretation and most of the time people interpret based on their own cultural backgrounds and prejudices.

Another approach in Robinson's (1985) categorisation is called the cognitive approach in which culture does not contain material manifestations like objects, behaviours or people. In this approach, culture is a process of memorising, associating and interpreting incoming data, which is frequently going on in every individual's brain. Consequently, culture might be considered similar to a computer programme within the individual. Cognitively-oriented anthropologists inspire people to know and to investigate their personal experience to be able to explain the essence of culture. Robinson considers this inner view of culture as a useful contrast to the behaviourist and functionalist approaches (1985). This way of looking at culture is similar to Hofstede's definition of culture who believes culture is like a software package in the mind (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005) and shapes an individual's identity. People carry patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that are part of their culture and which have been learned throughout their lifetime. Much of this has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most sensitive and capable of learning (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). In the cognitive approach, culture is considered as an ongoing process. Even though it

can have an impact on foreign language teaching, it cannot be totally taught or learned in language lessons since learning and grasping feelings are bound to experiences of culture.

The last way of understanding culture in Robinson's categorisation is called the symbolic approach. This approach perceives culture as a dynamic system of symbols and meanings. Before Robinson, Geertz used this definition for the first time. According to Geertz (1973 cited in Lizardo, 2016, p.200), culture is "the ordered system of meaning and of symbols" and social system is "the pattern of social interaction". In this approach constant change has been emphasised. This way of approaching culture does not emphasise outer incidents and also does not focus on inner mechanisms. It emphasises the meaning emerging as a result of the dialectic process between outer and inner occurrences. In this approach, former experiences affect the interpretation of new concepts and former interpretations affect new experiences and everybody plays a role in this process. Similarly, Connor believes that culture is not a material notion which consists of objects and behaviour (1996). In Connor's view, culture is the shape of phenomena that individuals have in their minds along with their styles of understanding, relating and interpreting them. Thus, depending on the society, culture may have different meanings for each individual. This means culture is an ever-changing notion of the world around us. This process and development begins at birth and is affected by the person's own culture until the person is challenged by a foreign culture. Thus, when this theory is applied to foreign language education, it means that cultural understanding is a continuing process where the students are constantly linking cultural information with their own current and former experiences for the sake of creating meanings (Robinson, 1985).

Researchers have emphasised the importance of culture as a main feature in language teaching and have come up with different definitions some of which I presented earlier. They have also defined language and have tried to justify why culture cannot be isolated in teaching a language as communication is at the heart of language and culture is at the heart of communication. In

this respect, Nababan (1974) defines language as "the code of (primarily) vocal symbols by which human beings interact or communicate" (p.20). He also underlines the inalienable position of language within human life and states that "language is the primary means of human communication for the attainment of co-operation not only for the survival of the species but also for the improvement and promotion of the cultural aspects of human existence" (p.20). In other words, language is one of the criteria of the social system in a community. Moreover, language is not only the main instrument that human beings use to interact with but also the tie between people and their culture (Bolton, 1980). In precise, as Byram (1989) asserts, "when learners learn about language they learn about culture and as they learn to use a new language they learn to communicate with other individuals from a new culture" (p.22). From this aspect, it is important to understand the correlative relationship between language and culture. As a consequence of this relationship, culture teaching has become vital in foreign language learning and teaching, particularly in the field of English language education. Consequently, culture-oriented teaching should be gained especial importance in the English as a foreign language curriculum along with the essential techniques and methods to be employed in lessons. However, more data are required to explore the extent and the way foreign language teachers address culture in their lessons. In other words, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of culture and their practice in classrooms gains significance for understanding of the notion of culture and its reciprocal association with language.

As Byram (1988) points out, language in general involves sharing a reality, building relationships, negotiating meanings and foreign language education sets off such experience for students in a new world. It is through foreign language education that learners experience the world without their first language. Those learners need to try hard to handle the world and their experience of it. This sort of experience is not purely linguistic. "It involves learners in much more than a codification of their existing experience in a foreign language, as if that

language were no more than an epiphenomenon of their own language" (Byram, 1988, p.17). The educational value of foreign language studies rests significantly on cultural studies that include all aspects of culture. It is also crucial to encourage learners to make comparisons to reflect on their own relationship to language and its role in social interaction as this will make the process of creating meaning easier for them while linking cultural information with their own experiences (Robinson, 1985).

However, there is sometimes a propensity to consider language self-reliantly of the culture despite the fact that inclusion of culture cannot be treated an additional skill, but should be a part of teaching the four skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading (Byram, 1989). Dunnett et al. (1986) believe that most teaching time is allocated to the improvement of the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and it is hard to persuade teachers that the integration of culture is not an inferior aim. Due to the complication of the term culture, language teachers' opinions about the concept are significant as it has influence on how they acknowledge intercultural competence and on their practices in the classroom. In my study, therefore, I have explored teachers' interpretations and definitions of culture as an important part of assessing their understanding of intercultural competence and its place in English language teaching. According to Karabinar and Guler (2012), in foreign language learning and teaching, the theory of intercultural competence, which has received attention in the last twenty years, has assigned significance to culture and has brought new dimensions and demands with it for teachers. It is crucial to regulate the place of culture in the curriculum through exploring what is taught and what strategies and methods exist regarding culture in the lessons of English as a foreign language. Therefore, it is important to examine the how's and why's of culture-oriented teaching in English language lessons. Similar to most of the other studies that have been conducted in this domain in different contexts, Karabinar and Guler (2012) in Turkey, suggest that the incorporation of culture into language teaching is a necessity; however, due to

time limitations and other requirements of curricula, it still does not have a distinct place in foreign language education. This finding is rather similar to what most of the other scholars have presented in the findings of their studies (e.g., Al Mawoda, 2013; Reid, 2015; Larzén-Östermark, 2008).

Heusinkveld claims that one benefit of foreign language learning is to gain an understanding and appropriation of another culture but nevertheless cultural learning is the most elusive of curricular goals because culture is vast, changeable and subjective (1997). Heusinkveld (1997) believes that one of the key reasons for learning a foreign language is being able to communicate with native speakers of that language. However, exchanging plain words and sentences does not guarantee successful communication. These words achieve their value and meaning only through teaching the culture to which that language belongs. His point of view has been criticised by some scholars (e.g., Byram, 1997) since Heusinkveld (1997) implicitly considers culture as a fixed package. He does not make it clear what aspects of culture should be taught in language classes. As discussed earlier, visible elements of culture might be easy to distinguish and may be possible to teach but their foundation and invisible aspects are various and sometimes not achievable (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). In addition, today it is no longer appropriate to create borders between people since a person can be a member of different cultural groups through the social processes of modern life. Therefore, we cannot simply define who a native speaker is and say this set of parameters constitutes the culture of the speakers of a language (Jandt, 2013).

Most of the studies that have been done within the field of culture in foreign language education have not particularly focused on English as a foreign language. Nevertheless, their results are applicable to English language education. For instance, a study was conducted by Byram and Risager (1999) in the UK and Denmark on Danish and English teachers. They used questionnaires and interviews to gather data from language teachers. Even though their focus

was on Danish and English teachers, the findings might be relevant to learning any foreign language. The results of their study revealed that language teachers appear to lack the thorough comprehension of culture and the complexity needed to comprehend its importance for language teaching in the future. Additionally, they found out that the emphasis was on national culture with little attention paid to features of culture beyond that which they had in their textbooks. Considering the status of English in the world and its role all around the globe has made the concept of culture more complex in relation to learning English than other languages (Alptekin, 2002). However, the above mentioned study (Byram and Risager, 1999) does not clarify this difference or does not explicitly indicate any difference between the place of culture in relation to learning Danish and learning English.

Nevertheless, I have more sympathy with Alptekin (2002) who believes that English as a lingua franca has a specific position in the world which should be acknowledged. Intercultural competence gains more significance among those who communicate in English but come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This is probably due to the point that most speakers of English at the present time are non-native speakers and most communications in English happen between two individuals or a group of non-native speakers (Seidlhofer, 2005; Crystal, 2003). As Alptekin (2002) argues, in relation to English as a lingua franca, native-speakership is a myth and trying to teach standardised native-speaker norms is not realistic and is not favourable as it represents a rigid and monolithic viewpoint of the native-speaker's language and culture. I discuss this more thoroughly in section 2.7 where I explain the need for a shift from communicative competence to intercultural competence. Relevant to the current section, the main argument is how culture should be approached in English language teaching in order to fulfil students' needs in today's life and to appreciate English as an international language, rather than a language that belongs to its native-speaker community only.

Culture in English language teaching also needs to be approached in a way that helps students be prepared to interact with people from an extensive range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In this regard, Larzén-Östermark (2008) reported interesting results from her empirical study about the intercultural dimension in teaching English as a foreign language. She interviewed teachers of English who teach in a Finland-Swedish comprehensive school. Her findings are presented as three teaching orientations: cognitive, action-related and affective. Culture in cognitive orientation is considered as factual knowledge. This is the kind of knowledge that teachers can transmit to their students. Action-related orientation perceives culture as a set of social and sociolinguistic skills. In this orientation teachers aim at helping students to develop skills of intercultural communication. Culture with an affective orientation is perceived as a bi-directional perspective. In this orientation, teaching encourages students to look at their own culture from a different angle and another perception. This orientation aims at preparing students to empathise with and indicate respect for others (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). Perceiving culture as factual knowledge could be considered in terms of teaching transferable information and rules about countries. However, culture is not merely a body of knowledge but it is a framework within which people live and negotiate meaning with each other. Therefore, the other two orientations should also be considered in language education although these might not be as easy to transmit (Larzén-Östermark, 2008).

On the other hand, the results of other studies indicate that language teachers still need to be more insightful with respect to perceiving culture as a complex notion (Lázár, 2003; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Karabinar and Guler, 2013; Tsou, 2015). Most of these studies report that teachers believe that knowing about the 'foreign culture' is very important when communicating with the people of that culture (Karabinar and Guler, 2013). Although one might argue that this statement is true about small languages or when communicating with native-speakers of a language, it has been challenged with regard to English language teaching

because defining 'foreign culture' within the English teaching context is controversial. These studies suggest that teachers are aware that culture should be integrated into language education but they are not clear what culture they should teach and how they should approach it. They need to develop their understanding of culture and they should be trained to learn how to consider the international status of English within their lessons in order to prepare their learners for today's globalised and internationalised world. The next section discusses the status of English in detail.

2.4 The English language

The study of intercultural competence has attracted a great deal of interest in foreign language teaching (e.g., Byram, 1997;Sercu, 2006; Deardorff, 2009 Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009) and teaching the English language has featured the most in this domain since it is the international language. English is taught in almost every country in the world and it is often the language of wider communication among people who do not share the same first language (Crystal, 2003).

World Englishes is a term that covers all the varieties of English all over the world (Kachru, 1986). Kachru classifies Englishes into three categories: inner, outer and expanding circles. The inner-circle includes the countries in which English has a longer history and is the first language such as Britain, USA, Canada and Australia. The outer-circle contains countries which were colonised by the countries within the inner circle and which have kept English as one of their languages such as Nigeria, India and Malaysia. The expanding circle involves countries which may not have been affected directly by colonisation and where English is a foreign language in these countries but where it is used internationally for business and other purposes; for example, in Iran, Japan, and Spain. It is obvious that the number of English

speakers in the expanding-circle is greater than the speakers of inner-circle countries because this includes much of the rest of the world's population (Kachru et al., 2006).

World Englishes refers to all the varieties of English in the world whereas English as a lingua franca usually refers to the function of English. English as a lingua franca is a preferred term when English is selected to be used as a mean of communication among those from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2005). It has been suggested that when English is learned to be used as a lingua franca, study of the culture of the native speakers is not essential (Byram, 1997). This is because, firstly, there is an argument that by teaching English, there is a danger that American and western values are imported with the language which may not be welcome in some countries (Kilickaya, 2004). Secondly, the existence of world Englishes means it is not easy to define who a native speaker is. Therefore, the implication here is that, whereas in the past learners have tried to imitate native speaker behaviours as well as native speaker grammar and pronunciation patterns, this model has now disappeared or become more rare and is replaced by the 'intercultural speaker' as a model for learners (Byram, 1997)."Imitation is replaced by comparison, establishing a relationship between one's own beliefs, meaning and behaviours and those of the other, whoever that happens to be" (Byram, 1997, p.113). Including intercultural competence is about engaging learners' awareness of their own culture, which is usually taken for granted, as well as of others since it is through relating and making comparisons that an individual becomes more aware of his/her own culture. Culture in intercultural competence is not considered a threat for less powerful countries as it is not simply accepting a transmitted account of the dominant culture of a country. It involves learners in questioning and discovering.

2.5 Multilingualism and multiculturalism

Another debate concerning learning a foreign language is around multilingualism and multiculturalism. This debate is whether learning an additional language or additional languages is associated with being multicultural and how the relationship between multilingualism and multiculturalism works when this additional language is English. There have been recent discussions around the topic of multilingualism, language teaching and globalisation and these debates concern whether multilingualism is a vital feature of multiculturalism, whether language teaching helps intercultural harmony and what kind of abilities and skills are needed for today's world (Crozet et al., 1999; Salomone, 2013). A good number of scholars (e.g., Salomone, 2013; Basu, 2011; Oksaar, 1983) are of the opinion that multiculturalism would be rather passive if it existed without multilingualism and that it generally encourages tolerance rather than participation in otherness (Salomone, 2013; Basu, 2011; Oksaar, 1983). Learners would never be fully engaged with one culture unless they communicate in the language which is connected to the culture. General information and background knowledge could be gained without learning the foreign language but active participation could not happen. On the other hand, multilingualism would also be passive if it existed without multiculturalism. A person might be able to learn one or more languages but the person's knowledge about those foreign languages would be restricted to linguistic level until the person cognitively engaged with the relevant cultures and learnt about paralinguistic features as well as linguistic ones (Paige et al., 2003; Norton and Toohey, 2001; Basu, 2011). The appreciation of cultural diversity is the core element of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, in some cases, conceptions of cultural diversity do not acknowledge linguistic diversity as a vital element in this. There is an argument that multiculturalism can be present in a monolingual situation, especially in the English-speaking world. For example, Joseph (1998, p.40) suggests that "[f]or present purposes what matters is that multiculturalism does not require

multilingualism" and "[l]ogically too it must be possible for a monolingual to be multicultural, unless one is prepared to hold that no one can know a culture without speaking its language". It appears that Joseph's perception is more about becoming observers rather than participants in other cultures, and to diminishing the differences that are present since they are not apparent to those who are linguistically detached from the 'other'. "Being an observer often tends to invite ready judgment where empathy and understanding would be more appropriate" (Crozet et al., 1999, p.10). Even though being monolingual does not prevent recognition of cultural diversity, it significantly limits the access the individual has to the other culture's rules, norms, views of itself and that space where it is natural and typical (Crozet et al., 1999). The weakness of the logic of monolingual multiculturalism rests on the belief that language and culture are not closely connected and related.

According to Crozet et al. (1999), a monolingual view of multiculturalism leads to the result that cultures are taken to be only the apparent and externalised concepts that people who do not gain access to the new world view cannot internally participate. This kind of observation and exteriorised participation in a multicultural society limits culture to the manifested elements of culture such as artistic creations, music, sports or food. In this case, multiculturalism is just visualising a way of life rather than straight experience. Consequently, the perception is that multiculturalism is not for the whole society and it is for minorities. Thus, a multicultural society tends to be perceived as outside the experience of the main group which does not have much relevance for it. In societies where language education is greatly admired and valued and also where societies are considered as multicultural, they are more prepared for participation in global interculturalism at an international level. In today's globalised world, learners of foreign language are basically taking a step forward to become multilingual as well as being multicultural. However, their own cultural background might be a barrier in this process. Linking this point to the aim of my study, I dedicate the rest of this chapter to the

discussions around the challenges individuals might face while interacting in multicultural societies and the challenges they face in intercultural communication.

2.6 Challenges in intercultural communication

As social environments are becoming more and more multicultural and international, and intercultural interactions are increasing accordingly, societies can benefit from intercultural interactions in different ways. For example, one way could lead to wealth production through trade, tourism, or the mobility of people. However, people's ability to deal with outsiders and their differences could still be limited. Personal, social and intercultural competencies come to the centre of attention during communication with members of other cultures. Knowledge, tolerance and sensitivity towards the norms of communication of others play an important role not only for reaching to a successful communication, but also in building relationships and in learning about the world. Communication between people from different cultural groups and building up relationships with them can be challenging due to several reasons (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). I have divided the challenges in intercultural communication into two sections. The first one is related to the notions that have emerged as the result of thinking that one's own way of thinking and culture is the only one or is the best one. These notions have appeared as the result of a human being's tendency to compare everything and everybody with his own criteria and to think that their own culture is superior to others and who then tries to evaluate others' behaviour against their own standards. These tendencies make problems in intercultural communications (Ferraro, 2006). The second section is from the cultural linguistic perspective that is linked to pragmatics and how individuals conceptualise the English language. In this domain 'glocalisation' is an emerging phenomenon in which localised expressions used by non-native English speakers gains an amount of legitimacy (Tsou, 2015). Below I explain these two sections in more detail.

2.6.1 Intercultural encounters

Even though international and intercultural collaborations are growing and they seem to have positive impact, some other concepts are also becoming more familiar. Racism, xenophobia, prejudices, negative stereotypes, ethnocentrism are all different forms of extremism and more awareness is now needed to contest them. Racism, xenophobia and ethnocentrism often overlap and they are often used interchangeably but they denote different meanings. Xenophobia is classified as the dislike or fearing of the unknown, of beliefs that are different from someone or alien to someone. For example, when cultures meet, the majority culture will have a tendency to fear greatly that the minority culture will try to impose its own culture and behaviour upon them which will negatively affect safe and familiar traditions within the majority culture (Kaikkonen, 2001). Islamophobia and anti-Semitism could be examples of xenophobia which have been recognised as an irrational suspicion, fear or rejection of the Islamic and Jewish religions respectively and those who are Muslims and Jews (Gardner et al., 2008, p.121). Racism and ethnocentrism are now other widely used terms. The difference between racism and ethnocentrism links back to the difference between race and ethnicity. Ethnicity relates to belonging to a particular cultural group with a shared heritage and history. Race is a socially constructed social marker (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006). For example, somebody is ethnically Nigerian but racialised as Black. Ethnocentrism links back to ethnicity and is about seeing others through your own glass. It is the tendency to assume that one's own values and standards are universally accepted. Racism relates to a belief that characteristics, abilities, or qualities of a specific race are considered superior or inferior to another race. Racism is systematic and structural and centres on discriminating against a group or individual based on an assumed race (again socially constructed). Racial discriminations exist among those belonging to various groups. "They are discriminated against based on their cultural or ethnic beliefs" (Seelye, 1988, p.101). Ferraro (2006, p.35) agrees with Seelye that ethnocentrism,

meaning "culture centred", is a willingness for people to judge a foreigner's behaviour by the standards of their own culture and to believe that their own is superior to all others. Similarly, Lusting and Koester (1999, p.146) point out that most cultures have a powerful ethnocentric tendency to utilise the characteristics of their own cultures to assess the behaviours of the members of other cultures. Kaikkonen (2001) agrees with this statement, "ideas of one's own excellence are as deep as prejudices towards diversity and foreignness" (p.72).

Prejudice is another notion that normally refers to the "the unfair, biased, or intolerant attitudes or opinions towards another person or group simply because they belong to a specific religion, race, nationality, or another group" (Samovar and Porter 199, p.281). For instance, a person who says, 'I do not want (name of group) living in my neighbourhood' is stating a prejudice. Prejudice includes the preconceptions of people or groups according to unproven opinions, attitudes or beliefs. Jandt explains that "persons within the group are not viewed in terms of their individual merit but according to the superficial characteristics that make them part of the group" (2001, p.75).

Lusting and Koester perceive prejudice as referring to a negative reaction to other people, which is grounded in having a lack of experience or personal knowledge (1999). In other words, it is "a premature judgment that may be fairly fixed" (p.153). A prejudiced person tends to overlook evidence that is opposed to his/her subjective opinion and s/he easily changes the evidence to fit her/his prejudices. Prejudices can be understood as tools of projection, meaning that feelings such as anxiety, anger and hostility are transferred to others (McLeod, 2008). It is usually human's nature to blame someone else for his/her own mistakes rather than to begin looking for the reason for them in himself/herself. Therefore, encouraging and promoting fair and unprejudiced attitudes and avoiding discrimination is a significant task for intercultural education these days although this task is not easy. Even though this should be one of the cross-curricular issues that threads through the entire curriculum, it needs to receive special attention

in particular subject areas. In this respect, foreign language education is in a positive and favourable place to contribute to this task (Byram, 1997). To some extent, it could be considered as training in respecting 'Other'-ness and promoting a non-ethnocentric attitude and perception. However, it has to be questioned whether this opportunity is fully used (McLeod, 2008).

Apart from all these mentioned phenomena, other factors are also involved in cultural clashes in communication. The most major one is related to sociolinguistics and the fact that individuals tend to bring the features of their local language and culture into the communication while using English which I discuss in the following section.

2.6.2 Cultural linguistic perspective

Among the most common possible barriers in intercultural communication, the cultural linguistic barrier is the most frequently mentioned one. The cultural linguistic perspective is related to individuals' perceptions and interpretations (Suchánková, 2014). The way people perceive and assess meaning is often culturally directed. It means the same statement or the same action could be understood in different ways. One simple example is that the giving of gifts can either help communication or it can be assumed as bribery or dishonesty (Suchánková, 2014). Even one simple word might have different connotations for people from different cultural backgrounds (Thomas, 2006). For example, in English the phrase 'of course' usually suggests that the speaker has asked a question which is already obvious whereas in Russian it means 'certainly' and it is usually used instead of 'yes' to convey a keen affirmation (Thomas, 2006). For this reason, transferring the word 'of course' from Russian to English in reply to a question may sound peremptory or even insulting in the worst case scenario (Thomas, 2006). Therefore, the meaning that is attached to the words and sentences could have significant impact on the quality of communication.

As Bruner points out, the meanings we attach to various objects are not the same since these meanings have been built into our minds as the result of our experiences, traditions and culture (1990). From this aspect, culture can be explained as "variable systems of meanings" which are shared by a group of people (Bruner, 1990, p.22). This can be the reason why people from different cultural backgrounds interpret the same situation in various ways and have different understandings and views. As mentioned earlier (see section 1.1), pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. According to Yule (1996), this type of study consists in the interpretation of what individuals mean in a specific context and how the context affects what is said. Since the intention of a speaker is not always exactly what we infer, pragmatics also explores how listeners can make reasonable suppositions about what is said in order to understand what the speaker is intending to say (Yule, 1996). In addition, not all the meanings are explicit in a communication. According to Grundy (2008), successful communication requires a good investigation of what is implied or what the invisible part of the conversation is. Pragmatics explores "how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated" (Yule, 1996, p.3). The ability to arrive at understanding of what is not said is based on experience, previous knowledge and culture (Grundy, 2008). Therefore, when members of the same culture communicate, their shared knowledge allows much to be communicated that is not said. Conversely, for members of other cultures, lack of that shared knowledge can lead to miscommunication. For instance, here is an example from Grundy about the effect of culture in conveying meaning (2008, p.228). This conversation is between him and his wife who are both from the same cultural background:

B: When will you be back?

P: I should be back by eight but you know what trains are like.

Grundy (2008) explains that in this example, speaker P believes that the speaker B knows 'what trains are like'. The formula 'you know what x is like' usually implies a negative evaluation. This answer might not make sense to another person who does not have the same cultural knowledge about trains since the formula might have different negative evaluations in a different culture. The speaker P might not use this formula if he was talking to a person from another culture. Sperber and Wilson point out that "for meanings to be successfully conveyed, the speaker must make some assumptions about the hearer's cognitive abilities and contextual resources" (1995 cited in Grundy, 2008, p.229).

Apart from sharing the same understanding of the cultural context, there are some concepts that only belong to a particular cultural group. Sharifian (2010) provides an example in this domain. 'Taarof' is a Persian word which hardly has an equivalent in English. It is a cultural concept that mostly only people from Iran are familiar with. Even though some may believe it is a widespread phenomenon in the Middle East, many foreigners find it an entirely Iranian phenomenon (Beeman, 1986; de Bellaigue, 2004 cited in Sharifian, 2010). Taarof is generally driven by considerations of face and politeness. "Acts and gestures of it include hesitation about making requests and complaints, hesitation about accepting offers and invitations, as well as offering 'ostensible' invitations" (Sharifian, 2010, p.147). Some scholars have observed that Persian speakers bring the elements of taarof into English when they are communicating with foreigners. There are many example of it in their publications (see Eslami Rasekh, 2005; Sharifian, 2010, Sahragard, 2003). The dimension of taarof is rather vast and various examples can be given from previous studies but a detailed description of it may be beyond the scope of my study. What is relevant to the argument of this section is that any cultural group might have shaped a cultural schema consciously or unconsciously that affects most speech events. For instance, not being aware that the concept of 'taarof' and its elements are not valid and understandable in other contexts, might lead to a somewhat unpleasant interaction.

In intercultural communication, apart from linguistic knowledge of the foreign language, recognition is needed that such things as the place of silence, appropriate topics of conversation, forms of address, and expression of speech-act (e.g., apologies, requests, agreement and disagreement) are usually not the same across cultures and that these are perhaps more important to effective intercultural communication than grammar, lexis, or phonology (Smith, 1987, p.1).

Lack of knowledge in this respect can cause a failure in interpreting messages and in some cases block communication. This is what Thomas calls 'pragmatic failure'. He defines the term as "...the inability to understand what is meant by what is said" (Thomas, 1983, p.55). Individuals tend to bring the cultural elements of their expressions of speech-acts into the communication which might not be intelligible to other people from other cultural backgrounds. Other than the example of 'taarof' that I explained above, Sharifian (2010) provides another interesting example of the repertoire of politeness among Persian speakers when they communicate in English. According to him, the sociocultural foundation of Persian is the hardest aspect for people who learn this language as a foreign language. The speakers of this language learn about the ways of addressing members of society based on their socially perceived status via their socialisation into the language. This is a feature of many other languages. Most of the time one word has different forms that highlight various levels of familiarity or closeness between the speakers. Moreover, as an indicator of politeness, the plural morpheme is used with verbs. Many Persian speakers of English usually try to utter these "nuances of courtesy and politeness in English" (Sharifian cited in Saxena and Omoniyi, 2010). The following sample conversation is given by him as an example to clarify his point (Sharifian, 2010, p.145). The conversation is between a Persian speaker and an American lecturer.

American lecturer: Here's the recommendation letter that you asked for.

Iranian student: Thanks very much. I am ashamed.

American lecturer: What have you done?!

In this conversation the Persian speaker student does word by word translation to translate the Persian expression of 'I am ashamed' into English to express his/her appreciation to the lecturer. This might not be considered as a mistake but it is a reflection of a cultural conceptualisation. The Persian cultural schema of gratefulness often encourages the expression of gratitude in ways that might seem stronger and more intense than in Western varieties of English. The notion of 'shame' in the above conversation demonstrates the fact that the student is strongly and painfully alert of the time and energy that the lecturer has spent to do his/her query and s/he feels uncomfortable about it. Even though this kind of language use might be wired to the person's lack of linguistic proficiency and fluency, it could even be used by people who speak English as a native language (Sharifian, 2010).

The status of English as a lingua franca has common grounds with the concept of glocalisation. This concept was promoted by Robertson (1995) who defines it as "the simultaneity - the co-presence - of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies" (p.25). The relationship between localisation and globalisation was also detected by Swales (2004). He defines the concept of glocalisation as "a bifurcation away from the historically powerful nation state in two directions: one upward towards a world increasingly dominated by multinational corporations and international and supranational entities and one downward (as it were) towards regional aspirations, niche marketing, local involvements" (p.11). The position of English as a lingua franca and glocalisation are alike in terms of their conception of the combination of global ideas with local considerations (Tsou, 2015). Similarly, Sharifian (2016, p.14) asserts that similar to other aspects of globalisation, the extraordinary worldwide spread of English has led the language to become localised, "serving to encode the communicate needs of various speech communities". He highlights that,

In its journey across the globe, English has become increasingly localised by many communities of speakers around the world, adopting it to encode and express their cultural conceptualisations, a process which may be called glocalisation of the language (Sharifian, 2013, p.57).

This dual process of globalisation and localisation of English is called glocalisation of English. English has not only carried with it and spread Anglo-English conceptualisations but has also become associated with cultural conceptualisations that are new to English, a process which has led to the nativisation and development of new Englishes (Pennycook, 2017; Sharifian, 2016). Cultural conceptualisations are a form of distributed cognition in terms of being distributed across the members of a cultural group (Hutchins, 1995 cited in Sharifian, 2016). Even though they are not always imprinted in the same way in the minds of the members of the cultural group, they are distributed heterogeneously. Cultural conceptualisations are mostly presented and communicated through languages and are materialised in artefacts and non-verbal behaviours. Consequently, as cultural conceptualisations differ from one cultural group to another one, misunderstandings and miscommunications are common phenomena in intercultural communications and can be caused by pragmatic failure and lead to conflicts.

Even though these challenges in intercultural communication can occur through using any language, the developing phenomenon of English as a lingua franca certainly has powerful effects on the users of English as an additional language. For example, these days non-native speakers of English should not feel inferior for not producing native or native-like accents. Non-native speakers now have flexibility to speak in English in many different ways as long as the meaning they want to convey is intelligible and the objective of the communication is achieved (Tsou, 2015). Consequently, when English is spoken as a lingua franca, its usage is being enriched by people from all over the globe. In addition, the localised varieties of English are growing beyond the out-dated British and American varieties of English even though a

more up-to-date direction of this evolution in world English has still not been reached (Tsou, 2015). It has been agreed by some scholars that the glocalisation of English and the growing development of world Englishes have significant implications for the field of English language education (Graddol, 2006; Tong and Cheung, 2011; Tsou, 2015; Sharifian, 2016).

Some practical considerations have been revealed through this review of literature. A few studies show that many practitioners, students, and users of English have stated that there is an on-going requirement for a standard (e.g., Trudgill and Hannah, 2002; Modiano, 2001; Cogo, 2012). They believe that, despite the part that British and American English have conventionally played, it is hard for teachers to recognise what to teach or how to evaluate learner performance. It is also hard for teachers to recognise how they should incorporate other varieties of English into the curriculum (Tsou, 2015). According to Suchánková, nothing improves individuals' tolerance and sensitivity more than learning a foreign language (2014) and among all foreign languages, English has been mostly regarded as a resource of getting to know the world (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Through knowing and using English, people learn not only about other cultures, but also about many other aspects differing life situations, living conditions, concerns and problems. Therefore, directing English language education systems in more up to date directions will contribute to the improvement of a communicative, tolerant and emphatic global citizen of wholly democratic societies (Suchánková, 2014; Cogo, 2012).

As a result of English developing as an international language and the effects of glocalisation and globalisation on this language, English language teaching curricula now need to provide learners with an introduction to the complication of the English language in the world, together with an introduction to the conceptual variation that marks English in today's world, rather than exposure to British or American Englishes. According to Crystal (1997), these days, approximately eighty percent of communication in English is happening among non-native speakers. Many of these non-native speakers speak their own localised variety of English. In

other words, they are native speakers of their own localised English, for example, Malaysian English or Singaporean English. Therefore, when learners of English attend English lessons, they probably develop their skills and abilities in their own localised English and communicate with speakers of the other varieties of English. For example, a Japanese learner uses English to communicate with a Saudi learner. These sorts of communication call for the curricula of English language teaching to develop intercultural competence in learners. Canagarajah (2006) points out that in the post-modern age of communication, the important development of different varieties of English has made the notion of proficiency and its assessment even more complex. He mentions that

> [i]n a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex. …One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication, which to some extent involves multidialectal competence, part of which is passive competence to understand new varieties [of English] (p.236).

As Hismanoglu (2011) points out, English language education has now become a crucial part of general education. Knowledge of English language is a foundation and tool of communication with people of other language groups. English language education enables individuals to find a place in the contemporary cosmopolitan world in order to form their own opinions, travel, become familiar with other cultures and expand their worldview. It opens up doors to new worlds along with supporting one's self- reliance and independence (Hismanoglu, 2011). Even though developing intercultural competence could be achieved through a wide range of mediums, learning English is one of the most important ways for people to learn about other cultures and it plays a part in discovering their own identity and developing their own culture (Byram et al., 2002). As English is the most widely used language in intercultural communication, it is likely that it leads to tolerance, understanding, sympathy and sensitivity

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through making intercultural communication possible and easier which might eventually lead to a better quality of life (Byram et al., 2002). However, despite the fact that English is a lingua franca and it serves as the top negotiating language in business, science and politics, a level of regard for all cultural and communication differences is crucial. Hismanoglu (2011) states that although Europeans have a lot in common, it is their differences that attract the attention of scholars and sociologists. If differences are perceived among the countries that are close geographically and culturally, the differences will be even more prominent among remote nations. Although this might sound rather self-evident, this diversity in what we assume to be right and what we value could lead to struggles in communication with people of other cultures. Intercultural competence, according to Kim, refers to "one's skill in facilitating successful intercultural communication outcomes in terms of satisfaction and other positive assessments of the interaction and the interaction partner" (2005 cited in Jandt, 2013, p.35). To have more effective intercultural communication, certain skills are required. How developing these skills can be related to foreign language education, English language teaching in particular, is explained in another section of this chapter (section 2.7). To do this, I start by giving an introduction to the historical development of intercultural competence within foreign language teaching. In the next section, I discuss how English language teaching objectives and approaches have been developed throughout history from linguistic competence to intercultural competence through communicative competence.

2.7 Intercultural competence: historical background

Similar to other subject areas, the objectives of foreign language teaching have evolved during the history. Before the end of 19th century, it was supposed that knowledge about a language is all learners need. However, some shifts took place during the 20th century which affected the aims of foreign language teaching. Brogger states that in the early years of the 20th century the focus in language education was on literature, history and culture to which the language

belonged (1992). During that period, it was believed that language, literature and culture are linked. In the middle of the 20th century, however, the importance of texts and literature was not at the centre of attention anymore. The idea of integrating culture teaching practice into foreign language teaching was not given enough attention. During this period of time, the connection between language and culture was generally less emphasised and a shift happened from sociocultural contexts to linguistic competence. Educators were teaching grammar, phonology, vocabulary and were expecting students to learn and understand language accurately through grammar and phonology. The primary focus at this period of time was grammatical rules and vocabulary and a secondary focus was on the four skills of writing, listening, reading and speaking (Brogger, 1992).

Later on, at the end of the 20th century, a new dimension related to culture teaching came to be foregrounded. To be more precise, there have been on-going debates regarding whether the emphasis in transmitting cultural data should be on 'large C culture', which is normally shaped by the study of history, literary products, and the fine arts, or 'small c culture' which is about the features of daily life such as food, music, clothing, and patterns of behaviour and so on. However, as stated in a report by the United States Social Science Education Consortium (1999) the main task should be not only the inclusion of large C and small c culture, but also at the same time the expression of a general world view of attitudes and values and so forth.

This was followed by the awareness of educators for the need for communication, and later on in the 20th century, the pragmatic reform happened. This reform changed significantly the aim of foreign language instruction from linguistic competence to communicative competence. Instructors noticed that being able to utter correct sentences in a language is one thing but being able to actually use them in real life communications is another (Doyé, 1999). As Byram (1997) mentions, the concept of communicative competence was developed by Hymes (1972 cited in Byram, 1997) as a reaction to the Chomskyan concept of linguistic competence (Chomsky,

1957, 1965). Communicative competence concerns using accurate grammatical phrases in real situations of communication (Byram, 1997). It means that the ability to use language appropriately should be given greater prominence in teaching. Therefore, this new concept came into consideration in foreign language teaching which brought the functions of language into the classrooms rather than just lists of rules and structures. According to Hymes, communicative competence is an "aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages, and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts" (1972 cited in Brown, 2007, p.246). Communicative competence needs more than just linguistic knowledge. It is about knowing how to say something and what to say at an appropriate time and place (Brown, 2007). This view was further promoted and elaborated by Canale and Swain (1980) in the USA and by Van Ek in the mid-1980s in Europe. Canale and Swain (1980) explain that communicative competence is made up of four elements, namely, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence. Grammatical competence is the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and phonology. It is also called linguistic competence by Van Ek (1986). Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the study of the appropriateness of language in different contexts in which language is used. It is the ability of an individual to manipulate their utterances to make them appropriate to the situation in which they are speaking (Brown, 2007).

Strategic competence refers to the strategies which help to handle a communication when a breakdown occurs. In other words, it relates to an individual's ability to cope when s/he has difficulty in remembering a word, expression or a specific grammatical form (Canale and Swain, 1980). Discourse competence deals with how words, phrases and sentences are put together to create understandable conversations and other units of language. In other words, it considers how to combine grammatical forms and meanings in order to achieve a cohesive

written or oral text (Canale and Swain, 1980). "It is the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form meaningful whole out of utterances" (Brown, 2007, p.247).

Van Ek (1986) integrated communicative competence into foreign language learning and changed it into a main notion in the development of communicative language education. In foreign language teaching, communicative competence has been the leading approach for approximately three decades and most coursebooks on the market presently utilised by educators and learners follow this methodology (Aguilar, 2009). However, Hymes's description of communicative competence has been criticised and reviewed over the years by some authors in various directions. Van Ek (1986) and Byram (1997) are two authors who have criticised Hymes's description since they believe he implicitly suggests that foreign language learners should model themselves as first language speakers, ignoring the significance of the social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any intercultural interaction. According to them, a communicative approach with the above-mentioned four components aims at preparing learners to communicate with native speakers. Similarly, Spencer-Oatey and Frankin (2009) believe Hymes's concept of communicative competence is connected with the concept of appropriateness and in foreign language teaching there has been a desire to judge and evaluate the appropriateness by taking the native speaker as the model. However, this tendency has been challenged recently (see Spencer-Oatey and Frankin, 2009; Byram, 1997; Alptekin, 2002) as considering the native speaker as a model seems to be an impossible and sometimes undesirable target for learners because many speakers of English all over the world do not have it as their first language (Savignon, 2009). In many of today's intercultural communications, either no native speakers are involved or when they are, "both interlocutors have different social identities and therefore a different kind of interaction than they would have with someone from their own country speaking the same language" (Spencer-Oatey and Frankin, 2009, p.64).

Alptekin (2002) points out that the traditional model of communicative competence is no longer suitable for explaining learning and employing an international language in intercultural settings due to its firm association with native speakers' proficiency. Byram (1997) and Van Ek (1986) also believe Hymes did not pay specific attention to culture in communication; he was concerned with analysing social interaction and communication within a social group using one language. However, the reasons for misunderstandings and misinterpretations are not only related to a shortage of language skills. They are often caused by cultural differences. Accordingly, Van Ek (1986) added two more components to the list of elements of communicative competence and called them social competence and sociocultural competence. Sociocultural competence means having a certain insight into the sociocultural context of which every language is an integrated part, and which tends to function as a frame of reference for its speakers. It denotes the use of a specific reference form that is particularly dissimilar to that of the foreign language learner. Reid explains that sociocultural knowledge may include everyday living, living conditions, interpersonal relations, history, values, beliefs, taboos, social conventions and ritual behaviour (2014). Social competence can be described as the ability and enthusiasm to interact with others. It includes not only the volition but also the skilfulness to interact with others. It contains incentive, attitude, self- reliance, empathy and the capacity to deal with social situations (Aguilar, 2009). Van Ek (1986) realized that a person cannot be regarded as communicatively competent unless s/he develops this insight. Therefore, the perception of culture has been reconsidered as an important component of foreign language education and involved in the learners' development of communicative competence.

Moore (1996) argues that for a long time the term 'culture' has been understood as giving the learners some background information about countries they were studying. This information included food, festivals, fairs and other tangible items. However, the focus started to change gradually from 'large C' culture, as discussed earlier (section 2.3.1), to a deeper analysis of

ideas and values shared by the members of a society or social groups. Even Van Ek's components for communicative competence did not satisfy some scholars (e.g., Graddol, 2006; Byram, 1997) as it still failed to consider the situation of two non-native speakers communicating in a context belonging to neither. What sort of knowledge do they require in order to have a successful intercultural communication? Consequently, taking the concept of sociocultural competence as the starting point, in the early 1990s scholars Byram and Zarate (1994) developed the concept of the 'intercultural speaker'. This concept foresees:

> … a language speaker who does not strive to attain the hopeless idea of approaching native speaker competence linguistically and culturally, but who develops his or her ability to mediate between a number of cultural perspectives and between the target language and the first language (Risager, 2007, p.114).

The idea of intercultural learning became widely known in the 1990s. According to Risager (2007), with the introduction of intercultural learning to foreign language education, integration of cultural differences and using the target language worldwide became more vital. In the 1990s, the concept of 'intercultural competence' was introduced by Byram as an added concept for the overall aim of foreign language teaching. Byram added one more components to the list of elements of communicative competence: intercultural competence. Byram combined intercultural competence with communicative competence to create a model for language teaching. His model is called 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram, 1997). Although there have been others who have defined intercultural competence and tried to apply it in other disciplines, Byram is probably the only one who has firmly related intercultural competence to foreign language teaching and his model is well known in this area (Spencer-Oatey and Frankin, 2009). Byram explains that his model aims to help teachers of languages understand the notion of intercultural competence. Byram's model is grounded on Hymes and

van Ek's model of communicative competence. He therefore did not reject their models but reconsidered and expanded them.

In recent years, intercultural competence has become a progressively important element in the field of foreign language education as individuals around the globe are experiencing more and more intercultural communications as a product of globalisation (Hismanoglu, 2011). However, intercultural communication confronts with the lack of literature in the study of languages (Sakuragi, 2008). According to Hismanoglu (2011) the notion of intercultural communicative competence accounts for an understanding of the differences in communication norms between speech communities and the ability of unearthing the other[1]. In Guilherme's (2000) viewpoint, intercultural communicative competence is "the ability to interact effectively with people of cultures other than one's own" (p.299). In other words, intercultural communicative competence involves an awareness of the variation of values and behaviours of others as well as skills to deal with them in a non-judgmental way. Similarly, Reid (2015) points out that mutual understanding and intercultural competence are important in today's world as they allow individuals to overcome prejudice, discrimination and misunderstandings between people of different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communicative competence in English language education permits learners to comprehend and interact effectively with members of other cultures.

Regarding the concept of intercultural competence, Byram (1997) demonstrates that "when persons from different languages and/or countries interact socially, they bring to the situation their knowledge about their own country and that of the others" (pp.32-33). Moreover, Byram (1997) notes that "part of the success of such interaction will depend on the establishing and

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[1]The 'other' in intercultural communication refers to those who do not belong to one's own cultural community. As Koleva (2015) explains, "In the process of intercultural communication it becomes necessary to explain yourself to others who are different from you; you go to another understanding and perception of the world and make a step towards the realization of its foreign and national-cultural specificity as a feature of the objective reality" (p. 440).

maintenance of human relationships, something which depends on attitudinal factors" (pp.32-33). Intercultural competence in this model includes four main factors: attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness/political education. Below I explain each of these components.

2.7.1 A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence: 1. Attitude

Attitudes can include curiosity and openness, a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Spencer-Oatey and Frankin, 2009). It can be about interest and clarity, willingness to delay unbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Hismanoglu, 2011). The attitudes people have influences their interactions with others because these attitudes generally create expectations (Guirdham, 2005). These expectations can be the result of factors such as ethnocentrism as explained earlier in this chapter and cultural stereotypes. Stereotypes are defined as "the perceptions or beliefs we hold about groups or individuals based on our previously formed opinions or attitudes" (Samovar and Porter, 1991, p.280). As Guirdham (2005) states, stereotypes develop gradually by our culture and they are stored in our mind by pieces of information over time. Stereotypes can be negative or positive. Negative attitudes and stereotypes create negative expectations and negative expectations can lead to interpreting the behaviour of the members of the other cultures negatively. Therefore, in Byram's model attitude is an important factor. An intercultural speaker should be able to avoid evaluating people by stereotypes, avoid generalising and try to be open to other cultures.

2.7.2 A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence: 2. Knowledge

Another factor of the model is knowledge. 'Knowledge' of one's self and others means knowledge of the rules for individual and social communication and includes knowing social groups and their practices, both in one's own culture and in the other culture.

Knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the speaker's country on the one hand; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and social levels, on the other hand" (Byram, 1997, p.27).

In other words, knowledge is needed of "community groups and their outputs and applications in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the common stages of societal and personal interaction" (Hismanoglu, 2011, p.806). Since English is a lingua franca, for learners of English, the speakers can be people anywhere in the world. Hence, in English teaching, such knowledge can refer to the different cultures and languages of people of different countries or even people of different social groups in the same country. In addition, English is a global language. People use this language to interact with other people of various cultures. These cultures are not limited to only one country (Alptekin, 2002).

2.7.3 A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence: 3. Skill

Skills are divided into two groups in Byram' model (1997). Firstly, there is the skill of interpreting and relating and, secondly, the skill of discovery and interaction. The first one refers to the ability and capacity to understand and interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and to relate and link it to texts from one's own (Hismanoglu, 2011). In other words, this is one's ability to understand, to describe, and to relate events and texts from another culture to one's own culture. The skills of discovery and interaction help the individual to obtain "new knowledge of culture and cultural practices," including the ability to use existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills in intercultural communications (Byram, 1997, p.98). It is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture/cultural practices and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the restrictions of real-time communication and interaction.

2.7.4 A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence: 4. Critical cultural awareness

The last factor in Byram's model is critical cultural awareness/ political education which means the capability to evaluate critically and on the basis of "distinct criteria, applications and outputs in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Hismanoglu, 2011, p.806). Byram (2000) states that a speaker who can communicate interculturally in an influential way shows an amount of competence in a few features:

> … someone with some degree of intercultural competence is someone who is able to see relationships between different cultures-both internal and external to a society - and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures-someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural (Byram, 2000, p.10).

Therefore, intercultural communicative competence has an important role in foreign language education. As Kramsch (1993) agrees, foreign language learners should try to act faultlessly in a setting where two or more cultures communicate. In this kind of environment, they might find themselves in 'a third place' from where they are able to understand and mediate between their own and the other culture. Therefore, students need to be arbitrators who are able to administer communication and interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds. Students should learn to come out from their own outlook or Weltanschauung. They need to be capable of dealing with different worldviews (Hismanoglu, 2011, p. 807). "They should be persons with a privileged position between the home and the target culture" (Hismanoglu, 2011, p.807). According to Byram (2002, p.10), "Being exposed to the target culture is an absolute must for any learner/teacher. How can a person acquire the competence...?" He

believes the main goal of integration of the intercultural dimension is not teaching information about a foreign country. It is rather aimed at helping students to comprehend how intercultural communication happens, how social identities are part of all communication, how their opinions of other individuals and others' opinions of them affect the quality of communication and how they can learn more about the people with whom they are interacting (Byram, 2002).

One of the problems with Byram's model, mentioned by some scholars (Tarp, 2000 in Sercu et al., 2005; Mughan, 1999), is the lack of sufficient clues about how to teach intercultural competence. Even though the Council of Europe introduced the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) and within that much more significance was dedicated to cultural aspects in foreign language education, it still provides only general training and instruction. It does not focus on all the aspects of cultural teaching and does not provide precise guideline for teachers. Their goal was to prepare learners with the capability to interact effectively and appropriately across linguistic and cultural borders in multicultural and multilingual Europe but they often provide even less guidance regarding the development of intercultural communicative competence (Reid, 2015; Reid, 2014; Europublic, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2005; Kelly et al., 2004). As Byram (2010) agrees, in such documents, there is lack of clarification of the responsibilities and activities. Accordingly, teachers might become confused and not know which content, methodologies and techniques to use with the purpose of developing intercultural communicative competence. There are not many details or rules that can be actually explained or taught in the classroom. In addition, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages focuses on "valuing and developing the ability of all individuals to learn and use several languages" (Little, 2008, p. 3). Its aim seems to be mainly linguistic sensitivity rather than intercultural sensitivity. Although it also highlights cultural understanding, it emphasises the fact that communicative acts are contextualised and social conventions and cultural norms of a particular context within which a language is dominantly

being used, should be adhered to (Little, 2008). Therefore, some elements of it might match with the approach of communicative competence which I have explained and critiqued earlier. For implementation of intercultural competence in teaching English as a second or foreign language, more specific guidelines are yet to be offered.

The study that Reid (2015) has recently conducted illustrates that acquiring intercultural communicative competence is not a simple matter. It includes a new approach not found in conventional language classes. Accordingly, teachers find it hard to identify themselves with and apply intercultural aspects of English. Reid states that, on the one hand, intercultural communicative competence is harder to understand and is less tangible beside grammar or vocabulary but, on the other hand, there is a need for real world usage (2015). Reid (2015) offers brief guidelines to teachers on how to integrate developing intercultural competence in English language lessons and he also provides several techniques that teachers could utilise. However, it is still not clear how realistic and practical it is to dedicate a lesson or a part of a lesson for these techniques in lessons with a tight schedule. For instance, he offers Treasure Hunt or TPR (Reid, 2015, p.943). Their definitions have been provided in Appendix A. These kinds of activities are more culture-oriented than language- oriented and they are not a part of the assessment. A space for these kind of techniques is yet to be consolidated in the curriculums and the teachers still need to be more aware of the importance of these kind of activities (Al Mawoda, 2013).

Lack of clear and systematic guidelines for the incorporation of intercultural competence may lead teachers not to practise it actively in their lessons and as a result they may tend to stay in their comfort zone of usually undertaking traditional teaching approaches (Sercu, 2001). Sercu (2001) conducted a study which included 135 French, English and German language teachers from Belgium (cited in Sercu et al., 2005). She found out that most participants understood culture in foreign language education in a traditional paradigm without any reference to

enhancing intercultural communicative competence. She explains that foreign language teachers' perception of professionalism is normally those of teachers teaching for communicative competence, not those of teaching for intercultural competence.

Although some are of the opinion that the attitudes, knowledge and skills that Byram recognises need to be developed and that they cannot simply be conveyed or taught, teachers' awareness and knowledge about this approach have a significant role in addressing intercultural issues in their lessons. In addition, while not all the aspects of this model can be integrated in foreign language teaching, a foreign language teacher should ensure that some degree of cultural awareness and intercultural competence is being acquired by the learners (Mughan, 1999). Since there is still no clear explanation of to what extent intercultural competence can be integrated into language classrooms, most teachers either do not have enough knowledge about this concept or they do not want to be responsible for it (Mughan, 1999). However, according to Coffey (2011, p.28), it seems essential to have teachers who understand and believe in intercultural competence and include activities that "encourage tolerance for ambiguity, foster empathy and cooperation and build an understanding for cultural values".

Meyer (1991, cited in Castro et al., 2004, pp.91-92) also defines intercultural competence as "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures". As a consequence of the change in focus from a linguistic aspect towards a communicative aspect of language in the field of English language teaching, "English, as the foremost medium of international communication at the present time, is called upon to mediate a whole range of cultural and cross-cultural concepts, to a greater degree than in the past". Therefore, intercultural communication theory which was predominantly developed by Byram has been considered essential (Prodromou, 1992, p.39). Brunet-Thornton (2010 cited in Suchánková, 2014) explains that Intercultural Communication Competence includes the following main elements:

appropriateness, effectiveness, anxiety and uncertainty reduction, adaptation, face honouring and protection. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p.51) came up with the slightly different term of 'Intercultural Interaction Competence' which is similar to intercultural communicative competence but they do not focus on the context of English language teaching. They use this term:

> [p]artly as an umbrella term for reporting the work of different theories on this issue, and partly to emphasise the focus on interaction, in other words, to refer to the competence not only to communicate (verbally and nonverbally) and behave effectively and appropriately with people from other cultural groups, but also to handle the psychological demands and dynamic outcomes that result from such interchanges.

According to Larzen-Östermark (2008, p.528), the main aim of intercultural communicative competence is to develop intercultural speakers who have:

> [t]he ability to see how different cultures relate to each other in terms of similarities and differences and to look at themselves from an external perspective when interacting with representatives of other cultures.

In this process, the relationship between language teaching and culture teaching is summarised as a question of recognising other ways of living and other ways of thinking (Roberts et al., cited in Risager, 2007, p.149). Furthermore, Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) regulates the goal of integration of intercultural communicative competence as follows:

> It is the ability to communicate using language with other people and to be able to do so in a culture-sensitive way, taking as much account as possible of the cultural differences that can be predicted in the situation. So intercultural communicative competence is the ability to use language in culturally appropriate ways (Crozet and Liddicoat, 2000, p.3).

In brief, a shift in foreign language education, particularly the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language, goes with a shift in the culture teaching area (Larzen-Östermark, 2008). Based on this shift, learning strategies and methodologies, learner differences, experiences, attitudes and emotions, and recognising the other have been given priority. Thus, as Larzen-Östermark highlights, English language teaching these days is founded on the objectives of:

> ...making the learners familiar with the target culture(s) by providing them with general background information, preparing them for future intercultural situations by giving them social and sociolinguistic skills, as well as promoting empathy, open-mindedness and respect for otherness, by working against stereotypes and prejudiced views of other cultures (Larzen-Östermark, 2008 cited in Larzen-Östermark, 2009, p.402).

Even though the approach of intercultural communicative competence in language education has been introduced and developed for several decades, foreign language practitioners still prefer to claim that they adapt and apply communicative language teaching. These teachers might be familiar and agree with the elements of intercultural communicative competence or they might even incorporate its elements into their lessons to some degree but they are not explicitly and theoretically familiar with this approach (Reid, 2015). The results of several studies (Thanasoulas, 2001; Cakir, 2006) show that when it comes to culture in language teaching, most English teachers agree more on the significance of knowing about the foreign culture when interacting with the people of that culture. For instance, the results of the study conducted by Karabinar and Guler (2013) in Turkey demonstrate that English teachers in Turkey (participants) believe knowing about the foreign culture may be of assistance although the main goal is the social adaptation to cultural facts and the avoidance of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. This finding exhibits that these teachers are aware of the effect of culture on communication but at the same time it shows that these teachers' definitions of culture are limited to surface level definitions. The phrase 'knowing about foreign culture'

reveals that the teachers mean 'knowing about the target culture' which is a part of communicative competence as I explained above but it does not sufficiently foster the learners' knowledge, attitude and skills in becoming global citizens and intercultural speakers. In addition, it does not sufficiently explain what these teachers mean by foreign culture, particularly considering that this foreign language is English.

Intercultural competence can be learned in the same way that students learn phonological accuracy, syntax or morphology, through practice (Brooks, 2001). Common conversational subjects should be about typical everyday tasks which "should highlight identity, similarity and differences in comparable patterns of culture" (Reid, 2015, p.941). Despite some scholars who believe the relevant activities on intercultural competence cannot be integrated in lower level language lessons (Sharifian, 2010), Reid (2014) declares that it is significant to devise cultural tasks and exercises for all age groups from the beginning of learning a foreign language. He believes the purpose is to deepen the students' attitudes, knowledge and skills about other cultures and their own culture from the very beginning. However, research findings (e.g., Reid, 2014; Huber-Kriegler et al., 2012; House, 2012) demonstrate that teachers usually teach sociocultural aspects and do not pay sufficient attention to sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. In addition, mostly pleasant aspects of a specific culture are presented which might generate an improbable image in students' perception. As Byram points out, realistic, accurate, contemporary and factual information should be presented to the learners (1986).

Intercultural competence cannot be totally mastered only in English language classrooms. It also has to be acquired elsewhere through the media, travelling, working in multicultural settings and so on. However, language classrooms can give the opportunity to practise the skills for interpreting and relating to other cultures under the guidance of teachers (Hawkins, 1997). Although classrooms cannot provide real life situations for intercultural communication, it is possible to simulate real communication and performance through teaching and learning

activities (Hawkins, 1997) and it is clear that when the students in a classroom are from different cultural backgrounds, this simulation is easier. However, teachers' understanding and positive attitudes toward the integration of the elements of intercultural competence is necessary since it can influence their practices within the classroom. Numerous scholars have suggested a variety of activities that can be used in language teaching to develop learners' intercultural competence (e.g., Gudykunst et al., 1996; Neuliep, 2006). The following section is dedicated to some practical recommendations.

2.8 Intercultural communicative competence in practice

Since a shift has happened in foreign language education, a shift is also needed in the ESOL teaching curriculum. This shift needs to happen in order to change the curriculum from a linguistic perspective to interculturality (Alptekin, 2002). A new pedagogic and educational model in the case of English as a tool of intercultural communication has been called for (Alptekin, 2002). Holliday et al. (2010) and Alptekin (2002) similarly believe that intercultural communicative competence should be developed among those who learn English as another language. These learners need to be well- prepared and equipped with linguistic and cultural behaviour so that they can interact successfully with others. In addition, the learners also need to be equipped with a mindfulness of differences and strategies for facing and dealing with such differences. Even though the anticipated understanding of intercultural communicative competence has been neglected for years in foreign language education contexts, studies in some countries show that over the past few years some efforts have been made to develop English language learners' intercultural communicative competence through integrating some particular courses into the curriculum and organising cultural programmes. However, teachers are still not clear about this approach (Byram, 2002). Byram suggests the following steps in this regard and he declares that to develop intercultural competence in the learners, intercultural training has to be a vital factor of language lessons and might consist in these areas:

- Providing information concerning different cultures

- Identifying cultural differences

- Informing about possible communication barriers

- Eliciting conventional taboos and controversial topics

- Practising negotiations in different contexts and roles

- Developing awareness of different communicative norms and rules

- Training expectations – possible behaviour and attitudes of the counterparts

- Getting feedback – watching recordings or the evaluation by spectators (Byram, 2002, p.55)

Byram suggests including global topics, with the purpose of opening learners' eyes and minds to a better comprehension of reality in a global sense to fight for justice, fairness and equality among people and human rights for everyone (2002). He believes that it is important to awaken a feeling of responsibility, for people and the world, to motivate an active approach to the solution of local problems, to provoke interest in problems, to support sustainable development, to understand the situation of people in the midst of a difficult life situation and to ascertain causes and results of global problems (Byram, 2002).

The organised teaching and learning of knowledge and skills through the guidance of a teacher which are traditionally provided in language classrooms propose little opportunity to develop relevant abilities and skills for interacting in real life settings. The main purpose of the integration of intercultural communicative competences is to make the learners ready to behave suitably and effectively in real world scenarios in a foreign language. Within the context of foreign language tuition, intercultural communicative competence can be practised through activities relevant to behaviour and speech patterns. For example, stereotyping, suitable choices for conversation subjects, initiating and ending a conversation, criticising and complaining,

personal space limits, and body language. Nonetheless, the results of a study which was conducted in Estonia (Skopinskaja, 2003) illustrate that since foreign language curricula are generally exam-based, teachers tend to focus only on developing the learners' linguistic skills rather than their intercultural competence. Accordingly, most learners are not able to learn about challenges and issues in intercultural communication during their lessons. Skopinskaja (2003) demonstrates that in the exam-based system teachers do not include many activities relating to topics such as the potential issues of proximity, negative stereotyping, an unsuitable selection of conversation topics, or differences in non-verbal communication. He believes that this kind of educational approach may lead the learners to experience cultural clashes and culture shock without being prepared and these experiences may turn out to be traumatic.

A number of studies have been carried out (e.g., Moeller and Nugent, 2014; Reid, 2015; Baker, 2012) on classroom practices which are considered as good practice for developing intercultural communicative competence. For instance, Suchánková (2014) suggests role play as a helpful activity saying that model situations for trade and tourism could be practised and the knowledge about possible barriers could be presented. Garcia and Biscu believe that introducing particular drama activities in a cooperative lesson environment can aid learners to foster their empathic attitude and raise their cognitive and emotional competence which are important features of intercultural competence (2006). Lázár (2007) also asserts that language teachers should employ intercultural games and activities such as collaborative games, role play, ethnographic exercises and projects to include intercultural communicative competence into their teaching in order to raise learners' intercultural communicative competence. Singhal (1998), Henrichsen (1998) and Reid (2015) among others have offered activities that are helpful in fostering intercultural communicative competence. The activities that they have suggested are: comparison method, cultural assimilation, cultural capsule, drama, TPR, cultural island, reformulation, noticing, treasure hunt, prediction, role plays, research, songs, games,

portfolio and field trip. The definitions for each of these activities is given in Appendix A. Even though all these practical techniques are useful with regard to developing intercultural competence, it is initially important to familiarise, prepare and equip teachers with sufficient knowledge and guidelines and help them realise that intercultural competence is not separate from the other duties that they have been assigned for and they can incorporate it within the tasks that they normally do. According to Suchánková, lessons of a foreign language are mainly planned to found and develop communicative competence in the target language, but they also provide a good opportunity to teach personal, social and intercultural skills (2014).

According to Byram (2002), it is not necessary or even possible for a teacher to know all aspects of the foreign culture. This is not possible and when it comes to English there are diverse national cultures associated with it. Within the countries where English is being used, many variations exist related to people's beliefs, values and behaviours. Therefore, a teacher needs to try and design tasks to help students talk and elaborate on their own experience of the culture based on what they have confronted. The teachers should provide a setting within which students receive information about other cultures and reflect upon them relating to their own cultures (Byram, 2002). Making constant comparisons is implicit in most of the techniques and activities that are related to intercultural competence. The comparison method focuses on discussing the differences between the students' own culture and other cultures (Hughes, 1986). Robinson believes that not only features of various cultures, but also those within one culture also need to be compared as cultures are dynamic. They are continuously changing and different generations interpret concepts and situations differently (1985). Byram (2002) provides an example that could be helpful to develop learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. His example is that students watch a video which shows a typical English school day for a teenager. It proposes not only sociocultural knowledge like clothing and duration of classes but also sociolinguistic phrases like making requests, greetings, the way of addressing

people and so on. The video also focuses on body language (e.g., Slovakians raise their hand when they would like to ask a question, British students attract their teachers' attention verbally). The activity allows students to compare the normal English school day and the typical school day in their own country and think about the advantages and disadvantages of each cultural system.

As is clear from the above mentioned activities (and the ones that have been provided in Appendix A), all of them are standard class activities that are normally used in all language lessons. Teachers do not need to design or plan a particular or a unique activity for intercultural competence. They can connect their typical activities to culture teaching and intercultural competence. In addition, the teacher can inspire students to be more alert regarding different aspects of culture (Byram, 2002). Consequently, students will certainly be more prepared to interact with people of other cultures. They will be more empathetic and will tolerate the differences and cope with the situations they might encounter in their intercultural communications. In this process, teachers do not have to be specialists or experts in other cultures. They only need to provide a setting in their lessons within which their students learn how to react and respond to others' behaviours and others' opinions of themselves and how they communicate with people from different cultures (Reid, 2015). Obviously, students still need to know some factual information about the countries that the target language is dominantly being used but these information could be found in textbooks or on the internet.

Furthermore, textbooks can be taught in a way that offers intercultural competence and critical perspectives. For enhancing intercultural skills, teachers can begin from the topics and content in textbooks and then encourage students to discuss and make comparisons (Henrichsen, 1998). The main goal is to make students compare a topic in their own condition with some other examples from a different condition. For example, Byram (2002) gives 'sport' as a theme for classroom discussions. He asserts that the topic of sport can be assessed from numerous angles

such as gender, age, religion, racism. He suggests that some of the evoked questions might be: "Are there sports that are, in the familiar context or in the unfamiliar context, predominantly played by men or by women? Are things changing?' or 'Are there religious objections to playing sport, or days when some people choose not to do sport because of religious observance?" (p. 25) and many other questions. Furthermore, other themes such as family, food, leisure, school can be critically examined. Grammatical activities can support prejudice and stereotypes or can challenge them. For example, female subjects may be connected to stereotypically female activities or actions such as 'Susan likes cooking and Mark likes football. Similarly, stereotyping generalisations may be encouraged about nationalities and groups, such as 'Spanish people like…; Italians are... Older people…. Teachers can inspire students to comment on these kinds of sentences and challenge them (Byram, 2002). Beginning with the exercises suggested by the textbook, students can develop more exercises. They can reinforce the same grammatical structures through using a wide range of examples and contexts. Then they can replace the exercise proposed by the textbook with the ones that are provided by the students. The inclusion of the vocabulary that assists students to speak about cultural diversity is important in the integration of an intercultural perspective. Some of this vocabulary are words such as 'racism', 'human rights', 'equality', 'stereotype', 'ethnic minority', and many others.

What I have discussed in this chapter so far implies the teachers' crucial role in providing all the above-mentioned activities and bringing all the relevant discussions to the lesson. It is important that the teachers themselves avoid generalisations, sarcasm and disparaging judgements. Teachers and students together will challenge and expect generalisations or stereotypes and present other world views. This is an important aspect of boosting intercultural competence. The students should have chances for giving a reaction to photos, stories and any other resources. Lesson activities should be designed sensibly and should contain explorations

of other perspectives. Students bring substantial knowledge of their own culture but they mostly do not share the same values, ideas or knowledge (Byram, 2002).

Language learning in order "to promote an intercultural dimension encourages a sharing of knowledge and a discussion of values and opinions" (Byram et al., 2001, p.20).There are many intercultural and antiracist educational programmes across the world, for example, the Council of Europe's *All Different, All Equal* campaign (Community builders, 2006). Almost all of these programmes are grounded in the attitude of peer education which means that students learn from each other as much as they learn from their teachers, classroom materials and/or textbooks. The significance of the intercultural dimension is that it is an idea of language teaching and learning which tends to go beyond the notion of language learning as learning skills in a language and some knowledge about a country where the language is mostly spoken. It is not the main aim of intercultural competence to only teach factual knowledge about other countries. The main aim of this approach is that along with linguistic competence, teachers need to foster their students' intercultural competence which equips them with useful skills to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds, multiple identities and a specific personality (Byram et al., 2001). This has many implications for the priorities in teacher training. Even though it will take time for teacher training institutions to revise the curriculum, a lot of students, parents, teachers and other professionals feel the need to change the ways of learning and teaching.

As most of the mentioned studies illustrate, many teachers are conscious of the importance of incorporating cultural aspects into their language teaching lessons even though they may not often challenge the complex notion of culture and they often connect the concept of culture to a national paradigm. The teachers in these studies often do not incorporate it into their practice in ways that successfully promote intercultural competence. In addition, there is often pressure for quantitative assessment. Consequently, the teachers often feel obliged to direct their

teaching towards measurable products. To my knowledge, very few qualitative studies have been conducted on language teacher attitude which have focused on the integration of culture and the elements of intercultural competence into English language teaching. Reviewing those studies I have found out that carrying out research into language teachers' attitudes and the essence of intercultural English language education appears to be well worth developing. As Sercu (2002) points out, teachers' awareness and understanding of the main issues in intercultural communication and learners' improvement needs further research. In the following section, I discuss important characteristics of teachers' thinking and attitudes, as well as provide an overview of findings from research into the area of teachers' attitudes. Kramsch (2006) and Van Lier (2004) point out the fact that the responsibilities and roles of the foreign language teacher have become progressively wide and complicated. This raises the question of how the teachers themselves think regarding their profession and the elements affecting their decisions in their teaching practices.

2.9 Teacher attitude

As my study's main focus is on culture and developing intercultural competence through language teaching, I review literature on teachers' attitudes about culture and the approach of intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, it is important to look through the area of attitude as a whole. For this purpose, I dedicate this section to 'attitudes', its definitions and the significance of teachers' attitudes along with its impact on their teaching.

Normally, when people's attitudes are being referred to, their behaviours are trying to be explained; however, this is not sufficient and comprehensive. Although primarily an attitude is a knowledge representation that includes our liking or disliking of a phenomenon, it is a complex combination of elements which has a tendency to be engaged with beliefs, thoughts, emotions, values, behaviours and motivations. Spooncer (1992) describes attitude in three

dimensions: feeling, cognition and behaviour. Feelings or affects include a person's emotions towards something. Cognition is about an individual's thoughts and beliefs. Behaviour contains actions and practices. My intention to use the concept of attitude in this study (rather than other concepts, such as perception) is because the term attitude is generally used as an umbrella expression covering people's thoughts, points of views, feelings as well as the action they take in relation to their beliefs, thoughts and emotions. However, the term perception portrays an individual's mental image which is only a part of their attitude. As I mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, in my study, I intend not only to look at teachers' views on intercultural competence, but also explore their understandings of this approach together with their behaviour and practices in their classrooms. Below I am going to elaborate more on the definitions and dimensions of attitudes. It is also important to examine the relationship, differences and similarities between attitudes and other relative concepts along with the factors that might affect teachers' attitudes towards their teaching approaches and methods.

2.9.1 Definitions of attitudes

There are different definitions of attitudes. As Al- Mamnu and Al-Magid (2006) presents, Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English (1995) defines attitude as "the way that you think and feel about somebody or something; the way that you behave towards somebody or something that shows how you think and feel" (p.66). This explanation indicates that attitude involves an individual's beliefs and feelings that are reflected by the individual's particular behaviour. Likewise, Webster's New Collegial Dictionary (1975) states that belief is the essential element of attitude and also a person's "feelings are activated by a certain stimulus towards something which determines the behaviours of the person" (p.73). Another definition which is presented by The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1990, p.70) attitude is defined as "a settled opinion" which comprises one's behaviour which shows their attitudes towards a certain phenomenon. Thus, it is understood as "a settled behaviour or

manner of acting" reflecting a person's ideas and feelings (Al- Mamnu and Al-Magid, 2006, p. 38). It could be interpreted from these definitions that people's beliefs are vital in verifying their behaviours. The definition provided by The International Dictionary of Education (1977) seems to be rather thorough which is also similar to my own understanding of attitude when I was thinking about the aim of my research. In this definition, attitude is explained as a,

> [p]redisposition to perceive, feel or behave towards specific objects or certain people in a particular manner. Attitudes are thought to be derived from experience, rather than innate characteristics which suggest that they can be modified (p.31).

This description considers opinions, emotions and actions as the main dimensions of attitude. As Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg agree, it is over experience and evolution in the teaching practices that teachers "consolidate their feelings and beliefs consciously and unconsciously about another individual, a concept or a phenomenon" (1988, p. 93). One of the reasons that I have conducted classroom observations as well as interviews for my study has been to find out whether teachers' practices and behaviours in their lessons are compatible with their expressed ideas and feelings. As I am adopting the above-mentioned definition for attitude, I explain the dimensions of attitude (beliefs, feelings and behaviours) in the following section.

2.9.1.1 The dimension of beliefs

Beliefs can be seen as mental constructs originating from individuals' experiences, for example, of the approach of intercultural competence. It has been agreed that beliefs have significant impact on one's behaviour. Basturkmen et al. analyse conclusions drawn by scholars regarding the effect of teachers' beliefs on their behaviours (2004, p.245). For example, beliefs "motivate instructional practices in the classroom" (Burns, 1992); "beliefs

tend to form teachers' instructional practices" (Johnson, 1992); beliefs "guide teachers' thought and behaviour" (Borg, 2001).

In 1992, Pajares conducted a detailed survey to examine teachers' beliefs in education and as a part of the results of this study he concluded that to define behaviour and organise information and knowledge, beliefs play an important role. He perceives belief as a key element of attitude that includes knowledge, affect and behaviour which are all interrelated (1992, pp.313-316). Similarly, Clemente (2001) asserts that the dimension of belief is about the teacher's sense of plausibility regarding the techniques, method and approach they adopt in their teaching practices, and that controls behaviour in the classroom. This illustrates that beliefs are influential in determining the roles of teachers in the lessons as they assist teachers to employ their understanding and knowledge in a particular way in agreement with the rules of the teaching methodology and approach they adopt in classrooms.

2.9.1.2 The dimension of feelings

Another influential element of attitude is about feelings. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg, feelings are "those aspects that emerge from experience and behaviour such as the teaching experience of teachers that will develop emotionally in them" (1988, p.14). It is vital to create a relationship between the teachers and the approach and the method each of them is using. Clemente conducted an exploratory research about teachers' attitudes towards one of the self – directed language learning schemes in Mexico and he concluded that feelings play an important role in any language teaching approach (2001).

2.9.1.3 The dimension of behaviours

The last but not least dimension of attitude is behaviour. Behaviour is usually understood as the manifested form of individuals' beliefs and feelings. According to Eiser (1984), the dimension of behaviour is about the teacher's responses, actions and reactions. The teachers'

tendencies in these three situations form their behaviour to a particular methodology. Behaviours are based on the attitudinal affect including their feelings and beliefs (p.66). Eiser believes that within the context of language education, applying particular teaching methods often relies on teachers' beliefs and feelings towards language education (1984). Teachers' established feelings and beliefs regarding teaching approaches verify the teachers' behaviours. The different aspects of attitude are interrelated to form an attitude that creates particular behaviour which could be observable in teaching practices.

All three components of attitude cannot be easily determined unless by eliciting and analysing declarations of one's feelings and beliefs about a particular approach, such as intercultural competence, along with paying attention to their observable behaviours. An analysis of what they state may help to disclose to what degree teachers really practise the elements of intercultural competence in their lessons. Teachers' attitudes could be recognised through analysing what they express and how they act and this will be helpful in perceiving how their attitudes affect their decisions and performances in the classrooms. Numerous scholars are of the opinion that teachers' performance is shaped by the determined attitudes they start their profession with and their experience as a learner and as a teacher (Clemente, 2001; Borge, 2003; Golombek, 1998). However, the relationships between the components of attitude are not always simple and straightforward. For example, there are still doubts about the linkages between behaviours and attitude since they are sometimes divergent. Often in real life, what a person feels or believes might be different from how that person behaves as feeling and thinking comes from within while the behaviour might be controlled by the outside world and the environment (Krebs and Schmidt, 1993). This contrast has made the relationship complex and sometimes problematic because predicting a person's attitude towards a phenomenon or an approach cannot always be possible through an analysis of their behaviour. For instance, a teacher might implement a certain language teaching approach not because s/he thinks or feels

positive about it but because the implementation of that approach is the requirement of the educational setting the teacher works at and vice versa. Prabhu (1997) calls this a situational factor in language lessons which may include:

> [t]he language policy, linguistic and cultural attitudes towards the language, ideological and economic factors that influence the teaching processes itself, educational policy concerning teaching approaches and instructional objectives, time and resource constraints, administrative inefficiency, and class-size (p.162).

These elements along with the other elements (e.g., the teacher's training and skills or/ and learner related factors) might limit the teachers' opportunities for desired forms of pedagogic action.

On the other hand, the importance of teachers' intentions, feelings and beliefs to implement a certain approach is not deniable (Fishbein, 1970). Although teachers' actions and performance might not fully indicate their attitude, their feelings and beliefs do. Furthermore, Kennedy and Kennedy believe that if the teachers want or have to implement a particular approach successfully in their teaching, they will need to make changes in their attitude (1996). Attitudinal change has been seen as a facilitator in the effective and successful application of a teaching approach. The teachers might learn and understand the relevant principles and theories of the approach but they will not be totally successful until they change their feelings and attitude in general. In short, attitude is a tendency to react enthusiastically or unwillingly to something (the integration of intercultural competence in the case of this study). The above-mentioned dimensions of attitude affect an individual to behave in a particular way. Attitudes can always be changed, modified and learnt as the result of experience which is a part of an individual's (a teacher's) progress and improvement. In addition, attitudes can be influenced

or even inhibited by many environmental factors as I explained above and many items are involved in shaping one's reaction towards a particular approach.

Nevertheless, the measurement of attitudes is a complicated task to do. Various types of attitude measurement have been introduced by Kiesler et al. (1969). Self-reported beliefs have been used in this study as one of the tools of attitude measurement to determine the teachers' attitudes. Interviews have been conducted to recognise the teachers' self-reported beliefs and feelings. Obviously, by measurement I do not mean using a quantitative scale but rather I mean understanding the teachers' beliefs, feelings and behaviour towards the integration of intercultural competence in their teaching practices. This understanding is subjective, has been built upon my own understanding and grounded in an interpretive approach which the Methodology chapter expands upon. The three elements of attitude are the included mental constructs that establish an attitude that is apparent in action and behaviour (Al-Mamnu and Al-Magid, 2006). Their observable behaviour is also measured through classroom observations. Therefore, the observation method has been designed in my study to certify the expressed ideas which has been expressed in their responses. This allows me to make a comparison to find out if what participants express is in line with what they practise in the classrooms regarding the activities related to the intercultural competence.

As teachers' attitudes are very important for language education, numerous studies have been done to explore the position and role of attitudes in English language education from both the points of view of learners and teachers ((Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Lambert 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner and Smythe, 1981 cited in Gardner and Macintyre, 1993). Defeng (1998) points out that introducing any new approach to education, language education in particular, is typically challenging. This is probably because that involves a paradigm change for all the parties who are involved, mainly teachers. Considering teachers' attitudes is important because a paradigm shift involves a shift in attitude. Studying teachers' attitudes

helps researchers better comprehend how teachers make sense of the educational process (Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999). If teachers are positively faced to a paradigm, they will probably support its application, but if the teachers are negatively faced to the approach they might not be keen to make any shift in attitude needed to apply the approach (Hall and Hewings, 2001). To be able to make changes in paradigms, teachers should be more insightful and receptive to the new ideas and trends (Van der Walt 1990; Harmer 1995; Holliday 1997). It is usually a complex shift for teachers who are habituated to the conventional methods that they are probably experts in.

Intercultural competence is an approach which requires teachers to direct and facilitate their lessons to provide a context within which students interact. Many teachers find it hard to change leading teacher-centred classrooms to having student- centred classrooms or, in other words, from being authoritarians to being facilitators. I have found that work is still to be done in the domain of the intercultural dimension of English language teaching particularly from teachers' perspectives. It is clear that adequate literacy instruction in second and foreign language contexts and grammar teaching have been given much attention. However, some other important areas, such as developing language learners' communication skills in today's diverse world as well as developing their insight about the role of culture in intercultural communication have not been awarded enough attention.

2.10 Summary and research framework

This chapter has provided a literature review on the relevant concepts within the field of intercultural competence. I have presented various definitions and categorisations of culture particularly in relation to foreign language education. I have also discussed the place of culture in English language teaching from different perspectives. Moreover, the chapter has tried to look at barriers to intercultural communications from two main perspectives. Firstly, I have

discussed non-linguistic barriers which are mainly about an individual's cognition and attitude towards cultural differences usually shaped within the social environments where an individual has been brought up. Secondly, I have discussed cultural linguistic barriers which are mainly about accommodating cultural and linguistic features into the target language. The chapter has also included discussions around English as a lingua franca and emerging new varieties of English given its status as the most widely spoken language across the globe. It has also discussed how these barriers can lead to communication breakdown when people from different cultural backgrounds communicate in English.

Having discussed all these elements, the literature review has led to the main focus of my study which is about the integration of intercultural competence in ESOL classrooms. For this purpose, I have provided a brief historical background of the approach of intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching and explained why and how English language teaching has to modify its direction from adopting traditional approaches to a more up-to-date one as the number of intercultural communicators of English is significantly increasing. To explain how the approach of intercultural communicative competence can foster learners' insights toward differences and develop their capabilities to handle the challenges in their intercultural communications, I have discussed the main components of this approach and some suggested classroom activities. In addition, the chapter has provided a survey of some of the studies that have been conducted in this domain, particularly the ones with similar focuses to my study. The chapter ends by discussing the concept of teacher attitude and its different dimensions as the main aim of my study is to explore English teachers' attitudes.

Having reviewed the literature in the area of the integration of intercultural competence in English language teaching and the reasons for its necessity, I am now able to present a conceptual framework that enables me to situate my study within its conceptual and practical contexts (Ravitch and Carl, 2015). This eventually leads me to analyse my findings and to

address my research questions. Even though this is expanded in Chapter 4, along with all the themes and subthemes that have emerged from the data, it is necessary to introduce this framework at the end of this chapter as it gives the readers a clearer idea of how the reviewed literature in this chapter is relevant and connected to the findings of my study:

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   ┌─────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌────────────┐
   │ Beliefs │   │ Feelings │   │ Behaviour  │
   └────┬────┘   └────┬─────┘   └─────┬──────┘
        ↕             ↕                ↕
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Teacher attitude                   │
└───┬───────────────────┬──────────────────┬─────┘
    ↓                   ↓                  ↓
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| Teaching approaches: Communicative competence and Intercultural communicative competence | Culture and its place in English language education | Challenges in intercultural communication: Cognitive challenges and cultural linguistic challenges |
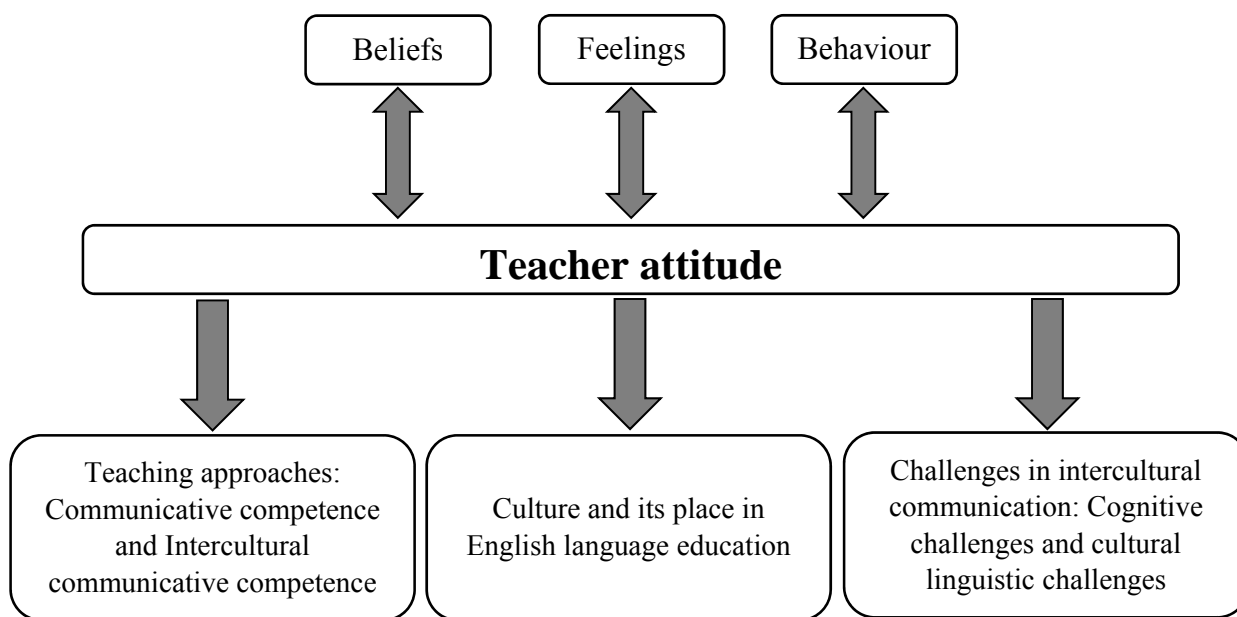
I came up with this diagram based on the point that my study explores the attitudes of teachers regarding the concept of culture and intercultural competence in relation to their English language practices. Therefore, the central concept through which the other concepts are being investigated is teacher attitude. Attitude in my study consists of beliefs, feelings and behaviours of the teachers. That means the other three main areas are explored through the teachers' attitudes. These three main concepts are: culture and its place in English language teaching, the recognition of challenges in intercultural communications and intercultural communicative competence as a teaching approach.

The literature review indicates that there has been a growing interest in the field of intercultural competence within teaching English as a foreign language. However, there is still need for further research in this regard as intercultural competence has not received much attention in English language education. There is limited qualitative analysis about integration of elements of intercultural competence into English lessons particularly in the UK. There is also a further limitation in the literature on teachers' attitudes, particularly non-native English teachers. This explains how my study might contribute to the literature through addressing the proposed research questions. The next chapter introduces the research methodology that I adopted in order to conduct this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study tries to understand how a group of non-native English language teachers in the UK perceive the idea of incorporating intercultural competence into their classrooms through exploring these teachers' interpretations and attitudes towards this concept. The previous chapters intended to introduce the research aims, objectives, research questions along with the theoretical background of the study. This chapter is aimed at providing an explanation of the methodological structure that underpins this study. For this purpose, the chapter begins with an explanation of methodology and methods, an overview of my ontological and epistemological standpoints and how my research questions assisted in designing the study. I provide justification for my choices of adopting a qualitative approach and interpretivist paradigm. I then describe the participants of this study and the methods that I utilised to recruit participants and gather data. Moreover, I discuss the ethical considerations in this study and other methodological issues. The discussion then moves to the procedures and the methods that I used to analyse the collected data. I also explain briefly about the pilot study which I conducted before starting the main fieldwork in terms of its influence on the actual study. The chapter is concluded by highlighting the steps I took in order to ensure trustworthiness.

3.2 Research aims and questions

In this study, I have tried to explore how a group of non-native English teachers, first of all, define culture in relation to their English language teaching practices. In addition, I have tried to understand how they perceive 'intercultural competence' to find out if they are aware of the concept and how important it is for them. I have also explored to what extent they are concerned

about the challenges that learners might face in intercultural communications and, finally, to what extent they can help learners overcome these barriers and increase students' insights into cultural differences. More specifically, the research considers the how and why of incorporating intercultural competence into English language lessons and how, in particular, non-native teachers think they can improve their learners' knowledge, attitude and skills in this domain. The research questions are:

1) How do some non-native English language teachers understand the relationship between culture and language in their English language teaching practices?

2) To what extent do teachers acknowledge the term 'intercultural competence'?

3) Regardless of (2), to what extent do teachers integrate 'intercultural competence' into their English language teaching practices?

4) What problems do teachers identify that could be construed as related to the integration of intercultural competence?

3.3 Research methodology and justification

As Wellington points out, "justifying the decisions we have made on methods is an essential feature of any written report or thesis" (2015, p.34). It is always necessary to justify our choice of methodology and our choice/s of methods for collecting and analysing data. According to Tight, some scholars use the concepts of methodology and methods interchangeably even though there is a difference between these two terms (2013). Research methodology is "the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use" (Wellington, 2015, p.33). This definition highlights that methodology is engaged with the underpinning theories and notions that a scholar thinks about before starting to conduct research and also while doing it. Conducting research involves making decisions on philosophical issues, the research design, the methods for collecting and analysing data and ethical considerations. In other words, research methodology includes deciding on choices of

the use of a specific philosophical paradigm, procedures and methods of gathering data collected from the fieldwork, analysing and interpreting them (Cohen et al., 2011). These explanations of research methodology therefore clarify the difference between methodology and methods. Methodology needs scholars to decide and choose their philosophical standpoints for the study but research methods needs scholars to decide on the techniques of data collection and techniques of analysis. Similarly, Clough and Nutbrown agree that "this distinction can be seen in terms of methods as being some of the ingredients of research, whilst methodology provides the reasons for using a particular recipe" (2008, p.23). This indicates that methodology is related to general decisions about the design of the research and the methods are the tools that researchers employ in order to collect data. Both research methodology and methods need scholars to figure out suitable approaches and methods for their research along with being able to provide justifications for their choices. As Clough and Nutbrown assert,

> [i]t is the task of methodology to uncover and justify research assumptions as far as practicably possible and…. to locate the claims which the research makes within the traditions of enquiry which use it (2008, p.34).

Therefore, in order to legitimise the methodological choices within this study, it is initially important to explain my philosophical assumptions.

3.3.1 Philosophical considerations

As it is clear from the research questions, my study is concerned with exploring English teachers' ideas and their practices. This means that I am interested in understanding the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, experiences and how these are manifested in their practices. Therefore, as a researcher, I am interested in the interpretations and the underpinning meanings of the social reality of the participants of this study and it is these which have affected my choice of methodology and methods of data collection (Bryman, 2012). Scholars require

philosophy to decide on the methods and strategy to adopt in order to respond to their research questions efficiently. The philosophical paradigm or assumption selected by scholars is supported by their epistemological and ontological positions and their choice of methodology (Guba, 1999). Ontological and epistemological standpoints tend to deal with the "nature of reality, what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified, the role of values in research and the process of research" (Creswell, 2007, p.20). This means, they deal with "the study of being and of knowing" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, p.33). Even though ontological and epistemological positions are two different issues, they are dependent on one another (Krauss, 2013) as the choice of a philosophical approach helps researchers to design their study and decide about the methods. I discuss these two philosophical issues of ontology and epistemology in the following sub-section and try to explain them in relation to my own study.

3.3.1.1 Ontology

Ontology is defined as understanding the nature of reality (Cohen et al., 2011). It is necessary for researchers to think about how they consider this reality. For this purpose, researchers need to ask whether the reality is an external and tangible 'fact' or whether it is the result of individual cognition and is socially constructed. Socially constructed means that meanings are known and developed by individuals through their experience in the world they live (Creswell, 2003). From this aspect, reality might be variously understood from different individuals' or different groups of individuals' perspectives as their experiences are never the same. This leads a researcher to investigate variation and complexity of views. As Creswell quotes, "[t]he goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (2003, p.8).

Similarly, Crotty defines ontology as the "study of being' or what is" (1988, p.10) and Bryman explains it as the nature of reality, what creates a reality and if a fact can be learnt from a

perspective (2012). This means ontology is about what people view as reality and how people interpret something as a fact. Ontology is the "nature of reality or of a phenomenon" and it is grounded in "politics and interest" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.33). This demonstrates that ontology is concerned about peoples' beliefs and the impact of their beliefs on how they perceive and interpret whatever they see in the world. Therefore, as Blaikie points out, in social science studies, ontology is related to the objective and subjective knowledge about things (2010). This means, the question of ontology is whether social existences are present by themselves and can be known independently or whether they are affected by social factors (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman, to have an objective ontology means to accept that reality exists independantly and consequently is not affected by social factors (2012). Conversely, to have a subjectivist ontology means to have a role in perceiving the social world and that consequently reality could change based on how it is understood. These two philosophical issues are related to positivism (objectivism) and social constructivism or interpretivism (subjectivism) (Bryman, 2012). To agree with or to choose either of these is crucial to determine the design and methods of data collection and data analysis.

3.3.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology considers the nature and form of knowledge and how it can be acquired. Walliman (2006) regards epistemology as "acceptable knowledge in a discipline" (p.20) which is concerned about how knowledge is learned or known (Guba, 1990). Positivism and interpretivism are two extreme epistemological positions (Bryman, 2012). Positivists claim that knowledge is something out there which requires to be tested or proved by the researcher through scientific testing. Those who hold this view utilise objective means to come to the truth with apparently less involvement from the scholar. Positivism is concerned about explaining a natural phenomenon through scientific means and relates to a single reality based on facts and numbers (Bryman, 2012). According to May (2011, p.10), positivists mainly rely on the

observation of data for results as they often suppose that "social facts exist independently of peoples' perception". Therefore, they usually try to use large numbers to create hypotheses which are tested several times to find out whether or not the results are in line with a specific theory (May, 2011). As a result, positivist scholars mainly wish to gather quantitative data about a social phenomenon to come up with "law like statements rather than explaining a particular event" (May, 2011, p.10). In addition, it has been agreed by numerous scholars (e,g, Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007; May, 2011) that positivism is grounded in objectivism which separates what is being studied from researchers. In other words, the findings and the results of such research do not include the researcher/s' interpretations and worldview, so that their results are not clouded or contaminated by their own judgement. On the one hand, positivism could be perceived as a positive position as the results are not contaminated by researchers' interpretations and judgments (Aubrey et al., 2000) but, on the other hand, as Silverman (2010) asserts, it has been criticised for relying too much on scientific observation and numerical methods to obtain knowledge.

By contrast, interpretive researchers highlight that researchers have to explore and understand the social world through the participants' perspectives and their own interpretations (Bryman, 2012). They believe knowledge does not exist out there to be tested through scientific testing but knowledge is based on a human interpretation of the social world. This is called constructivism or interpretivism. "The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.17). Summer believes that from an interpretivist's perspective, knowledge can be obtained through an affiliation between a researcher and a phenomenon (2006). According to Hanson, interpretivism is related to the "idea that meaning, learning and wisdom are context bound and therefore not amenable to singular models for deciding what matters, or is real" (2015, p.854). I think Hanson tries to suggest with this quote that as people's experiences of reality are

different, it is not possible to define one way of thinking and knowing. Therefore, interpretivism is a position in which a researcher believes that there are multiple realities and also there are multiple interpretations of any phenomenon which should be acknowledged by any researcher (May, 2008). Unlike positivists, interpretivist researchers believe that individuals' understandings, feelings and ideas shape their perceptions of reality and there is no one universal reality. Therefore, to conduct research, interpretivists are mainly keen on adopting a subjective perspective in which knowledge is generated by individuals who tend to interpret their own experiences based on their perceptions, feelings and understanding without relying on scientific testing of data of hypothesis for results (Krauss, 2005). Consequently, an interpretivist is more involved in their study and they can add their personal and strong view towards it. Unlike positivists who prefer to test existing theories, interpretivists, who are usually interested in taking a subjective view, are greatly keen on generating new theory (Bryman, 2012). This enthusiasm affects interpretivists' choices of data collection methods. These researchers mostly rather use one to one or/and group interviews and observations. They also prefer to have a smaller sample compared to positivists who use large-scale surveys or/and questionnaires. (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore, from what I have discussed above, it is clear that both positivists and interpretivists understand knowledge in a different way grounded on their epistemological standpoints. These assumptions lead social science researchers to decide between taking a positivist or interpretivist position in their studies and consequently often decide between conducting quantitative or qualitative research. Through the insight I gained about philosophical considerations and issues in social science research, I was therefore able to form my own standpoint and able to decide upon which paradigm could best suit my study. I formed my research questions based on the belief that the participants of this study are actively social actors and their viewpoints and ways of thinking have an essential role in this study. Thus,

considering the fact that my research questions involve looking at teachers' beliefs, understandings and their classroom practices, I decided to choose an interpretivist paradigm rather than positivism. This paradigm has helped me to analyse the participants' different ways of understanding and their individualised knowledge along with the implications of their understandings and knowledge of their classroom practices. As a result of my decision to adopt an interpretivist paradigm, I chose a qualitative approach. According to Kincheloe (2008), qualitative researchers are keen on comprehending social events from numerous perceptions. He points out that "knowledge of human beings involves the understanding of qualities which cannot be described through the exclusive use of numbers" (p.188). I believe that the participants' attitudes and perceptions are subjective and differ from one participant to another and they cannot be analysed or measured quantitatively. In addition, considering my own position in this study as both a researcher and as an English teacher, it was not possible to detach my views and biases about the topic.

In addition, qualitative research seeks to explore phenomena rather than confirming a hypothesis which quantitative research usually does (Cohen et al., 2011). This study is exploratory, rather than trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis or an assumption. The main concern of this study is to explore English language teachers' perceptions, attitudes and understandings about the inclusion of intercultural competence in their language classrooms. I needed to explore what these teachers have in mind when writing or thinking about their lesson plans in respect of culture and how much they recognise the need for the inclusion of intercultural competence. Therefore, this study was more about exploring and not proving something.

Therefore, considering all the above-mentioned reasons, I am confident that the choice of a qualitative interpretivist approach for this research is appropriate. Accordingly, I decided to have a small group of participants explore their attitudes and understandings in order to achieve

an in-depth perception of their knowledge about the practicality of intercultural competence and their real life practices in their lessons. In the following sections, I explain who the participants of the study are, along with the data collection and data analysis methods which I have used in this study.

3.4 Research participants

I have discussed my justifications for choosing non-native ESOL teachers as participants in this study in Section 1.2 where I explained the background of the study. However, it is worth reiterating that my background and life history have influenced my choice of the research topic and research participants. I was and still am an ESOL teacher and I have been teaching English for speakers of other languages for a number of years and it has always been my area of interest. My higher education degrees are also an indication for my enthusiasm in this area. I believe focusing on other groups of English teachers would not be relevant to my career, to my educational background, to my area of interest and generally to my positionality as a non-native ESOL teacher. I have provided more detailed explanations in this regard in section 1.2. In this section, I focus more on how I identified and recruited my participants. The identification and recruitment of participants are two of the most crucial stages in any research study. These stages included deciding on the number of participants, identifying who should participate in the study using a set of criteria, recruiting and selecting them. As I had limitations to find non-native English language teachers in the UK, particularly in the city where I live, different types of techniques were utilised as the most suitable strategies to identify and recruit the participants. Below I am going to explain these techniques and their suitability for my study.

3.4.1 Sampling techniques

Once I received ethical approval for my study from the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee, I started to recruit participants. I had to adopt more than one technique to identify

and recruit participants for this study. Convenience sampling, snowballing technique and purposeful sampling were all combined and used in the process of sampling. Convenience sampling means gathering data from population members who are conveniently available to take part in research (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Robinson (2014), convenience sampling which is also called purposeful sampling is a non-statistical technique and it is mostly used in qualitative research. This technique includes deliberate identification, recruitment and selection of participants who are keen on participating in the research and who volunteer to be a part of the study. I was not intent in having a large group of participants as the study was purely qualitative. According to Robinson, a small number of participants in qualitative research is recommended in order to prevent generating a large volume of data that the researcher might not be able to handle (2014). The number of participants that I had in mind was no more than 12. I was looking for non-native English language teachers who teach general English in the UK. It was also important for me to make sure that the teachers were experts, qualified and experienced in their teaching jobs (Cohen et al., 2011). There are many non-native speakers of English who teach English in voluntary or charity centres but they have no teaching qualifications. I did not ask these teachers to participate in my study as I wanted my participants to have majored in teaching English and who would have enough theoretical and practical teaching backgrounds. I wanted my participants to have enough knowledge which would be useful for my study. Thus, I used purposeful sampling to recruit expert participants for my research. As Cohen et al. (2011) point out, this type of sampling is concerned about hand-picking participants based on the knowledge they possess.

I contacted some language institutes via email and sent them the information sheet. The managers of these institutes distributed my email to their non-native teachers. I was contacted by some of these teachers and had a chance to have a face-to-face meeting with them in order to explain the study's aims and objectives thoroughly. As the number of teachers that contacted

me via email was not sufficient, I had to use snowballing technique, as Walliman (2011) and Goodman (2011) recommend, to access more teachers. At the end of my meetings with the teachers, I asked them to introduce me to some of their friends or colleagues who were non-native English teachers. Therefore, I was given some more contact details. Apart from this snowballing technique, I also attended the language centres and requested to talk to teachers in order to ask them to take part in my research. Eventually, thirteen teachers in total agreed to participate. I picked three of them to participate in a pilot study which I conducted and ten of them agreed to participate in the main study. Unfortunately, two of the participants of the main study had to withdraw because of their personal circumstances and I could only find one replacement. Therefore, in the end, the pilot study was conducted with three participants and the main study was conducted with nine participants. These teachers teach general English for adults in different language institutes and their students are from different nationalities. Table 3.1 illustrates the details of the participants.

Table 3.1: Main Study Participants

Participant	Nationality	Qualification	Teaching experience
Teacher1	Spanish	MA in TESOL	6 years
Teacher2	Greek	MA in TESOL	10 years
Teacher3	Egyptian	MA in TESOL	11 years
Teacher4	Yemeni	Trinity TESOL teacher education	5 years
Teacher5	Iraqi	DELTA (Diploma in TESOL)	6 years
Teacher6	Spanish	CELTA teaching certificate	10 years
Teacher7	Kenyan	BA in ELT	3 years
Teacher8	Dutch	CELTA teaching certificate	7 years
Teacher9	Polish	CELTA teaching certificate	10 years

3.5 Data collection procedures

It is obvious that different methods are required to obtain answers to the research questions. In qualitative research, various types of data collection methods exist and researchers choose their data collection methods depending on the type of their research questions and the nature of their studies. In my study, in order to collect in-depth data, I used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. I explain both of these methods in the following sections.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interview was chosen as one of the data collection methods in this research to explore the teachers' perceptions. This method enabled me to communicate and interact with my participants and elicit meanings from their conversations. According to Wellington, the interview technique is a suitable method to investigate and elicit unobservable things such as participants' feelings, thoughts, and intentions (2015). As the purpose of interviewing is to prompt different perspectives, it implies that there is not only one established truth but that there are "multiple truths in social situations" (Wellington, 2015, p.71).

As May (2011) points out, there are different types of interviews. Structured interviews are where the researcher uses closed questions. This type of interview is more like a question and answer session rather than a conversation. Semi-structured interview is another type of interview in which researchers use pre-determined questions but at the same time they are ready to ask any other question which arises as the conversation goes on. The other type of interview is an unstructured interview where researchers use open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviewing is an approach that was planned for my study. This approach has been considered as the most valuable approach since it includes a question list or interview guide, the interview is more controlled by the interviewer and at the same time the interviewee has also enough flexibility to direct the interview as well. In this approach, the interviewer might change the

structure of the checklist or guidelines during the interview depending on the responses and interactions (Wellington, 2015). In addition, semi-structured interviews help researchers generate extensive data from participants through asking self-arising and additional questions (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

Focus group discussions and questionnaires were other data collection methods that I considered but thinking about their advantages and disadvantages, I chose individual interviews. Focus group and interview, as Harrell and Bradley (2009) agree, both can be appropriate methods to provide in-depth data that might be useful. In both methods the interviewer has a chance to ask more questions directly or to ask for clarification if there is an uncertainty or a part of their response is not clear. In the interview, the interviewer can ask the respondents to elaborate more on an emphasis but it may not be possible in a focus group since not all the respondents share the same emphasis (Harrell and Bradley, 2009). Misleading also can happen in focus group discussions quite frequently since the interviewer has less control of the discussion. In addition, for the comfort of my participants, I asked them to determine a place for the interview and I attended in their suggested places. In a focus group, however, all the participants have to gather in one place which might not be convenient or desirable for some of them.

Using a questionnaire was another option which I considered. Intercultural competence is a new and complicated concept and I supposed that many teachers might not be familiar with the terminology. In order to explain to them precisely that what it means, I would have to be involved in the process and be careful to avoid any misinterpretations. Some scholars describe interview as conversation between the scholar and participant on a topic of interest (May, 2011). This way of understanding interviews suggests that the interview provides an opportunity for an interaction between the scholar and a participant about different issues to gain understanding into the subject to be researched (Wellington, 2015). A questionnaire,

however, does not give this opportunity to the researcher. According to Sudman and Bradburn (1982) some questions may not be clear and ambiguous at the time and also the participants might not express their attitudes and feelings because of the time limit and lack of effort.

The interview has been perceived as a qualitative method which is usually utilised to gather extensive data from participants. Interviews can provide in-depth details about some of the questions raised since "[i]nterviews have a higher response rate than questionnaires because participants get more involved and motivated" (Cohen et al., 2003, p.269). Another advantage of the interview is that through an interview a researcher may investigate further ideas and points which had not been quite clear to him/her during the observation process (Kelliny, 1994). Researchers adopt the method of interview in order to gather in-depth information about the interviewee's points of view through interpreting and analysing the meaning of the interviewee's expressed or shared ideas, values, feelings, behaviours and experiences of the world (Anyan, 2013; May, 2011).

On the other hand, similar to all the other data collection methods, the use of interviews has its own disadvantages and it has also been criticised. Utilising interviews mainly means including a small number of participants in the study (Creswell, 2007). Having a small group of participants along with the diversity in the participants' viewpoints make it hard or even impossible for the researcher to generalise the findings of the study (Creswell, 2007). In addition, as the number of participants are few, the researcher needs to have lengthy conversations with the interviewees to generate enough data. Therefore, interview has been considered as a very time consuming technique. This method has also been criticised for the excessive dependency of the researcher on participants' words (Pierre and Jackson, 2014). It has been argued that researchers usually try to emphasise too much the participants' expressions and statements. According to Pierre and Jackson, through this method, participants' words are usually considered as "the foundation of knowledge" or as the absolute

truth (2014, p.715). However, considering the pros and cons of all the data collection methods, I believe interview is the most suitable technique for my study as I explained before. I prepared a list of questions and took the list to my interviews. I tried to ask all the questions from the participants but the order of the questions were different from one interview to another since the participants' answers determined the direction of the interviews. Different participants provided different answers and different unpredictable questions arose from their answers. Each interview took approximately between 45 minutes to one hour and all the interviews were voice recorded using my iPad.

Having explained my first data collection method, I explain my choice of observations as the second method of collecting data for this study in the next section.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation has been defined as,

> [a] research method that enables researchers to systematically observe and record people's behaviour, actions and interactions. The method also allows researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people's behaviour within their socio-cultural context (Hennink et al., 2013, p.170).

In addition, according to Cohen et al. (2003), observation helps the researcher to observe and record the participants' practice and behaviour directly rather than relying only on their self-report. Observation assists researchers with seeing "things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.306). I believe classroom observations were needed for my study as one of its aims is to explore the practical aspect of intercultural competence which includes relevant activities and tasks that might be embedded in the classroom practices. The activities and tasks that are relevant to develop learners' intercultural competence might

not always be included consciously. What teachers stated over the interviews helped me understood whether or not they have included these activities consciously for the purpose of boosting the students' intercultural competence. In addition, the current and existing literature lacks sufficient suggestions and guidelines for teachers to consciously practise intercultural competence in their lessons. Analysing the data I collected from observations has helped me to categorise some activities and practical plans to present to teachers and to contribute to the literature.

I observed some of the lessons of the teachers who participated in my study. The purpose of the observations was mainly to explore what actually happens in the classroom regarding the integration of intercultural competence. Therefore, I attended (after securing teachers' permission) sessions in various English language institutes and observed how non-native English language teachers deal (if they do) with culture and if they use the sort of activities that develop students' intercultural competence. Once the participants gave permission, I arranged with them, either by email or telephone call, a mutually convenient time for me to attend and observe some of their English classes. The average number of observation sessions was five sessions with their permission. Each session was between 1:30 to 2 hours. I describe the type of my classroom observation as non-participant observation. As Hennink et al. describe this kind of observation, it is "conducting an observation without participating in the activities that you are observing. In order to do this you often observe people, activities or events from a distance, so that you are not part of the situation you are observing" (2013, p.185). I did not engage in the classroom activities as I wanted to concentrate fully on observing the whole lesson rather than making myself busy with doing tasks.

Similar to all other methods, observation also has weaknesses. One of them is the distraction that the presence of a researcher can cause (Cohen et al., 2003). As Patton (2002) points out, it has been argued that the presence of the researcher in a setting that is being studied might

influence the people who are being observed which might cause them to behave differently. Therefore, researchers should be cautious about the influence of their presence in the environment (Hennink et al., 2013). I did not use any device for recording the sessions since this might have caused more distraction. I tried my best to be as neutral as possible by making less eye contact with the teacher and keeping myself busy by taking notes. I felt that after the first two sessions, the teachers and the students got used to my presence but I am still not very sure about their actual feelings in this regard.

As Hennink et al. (2013) suggest, throughout my lesson observations, I identified an appropriate place to sit which was usually the back of the room and I tried my best not to cause any distractions by making unnecessary noises or movements. At the first session of observations the teachers introduced me to their students and they also explained to them why I was there. Some of the teachers assured their students that my research was about their teachers' practice and I was not there to evaluate the students' performances in the classroom. As Hatch (2002) suggests, I took notes while observing the classrooms. I tried not to be selective in taking notes. Therefore, in my field notes, I described the context and wrote down every single task, interaction and activity that happened. In addition, I took note of the setting observed and of any non-verbal language and feelings (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al., 2011). Based on my experience from the pilot study, being selective might not be helpful to collect all the relevant data. Certain activities that might not be relevant to the topic of the research, might be useful throughout the analysing and interpreting process. Based on this experience, I tried not to take anything in the classroom for granted and took note of whatever was happening. This made the process of coding and categorisation of data relatively hard and time consuming but I believe it was worth it. Moreover, I wrote down my reflections in field notes. According to Patton (2002), "field notes also contain the observer's own feelings, reactions to the experience, and reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what has been observed"

(Patton, 2002, p.303). Thus, I added my feelings and reflections to the field notes in order to describe and interpret each observation relevant to each participant.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Scholars are of the opinion that ethics and moral rules need to be considered by researchers at every stage of the process of research including the planning, data collection, data analysis, presenting data and findings, writing up and publicising any information about participants (May, 2011; Sikes and Piper, 2010). It is vital to understand ethical issues and to apply the related rules to protect the rights of those who participate in the study, the researcher and the sponsoring institution/s (May, 2011). I, as a researcher, spent time thinking carefully about and assembling the ethical issues related to this study in accordance with the standards recommended by the University of Sheffield. I was aware that any unethical action throughout my study could have risked its reliability. Therefore, to make my principles of procedures binding and known, the participants of my study had to agree to the principles before the study started. I was aware that my participants needed to be mindful about their rights (Hopkins, 1985). For this purpose, I applied to request permission for my study from the University of Sheffield. My ethics application form included detailed information about my topic, research questions, methodology, methods and participants. In addition, I explained in the form that I was aware that ethical considerations in relation to my study were necessary. I stated in the form that I would definitely act in accordance with the advised standard by the university. I also attached a copy of my information sheet and consent form to my ethics application. Accordingly, my study was approved by the University's Ethical Committee (Appendix B).

After my study was ethically approved by the university, the next stage was recruiting participants as I explained earlier. I sent my information sheet to my participants through email. Even though my information sheet was comprehensive, I also explained to the participants

about the ethical considerations of my study in an introductory meeting and asked them to sign

the consent form. I reassured them that their participation was entirely voluntary and they could

withdraw at any time. In addition, I made sure that they knew their names would not be

publicised anywhere and their recorded voices and any collected data from their lessons would

be kept completely confidential and anonymous (Verma and Mallick, 1999). As I needed to

observe some of their lessons, perhaps the biggest challenge was to reassure them that my role,

as a researcher, was not judging, assessing or evaluating the performance of the teachers and

the students. I needed to convince them that the study's aim was to explore the understanding

of the teachers involved and there would not be any judgment of or inspecting the quality of

teaching or learning. I also reminded them of the significance of honesty in answering interview

questions to ensure the research validity (Verma and Mallick, 1999).

3.7 The pilot study

I carried out a pilot study for this research. A definition for a pilot study can be: "The checking

of the procedures to be used in a study to see that there are no problems" (Wilson and Sapsford,

2006, p.103). Dörnyei (2007) points out that the research process is like a theatre performance.

A research study also needs a rehearsal to ensure success in the main study. He explains that,

although a pilot study does not guarantee success, carrying it out will increase the chances of

success. Conducting a pilot study is important as it helps the researcher to amend and revise, if

necessary, the research methods to see if they can be used as they are or in an adjusted form.

The participants in my pilot study were three non-native English language teachers. One of

them was from Kenya and had been teaching English for adults in a UK School. She had been

in the UK for three years but was trained in Kenya. The other participant was Polish. He had

spent most of his life in Poland and Canada and moved to the UK recently. He was teaching

English in the Polish community and he also carried out some one-to-one teaching sessions.

He also taught in a UK College. The third participant was from Holland. She was Dutch and

had been teaching English in a UK College/ ESOL department. She had been in the UK for around five years. The design of the pilot study was to carry out an interview with each participant and observe their lessons for one month. I observed around 3 sessions of each teacher during one month.

Despite the efforts I made in simplifying the purpose of the research and even the title, still at the beginning of the interview the participants were not really clear about it. It was predictable because the term 'culture' itself is not easy to define. I tried not to use technical terms such as 'intercultural competence' and I tried to explain by giving some usual and everyday life examples. However, I still felt that my interview questions were not focused enough. I had to rethink about the interview questions for the main study and tried to make them clearer.

Another experience that I gained through the pilot was that some of their responses did not really match their practice in the classroom. For example, one of the teachers emphasised the point that the focus is always language in her class and she never involved culture since she felt her students did not need it. However, when we continued discussing, she said she usually asks her students to talk or to write about their national or religious ceremonies. In one of the lessons that I observed, she mentioned some examples of different ways of addressing people by her students and some other examples. At this point, I noticed that she included cultural content without consciously knowing. That is the reason I think observations are important. From this experience, I considered undertaking two interviews and one set of observations between the interviews. However, this did not always happen as some of the participants did not show interest in having another interview and some of them mentioned that they would be away for holidays. However, as I changed my interview questions to more focused and in-depth, and after I did the data analysis and interpretations, I was able to build a logical connection between the interview results and the observations and make sense of the existing mismatches between what the teachers expressed in the interview and what they were

practising in their lessons. Chapter Four presents and discusses the results thoroughly. The next section is dedicated to the method and procedure of data analysis.

3.8 Data analysis

This section discusses the way I analysed the collected data from my interviews and observations. As Goodson and Sikes (2001) assert, "analysis is about making sense of, or interpreting, the information and evidence that the researcher has decided as data" (p.34). In order to interpret and make sense of the collected data, a researcher needs to break down "a topic or object into its component parts and understand how those parts fit together" (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p.10). However, before I start explaining the process of my data analysis, I believe it is necessary to explain how I approached my data. According to Dewey, data can be approached in two ways, deductive or inductive (1997). The following sub-section discusses these two approaches and my own standpoint in this regard.

3.8.1 Inductive and deductive approaches

According to Elo and Kyngäs (2007), in deductive approaches, scholars start with a theory about the subject of their studies and then they narrow it down into assumptions or hypothesis to be examined. In this approach, themes do not arise from the collected data but they emerge from previously set research questions, existing theories and the researcher's experiences (Given, 2008). In contrast, inductive approaches are concerned about developing theories and conclusions through generating data from the field (Trochim and Donnelly, 2006). The inductive approach has been suggested by numerous scholars (e.g., Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It has been seen "as the best approach … an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit and work" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.3). The inductive approach enables researchers to demonstrate that a particular theory fits an empirical setting and it is comprehensible to everyone.

The nature of my study was exploratory which means I tended to adopt an inductive approach. This is observable in the types of research questions and also in the data collection methods that I selected. I interviewed teachers and I observed their lessons in order to explore their attitudes rather than eliciting data from literature and existing theories. However, I should not deny the fact that I began my fieldwork after I reviewed literature. This means the existing literature has obviously affected and even helped me both during my data collection process and during analysing the data. Basically, the theoretical background of a researcher forms a part of the researcher's worldview (Charmaz, 1996) and it cannot be neglected. Strauss and Corbin mention this point as one of the weaknesses and limitations of the inductive approach as although researchers might want to conduct an inductive approach, they do not start their research with no theoretical knowledge (1998). While I was coding the scripts and through the process of building up my themes, I realised that a huge amount of the ideas presented by my participants had already been mentioned in previous studies. In addition, I noticed that while coding the data I could link them to the literature that I had already reviewed. For example, I found out that the components of Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence are directly linkable to the classroom tasks and activities that I observed. However, this does not mean that I deductively approached my study as that was not my intention. When I started my fieldwork, I tried not to have any assumptions, not to rely too much on what I had read previously and not to prove or disprove any existing theory. Furthermore, I was extremely welcoming of new insights that I had never encountered in the literature.

Having explained my adopted approach with respect to dealing with data, I explain the procedure of my data analysis in the following section.

3.8.2 Data analysis method

Even though there are many ways of analysing data, content analysis is often a common and appropriate method to analyse data in qualitative studies. Mayring (2000 cited in Kohlbacher, 2006) suggests a definition for qualitative content analysis which is:

> [a]n approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification (p.8).

Content analysis has been perceived as a method of analysis which is step-by-step, theme-by-theme and systematic. This method can be used to analyse data collected using different methods including interviews and observations to identify the frequency of themes and their related patterns within a group of people who participated in a study (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007). As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, in my study, the analysis of the collected data was reflective and interpretive. In addition, the findings of the analysis were categorised under themes. In my analysis, I tried to adhere to the following definition of this kind of theme-based content analysis.

> Theme-based content analysis is a qualitative method that provides useful, detailed information about user opinions or behaviour, and can also provide general indications of results in the user population by the grouping of data into meaningful categories (Neale and Nichols, 2001, p.167).

I transcribed my interview recordings and I re-wrote my field notes from observations to make them tidier and then I started to organise and code the data. I found transcribing and rewriting the field notes helpful as it helped me to listen to my interviewees and to read the notes several times. This stage has been called 'familiarising with data' by Yin (2011). According to Yin, analysts at this stage familiarise themselves with their transcriptions and notes through reading

the notes and listening to the recorded data numerous times (2011). Even though familiarising with my data was happening to some extent right from the beginning of my field work while observing classrooms and while speaking to my participants, this stage officially started once I began to listen to the participants' recorded voices and read my field notes. Along with familiarising with my data, this stage helped me get more involved with the collected data. I believe I began to think about codes and emerging themes while listening, reading and reviewing my scripts. According to Braun and Clarke, "[i]t is a good idea to start taking notes or making ideas for coding that you will then go back to in subsequent phases" (2006, p.17). Thus, this was one of the crucial and exciting stages of my study as I started to engage with my participants' voices and actions, and elicit meanings from what they had uttered and what they had done.

Once I had finished transcribing and had developed some ideas which captured interesting meanings, I began to code, organise and categorise the data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.56), coding means "…attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval". Generating codes is probably the untidiest stage of the whole process of data analysis as I identified many codes. Most of these codes were relevant to the research questions and the main aim of the study, whereas a few other codes appeared to be signifying an independent pattern.

To begin with, I created categories which were drown from my research questions. These categories assisted me with being more organised and helped me to have a framework for my analysis in order to stay focused and not to diverge too far from the aims of the study. For instance, one of my categories was 'The concept of culture in relation to English language teaching'. This was drawn from my first research question. Having this category, I looked at my participants' responses regarding their definitions of culture in relation to their teaching practices. I coded the relevant parts which also included differentiating and combining the data

along with reflections that I made. Continuous thinking and reading about the emerged ideas and codes, I was able to group the codes depending on their relevance to each other or their meaningfulness together in order to come up with themes. For example, for the above-mentioned category, the themes were, culture as transferable facts, modes of thought, two-way belief and skills.

I initially decided to use Nvivo as software to assist me with categorising and suggesting the emerging themes. However, I soon realised that even if I used the software, I had to go through the data myself to double check what the software had done and to make sure that the themes were correct. Therefore, I noticed that I could save time if I only used a highlighter to read the transcriptions and field notes several times and highlight the relevant, interesting and frequently mentioned parts. I tried to look for concepts and expressed ideas that were relevant to the topic of my study. I also annotated and wrote down some general notes on what made these expressions attractive, important and interesting (Bryman, 2012). As I explained earlier, it is obvious that at this stage, the analyst's theoretical, cultural and experiential backgrounds together with the research questions influences him/her point of view while coding the data (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Yin, 2011). Moreover, the researchers consciously or unconsciously use their already shaped perspectives to explore their participants' voices and attitudes.

The ultimate goal of my analysis was to come up with such themes that help me present and discuss my findings in the most appropriate way. A theme is defined by Bryman (2012) as a category highlighted by scholar through their collected data. This identification is mostly related to the researcher/s main focus and the research question/s. In addition, this identification of a category is built upon codes identified in scripts and field notes, and helps the analyst/s develop a foundation for a theoretical understanding of their data that can turn out to be their study's contribution to the current literature linking to the study's aims (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore, a theme could be explained as a category which is associated with the focus of the research and that most of the time is related to the research questions. In exploratory studies, some of the emerged themes might not be related to any of the research questions (Bryman, 2012). In this case, it is the researcher/s decision to choose how to deal with them. If they find these themes significant and important to the general topic of the research, they might decide to rethink the research questions or even amend them.

Even though counting the frequency of words has been mentioned as one of the helpful tools to determine a theme, I believe that qualitative analysis is concerned with understanding the importance and depth of the themes emerging from the fieldwork "rather than reduc[ing] the responses to quantitative categories" (Smith, 1995, p.10). In my study, I mainly focused on the richness of the points that my participants were making. I did consider how popular a certain idea was among my participants but I did not count how many times a certain word was mentioned as I believe concepts and ideas are more important than the expressed words. One participant might be in an absolute agreement with another participant but s/he might express it in a different way. Therefore, I could not rely on the number of repetitions of words which most of the software packages such as Nvivo suggest.

At the end of the final stage of my analysis, I was able to generate a set of themes and sub-themes from the collected and coded data. Table 3.2 demonstrates a sample from the theme generation stage that I went through. I reviewed the themes several times to make sure that each theme could stand by itself and be logically connected with the codes (Boyatzis, 1998), and not need to be developed, separated or combined with other themes. Accordingly, I was able to create categories and group all the similar themes and put them together in each category. Then I was able to link these categories to my research questions. Therefore, to address each of my research questions, I presented its relevant categories. The next chapter

consists of a full presentation and discussion of these categories. In general, I can summarise the process of my data analysis in the following five stages:

Stage 1: Transcribing interviews and organising observation field notes.

Stage 2: Annotating and selecting codes manually through highlighting the scripts.

Stage 3: Determining the ideas and themes, and counting frequencies.

Stage 4: Thinking about the codes, grouping them in order to establishing connections between them.

Stage 5: Building up themes and sub-themes.

Table 3.2. Sample Theme Generation

Question	Participants' responses	Codes	Theme
The place of culture in English language teaching	They (students) love talking about their backgrounds	Joyful lesson discussions	The relationship between learner motivation and culture
	Lessons are boring and uninteresting without discussing cultural matters	Avoiding demotivating learning atmosphere	
	They brighten up when you (teacher) give them a chance to talk about their countries	Pleasant learning experience	
	My (teacher) main objective is to make the lesson personal to them (Students)	Personalised lessons are motivating	
	They (students) absolutely enjoy to write about special ceremonies in their countries	Personalised tasks are motivating	
	Students see the benefit of that (learning about British culture)	Purposeful learning is inspiring	
	They communicate better if the topic is cultural	Enhancing student engagement	

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

As Seale (1999) points out, trustworthiness is concerned about seeking guidance to help with judging the quality of a qualitative study. Although the trustworthiness of qualitative research generally is questioned by positivists, some methodologists emphasise how qualitative researchers can integrate measures that deal with trustworthiness (Shenton, 2003). One such methodologist is Guba who proposes four criteria that he believes should be considered (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). These four elements are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Transparency is also another factor that has been emphasised by other scholars. Below I discuss each of these criteria.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Shenton (2003), the qualitative researcher's credibility mainly deals with the question of "How congruent are the findings with reality?" (p.64). Ensuring credibility is one of the most vital aspects in founding trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Credibility refers to "the extent to which a document is sincere and undistorted" (Wellington, 2015, p.214). According to Lincoln and Guba (1989), in qualitative research, credibility is established when the researcher makes the realities that have been constructed in the interpretation of the collected data match the constructed realities of the participants of the study. Similarly, Robson (2002) explains that the information the scholar offers on the methods utilised for gathering the data and their justification support the credibility of the results. In my study, to ensure establishing credibility, I sought advice from my supervisor and my colleagues and asked them to review my chapters about the methods employed and my findings. In addition, I sent my transcriptions to my participants and asked them to read them and confirm that the transcripts included correct information about them and that their expressions had been recorded correctly.

3.9.2 Transferability

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), transferability is concerned about identifying whether a study's conclusion may be generalised beyond the specific context of the research study. It means transferability deals with whether or not the findings of a study is transferable from the condition that the study has been conducted to a different condition. For example, my study was conducted in the UK and the participants were non-native speakers of English who teach English in the UK. For my study, transferability is concerned about determining whether the findings might be applicable in a different context of English language teaching. I believe this is not easy to do and it might be rather critical as my sample size was small and each of my participants was from a different background and their educational levels were also different. As Patton (2002) asserts, transferability involves the idea that the results of the research might be contextualized and important in the setting that the study was done. Particularly in qualitative studies it is usually not possible to transfer the results to a different environment at a different time as qualitative researchers often tend to attain findings that might be valid only in a particular time and particular place (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Hammond and Wellington, it is the scholar's job to offer an in-depth explanation to the readers to help them evaluate and decide whether or not the findings are transferable and applicable in a different context (2013).

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is about stability and consistency in the process of the research. Being careless or making mistakes in conceptualising the research, gathering the data, interpreting the collected data and reporting results are all parts of assessing dependability. In any study, sufficient justification for selecting participants and occasions to interview and observe should be presented. The more consistent the study is, the more dependable the findings are. A major

technique for assessing dependability is to see if the researcher has kept a full record of all the stages of the process of research including recruitment of participants, interview transcriptions, observation field notes, data analysis, and documents related to the ethics in an accessible manner (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, I have kept all the mentioned documents in the forms of hard copy and soft copy, and I have more than one copy from each document. In addition, I have tried my best to include sufficient reasons and justifications in my thesis about all my choices from the beginning of the research journey until the end of it. I have also attached the relevant documents in the appendices.

3.9.4 Conformability

Conformability is about indicating that a researcher's theoretical preferences and personal values do not manifestly influence the study (Bryman, 2012). I should confess that being totally objective is not possible but I tried my best not to allow my personal ideas and standpoints to affect me while I was interviewing the participants, observing their classrooms or analysing the data to present their voices (Bryman, 2012). To ensure conformability, I planned to go back to my participants, discuss the findings of the study and check my interpretations with them. This is what Bryman (2012) calls 'member checking'. He believes member checking "is a process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he or she has conducted research with an account of his or her findings" (2012, p.391). However, I was not able to do this with all my participants due to their unavailability. In this regard, I also found it greatly helpful to have someone else such as my supervisor and a colleague to read my findings to evaluate and provide feedback on my analysis of the data.

3.9.5 Transparency

One of the main factors for ensuring trustworthiness is transparency (Yin, 2011; Flick, 2007) Transparency is about making the study accessible for other people. Researchers should

provide the opportunity for others to read their work. This is because of the fact that one of the key purposes of research, particularly a PhD, is to contribute to knowledge and not sharing the work with others prevents that from happening. In addition, researchers should demonstrate to their readers how they progressed their study and how they obtained the results and drew conclusions. This transparency in presenting research might contribute to raising the quality of the research. Furthermore, presenting in conferences, seminars, workshops or on any other occasions can also be a way of certifying transparency.

Therefore, I have intended to provide thorough explanations about the procedure of my study in order to meet the above-mentioned factors to secure trustworthiness. All five chapters of my thesis have aimed at detailing every step in my research from the initial planning to the writing up stage. I hope that readers have been given sufficient and clear information about the whole process of my study.

3.10 Summary

This chapter provided justifications for my choices of qualitative approach, an interpretivist paradigm, data collection methods and data analysis method. I explained that I used a cluster of sampling techniques to identify and recruit nine participants to take part in this study. I adopted semi-structured interviews with my main participants and observed some of their sessions. The chapter discussed the process of manual content analysis of the data from the interview transcription and observation field notes. In addition, I explained the issues related to qualitative educational research. These issues include research ethics and trustworthiness, and I discussed that trustworthiness contains five main elements of credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and transparency. I also explained how I addressed these issues in each phase of my study.

The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

As explained in the previous chapters, as a means of gaining deeper insight into English language teachers' understanding and attitudes towards the concept of culture and intercultural competence, this study aimed at finding out to what extent intercultural competence plays an active role in English language teaching. In order to achieve this aim, I proposed four research questions:

1) How do some non-native English language teachers understand the relationship between culture and language in their English language teaching practices?

2) To what extent do teachers acknowledge the term 'intercultural competence'?

3) Regardless of (2), to what extent do teachers integrate 'intercultural competence' into their English language teaching practices?

4) What problems do teachers identify that could be construed as related to the inclusion of intercultural competence?

In the previous chapters, I have introduced the research aims, objectives, relevant literature, my methodological approach and research design. In this chapter, I present findings from the analysis of the data gathered through interviews and observations. I address the research questions drawing on the findings of the study and discuss the findings in relation to the literature review of the previous studies. The findings have been categorised into themes. For each section I give some examples from the fieldwork to support the findings.

The findings of the study are presented and discussed drawing on the conceptual framework that I described at the end of the literature review chapter. The main concept of this framework

is teacher attitude as the main focus of the study is exploring how teachers think, feel and behave with regard to including intercultural competence. These three elements which construct teacher attitude are not distinguished in this chapter but they are all embedded in each section of the chapter. The teachers' beliefs and feelings have mainly been explored through the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and their behaviours are mainly explored through observing their teaching practices and their chosen materials. As the analytical framework suggests, to explore their attitude, the main themes generally focus on their understandings of and practices about the concept of culture, its place in English language education, intercultural communication challenges, the role of English language teaching in tackling with the challenges and their teaching approaches.

4.2 The concept of culture in relation to English language teaching

The first research question was developed since intercultural competence deals with communication between cultures. In order to explore how the participants of this study define culture for language education and how they understand the place of culture in their teaching practices, firstly, it was crucial to unpick the notion of culture itself and find out how it was predominantly being understood and described by them. The teachers' definition of culture was one of the first interview questions in order to see how these practitioners perceive the term. In addition, to understand the place of culture in English language teaching from a practical angle, it is primarily important to study the relationship between language and culture particularly within the context of language education. The participants' responses to the interview questions relevant to the first research question and also the relevant data collected from classroom observations are addressed under two main categories each of which is discussed under certain themes. The first category is 'the teachers' understanding of the concept of culture' and the second one is 'the teachers' understanding of the place of culture in English language teaching'. About the first category, the collected data suggest that teachers'

understanding of the concept of culture could be analysed under four main themes; namely, culture as transferable facts, culture as skill, culture as a two- way belief and culture as modes of thought. It is also important to mention that I present and discuss the participants' viewpoints about the concept of culture in relation to their language practices which is the main focus of this study. Below I explain each of these along with their relative sub-themes thoroughly.

4.2.1 Transferable facts

The responses to the questions on how the participants define the term 'culture' reveal that although the participants' immediate response was around concrete elements of culture, most of them related to a much broader use of the term during the conversation. It was hardly surprising that some of them agreed it is a difficult and highly complex notion and most of them said culture is basically '*everything*'. Different aspects were included in the participants' responses and their views were pretty similar. Assembling all of their definitions, I tried to distinguish a general orientation within each respondent towards different viewpoints and I came up with the four already mentioned themes, one of which is the aspects of culture that could be transferred. Perceiving culture as transferable facts involves a vast range which mainly includes objective knowledge about the world. It has also been called as 'transmissible facts' by Byram (1994) and as 'factual knowledge' by Larzén-Östermark (2008). Behaviourist anthropology in Robinson's (1985) categorisation is also connected to the transferable facts about a culture. My respondents' viewpoints illustrated different understandings of the concept of culture as transferable facts. This variety in their definitions could be explained by drawing on the following sub-themes that emerged from the collected data: general knowledge about the UK and cultural products.

4.2.1.1 Information about countries

The most dominant viewpoint of the participants involved remarking culture as materially manifested objects that can be transferred to learners. From what can be elicited from the participants' definitions of culture, knowledge about the country they currently live in involves facts about its history, geography, religion and political conditions. It can additionally include folkloristic features such as traditions and ways of life which are essential parts of culture. The participants also referred to daily life in England with all its special habits and routines such as school, work, leisure-time activities and family life. They tended to describe this feature by mentioning many items such as different festivals, traditions, customs, clothes and food. For example:

> *I would say culture is traditions, customs, the life style of specific community, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the money they use...* (Teacher 4)

Linking this aspect of culture to the participants' viewpoints about including its relevant elements in their language teaching practices, most respondents agreed that in order to be fluent in one language, it is necessary to learn about the social context of that language. For example, Teacher 3 expressed her view as below:

> *I think speaking a certain language means that you are associated and linked to a particular culture. I think definitely if you speak a language you have to be familiar with that culture, so, for example if I want to learn French, I think it would be impossible to learn French without knowing a little bit about French culture for example. If you want to immerse yourself in that language and actually pick up the skills to be fluent in that language, you need to learn a little bit about people of that language, background of the people who speak that language because there are a lot of social rules that are associated with that language.* (Teacher 3)

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This extract demonstrates that Teacher 3 understood the strong connection between language and culture, and she believed that learning a new language cannot be isolated from its associated culture. However, learning about a culture in her point of view is about gaining information about the country in which the language is dominantly being used. I suppose she was referring to the national culture of France when she was talking about the relationship between language and culture. Nevertheless, her point might not be relevant to those who learn to speak French somewhere out of France. In other words, there are people who learn French to use it in other countries where French is one of the dominant languages, such as some countries in Africa (eg. Senegal) or in America (e.g. Canada), and they might not be keen on learning French national culture.

Furthermore, I believe '*French culture'* is a broad and complicated term; however, this participant narrowed it down to '*background of the people'* and '*social rules'* which include transferrable information about general social rules in France. Even though the status of French in the world is different from English, this teacher gives this example to declare that in order to be able to live in a country, the national dimension of its culture should be learned. The teachers tended to discuss various topics in this regard ranging from English food to the history of the UK, present and past political situations and many other topics. These discussions are relatable to cultural information about England which are on the surface of the cultural iceberg (Hall, 1976 cited in Dignen and Chamberlain, 2009) as discussed in the Literature Review (see section 2.3.1) and they were either directed by the textbooks or by other classroom materials. My classroom observations also indicated that there were references to the life in UK in most of the sessions. For example, 'British weather' was a popular topic in some of the lessons. In one of the interesting sessions, the topic was 'Talking about weather'. There was a text in the textbook '*Don't know what to say? Talk about weather'*. The reading was in the textbook (*English File*) which was being followed in the lesson. Figure 4.1 is the text:

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Figure 4.1: Talking about whether

The teacher asked the students: 'Have you noticed that English people talk about weather quite often?'

Some of the students: Yes

The teacher: Do you know why?

The teacher, after the students said no: Research shows 94% of British people admit to having talked about the weather in the past six hours. It means weather is a very popular

topic in most English conversations but nobody exactly knows why. Read the text now

and answer the questions on section c (Extract from field note, 15 November, 2015).

As it is evident from the above-mentioned exercise, the main focus is on the context of England and how British people use the topic of weather in their interactions. The tasks also require students to talk about their own countries too. Sections 'a' and 'f' in Figure 4.1 ask students to compare the given subject with their home countries. In this kind of exercise, British culture is considered as the target culture to be taught by teachers and learned by students. These tasks provide information about England and how it is or is not different with the students' country.

Another example from the classroom observations would be a discussion around 'sports'. A couple of the participants referred to sports as part of the cultural landscape. They mentioned that they have some sports in their countries which are unknown to the rest of the world or have been localised. Similarly, there are some sports that originated in the UK and not many people from other countries were aware of them. In one of the lessons, the students were supposed to read short texts in the classrooms. One of these texts was about 'cricket'. This sport was unfamiliar to some of the learners. The teacher started to explain that cricket was invented in England and it is an important sport for a lot of people in this country. He also explained that cricket is a symbol of 'fairness' to British people. He said: '*if someone charges you too much in a shop, you may say it is not cricket*'. In this lesson the teacher tried to introduce local sports to the students. As is clear, the topic is objective. All the teacher does in this case is transmitting information to the students about the place they live. Some of the participants also made the point that this aspect of culture is manageable and easier to include in their teaching than addressing other aspects that they did not feel comfortable around or did not know how to address in their teaching practices. As one of the teachers declared:

Here we focus on British culture a little bit because we are in the UK. And I found it more manageable. When I was in France it was English as an international language and it was too broad. So it was too difficult. (Teacher 1)

This extract illustrates that apparently Teacher 1 thought English language education in the UK perceives the status of English more as a national language of the country than an international language which is being used all over the world. Therefore, the national culture of England is a part of teaching English whereas in other countries such as France, the global status of English is being appreciated more and accordingly cultural dimensions are not clear and easy to be identified and integrated in the lessons. Spiro (2013) also agrees with Teacher 1 that the advantage of this approach is that, "it is easy to teach, as it tends to reinforce rather than to challenge and critique cultural stereotypes" (p.194). However, being easy to teach does not mean it is adequate. In most cases, what individuals need is a deeper analysis of the cultural events in order to be able to be more engaged with the given intercultural situations. In this respect, overall, the participants of my study may still need to adopt more critical approaches.

Moreover, while the participants included the national culture of England in their definitions of culture, they also indicated that they face restrictions in this regard as they are not originally from the UK. Their perceptions indicate that as they have not been brought up in England, they do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable or confident regarding teaching cultural elements of British culture. The following participant provided an example in this respect:

I tell you something funny. Before last Christmas all the other classes had some activities relevant to Christmas. They were reading or watching something about Christmas and its history and celebration or something. I remember my colleagues read A Christmas Carol for the whole week with their students, They watched a documentary about history of Christmas cards, one of them organised a Christmas card workshop, you know, things

like that. My class was the most boring class that week. I think my students were bored too. We did nothing different. I was also embarrassed when a student of mine asked about history of Christmas card and I didn't have a clue. I had never been curious or even interested in these things you know and I was surprised how interested my students were, even my Muslim students. (Teacher 4)

According to Llurda (2004), English language teachers used to be considered as ambassadors of British or American culture but this way of thinking should be changing now as it is not wise, practical and realistic. The globalness of English should gradually be acknowledged. Teachers should not be expected to know everything about British or American culture. Regarding the above-mentioned extract, I believe the problem might not be that Teacher 4 did not have enough information about Christmas. The problem is possibly about his being 'embarrassed' for not having this information. This illustrates the point that teachers themselves may have not yet fully accepted that they should not act as an ambassador of any foreign culture as this kind of attitude can affect their self-image. This problem is more significant when English teachers are non-native speakers of English as non-native English teachers often think themselves to be "in an unfavourable position compared to native speaker teachers concerning their non-ideal language ability and cultural knowledge" (Gonzalez, 2016, p. 461). Takahashi (2014) also asserts that non-native English teachers often feel anxious in certain situations, particularly when they want to handle pupil questions or when they want to answer culture-related questions. I discuss this more thoroughly in section 4.8 where I expand upon 'non-native English teachers'. In the following section, I continue presenting and discussing data about perceiving culture as transferable facts.

4.2.1.2 Cultural products

Some of the respondents included art, film, music and heritage conservation in their definitions of culture. They mainly referred to these elements in association with English-speaking countries and particularly England. Some of them explained that their students needed this information as they might have to take part in a citizenship exam or they needed to know about cultural products of the place they are living in. In addition, some of the participants mentioned that based on their experience these sorts of information are attractive for their students. Cultural products of a nation are usually categorised in large C culture (Doyé, 1999) which has already been described in the Literature Review chapter (see section 2.3.1). The participants were aware that these elements are only part of the extensive notion of culture. Artefacts (including any sort of artistic works) are concrete and tangible products unlike a lot of other aspects of culture. The interviewees believed that film and music could attract the learners' interest and they could be used in order to create a dynamic and interesting learning environment for the students. This illustrates that the teachers are aware of the effect of some aspects of culture in the learning process and they are ready to include these aspects in their lessons. For instance, Teacher 2 stated:

> *You know art is all around us. Art in its different forms creates very good opportunities*
>
> *in classrooms for group discussions and lesson activities and all that.* (Teacher 2)

In the same vein, another teacher declared:

> *I use pictures, static pictures, comics, movies. If they have some basic English, I show*
>
> *them a movie. Something is said in the movie usually a dialogue and I stop it and ask*
>
> *them ok, what was said, why was it said like this, what is the situation, what did this*
>
> *person say to the other. What was the reason to say that? All these kinds of questions and*
>
> *answers. Of course it helps a lot because people start to think which is the main purpose*

of teaching but of course it is limited because there are not too many movies which could be used. Last week I showed them a movie called Back to Future. There were some elements of time. It worked very good. They enjoyed it very much. (Teacher 7)

On the other hand, one of the teachers (Teacher 9) stated that utilising cultural products in English language classrooms could assist their students in the process of learning English. This teacher believed that any cultural product such as movies, music and drawings might help the students linguistically and culturally; linguistically, because they can broaden their lexical, phonological and grammatical knowledge through listening and watching; and culturally, because they could start thinking about the target culture, understand some cultural elements which are not easily teachable and help them relate these elements to their own culture. This teacher concentrated a lot on creating a natural environment for the students to learn English. He believed it was only through art and media that the students could realise the details that can never be teachable. He explained that the process of learning English as a foreign language should attempt to imitate the process of learning a first language as much as possible and cultural products could assist them in this process. Although he admitted that it was difficult or even impossible for adults to acquire a foreign language as children acquire their first language, he strongly recommended teachers to use cultural products to create settings in their lessons which are as natural as possible:

They have to learn how to think in English. Give the students what they need. Let them see the pictures, hear the sounds. They will make the necessary connections. Teachers shouldn't think they know better. We can construct, build anything. Because I was taught in natural way, I can communicate with local people more easily... (Teacher 9)

Even though this teacher seems to go one step further by explaining about encouraging students to learn English autonomously by providing the context for them, his point of view could be

criticised as the approach he is suggesting seems to be unrealistic. Learning a foreign language as an adult similar to acquiring a mother tongue and thinking in English might be considered too idealistic. His point of view might be in agreement with Krashen (1988) who controversially believes that the second language should be acquired rather than learned. However, it has been argued that this objective is unrealistic and unnecessary (Alptekin, 2012; Kelleher, 2013). Kelleher (2013) points out that the learners' first language cannot be banned. He believes that banning the first language forces students to think in foreign language. However, it is unlikely that the majority of learners often think in the target language. In addition, in today's globalised world and considering the status of English, it is often unnecessary to ask students to think in English or to sound native. I discuss this thoroughly in other sections of this chapter. What is relevant here is that the participants of this study identified cultural products of England as one of the main sources of culture that they include in their teaching as manageable and teachable for teachers, and motivating and useful for students. I believe introducing cultural products of a culture might be beneficial for the students as they might be a starting point for them to think about the underlying values and beliefs of that culture. However, it still might not be sufficient for developing the capacity to negotiate between different cultures (Spiro, 2013).

To have successful intercultural communications, more extended perception about cultures is needed of which a large part might not be teachable through traditional language teaching methods. In the following section, I present more in-depth explanations around the topic of culture provided by some of my participants and what the classroom observations suggest in this regard. To do so, I have divided the related data into the two themes of 'culture as a mode of thought' and 'culture as a two-way belief'.

4.2.2 Modes of thought

Modes of thought are linked to the mental processes of people who share the same culture and are dissimilar to the other two categories which represent tangible and visible aspects of culture. This category can include beliefs, values and norms, including the way people live and behave (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). This aspect of culture is one of the themes which emerged as some of the participants of my study included these elements as part of their understanding of culture throughout all the interviews. For instance, one of the respondents defined culture as:

> *I suppose it is shared behaviour, shared knowledge. It is kind of the extension of your identity, how you think, how you integrate with other individuals in the society, the way you see the world.* (Teacher 7)

The elements in this category signify sociocultural knowledge and small-c culture as explained in the literature review chapter (section 2.3.1). These elements are not easily and physically tangible. They are more related to the individuals' mental structure and their acts and are associated with the fact that people of different cultures have significant differences in their values, beliefs, attitudes to time, life style and in many other ways and they gain them as matter of fact from their early years. As another participant (Teacher 3) emphasised in her definition:

> *Culture is the perspective that an individual brings to any social situation.* (Teacher 3)

This suggests that each individual has a particular attitude towards or way of thinking about everything in the world and that an individual transmits that particular way of thought to the contexts that s/he enters. How this type of transfer happens and how it affects intercultural communication is discussed extensively in the section 4.4.2. What is relevant here is that my participants included 'thoughts' and 'worldviews' in their definitions of culture which illustrates their insightfulness into the complexity of the concept of culture. One of the participants even related her view of culture as modes of thought to the factor of age. She

believes that it is more achievable to acquire a particular way of looking at the world when learning happens at younger ages:

...I think there is a connection with age maybe and the time when you are learning. So if you learn language when you are young when you are still absorbing your first language maybe you can also learn the culture more naturally and then you can sort of be a bilingual and bicultural compared to an adult who sort of has more education , more time that bring to set. Then learning a second language and a second culture. I think you are a little bit less receptive. So you have to make an effort to learn or even to understand others. (Teacher 7)

Age is an interesting factor that I found interesting and relatable; however, I am not able to elaborate much on it in this study as it was not referred to by other participants. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that some of the participants started to analyse the concept of culture more deeply which allows me to link their definitions to the approaches offered by scholars. For instance, Robinson (1985) refers to modes of thought as a cognitive approach as explained in the literature review (section 2.3.2). Larzén-Östermark (2008) also elaborates on modes of thought in his research and introduces it by highlighting a number of elements, such as values, norms and beliefs underlying the way people live and act. As 'modes of thought' is one of the important themes that the participants referred to and it is very useful in understanding the significance of intercultural competence, it is worth reiterating from the Literature Review chapter (section 2.3.2) that culture can function as 'mental software' for humans and plays an important role in developing people's ways of feeling, thinking, and acting (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Culture is learned and experienced by individuals in social institutions like the family and school (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It is basically the collective programming of the mind rather than individual as it is shared with people who have lived within the same social institution (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It distinguishes one group or category of

people from another. Looking at culture from this aspect is important for my study as having different ways of thinking or mind programming could be one of the main reasons for interpreting situations differently and this kind of different interpretation or misinterpretation could be the main reason for challenges in intercultural communication.

Another factor in this domain is changeability of culture. As mentioned, the participants linked culture to ways of thinking and behaving, and these particular ways of thinking and behaving might be affected by many elements throughout one's life. As this participant clearly explained:

> *Culture you have learned from being a child is going to change as the culture that you are in is affected by what is happening in other parts of the world. Of course this has changed a lot even in my life time, the amount of exchange of culture and the amount of contact which different people with different cultures have on each other. I think it is a developing situation and I think communication has made a lot of difference to that.*
>
> (Teacher 2)

Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009, p.59) describe culture as "the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next". This definition implies that culture is not a static notion. It changes through time and it is a dynamic and fluid concept, which distinguishes people from each other and allows them to self-identify. The kind of change and developing situation that the above-mentioned participant was talking about is more evident in today's globalised world as communication among people has increased. The fact that one's modes of thought are changeable and are capable of being affected is probably the reason that nowadays there is a concern that local cultures might be affected by more dominant cultures (e.g., American culture) which is not favourable to some people and societies. This is discussed more in section 4.4.1 of this chapter.

4.2.3 Culture as a two-way belief

A few participants provided more extensive explanation for culture in the sense that they perceived culture not only as knowledge about target culture, but also as acknowledging students' own cultures. They believe students' cultures should be stressed and treated as much as the target culture is considered. In other words, students' cultures and the target culture should essentially be related to each other equally. For example this teacher expressed:

I think in this centre there is a big focus on culture. Because it is like, it is like a community centre for a people from a lot of different countries with a lot of different languages and probably a lot of people are maybe immigrants. So I think the teachers here make a quite big emphasis on culture like how to take part in English culture and also sort of being aware of one's own culture and culture of other people. Like students Iranians, Brazilians, Pakistanis etc. all come together. So I think here there is a big emphasis on culture. (Teacher 4)

This extract suggests that Teacher 4 explicitly refers to the significance of the students' own cultures. He also thinks a conscious effort needs to be made to help students be more aware of their own culture and make mindful comparisons when they come across differences. Being aware of why people of the target culture speak or behave the way they do is perceived as important in order to enable learners to have deeper understandings of similarities and differences. As this teacher highlighted:

...but I don't just bring a cultural topic to class to discuss but in most of the cases it is embedded. Whatever we read is about English culture and then asks them to relate to their own culture or compare it with their own culture. (Teacher 7)

Based on this extract, Teacher 7 does not consider teaching of culture as a secondary goal. He does not distinguish teaching language from the teaching of culture. He thinks they both

go together and culture is embedded in all classroom tasks. Unlike some scholars who believe culture should be taught as the fifth skill in language lessons (Tomalin, 2008; Sarıgül and Ashton; 2005), none of my participants treated culture separately from the other four skills. The participants do not dedicate any session or any task solely to culture and they believe in every task they do there is a cultural issue to discuss. 'Teaching culture' as a discrete area, which is mentioned by many scholars (e.g., Seelye, 1988; Tomalin, 2008) as an important factor in foreign language education, was not supported by most of my participants. I also did not observe many tasks in the lessons which were particularly aimed at teaching culture. Instead, culture-related issues and discussions were constantly being raised and initiated mostly by the students and sometimes by the teachers. This is in line with what Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008) discuss. They assert that the four language skills help learners to communicate fluently and appropriately in the target language and culture. Thus, culture flowed through all language-related skills as "the design of most activities has considered all the skills conjointly, consistent with how people interact with each other in real life" (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2008, p.168).

About cultural issues that were being raised in the lessons, some of the teachers explained that some students might show reactions in the discussions related to cultural topics or they might become emotional. These participants link these reactions to the students' lack of awareness about differences and they believe the reactions could be softer if the students' knew more about each other:

Discussions are very important in the classroom. You may find some students who don't understand why things are different in different cultures. Or in some cases they might become vocal but it is not a big problem as long as they learn something out of the discussions. After a while you will see they know more about each other. (Teacher 1)

Similarly, another teacher also discussed raising cultural issues in the lessons in order to help students be aware of other cultures and be more insightful about their own. This participant mentioned that sometimes individuals might have an understanding of a foreign culture that is not necessarily correct. He believes there are good opportunities in his lessons to provoke discussions in order to help students understand that not all their perceptions about different cultures are right:

> *...the expectations that people have about the other culture, these expectations are formed by what you see on TV and what you read in books, it is about stereotypes. It is a misconception or false generalisation that you make about a group based on a single experience. I think in communications misunderstandings might happen. I raise these things in the classroom. Of course not most of the time but whenever it comes up, I focus on it.* (Teacher 4)

Regardless of what the teachers said across the interviews, in almost all the classrooms that I observed, comparison between cultures happened. The students were consistently making comparisons between their own cultures and their classmates' cultures or the culture presented in their textbooks. This was happening either through the teachers' conscious effort by providing a space for comparisons or through unintentional and self-guided discussions. Comparing and contrasting activities are one of the main activities to provoke intercultural competence. For example, in one of the lessons that I observed the topic was 'Family life'. There was a speaking task in the textbook about the topic through which students were supposed to work in small groups and discuss their opinions about five statements (as shown in Figure 4.2):

Figure 4.2: Speaking task about family life

This exercise appears to ask students to talk about their personal ideas; however, most students

referred back to their cultures while sharing their opinions. It was obvious that students were

coming across different viewpoints regarding family life and strong or weak family ties and

values. Some students were trying to compare Eastern and Western perspectives about family

life and some were surprised to realise how their information about family life in some

countries mismatches what their classmates from those countries were saying. For instance the

following conversation was between two students. One is Jordanian (A) and one Italian (B):

A: We don't leave parents' house until we get married. And some people live with parents

after marriage. Because we are very attach to the family. We love our family. I know in

US and Europe children leave their parents when they are 18.

B: Not all children leave in 18 in Italy. If you have a job, income, maybe yes but you don't

leave until you have money. I was 26 before I come to England, I was living with my mom.

I will live with her when I go to Italy. (Extract from Field notes, 10 December, 2015)

In this conversation, each of the students tried to be a representative of their cultures. They

both referred back to family values in their cultures but from different perspectives. One

student believes living with parents is due to the strong emotional attachments which might

suggests that this emotional attachment is looser in those who do not physically live with

their parents. On the other hand, the other student from a different cultural background relates it to the point that staying with parents means that the person is not ready to be independent and to build his/her own life. None of these perspectives can be proven right or wrong. Right or wrong can only be defined in a given cultural context. However, these classroom discussions are very helpful for the students to reflect on their own culture, become familiar with other perspectives, and try to understand the logic behind a different perspective. In perceiving culture as a two-way or bi-directional belief , the significance of knowing and learning about one's own culture are significantly emphasised and can be considered as crucial to relating one's own to foreign culture on equal terms (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). In this approach, an individual's awareness about his/her own culture is perceived as an unavoidable foundation for making conscious comparisons when s/he encounters different cultures (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). This kind of knowledge and awareness about how and why representatives of one's own culture and the other culture behave in a certain way would enable them to have an in-depth comprehension of differences and similarities. However, perceiving culture as a bi-directional belief is an area which has not been researched purposely enough, but I believe it is very important for intercultural competence. I believe the role that students themselves play in the classrooms with respect to fostering intercultural competence is one of the key findings of my study and something which has not been referred to by many scholars who study intercultural competence. As I mentioned before, Larzén-Östermark (2008) has referred to culture as two-way or bi-directional belief but his study does not go significantly deep as it does not include any observational data.

Some of my participants believe the learners must feel free to explore the uniqueness of their own culture and identity while developing understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the world and understanding of English culture as they live in it. Although these

participants believe their priority is to make the learners prepared for everyday life in the UK, they think there is no need to promote and impose any culture on any person. As this participant highlighted:

I wouldn't think it is proper to impose British or American culture to anyone who is studying English as an international language, my culture is as good as yours and yours is as good as any other ones. (Teacher 6)

This viewpoint also challenges the discredited belief that western cultures are superior to others. It also illustrates that these teachers understand that considering the native speaker as a model from the cultural point of view seems undesirable or may be an impossible target for learners. In this regard, one participant mentioned that she includes British culture but she talks about negative aspects of British culture as well as positive aspects of it. She thinks that as her students are aiming at living in the UK, they should have a realistic image of the culture of the place they live in rather than the image they have created in their minds:

Nowadays culture for my students is here in Sheffield, is that they live in the dumps, usually, in areas I wouldn't want to live very often, that is the culture they meet. So, am I including that culture in my lessons? Well, yes I am. If it comes up we will talk about it and we will talk how it is not all desirable and a very negative part of a postmodern culture at the moment and all that, you know, when it comes up. I wouldn't necessarily force down them but if it comes up yes, I will include them if it happens in my lesson but it might not be a culture you think about. But that is a culture. That is the part of British culture and they need to go to job centre whether they like it or not, you know, and there are all aspects of culture you might not think about. I can totally imagine it that their experience of British culture is not very good because often what they are confronted with or their view of women for instance, especially I mean of course we get lots of Muslim

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people and they have a particular view of women and neither do I agree with those women who walk around half naked on the streets to go to the Saturday evening dances all drunk and throw themselves over the place , that is the culture and that is what they see, you know, so, do they like English culture ? No they don't. I can imagine. I don't like it either, I am coming from a western culture basically but I don't like it either. That is all culture and they should be prepared to encounter. (Teacher 7)

This is probably one of the reasons that this participant believes her students do not come out of their communities and integrate with local people or people of other cultures. However, she agreed that the students need to be ready and aware of these differences as they will have to have relationships at different levels with other cultures whether they like it or not. Almost all participants support and acknowledge the point that it is not favourable, realistic, practical or perhaps possible to expect learners to imitate or try to model native speakers; however, they all agreed that their students should be able to adapt to their new environment and within the process of adaptation, they need to reflect on their own culture:

We also can use images, we can play, play roles, and we can also discuss it: how do you understand this? Is this the same in your culture? No? How is it in your culture? So, people can understand the language, they can understand all the differences between the cultures, they become aware of the differences eventually. (Teacher 9)

The activities in coursebooks also have had an important role in the classes that I observed in helping students reflect on themselves as much as they learn about their classmates' backgrounds. For instance, in one of the sessions the topic of the lesson was 'jobs'. The textbook had an activity asking the students to talk about their dream job. An Italian student started talking about his job in Italy which was in the food industry. He has now immigrated to the UK having hoped that he will find the job he likes and he is experienced in. However, after

working for couple of months in a couple of restaurants he has quit his dream job and now has started to do something totally different. He explained that the main reason to do so was that people's perception of food in England is totally different from the Italian one and he has found it too difficult to adjust himself to English perceptions. In every chapter of most of the textbooks there were exercises that were requiring the learners to refer back to their home countries and home cultures. The following questionnaire (Figure 4.3) was in one of the coursebooks that one of the participants used in her lesson. The topic of the lesson was 'Good manners? Bad manners? Not important? The students had to decide if the provided behaviours were 'good manners', 'bad manners' or 'not important/ not necessary'.

Figure 4.3: Questionnaire about manners

As it is evident from the figure, most of the statements are culture specific and the students' answers were obviously different. The students all had a long group discussion with each other while completing the questionnaire and the teacher was encouraging them to carry on the discussions. As I mentioned before, perceiving culture as a bi-directional, which significantly involves the students' home cultures and other cultures, has not been paid adequate attention in previous studies. In most of the studies that have been conducted in respect of the cultural aspect of English language education, 'target' culture has always been emphasised more than the students' cultures. These studies have tried to explore whether or not target culture should be taught in the lessons. This is probably because most of these studies have been conducted in other countries and the learners of English in those studies are living in their own countries. Therefore, those studies try to investigate the place of 'target' culture in the lessons as the classroom environment is culturally homogenous. For example, Jabeen and Shah (2011) conducted a study in Pakistan and explore learners' attitude about the role of culture in English language teaching. They reported that their participants reacted against the target culture. They explained that target culture for them was American culture. Their finding is similar to another study which was conducted in Saudi Arabia by Haq and Smadi (1996). They also reported that their results show that Saudi students are cautious when they are taught culturally loaded language in English language teaching. As it is clear, neither of these studies discusses culture as a bi-directional belief. They only argue the positive and negative aspects of teaching target culture. However, the findings of my study largely indicate that students' self-reflection and self-awareness are important and this could be achieved through making continuous comparisons with other cultures.

As the above-mentioned examples from the data suggest, students are being given different activities and they spontaneously relate them to their own beliefs and cultures. Even though most of the participants did not take this sort of activity for granted, a few of them tended to

skip these activities as they preferred to focus more on the linguistic parts to prepare the students for their exams. I discuss this in the section related to the limitations of including intercultural competence in lessons. What is related to the current section is that the data suggest the elements that the students bring up in the lessons are all very important in raising their intercultural awareness. This is in line with Larzén-Östermark (2008) whose findings suggest culture is perceived as more than knowledge. The significance of learning about and knowing your own culture is understood as a precondition for relating the two to each other on equal terms. He demonstrates that awareness of one's own cultural background is seen an unavoidable basis for conscious comparisons that the learners will make when encountering other cultures. Knowing why someone from a particular culture speaks or behaves the way they do is seen as enabling a deeper understanding of similarities and differences (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). In the section on the effects of glocalisaton on the students' speaking skills, I provide more examples of the class activities which help the students' to focus on self-reflection and to enhance their self-awareness and gain more in-depth understanding of differences.

4.2.4 Culture as skills

This category is about seeing 'culture' as skills to be learned by English language learners to assist them while they live in the UK. It mainly involves knowledge of how the people of the target culture speak or act on particular occasions through spoken language or body language. When culture is perceived as skills, it is perceived as practical knowledge, rather than information about concrete elements (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). Therefore, the focus is on learning how to speak and act in a manner that has been considered as appropriate in the target language culture in order not to offend anybody or not to be considered as inappropriate. Two types of skills can be distinguished from what the participants highlighted. One is related to social practices and the other one is related to sociolinguistic practices. Social practices are

concerned with how people of the same culture act in particular circumstances and the sociolinguistic practices are concerned with the form of language people of the same culture mainly use in certain settings and based on certain types of relationships (Larzén-Östermark, 2008). In most social settings, language is used and the form of the usage of the language significantly depends on the social context. Therefore, social practices and sociolinguistic practices overlap most of the time. However, below I present them separately to indicate my participants' viewpoints.

4.2.4.1 Social practices

Four of my participants talked about social habits related to particular social contexts. They gave some examples of social behaviours that might seem surprising, strange, amusing or offensive to people who are not from the same cultural background. Their examples were mainly from their own experiences as foreigners coming to the UK and elements of culture that they found different. Even though many of the participants believed these sorts of behavioural habits could be acquired simply by living in the target culture's society, they declared it is always better to be prepared before the breakdowns and clashes happen spontaneously. As one of the participants mentioned:

...Then you may think someone is rude when it is not and there is some aspect of behaviour

that you may expect and then you can be angry at the person and it can create a problem

in communication and even in relationships... (Teacher 1)

He also provided an example of social convention based on his experience:

For example, in Spain, if you are at a party and you say 'I am leaving now', you expect

people to say' oh, don't leave now, come on, stay a bit longer and etc.' and it is impolite

not to say so whereas in France and in the UK, you say 'I'm leaving' and they are like

'ok, bye' which is kind of good because it is your freedom, do whatever you want, you are

free but at the first time, I had like 'ok, bye', in Spanish culture, that is 'ok, we don't want you here, go, that is why we are not insistent'. So I felt really angry and insulted when they said 'ok, bye' and I got angry at them actually... (Teacher 1)

The majority of the participants agreed that students enjoy hearing their teacher sharing their own experiences of having culture clash in different places and situations. This is probably an advantage of having teachers who are bi-lingual or multilingual and have experience of living in different cultural environments. I present the major findings of my study about the effect of non-native teachers' reflection on their practices in section 4.8. What is relevant here is that my participants highlighted that in their classrooms they have heard from the learners that they find these real life experiences helpful for their everyday interactions in the UK:

Sometimes I look back at my lessons that I talk more, and I think students also enjoy that and I share a lot of my experience with them. I ask them to share their experience within themselves but I think you can also learn from the teacher and that is something that I questioned about teacher talk. Yes I think they have to talk but I think a little bit of teacher talk is not always bad. Apart from the experience that I tell them like here they can say goodbye at a party, that's fine, so I do mention those kind of things. And these examples are based on my own experience. And I think the students appreciate that. (Teacher 6)

In the observed lessons various topics were covered which are relatable to social practices. One of the popular topics that was controversial in the classroom observations was 'Time'. For instance in one of the lessons, an Omani student said: '*In Oman posh people are always a few minutes late for parties and meetings*'. This was very surprising for some of the students and for the teacher that being late in some cultures is considered as a prestigious and a high-class feature. However, a few other students from Middle East agreed that it is similar in their countries. They said some people intentionally attend events late to indicate that they are busy

and their time is more valuable. As the discussion was carried out, a Brazilian student said that Brazilians are famous for not being punctual but it is not the case of everyone including himself: '*I always meet my deadlines and for meetings I'm usually 5 minutes early*'. The teacher explained that '*Being on time is very important in the UK and if you are late British people may think you don't respect them and their time. You should never leave people waiting*' (Extract from Field notes, 5 November, 2015).

This discussion was suggesting that different cultures have different attitudes towards time. In this respect, Hall (1976 cited in Dahl, 2004) divides cultures into the two categories of monochronic and polychronic[2]. People in monochronic cultures are usually punctual and organised, and people in polychronic culture are usually considered less organised and minutes matter less for them. Obviously, interactions between people of these two categories might be challenging as each group has different attitudes towards time. I believe these sorts of discussions are important as they help the students be aware that not everyone has the same understanding of time and this awareness might probably help them be more insightful and tolerant when they face a person with a different vision about time. In addition, they help students understand that not everyone in one culture is the same and personal features of individuals might be different or sometimes might even be opposite of what others generally think about one particular culture.

Moreover, during the interview, one of the participants explained that some concepts have different connotations in different social contexts. She gave 'privacy' as an example and said she shares these experiences with her students:

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[2] Polychronic and monochronic are two orientations towards time. Individuals from polychronic cultures do many things spontaneously, are concerned less about time and believe that they should not be controlled by time. Individuals from monochronic cultures rely on time and organise their lives around time (Hall, 2000).

Yea, when I was living in Nepal and India. In Nepal they don't have the concept of privacy which they have very much in the UK. Sometimes I felt embarrassed you know, sometime in shopping centres they just come and look into my bag to see what I've bought. Here that would be considered as very rude, it is not acceptable. I just accepted it and understood that it was a difference. It was also very common to make personal comments on people's appearance, they would just tell you if you look a bit fat. Well I tried not take it offensively. In some way it is good to be truthful but it is very different in the UK. I just accepted it because it was quite common. I was not prepared. I wish I was but I just learned it while living there. (Teacher 3)

Helping learners to gain knowledge about a particular social context is directly linked to the approach of communicative competence as described in the Literature Review chapter (section 2.7). Canale and Swain (1980) understand communicative competence as a combination of knowledge and skills needed for communication. As part of their definition of developing communicative competence, they refer to the knowledge of how to use language in a social context in order to fulfil communicative functions. They generally describe communicative competence as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting. This was the most common approach that almost all my participants tended to adopt because a part of their job is to prepare their learners for life in the UK. Even though this approach might be considered a dated approach as it is now difficult to define one social setting to the English language, it is a different case when it comes to teaching English in the UK since learners have moved to this country for different reasons and it is necessary for them to become familiar with the social context. However, I believe this should not stop these teachers from acknowledging the global status of English and the other social contexts that their students will have to use this language for communication purposes. My classroom observations demonstrate that multicultural classrooms have made it easier for the teachers to bring up discussions about different cultures

along with introducing the cultural elements of life in England. Most examples that I provide throughout this chapter are indications of this finding. As I have mentioned earlier, students contribute a lot in this process as they are keen to share their own cultural principles with the rest of the class. Even in the classes where most of the students are from one national background, teachers could still acknowledge diversity through different pathways such as referring back to their own personal experiences or asking their students to reflect on their own experiences both in the UK and in other settings. It only requires teachers' willingness and awareness to do so. In my study, apart from one teacher who did not show any interest in bringing up cultural elements in their lessons, the rest considered it very important.

Apart from social practices which mainly refer to skills and knowledge about general rules and principles of living in a particular setting, another kind of skill also emerged from my data. This skill is those socio-linguistic practices which are more related to the way of using language in particular contexts. The following section provides more details about this theme.

4.2.4.2 Sociolinguistic (pragmatic) practices

Sociolinguistic conventions in the target culture were mentioned often throughout the interviews. Almost all of the participants referred to culture by linking it to language as a sociocultural phenomenon. This indicates that they are well aware that the type of language one utters is influenced by the sociocultural environment. The category of sociolinguistic or pragmatic practices is concerned with the effect of social settings on selecting a variety of language. For instance, according to the lesson observations, areas such as speaking in a formal setting compared to speaking in an informal setting or directness and indirectness in communications were being covered by the teachers. Data from both interviews and observations illustrate that the teachers pay particular attention to 'politeness':

...Also register is part of the culture. It is very important. Especially I focus a lot on politeness. I tell them remember in the UK, you have to say 'please' and 'thank you' all the time, and try not to have an strong and direct intonation...(Teacher 6)

In one of the classrooms that I observed, the students were supposed to read a text named 'culture shock' (Figure 4.4). It was about a Russian man married to a British woman and they went to live in Russia. The lady noticed that the things they do in Russia were different from what they do in England. Similarly, the man had the same feeling towards the British way of behaviour. For example, the usage of some words such as 'sorry' and 'please'. The man was struggling to understand why the lady says 'sorry' all the time while she has not done anything wrong and similarly she says 'please' on so many occasions that might be meaningless for a Russian person. Here is the text:
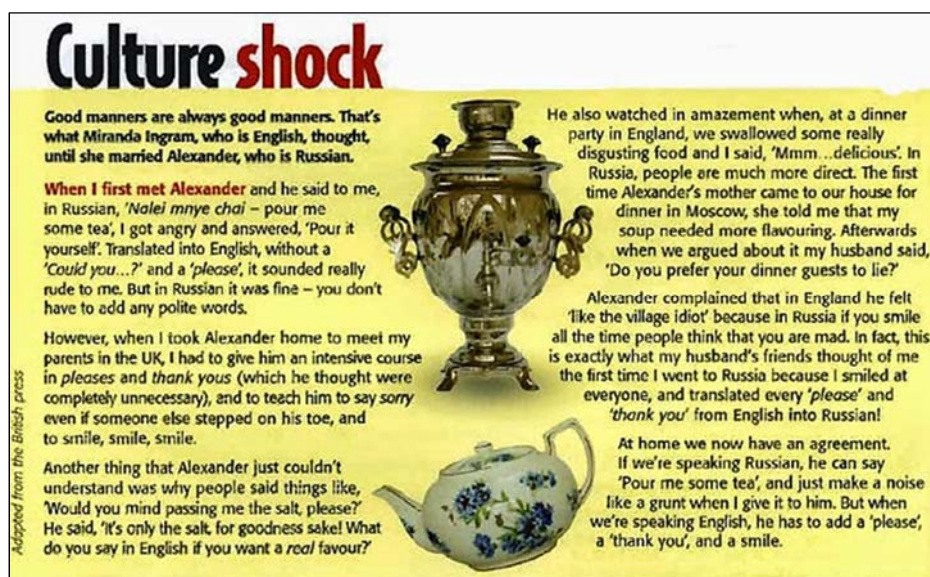
Figure 4.4: A story about culture shock

A classroom discussion was held after reading the text and some of the students agreed that in England '*people say sorry for everything*'. Even though this sounds to be an exaggerated or a generalised statement, these kinds of texts and classroom discussions could have a role in raising the students' sociolinguistic knowledge.

Another classroom activity that I observed that can be related to the sociolinguistic practice is an activity they had about 'writing emails'. During my interview with one of the teachers, he mentioned that students need to learn how writing formal and informal emails in the UK might be different from how they do it back home. In one of his sessions that I observed, he taught a lesson on writing emails. He introduced the topic as a '*controversial topic which could be problematic and is a genre on its own*'. The teacher gave them some templates of formal emails. He explained that '*in England the way we write an email to our boss or to our teacher should be totally different from the email we write to our friends*'. He gave handouts to the students which show the different types of language one should use in both situations. A Chinese student shared his own experience that once he tried to write an email to his landlord and his landlord was upset about it. Here is my narration of what the student explained:

In my email to emphasise some information, I coloured some parts and I wrote with capital letters but then he replied my email with very angry language. I was so annoyed and surprised. I didn't know why he is angry. (Student)

The teacher appreciated that he shared his experience and stated that:

You cannot use capital letters in your emails. You also cannot highlight or underline sentences or write sentences such as give answer to this as soon as possible unless you have that sort of a relationship in real life with somebody.

This teacher believes the way the students write emails has a lot to do with the students' culture. He mentioned in his classroom that:

It might be normal for you in your country to use emoticons in the formal emails but here in England you cannot write an email to your professor to say 'I am sorry I cannot come to the class' with an emoticon of crying face. Be careful about this if you want to study in the university or live in this country (Extracts from field notes, 24 November, 2016).

Sociolinguistic practices are directly connected to the study of pragmatics and speech acts which are important factors in intercultural competence (Grundy, 2008). I discuss them in detail in other sections when I address the second and third research questions. So far, I have discussed my participants' understanding of the concept of culture in general making some linkages to their teaching practices. The next stage is to look at their perspective about the place and the importance of culture in English language teaching in a continuation of exploring the first research question.

4.3 The place of culture in English language teaching

As mentioned, the first research question tries to explore my participants' viewpoints about the concept of culture, its relationship with language education and how they perceive the place of it in their teaching practices. In the previous section, I presented my participants' attitudes towards the concept of culture and in this section I mainly present and discuss their attitude towards the place of culture in their teaching practices. As discussed above, based on the findings, their mentioned viewpoints about the notion of culture along with what they actually practised in the classrooms could be analysed under the four main themes of culture as transferable facts, modes of thought, two-way beliefs and skills. These findings are similar to the findings of the study which was conducted by Larzén-Östermark (2008) although his research context was different. He focused on Finland-Swedish comprehensive schools and their treatment of culture in English as a foreign language teaching. However, as his data was collected only through interviews with teachers, his results do not include specific behaviours and events that occurred in the classroom/s.

As discussed, culture as transferable facts (Byram, 1994, Larzén-Östermark, 2008, Robinson, 1985) mainly concentrates on surface culture and as a tool to raise the learners' cultural awareness about objective elements of culture in the UK. Transferable facts could be

transmitted to learners either from the teacher or the textbook (Byram and Risager, 1999). Culture as skills was mentioned as the most important aspect as the students could learn about the practical side of culture and be mindful about social and sociolinguistic practices that may help them in their encounters with native speakers in England (Hubernere, 1965). My participants perceived culture as skills where the English culture is in focus but it was evident that the learners' own culture was also involved. Some of the participants highlighted the importance of culture as a two-way belief as they believe students should be encouraged to look at their own, familiar, culture from another perspective and learn to empathise with and show respect for otherness in general, not only focusing on representatives of English-speaking countries (Sercu et al., 2005, Larzén-Östermark, 2008). However, classroom observations indicated that most of the time it is students who initiate discussions which refer back to their cultural values. The participants also considered culture as a cognitive approach (Robinson, 1985) or modes of thought (Larzén-Östermark, 2008) through mentioning that culture consists of elements such as values, norms and beliefs underlying the way people live and act.

Although the majority of participants believe that cultural elements of the UK should be raised in the lessons, they do not plan for them in advance. Their lesson plans mainly include activities related to the students' linguistic knowledge and the four skills. They try to enhance the learners' cultural knowledge and awareness only when the classroom discussions direct them to do so or if the textbook has an emphasis on a culturally related point:

If they want to be more polite, or they want to tell a joke or be sarcastic, you know, I do find myself saying things like' oh, no no no, we don't do that in the UK. But I don't plan for these. It just happens, depending on what the students would say or what the textbook would bring up. (Teacher 1)

Only one participant did not enthusiastically support the idea of bringing British culture into the classroom as she believes that students are living in this society and they therefore grasp cultural elements in their everyday life. She does not think that it is a job of language sessions or to spend particular time on those as people pick things up simply by living somewhere:

...Sometimes, I mention them but I can't say I really bring culture into it because people live in it, you know, they live in it, they survive in it, they experience it every day, from the moment they set the foot here on land they experience what the culture is like, you know. They are totally surrounded by it; no need to bring it to the class... (Teacher 8)

This teacher probably has this particular standpoint as she teaches in an ESL classroom. Based on the context the teachers teach in, they have to distinguish between teaching English as a foreign language and teaching English as a second language. English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in the UK fundamentally share the same aim which is teaching English to those whose first language is not English. However, there is a difference between the goals of their learners. ESL learners are stereotypically those who have come to the UK to stay for a longer time or perhaps for the rest of their lives. Immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers are usually expected to attend ESL classrooms. EFL learners, on the other hand, usually learn English for any reason and are less likely to be planning to live permanently or having a long-term stay in an English speaking country. As a consequence of this difference, teachers tend to employ different approaches although they might bring in the same topics and have the same teaching styles in each of these classrooms. In this regard, Teacher 8 declared that:

Well, what I do is in ESL it takes a particular position. It aimed at people who come from abroad as refugees, as asylum seekers. You know, it is not the same as, as, as, also the teaching is different, I mean we all teach English but the teaching is different whether

you teach to the people like that or you just teach English to a group of Spanish who come

here to learn English, it is a completely different situation. (Teacher 8)

Teacher 8 believes the learners' goals and interests are totally different in ESL lessons particularly for those learners who came from traumatic situations in their countries to claim asylum and who stick to their own community and do not leave it. They mainly try to help themselves and their families survive and have a stable life. They mainly do not show any interest to engage with English culture or even become familiar with other cultures. English for these learners is a survival skill:

When people come from, for example, I have a guy who came from Syria, he come from

very difficult circumstances, very hard time, it would be great if he go and know other

people and all that but what does he care? He is surviving here really and sometimes we

got people with their families, they just want the best for their children... (Teacher 8)

She also stated that:

They don't come here because they are interested in cultures and I think it might help

them if they become a bit more interested, it might help them, but I am not sure. They

need to survive here. They need to be able to shop and to go to job centre and to, you

know, it is not a choice, if they could help it, they would be back in their countries. I am

always surprised they know so little about England. Many people they don't come out of

the area that they live in. They don't even know other areas in Sheffield. Then I say them

have you ever been to the countryside because there are such a beautiful countryside out

here, they don't know what I am talking about. So, they just stay in their own area. I am

not saying this is the same for everybody but definitely for the majority. They don't even

come out of the area where they live. I think it is a survival skill for them to learn English.

(Teacher 8)

In contrast to Teacher 8 who tends to avoid touching the cultural elements that the students encounter in England, another participant (Teacher 5) who also teaches in ESL classrooms insisted strongly on the importance of incorporating culture in language lessons. His point is that culture is different among different social classes. He believes that based on the place where the students live, they grasp different sort of British culture. Considering the fact that asylum seekers do not have the freedom to choose their houses, this participant believes the learners obtain a limited knowledge about English culture. The elements that they pick up are very much from a particular class of culture in England with which they have been surrounded. This makes him believe that it is vital for him to make the learners aware that the cultural environment that they have been surrounded by might not be the whole reality of English culture. He articulates that sometimes his students' experience of culture in England is not his experience of English culture:

The culture of upper classes I am sure is a lot more different from the culture of lower classes. So, when you say culture, I am thinking, well, which culture? It is totally different. What happens, some of them live in these big flat buildings among junks, you know, and that is the culture they come across which is not the culture they would have had in their own country but that is the culture for them. (Teacher 5)

This means the students learn British culture but they only learn a part of it. Many of them tend not to interact with the people who they come across with as they do not favour that part of the culture. In this case, maintaining their own culture becomes significantly important. Teacher 5 emphasises the importance of discussing different aspects of culture in language lessons as he thinks it is important for the students to know that the aspect of culture they come across is not all about English culture. Their experience of the new culture greatly relies on the situation they have been:

I live in this street. If my student lived in this street, mostly their experience would be positive because there are no junks; the area is not littered with rubbish. That is not like the area where they live. In those areas there is a lot of crime, there is a lot of drug use and all that. So, what culture do they actually meet? Not a culture they are particularly interested in meeting. (Teacher 5)

In my classroom observations, I realised that Teacher 5 often let open discussions happen in his lessons and dedicated more time for his students to talk than focusing on textbook activities. In one of his sessions that I observed, the topic was 'Schooling and the British education system'. The students started to compare their own education system with the UK and the issues they or their families face in adjusting to this system. A Pakistani lady made a different point and shared her massive concern about her daughter being brought up in this country and attending an English school. Her concern was mainly around how she thinks her daughter's school environment erodes her native and Islamic values and the challenges she faces in helping her daughter to maintain her own cultural values. A few other classmates could also relate to this point and tried to suggest relevant strategies to this mother. The lady mentioned that:

I see that my daughter and some of my friend's children make some habits that is forbidden for us. They go restaurants and eat food that is maybe not halal. I don't like it and I tell them but I can't stop it. When all her classmates go out how can I force her not to go? My daughter has hijab and she has not a problem but my friend's daughter doesn't like hijab. It is a very hard situation for us. (Student)

The students' concerns about the effect of British or western culture on their local values were mentioned often in lessons and is something which is related to the effects of globalisation. I discuss this more in section 4.4.1 of this chapter. What is relevant here is that

some teachers acknowledge that all aspects of British culture should be discussed in the lessons in order to prepare students for both its positive sides and negative sides. In addition, classroom observations illustrate that open discussions in the lessons help students to learn from each other and to share their own experience of culture with their classmates.

Therefore, as discussed, the teachers mainly prioritise the national dimension of culture and focus a lot on British culture although diversity in their viewpoints is recognisable. They support the idea that it is important for the students to become familiar with the social and sociolinguistic norms of the place they live. However, the context of the classrooms and the recognition of students' immediate needs and purposes play an important role in teachers' decisions of how they would like to deal with culture in their lessons. Apart from one teacher who declared her learners are not interested in learning about cultures and differences, the rest of the participants believe raising cultural elements and issues can have a positive part in creating a pleasant learning atmosphere and eventually in motivating the learners. One emerged theme that explains why the majority of the teachers think integration of cultural elements in English language teaching is important, is about the point that they believe it has a role in enhancing the learners' motivation. The following sub-section looks at this more thoroughly.

4.3.1 The relationship between learner motivation and culture

Among the reasons that the participants provided for including culture in their language lessons, 'motivation' was the most commonly referred one. Therefore, this section is dedicated to the discussions around the motivating aspects of enhancing cultural elements in language lessons. The literature review chapter has already presented some scholars' ideas about the relationship between cultural studies in language lessons and learner motivation. These scholars have found out that cultural studies could potentially motivate learners to learn English and have tried to draw a link between learners' interests in cultures and their motivations

towards learning English. The findings of my study could support the existing literature in this regard. Some respondents also believed that cultural studies could be perceived as a tool to help their learners be motivated in the process of learning English. Some of the participants mentioned that one of their main objectives is to help the learners enjoy learning English and make the lesson more personal to them in order to have a pleasant learning experience. They highlighted that this could happen when the students realise the benefits of learning English culture. As this participant pointed out:

I also believe how we should be delivered or engaged with in a supportive way where the students see the benefit of that and where they understand that learning about British culture actually help them to achieve their goals quicker, get on with people or maybe help them to find a job quicker... (Teacher 3)

As is evident in this extract, in classrooms teachers could elaborate on the benefits of engaging with a different culture or cultures. Similarly, some other interviewees highlighted points such as '*they can find new friends easier*' (Teacher 1), '*they will have a better time*' (Teacher 6), and many other reasons that may help learners be more enthusiastic about learning English and become familiar with cultures and differences, rather than adhering to an exam-oriented and theoretical system of learning language and being resistant towards learning anything that will not help them pass their tests. As one of the participants stated, having an exam-centred attitude might eventually lead the learners to be frustrated by learning sets of grammar and vocabulary:

It would be ideal, I would love to do more different things and all that and I can hate it that I think I am so focused on exams and I can hate it to see students want to pass their exams only but you know that is what I do, that is what I have to do because I want them to pass and they want to pass. You know, they really want to pass their exams. So, they brighten up when they do different things and you give them a good chance to them to

talk about their countries and all that, I do that all a bit but it can't take too much time. It is not getting them through the exam. So, my focus is on doing it so that you pass exam with it and I know that they may get bored or uninterested. (Teacher 3)

This is in line with what a good number of researchers have also agreed on. Integrating cultural content into the lessons or highlighting cultural parts of the textbooks has been recognised as a motivation for the students to learn a foreign language (e.g., Kobayashi and Viswat, 2007; Klayman, 2008; Momeni, 2013). McKay also points out that the reason for the use of cultural content in classroom is that it will foster learner motivation (2000, p.7).

However, as mentioned in the previous section, one of the participants highlighted the importance of maintaining learners' own culture as some learners may find engaging with English culture '*threatening*' to their own culture. This could be a reason why some learners and teachers are not interested in learning and teaching British or any other culture. Adaskou et al. (2000 cited in Nation and Macalister, 2009) discuss the same issue with reference to English language teachers' experiences in Morocco. They found that most of the teachers argue against the teaching of target language culture in the English language classroom. They feel that the inclusion of target culture leads to a sense of dissatisfaction with the local culture as learners compare their culture with that of the target language. For example, the social or political background that learners or even teachers come from might lead them to consider being involved in any aspect of western culture as a process of westernisation. This possibly justifies the reason why McKay (2000) and many other scholars agree that there should be a variety of cultures in the classroom practices and materials and not only an overload of western culture in English classrooms. In addition, it is important to ensure learners that learning about a culture does not mean accommodating to that culture. It will be highly desirable if the role of the culture in the materials (or generally in the lessons) is mainly to motivate the learners and

to create learner interest towards content along with developing their awareness towards differences (Klayman, 2008).

Most participants of my study discussed '*creating a pleasant learning environment*' (Teacher 7) as one of their core teaching objectives. They try to help the learners enjoy learning English and in this process, '*trying to make the lessons more personal to the learners*' (Teacher 3) has a good role. These teachers believe that the students enjoy discussing their own culture and relating it to the other cultures. For example, this respondent believes:

> *...They love it. They love talking about their backgrounds, the countries they come from and you know, we saw it when we are preparing for writing exams, we did a writing on celebrations, sort of celebrations and they could pick that themselves and some of them they wrote about for example independence day in their country, many of them write about Eid, you know so of course they need to put it in their own thing. They absolutely enjoy it...* (Teacher 5)

This might be interpreted as meaning that to make the lessons more personal to the students, teachers need to encourage students to reflect more on their own culture since retaining one's own cultural beliefs is as important as being aware of other cultures. Once the learners come across differences among themselves and other students, or perhaps their differences with the presented cultural elements in textbooks, they start reflecting more on themselves. This will help them to think more about the elements of cultures that they have been brought up in but perhaps taken for granted or not realised their significance. The classroom observations in this study also indicated that the students end up bringing up their own cultural elements into their classroom activities and teachers play a big role in allowing this to happen. I realised that learners can be more involved with the lesson when they are asked to speak about their home culture. There were some students who could go on and on speaking about how they act or

behave in their countries. The textbooks also had a very important role in bringing up these sorts of discussions. For example, in one of the lessons of Teacher 7 the topic was 'gestures and body language'. The teacher gave the following worksheet to the students (Figure 4.5):
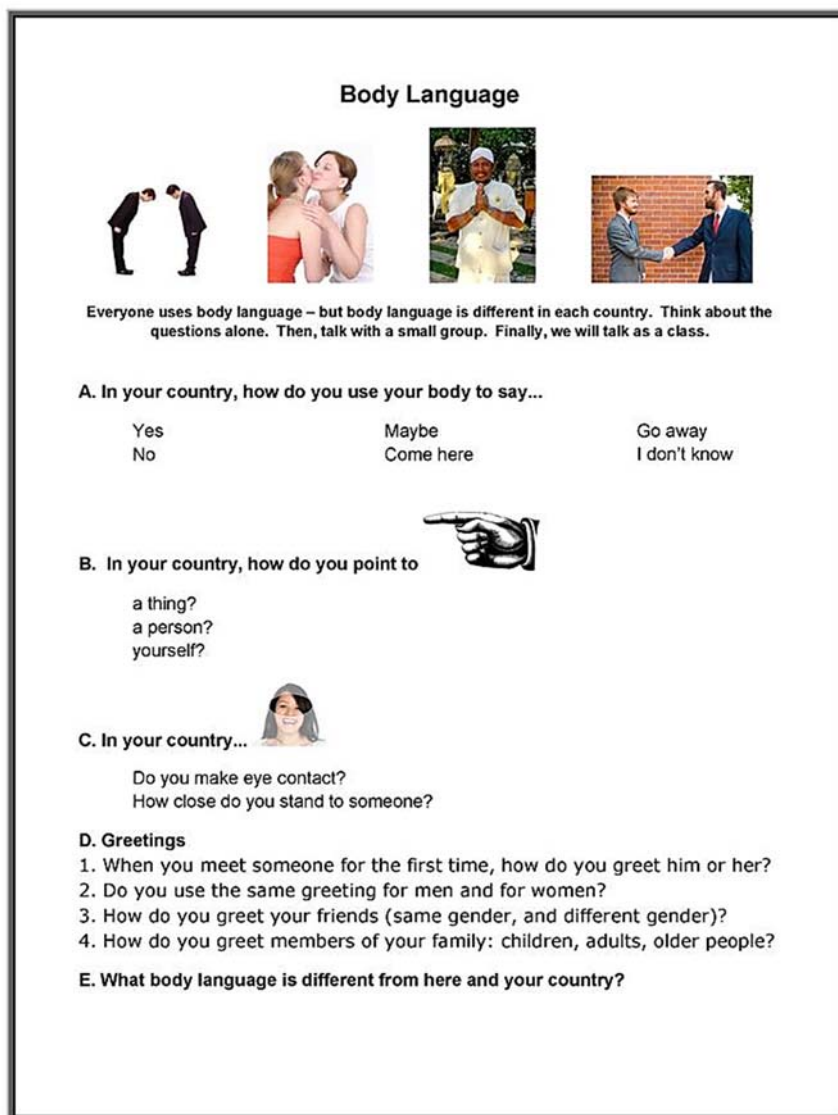
Figure 4.5: Body language worksheet

One single worksheet about body language was enough for the students to spend the rest of the lesson talking about different types of body language and how they could be interpreted differently in England. What some of them were saying was surprising for some others. The students found it very interesting to realise how one gesture or body language might have

different meanings in other contexts. For example, a student from Ukraine shared his own experience in this regard which was fascinating to the other students:

To say 'yes' we move our head up and down but Bulgarians move their head to left and right to say yes which means 'no' in other cultures. I was in Bulgaria sometimes ago and we got an accident on the road and the police came. We tried to communicate in Russian and we all could understand the language but the body language was completely different. So, we tried to use their body language and they tried to use our, without knowing who uses what. It was impossible to communicate. The policeman asked me a question and I moved my head right and left meaning yes but the policeman understood upside down and he did the same, my God. (Student)

A couple of other students shared similar stories and all students seemed to be very engaged with the lesson. The teacher did not try to stop their discussion in order to move on the lesson. She let their discussion carry on as the lesson atmosphere was very dynamic and the students seemed engaged and happy. In other classroom observations similar activities caused the learners to relate to their own experience and elaborate on them; particularly when the topic was on food, weather, family, manners. For example, in one of the lessons the topic was food. In the previous lesson, the teacher set an activity for the student. Students were supposed to prepare a presentation about a national dish from the students' home country. They had to tell the name of a dish, ingredients, how to make it and the history of the dish. They prepared the presentation individually and presented it to the rest of the class. The students were allowed to ask questions after each presentation. For example, a Moroccan student presented about '*boulfaf'*' which is a national dish in Morocco on one of the religious occasions called 'Eid al Adha'. Here is a small part of his presentation that appeared shocking to some of the students who were not familiar with the story behind it and they were keen to know about it:

We sacrifice a sheep on this day and use different parts of the sheep to make dishes. One of those dishes is boulfaf which is made from liver and kidneys of our sheep. We then eat it with relatives or give some to poor people. (Student)

He continued to explain how they celebrate this day and how this dish is made. After his presentation, some questions were asked. Here are some of my extracts from the field notes:

A student asked: Why do you have to slaughter an animal to celebrate?

Another student asked: Why don't you just buy meat from a shop?

The other students started to contribute in the discussion and they were trying to explain the main reasons of doing it. A conversation started between an Omani girl (A) and a Spanish boy (B):

A: *We don't call it killing or slaughtering. We call it sacrificing. It is symbol, we want to show that we are happy to sacrifice in life. Prophet Ibrahim sacrificed a sheep, he wanted to sacrifice his son.*

B: *I know the story of Abraham, I know what you mean, but I'm not vegetarian, but I don't understand cutting the head of sheep at home in a dirty way.*

A: *In the past people did at home but not many people anymore, my father buys the sheep and give it to the butcher.*

B: *OK, I don't know* (Extract from field notes, 09 November, 2016).

The discussion went on for a while and all students were passionately involved in the arguments. It is interesting that one simple task about a dish could lead the students to raise deep cultural issues. The teacher did not start the discussion. It was the students who spontaneously developed the argument. They all wanted to challenge each other and at the same time learn from each other. However, I think the teacher had a role there too. The teacher

could have stopped the discussion for going off topic or to save time for other tasks but she did not. She let the discussion go on. I could see that the environment of such lessons changed positively when the teachers encouraged the spontaneous interactions to grow. Over the interview, one of the teachers referred to this point and said:

I think they communicate better if the topic is culture and I think it raises their curiosity and then they ask questions later. Sometimes you are going to do an activity for 10 minutes or 20 minutes and it takes one hour and half because they are very into it or they keep asking questions. (Teacher 1)

I believe the students can also improve their linguistic knowledge in this procedure. As Adaskou et al. (2000) assert, learners are more motivated when they learn the target language with reference to their local culture (cited in Jabeen and Shah, 2011). Similarly, this participant explained:

...because I felt if I found that people were talking and the topic went off or diverged from the main stream of the topic that I wanted to talk about, I just let it go because I think it fulfils the purpose which is to get the people talking. I can hope, by the time the conversation diverges, I can teach them some new terms, some new phrases which help them incorporate it into conversations. I don't worry as long as the students are talking and getting involved and hopefully they are enjoying themselves, which is the objective of the lesson. If I feel at the end of the lesson that we haven't managed to talk about the thing that I wanted, I can teach them next time. (Teacher 9)

As a consequence of appreciating the opportunity to share their own cultural elements, the students will be motivated to extend their vocabulary range and other linguistic skills in order to be able to share their experiences in and outside of the classroom. As Suchánková explains, learning a foreign language enables people to learn about other cultures and contributes to the

discovery of their own identity and the developing of their own culture (2014). In this respect, teachers should remain flexible with regard to the teaching approach they adopt, mediating between what can be taught and tested and what must be taught and cannot be tested, as well as keeping a log for self-reflection (Almawada, 2013). My findings also support Almawada's declaration. For instance, one of the teachers stated that:

My objective is to help the students to see the purpose and then learn English language and to help them enjoy it because if they are not engaged with the lesson, if they are not engaged with the subject, I think it makes learning a language a massive mission. So I suppose just making the lesson enjoyable using the students own experiences rather than bringing piles and piles of worksheets in. Try to use the students own experience and build up like a personal tale of lesson, something that really appeals too their own interests, I think that way they see language learning as more relevant. So to make them the lesson personal to them, to make it interactive, and to make it interesting, to have some sorts of goal. So link the lesson to their career goals, personal goals, that they have a target that working towards and that target doesn't have to be the English exam. I develop a target with the students collaboratively. (Teacher 3)

As the above presented data suggests, some of the participants in the study believe they can help their students be more engaged with the lessons and be motivated through incorporating cultural issues. This is similar to the finding of a study that was conducted by Ho (1998) in Taiwan. Ho observed that when students feel that the foreign language lesson is relevant to their needs, they are more likely to have motivation to learn the language (1998). However, unlike his study that suggests that the students were interested in knowing more about English-speaking countries, my classroom observations indicated that the students were interested in sharing their own cultural values and keen to know more about their classmates' cultures. They were happy to find out about similarities and differences they have with other cultures. Dörnyei

(1994) also recommends that language teachers can increase their learners' motivation through developing students' intercultural awareness systematically by focusing on cultural similarities and differences.

All in all, I could conclude that with respect to the place of culture in the participants' practices, they generally believe culture is important, firstly, to help learners be aware of the country that they are living in and, secondly, to help them enjoy the lesson and be highly motivated to learn English. However, they do not treat the teaching of culture as an additional task as it is integrated into almost all parts of the lessons. Having presented and discussed the findings of my study on how teachers perceive the concept of culture and its relation with their practices, the next step is to move on to the main focus of this study which is on intercultural competence and the teachers' theoretical and practical attitudes towards it. The rest of the chapter tries to address the other research questions.

4.4 Teachers' recognition of the importance of intercultural competence

Intercultural competence has been developed as an approach to deal with cultural differences and barriers in communication but the first step in solving any problem is recognising there is one. Thus, in my study it was initially important to find out how the participants perceive intercultural communication and what kind of challenges they could identify. The participants' recognition of the possible and potential problems in intercultural communications could be the starting point to explore how they acknowledge intercultural competence, the second research question of my study. This makes the point that the importance of being competent in a certain situation cannot be detected until the identification of an actual need for that competency. Therefore, in order to address the second research question and to explore to what extent these teachers acknowledge intercultural competence, I started with asking questions about how they comprehend the communications between people of different cultures and what

kind of problems they think might occur in their communications. Acknowledgement in this study includes the analysis of the participants' face value definitions of the concept of intercultural competence as well as analysis of what they generally discussed during the interviews and making linkages (where possible) to their classroom practices. Analysing the collected data, I believe I can divide the participants' responses and classroom practices regarding the importance of intercultural competence into two sections: the effect of globalisation on intercultural communication and the effect of glocalisation on intercultural communication. Below I present and discuss the related data for each of them in more detail.

4.4.1 The effect of globalisation on intercultural communication

The spread of English is believed by many to be a consequence of globalisation and this is the reason they are both often powerfully linked (Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013; Widdowson, 1994; Brumfit, 1995). Globalisation, particularly globalisation of the English language, is a phenomenon that has a significant role in my study as most participants referred to it either explicitly or implicitly. While I was trying to find out how the participants perceive and appreciate intercultural competence, most of them talked about globalisation and its impact on both the English language itself and on its speakers. These teachers believed that as a result of globalisation, an individual's communications with the world has increased. The development of technology, social media and computer-based learning are some of the examples that were given by the participants which support the idea that the development of technology is having a great influence on making people contact other cultures and making them more aware of differences. For instance, one of the participants stated that:

There is a lot more awareness of other cultures now than before and therefore I think the exchange between different cultures can be much easier because there is an awareness that there are other ways of doing things. (Teacher 7)

This point is in agreement with Alfehaid (2014) who asserts that globalisation supports and strengthens communication between millions who have completely different cultures. He believes that internet technology (for example, online learning) is an example of something that can encourage communication between people who are in different places and that computer-based communication over a network aids learners understand both language use and intercultural exchanges. Therefore, an individual's awareness of differences develops more easily and quickly in the current era than in the past.

These days young generation don't even need to leave their rooms to have communication with the world, let alone travelling to other countries. They chat all the time on Whatsapp, Wechat, Snapchat, whatever chat. I don't necessarily like it but if you ask me about cross-cultural relationships, that is an example I could give. (Teacher 8)

However, English is a requirement in this process. Without being able to speak English, communication with people of other cultures and raising this sort of awareness seems to be almost impossible. Apart from 'cultural awareness' caused by the effect of globalisation, some of the participants also believed that this change in the type and the amount of communication across the world might lead to a change of local cultures as well. As one of the teachers declared:

A culture you have learned from being a child is going to change as the culture that you are in is affected by what is happening in other parts of the world. Of course this has changed a lot even in my life time, the amount of exchange of culture and the amount of contact with different people with different cultures have on each other. (Teacher 5)

This point refers to the impact of globalisation on the individuals' home cultures. Some of the participants indicated a good grasp about this influence and pointed out how some societies approach this as a positive effect and some believe that it is a threat to local cultures and that

globalisation from this perspective should be challenged. Three of the participants linked globalisation to the dominant effect of western culture on the world and explained that English is the main tool to spread this culture around the world. As one of them said:

English is one of those great communication tools now. Could have been different, couldn't it? It might have developed differently but the impact of west, USA specifically, on world culture is very considerable. (Teacher 9)

This comment by this participant suggests globalisation and so-called Americanisation or Westernisation are connected. Even though theoretically globalisation does not mean Americanisation and American culture is only part of the many other cultures that make up globalisation, from a practical point of view American culture is perceived as a role model and a leader in affecting other cultures (Poggensee, 2016). This may result in embracing and accepting American norms and values automatically which might not be favourable to some people and authorities. As Liu and Fang (2017) point out, often a language is associated with a target culture but this is not true about English as a global language and for most English learners the term target culture cannot be applied. They believe that "cultural globalisation requires that learners of English gain exposure to more cultures than the culture of traditional Anglophone countries to be successful in intercultural communication with people from different lingua-cultural backgrounds (Liu and Fang, 2017, p. 26).Therefore, in order to have successful intercultural communication and to achieve intercultural competence, it is vital that all cultures be valued and be respected on the same level. One of the teachers explained that even in his lessons he has realised that some students are rather defensive of their own culture when western ideas are being discussed:

...for example if you start talking about how the west or different western countries see politics and governments and I don't know, drugs and abortion and relationships or

things like that, then they might start arguing, or they might disagree or be very passionate about it or... (Teacher 2)

In one of the classrooms that I observed, there was a good discussion in this regard and some of the students brought up some good examples. The teacher asked them to talk about some of the challenges they face while living in the UK. Some of the problems that they could think of were rather physical and factual challenges about life in the UK in general; on the other hand, a lot more were about moralities and cultural principles. As an example, a Chinese student discussed about her willingness to hold on to her Asian values and teach them to her children. She shared her concerns in this regard and said her children are sometimes rather stubborn to learn and practise their home cultural values. She said she has realised that her children do not favour their home culture as they believe Asian culture is conservative compared to the ones that they are surrounded by in England. The notion of modesty was a point raised by the Pakistani student who I mentioned in the previous section. She was worried about how the school environment has affected her daughter to question the different perspectives around this concept in western societies and in her home country. Here is what the Chinese student stated:

We don't have religion but we have Confucianism. I notice in this country people don't show the same sort of respect that we have in China. I mean the respect that we have to older people, to the teachers. There is nothing like that here. I hope Chinese young people see it as me but everything is changing, kids are becoming more like here. (Student)

As is evident in this extract, the student expressed her concern about the effect of British culture on Chinese cultural norms. From what she explained, it is clear that she does not perceive some aspects of British culture as favourable and she does not want Chinese traditions be affected or changed. I think this kind of critical evaluation of cultures are important in achieving the aim of intercultural competence as it helps one to realise that not all aspects of western culture are

superior to one's own culture. As the above-mentioned student emphasised, individuals should notice that they need to preserve their own beliefs and norms but at the same time they need to analyse and investigate elements of other cultures, evaluate them, compare them with their own culture and try not to easily be affected by them. This is compatible with the findings of a study which was conducted by Al Qahtani (2004) in Saudi Arabia. He tried to explore the attitudes of English teachers towards introducing the target culture in their lessons in order to develop their learners' sociolinguistic competence. His findings illustrate that these teachers did have positive attitudes towards teaching the target culture and were conscious of its significance in increasing their learners' cross-cultural understanding of the meaning of culture and what its teaching may need. Nonetheless, he highlights the teachers' fear that by introducing students to the target culture it might influence their religious principles in an unfavourable way.

Similar to the above-mentioned student, one of the teachers also criticised the 'level of respect' in the UK and he also said that the influence of American and English culture on the cultures of the rest of the world is significant:

> *If I go to teach in a class of 16 year olds in the USA or even in this country, I wouldn't get anything like the respect that I get here in this centre because so many of these people value education, value teachers but I know the influence is very much one way, unfortunately.* (Teacher 4)

As Block and Cameron (2002) point out, the Americanisation of our lives is a global phenomenon as ways of doing, thinking and being (culture), most of which originate in America, flow outwards and finally are taken up in some form or another around the world. They continue stating that, "the traffic is not completely one way, from the USA outwards; however, it is to say that America is undoubtedly the key instigator and propagator of world culture". A few participants of my study referred to this point mentioning that the huge

impact of western culture on others and its consequences have been recognised by some countries and they have started to think about strategies to prevent it. For example, one of the teachers said:

I've heard that Saudi Arabia wants to restrict sending students to Europe or to the USA. I know it's extreme but thinking about the drawbacks of western culture, it isn't that simple to blame them. (Teacher 7)

Some of the participants mentioned that although they believe western ideologies are not superior to other ideologies around the world and they do not support the idea of Westernisation, it is today's reality and nobody can escape from them:

...We can't necessarily like it or approve it but we are aware of it. English is a means of communication between lots more people. (Teacher 4)

Therefore, as is evident from the above-mentioned extracts, most participants highlighted the point that while English language education can open a gate for learners to the globe, at the same time it can affect local norms. The effect of Western ideologies on people and countries all over the world is not deniable although other cultures have also contributed to globalisation. Teacher 4 provided the following example in this regard:

For example, in this country, even those English people who don't like the idea of migration and multiculturalism, they just enjoy different food. They now have much more food varieties than they used to. Their diet used to be very plain, you know, meats, potatoes, vegetables, you know, meats were over cooked, vegetables were over cooked, I don't think they really enjoyed that food. Multiculturalism helped a lot. You know, the idea of people eating pizza and curry, you know, food like that I mean nowadays for some youngish people a night out in a pub followed by a curry is a great idea. (Teacher 4)

I believe he tries to make this point that the process of globalisation has enriched British culture and this should not be taken for granted. The fact that England has been receiving immigrants from all over the world has made this country become rich culturally as people from different cultural backgrounds have shared their cultures through different ways and mediums. That is probably one of the reasons that learners' culture should be focused upon. A few of the participants said they do their best in their classrooms to focus on the students' culture and make the students talk about themselves and how they act or react in different situations back home to encourage diversity rather than just focusing on the cultural aspects that the textbooks usually suggest. They believe that in the process of promoting diversity, course books and classroom materials play an important role. As some of the participants highlighted, the new generation of textbooks encourage diversity much more than the previous ones although the most popular ones are still being produced in England and in the USA and the dominant culture that these textbooks reflect is the western culture:

> *You see nowadays materials, ELT materials are more culturally inclusive. When I was a student in a book there were just pictures of white people and they supposed to be British. Now you see pictures of children and people of all colours, races and nations. Publishing houses are becoming more inclusive. So, you never see pictures of two British people. You will see groups of students from different cultures.* (Teacher 2)

In the textbooks that the teachers used while I was observing the classrooms, I did not really notice the diversity in photos as this participant stated. However, in the worksheet that some of the teachers printed out from websites and brought to the classrooms, this kind of diversity was noticeable. The following worksheet (Figure 4.6) is an example.
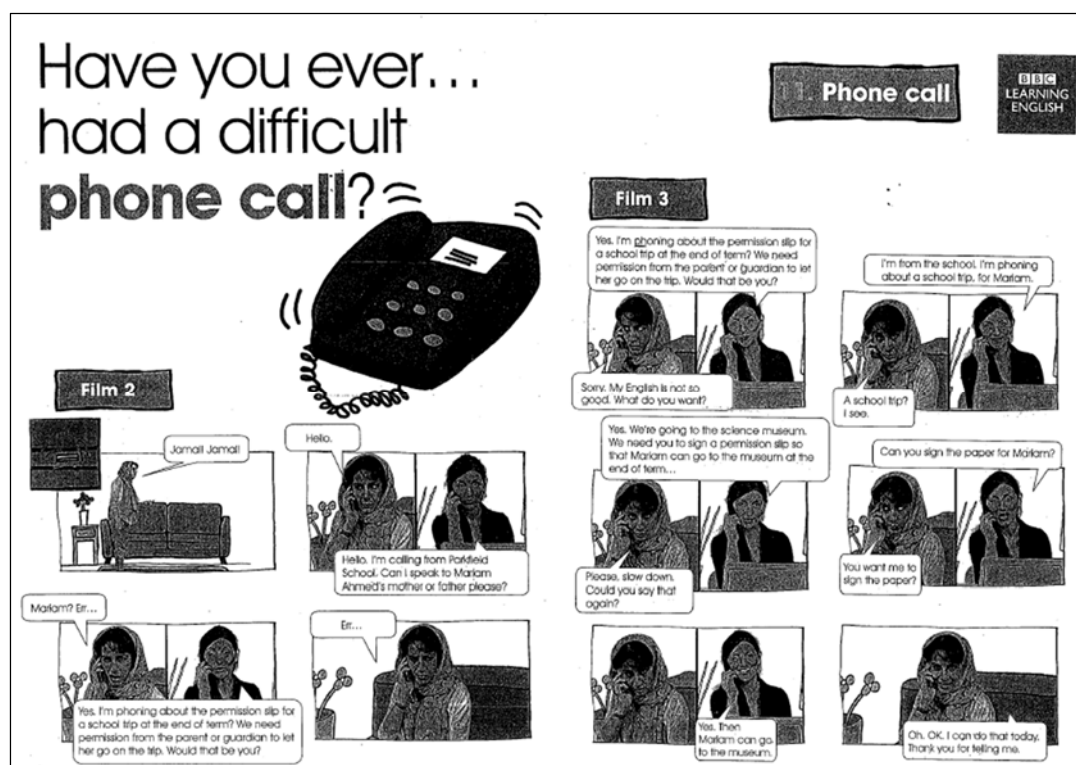
Figure 4.6: Diversity in materials

Although these kinds of materials demonstrate that resources are becoming more inclusive these days, my own understanding is that limiting it to pictures and names are not sufficient to promote diversity. Considering the status of English as an international language, scholars are of the opinion that English language textbooks should also demonstrate the global status of this language more accurately (Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013). As McKay (2003) asserts, in the light of English as an international language, the cultural content of materials should not be limited to inner circle countries (native English-speaking countries) and should include local cultural content. Although in the materials that I collected from my classroom observation I could hardly see any reference to outer and expanding circle countries (as explained in the Literature Review chapter, see section 2.4), many exercises within the textbooks encourage the students to present themselves and their cultural backgrounds. These exercises only require to be elaborated on through teachers. As an example, I observed a classroom in which the topic was *'Modern manners?'* There was a passage in the textbook that the students were asked to

read and discuss. The passage was about '*mobile phone etiquette*' and it was mainly guidelines which were offering advice on what and what not to do in social situations regarding using mobile phones which is shown in Figure 4.7.
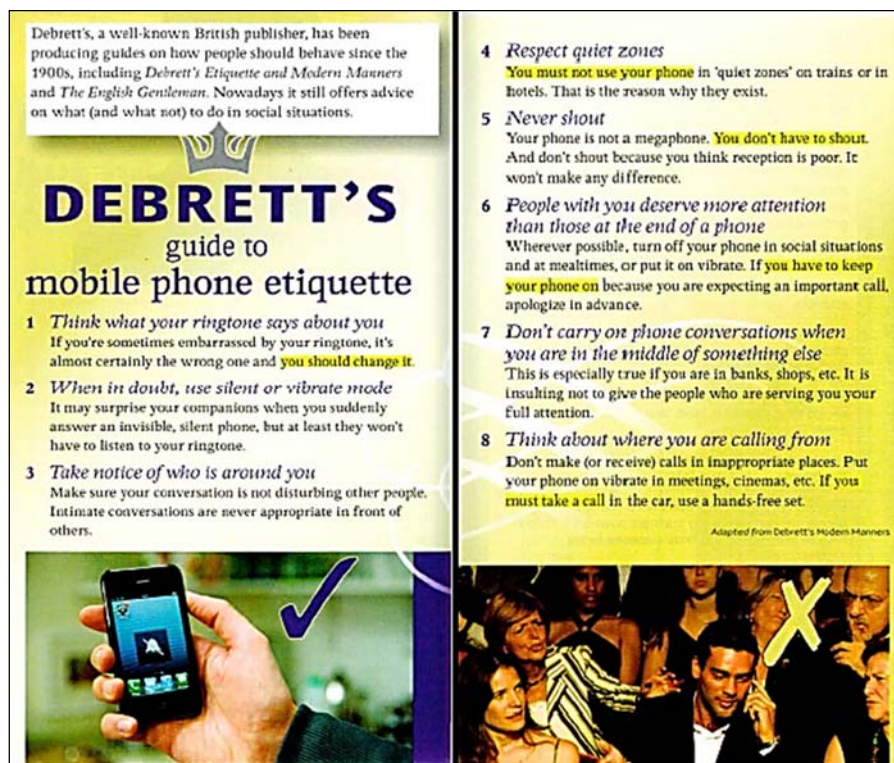
Figure 4.7: Guide to mobile phone etiquette

Although the producer of the guidelines was a British publisher, the post-reading questions that the textbook was asking the students were mostly about mobile etiquette in the place where students come from. The teacher asked the students to go through the questions and discuss them. While answering the questions, students brought up some interesting points and made comparisons. As the lesson continued, the teacher provided them with a different topic and asked them to discuss it in pairs. He wrote this down on the board: *"Imagine that you have been invited to stay for a weekend with your partner's family. Think of three things that you think it would be bad manners to do"*. These sorts of topics could be found a lot in the textbooks but it was mainly up to the teachers to decide to focus on them or not and how much attention to pay to them. As mentioned before, some of the teachers mentioned during the interviews

that these sorts of activities are not a part of the examination at the end of the course. It means the exam questions do not cover this aspect of language learning. Therefore, sometimes time limitations and exam-based courses do not allow them to cover all sections of their textbooks and when making decisions about the parts that they can omit, the cultural aspects of the textbooks are their first choices as these, in their opinion, will not help students pass their end of the course tests.

The participants' viewpoints regarding globalisation and its effect on English language education can be investigated in two parts, for its positive effects and its negative effects. Most of them believed that it does have a positive influence, firstly, as it has made the classroom environments more diverse. Most of the classrooms that I observed were multicultural and that is one of the outcomes of a globalised world. According to Czaika and Haas (2014, p.285), a main dimension of globalisation is "a fast growth in cross-border flows of all sorts, starting with finance and trade, but also ideas, ideologies, and knowledge about democratic and economic governance, cultural and media products, and people". One of the main immigrant receiving societies is the UK and this is the reason that English language classrooms in the UK are multicultural and diverse. This kind of diverse classroom environment has a great role in promoting intercultural competence even if the textbooks and even the teachers are not ready to play roles in this regard. Interactions among the students throughout the lessons can help them be more open-minded and insightful about differences and develop the kind of ability that the approach of intercultural competence offers. Secondly, on a positive side, according to some of my participants, these cross- border flows as a dimension of globalisation have made textbook publishers re-think the content of their books and they have started to take the status of English as an international language more into account compared to the past although more in-depth revisions are still needed in this respect. In addition, compared to the past, the

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students' general awareness of cultural differences has developed to some extent both inside and outside the classrooms through using technology, the internet and online networking.

Some participants also talked about the negative effects of globalisation on English language teaching. As I mentioned above, this might be the perspective that suggests globalisation has been created by the west and its purpose is cultural imperialism (Philipson, 2009). As mentioned earlier, the frequency of reference to non-English speaking cultural contexts in the textbooks that were used while I was observing the lessons are very few and some of the participants of my study put the blame on globalisation and cultural imperialism. The following extract is a representative:

> *Whatever we read in the class is about English culture but then I ask them to relate to their own culture or compare it with their own culture. English culture is a part of the curriculum probably because we are in England or maybe because English culture is dominant anyways, so we teach it when it comes. I express cultural points when it comes out in texts. Texts are about English culture but the students relate it to their own. Having students from everywhere there is a cultural issue already.* (Teacher 7)

Philipson (2009, cited in Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013) points out that in language teaching, "cultural imperialism includes the transmission of ideas about the culture of inner circle countries occurring via textbooks, the choice of content and entails the presentation of certain cultural stereotypes and values as universal and superior, while others as inferior either by omission or direct presentation" (p.85). Phillipson (1992) believes that English language teaching rebuilds cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Similarly, Brown (2007) recognises the threat of imposing a foreign value system on learners of English. Language and culture are inseparably tied to each other; however, no one

language is inseparably tied to any one culture (apart from some small languages which are an exception) (Smith, 1981). As this participant talked about Arabic language:

Languages like English or even Arabic which is quite widespread, it is the 6th most popular and most common spoken language in the world, it is not associated with one culture. It is associated with Arabic culture, the culture of the Middle East probably or Islamic culture but it is not associated with one particular culture. They do share a lot of shared qualities but they have differences in places, so, yea Arab world is quite large and a lot of countries do speak Arabic. It is not one particular place and not one particular culture. English, Spanish, other languages, similar situations. (Teacher 3)

A number of participants in my study declared that they believe the UK and the USA have always tried to impose their ideologies on the rest of the world for their own benefit and younger generations have always been their target. In this regard, one of them said that in his lessons he usually tries to help her students develop criticality:

I try to promote debate in most cultural topics, because that is the point of being here, they are here to live here or to study in the university, so it is very important for them to start being critical, start realising that their beliefs are valuable, so we give an arguments, for and against, you debate on this. (Teacher 3)

This teacher believed that many other factors are involved in the students' lives that lead them to be affected by British and American ideologies and he is aware that English lessons are only a very small part of the students' lives. However, he thinks that even a small part such as English language lessons should play their part to help them understand that everyone's values and beliefs are equally respectable. Promoting criticality will help students be aware that they have the right to question and critique matters rather than accepting matters at face value. Unlike this participant who encourages open discussions in

his lessons on different cultural topics, another participant (Teacher 2), who also agreed that globalisation may lead to the understanding that non-western cultures are undervalued, explained that he tries not to get too deep into cultural discussions in the lessons as he thinks the students might show extreme reactions:

there is an issue that they like to talk about nothing too taboo, you know, because I do think the deeper you get into culture, for example if you start talking about how the west or different western countries see politics and governments and I don't know, drugs and abortion or things like that, then they might start arguing or they might disagree or be very passionate about it or... (Teacher 2)

As some might think that this teacher does not help his students be prepared to handle challenging features of intercultural communication, he argued that these sorts of reactions have nothing to do with the students' readiness for intercultural encounters. He declared that the students might never be ready or they might not want to be ready to discuss controversial topics. Based on his experience, bringing up topics such as religious beliefs or political views might make the students feel that the teacher is forcing them to be someone else:

It is not about being ready or not, maybe they will never be ready, or they don't want to be ready when it comes to. I don't want the students to feel that I am forcing them to become someone they don't want to be. We have our own beliefs and value system and they have their owns, that is fine as long as you do not insult somebody or you don't bully somebody, you don't cause any problems. (Teacher 2)

From what he explained, it is possible to infer that he thought students who show reaction to different points of view on different topics, defending their own perspectives or positioning are a promising sign as it demonstrates that the students themselves are already aware of or in the process of being conscious about the danger of cultural imperialism. Therefore, he does not

want to let arguments happen in his lessons as it might make the lesson less enjoyable for some or most of the students.

Some other participants also had similar opinions about classroom debates on cultural topics. They mentioned that provoking differences might lead the discussions towards sensitive issues and might cause an uncomfortable atmosphere within the classroom for some of the students. Unlike Suchánková (2014) who suggests that the teachers should elicit conventional taboos and controversial topics, the participants of my study mostly try to avoid controversial discussions as they think it might lead to an uncomfortable and not friendly classroom environment although sometimes in the lessons it can be unavoidable and the students start expressing their opinions on those topics. I provide more extracts in this regard later in this chapter when I address the last research question.

As discussed, globalisation has had an impact on English language education in different ways. To a similar extent that English as a global language has affected people around the world linguistically and culturally, non-native speakers of English have also affected this language. As I discussed in the Literature Review, cultural conceptualisations in world Englishes have recently been emphasised. This means different speech communities from all over the world localise English as a global language. This aspect also emerged from the data that I collected. The following section presents and discusses the relevant data in this regard.

4.4.2 The effect of glocalisation on English speaking skills

It has recently been argued that the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca has common foundations with the notion of glocalisation (Ali and Ghani, 2016; Sharifian, 2013; Swales, 2004). In addition, it has been suggested that despite the globalisation of English, the language has become increasingly localised by many communities of speakers around the world who adopt and adapt it to encode and express their cultural conceptualisations (Sharifian, 2013).

This has led the concept of English as an international language to have similar conceptions with glocalisation since both of them share the combination of global ideas with local considerations. In section 2.6.2 of the Literature Review I explained both of these concepts in detail. Similarly to some of the previous studies (e.g., Tsou, 2015; Tong and Cheung, 2011; Rai and Deng, 2016; East, 2008), in my study one of the emerging themes was also about localising English language by its non-native speakers. In this respect, most of my participants referred to transferring first language rules into English. Therefore, this section is dedicated to those aspects of glocalisation which have emerged from my data along with discussing them whilst referring back to the literature.

Different factors such as a person's identity, culture and ideology affect their English language learning and speaking. In a multicultural environment where everyone has to communicate in English, different examples of this kind of localised varieties of English are observable. The influence of an individual's local language and culture on the way they learn and speak English was mentioned by the participants of the study and was also observed in their classrooms. Different participants made different linkages to the localisation of English. For example, one of them linked it to the educational system that the learners had in their own countries. She believed the educational system in the students' home countries affected their perspective on learning English. In addition, she highlighted that the students in English language classes in the UK learn a '*mixed kind of English*' as apart from their teachers, they learn about other students' perspectives too:

Culture in that sense I think that relates to their educational background, the type of educational background they have had, the way in which they have learned in their home countries and they bring that to the lesson, so yes they are learning English but they are learning I would say a mixed kind of English... (Teacher 3)

Her point of view is more connected to the perspectives that learners transmit to language education based on their different learning experiences in terms of methodology preferences and practical approaches of learning English. She also explained that she believes the students coming from different educational systems and backgrounds contribute to language education in one way or another and this contribution helps the teachers to broaden their views and to develop their knowledge about different methods and approaches from different countries. Similarly, another participant argued that the students bring their own perspectives of English to the lesson which are mainly shaped by the status of English in the place that the students come from and that the way English has been perceived in their home countries is also important in the way they treat English language and its learning:

> *I think the students also have a preconception about the English language and how the English language is viewed or regarded in their own countries. It may be highly regarded and it is a prestigious skill to have, it may be the other way around.* (Teacher 6)

Other than these two examples, some other participants provided more linguistic- and sociolinguistic-based examples showing that the learners conceptualise English through referring to their home culture and their first language. In the same vein, many scholars believe that despite being able to speak a language fluently there is often a pragmatic dissidence in different speech acts that may lessen the communicative intent (Cortazzi and Jin, 2008; Goh and Kwah, 1997; Rao, 2002). Therefore, language teachers, when teaching English, especially in terms of the usage of English, need to take into consideration cultural factors and embed culture in the linguistic forms that students are learning. In this respect, the participants of my study mentioned some elements that they believe English language learners adopt while communicating in English. I can categorise these participants' attitudes in terms of the effect of glocalisation on intercultural communication into two sections: sociolinguistic transfer and linguistic transfer. The following sections try to present and discuss them in detail.

4.4.2.1 Sociolinguistic transfer

Sociolinguistic transfer has been referred to by Wolfson (1989) and it has been called pragmatic transfer by House (2012). House has observed that pragmatic transfer from the first language happens often in English as a lingua franca discourse because interactions in this language with this function are found to vary at the levels of discourse and pragmatics. This was also evident in my study. For example, the concept of politeness is an obvious example that most of my participants referred to when highlighting the fact that people from different cultures may have a different understanding of politeness and might interpret social situations differently. The participants shared with me many stories in this regard from their own experiences as non-native speakers living in the UK, their experience of travelling to different countries and from their experiences in their teaching lessons. For instance, the Spanish teacher who has also lived in France explained that he shares his own experiences with his students while he teaches:

In Spanish you don't say please or thank you to your friends all the time because they are your friends and that is how you show the close relationship whereas in France you have to say please and thank you all the time if you are talking to your friends. So that is an example that I give to my students... (Teacher 1)

In this respect, most of my participants demonstrated a good understanding of the pragmatic transfer from their first language into English. As previous studies have observed, one of the challenges in intercultural communication refers to the need to create awareness about the importance of understanding speech acts interculturally. Palma-Fahey (2005) refers to speech acts as 'intercultural danger zones'. As the Literature Review chapter has shown, speech acts denote what the writer or speaker is doing when uttering a particular form of words, and their focus is on meaning (speaker's intention). The recognition of the meaning of a particular speech act in a given cultural setting is at the heart of successful intercultural communication. Speech

acts have often been considered universal. However, it has been shown that they can manifest differently across languages and cultures (Palma-Fahey, 2005). As Palma-Fahey asserts, this cross-cultural difference in language use is indicative of broader socio-cultural differences that underline language in use internationally and certainly it is at this level that much intercultural misunderstanding has its origin (2005). The results of my study also reveal that the participants believe most of the problems in intercultural communication occur when individuals transfer their cultural norms into English assuming that their addressees would share the same meaning and would understand their intention. One of the interviewees detailed his view in this regard:

Somebody who uses a particular form of a communication as perfectly normal in their culture, it might be offensive or insulting in another culture. I think that causes barrier in communication, you know, individuals might not come across in a particular way, they just communicate in a way that is the norm to them, it may be received in a way that's offensive to another one or that is bizarre and impolite. (Teacher 5)

This teacher explicitly mentioned that it is an essential task to make students aware why people of other cultures act the way they do since intolerance is often caused by pure ignorance. Another participant also explained her point of view about the potential problem in intercultural communication as below:

...people don't realise that actually adults can bully each other in very very different ways. You know students can be patronizing, they can bully about competence in the language, they can make offensive remarks about backgrounds or different cultures or political opinions or religious ones. And I think students themselves if they have never been engaged in an opportunity where they can actually talk to somebody from a different culture, all they know is the opinion of people from their own country and then they face them, and it could be quite different. (Teacher 3)

Most of the interviewees stated the significance of making their students understand that there are many different ways of doing things, and that a person with a different cultural background cannot be considered abnormal solely because s/he does things in a different way from others. They also pointed out that they might not always be able to accept some particular features of specific culture, but an awareness of the value systems underlying their operation will enable respect and intercultural understanding. Developing awareness towards differences might be helpful in the process of being open-minded and establishing respect towards any kind of variation:

> *...I think when that respect is established people are quite happy because they know that if they have a cultural difference, religious difference or whatever they will be treated with respect and will be discussed in a respectful way and they will not be reserved, feeling that they are being criticised. So I think it will take a little bit of time to establish that sort of meeting of minds and get people to talk about their way of doing things confidently and believe it will be treated respectfully.* (Teacher 9)

Learning about how different people might say and do things differently from us and learning to respect these differences can start from very smaller social units such as families or could be developed through various social contexts. As one of the participants highlighted:

> *...and this kind of communication skill can be developed in how you communicate with your family, your colleagues, your neighbours, with people you've never talked with before. I think these skills are developing in different places in life.* (Teacher 8)

However, the majority of people do not learn or develop this awareness until they move out of their cultural environment and experience a totally different environment. Even within that context they sometimes do not sense the differences or they do not need to deal with them until they start learning the language of that environment and they start having to speak,

communicate and interact with others from various backgrounds. For example, in most of the cities in the UK, different communities are often living all together in certain parts of the city. They live next to each other, establish their own businesses and do not often move out of that area. This may lead most of them to feel that they do not need to learn how to interact with people of other communities or even with native speakers. As one of the interviewees declared, the students' knowledge about cultures is '*very limited*' as they tend to stick to their own cultural community.

> *Culture is something that you experience really. I think the students probably have learnt a lot about English culture just simply by living here but still very limited because our students. I think it is limited because it depends who they mostly meet. Do they meet quite sort of lower class people or higher class people? It depends where you live or what areas you choose to live or being housed.* (Teacher 8)

When they start attending English language lessons, their classrooms will become a place for them to meet other learners from different countries and to start broadening their communications. In this situation, teachers have a vital role in encouraging them to be aware of challenges in intercultural situations, particularly about variations in the way people speak and behave and how they might find them totally different from the way they speak and behave and how they might occasionally find some of them unfavourable. This can be possible through classroom activities and practices. Therefore, language classrooms and language teachers can clearly have a useful role in developing the learners' insight in this respect. In the lessons that I observed, there were many occasions when students happened to come across cultural differences and they had frequent discussions around them. Most of the teachers were conscious enough to grasp these occasions to elaborate on them in order to develop the learners' awareness. Even in one of the classes I observed, Teacher 7 explicitly expressed '*you don't have to understand or you don't have to agree but you have to be respectful*'.

As another example, in one of the lessons that I observed, Teacher 9 tended to spot a cultural point and try to comment and elaborate on it. For instance, this happened in one of her sessions:

> *Student: Give me paper.*

> *Teacher: What we say is, could I have a paper please, or could I have a sheet?*

In the interview, she had already said that this was what she usually does and she would not necessarily say it in a way that students feel they are being told off, since they are adults at the end of the day and it is a supportive classroom. She carried on giving another example:

> *Even things like greetings, you know, are different, the way students ask for things in class, like taking leave from classrooms. Some students ask for example, if they receive a call, some students stand up and walk out of the classroom and they think it is ok. I pick up things like that. For example I say, 'if you have a call, you'd like to take a call in the classroom, that is absolutely fine, just let me know'. We find it in between: we don't say you have to turn your mobiles off, we also don't allow communicating with others who are not in the classroom. So picking up on things like that without making them feel awkward...* (Teacher 9)

These kind of examples happened rather frequently in the classes that I observed. It shows that these teachers are mindful of the problem to some extent and they try to enhance it in order to develop the students' awareness in intercultural communications. Generally, the teachers are aware that pragmatic norms in one's culture could be transferred to the other culture and that might cause problems in intercultural communications. They believe plenty of opportunities happen in their lessons which help them to elaborate on cultural differences and raise potential issues but yet, as I have often mentioned, it is still not one of their main concerns.

Some of my participants agreed that the localisation of English could be manifested through different linguistic forms. Intonations, word stress, accents and word choices were mentioned by five of the participants as elements of linguistic transfer which could be interpreted differently in different cultures. To what extent different sorts of linguistic transfer were acceptable in my participants' viewpoints and how much it could affect the learners' speaking skills and their intelligibility are discussed in the following section.

4.4.2.2 Linguistic transfer

One major issue considering the effects of globalisation as well as the effect of the learners' first language on their English, which was frequently referred by my participants, is related to their speaking skills and mainly involves intonation, word stress, pronunciation and accent. It has been observed in previous studies (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007; Scollon et al., 2011; Holliday et al., 2010) that learners of English who belong to various linguistic communities, internalise the conceptualisation of English word stress production and perception through their glocalised variety of English as part of learning the language as an international language. Jenkins (2000) and Ali and Ghani (2016), among other scholars, highlight the importance of accepting both global and local varieties of English in curriculum development. To Jenkins (2000), in order to democratise the English language, pronunciation is the area of greatest prejudice and preconception and the most resistant to change. Therefore, if English is to achieve true integrity as an international language, it must acknowledge an international phonology. Most of the participants of my study tried to demonstrate their views in this regard through referring to their students' speaking skills. Within the field of teaching English as an international language, there is the argument about what variety of English teachers should teach. Most of my participants believed that they have to teach British English as they are teaching in England, their students are living in England and British English is mostly the only variety that their textbooks offer:

When you live here you should teach British English. There are other varieties of English but they are not very useful here. (Teacher 1)

However, a few of them raised the point that whatever variety of English they try to teach through classroom activities, each student will eventually have their own particular accent and particular way of pronouncing words. One of the teachers, for example, made it clear that based on her experience, different students from different countries have their own particular way of speaking that might never or very hardly change:

I have students in my Advanced English class. They speak perfect English but without knowing them and without even looking at them, you can easily guess they are Arabs, Chinese or what other nationalities and it is perfectly fine. (Teacher 7)

She claimed that even if she works on her students' pronunciation and tries to teach them word stress and phonology, they will not lose the way they pronounce words and their accents. Therefore, she tries not to spend too much time on the pronunciation section of the textbook but advises her students to listen to radio and watch movies to improve their speaking skills. In addition, by *'it is perfectly fine'* she means that having a particular kind of accent is not a disadvantage for a non-native speaker of English as it manifests the speakers' identity and there is no need to impose British English phonology on the learners. Perhaps appreciating different types of accents is an important point in acknowledging intercultural competence as it could have a role in promoting the point that English is an international language and it belongs to all its speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Mutual intelligibility is one of the most important factors in intercultural communication (Jenkins, 2000). However, my participants did not explain their views about how much an accent might affect intelligibility and how far a teacher should go with teaching pronunciation, particularly when the teacher herself/himself is a non-native speaker and might have specific kind of accent or might not

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pronounce words in a way that a British person might do. Similar to this participant and some other participants who had similar opinions, Harmer (2007) points out that perhaps the teachers should be happy if the students can at least make themselves understood and that in today's globalised world the teachers should work towards an intelligible pronunciation rather than trying to achieve native speaker perfection. Nevertheless, I believe there is an issue here and that is about the lack of criteria for 'intelligibility' which has turned it into a pretty vague concept for teachers and students. What is intelligible for one person might not be intelligible for another person. There is no one universal regulation for intelligibility (Rajadurai, 2016). Thus, it is hard for English teachers to escape from conventional methods of teaching British and American varieties of English which even though they might not be fully learned by the students, at least give them a standard to follow (Jenkins, 1998).

Some other participants mentioned that although they only focus on British English due to institutional requirements, they do not mind other pronunciation norms. For instance, this participant was talking about the importance of sentence stress in English and how he deals with different varieties of English. He said:

> *For example, stress, because it helps a lot if you learn how to pronounce. When I was in France I had to teach both pronunciations, American and British. I know there are also other pronunciations like Indian pronunciation, Australian one but we focused on these two. Here in the UK I normally focus on British pronunciation but if they pronounce American one, that's fine, it doesn't matter as long as that is understandable.* (Teacher 6)

This extract suggests that he acknowledges intelligibility by saying '*as long as that is understandable*' and he also acknowledges that the other varieties of English are as valid as American and British ones. However, he had to focus on British English, firstly, because the students are based in England and, secondly, due to the lack of guidelines on how to promote

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intelligibility. Similarly, Jenkins (1998) asserts that teachers can use British and American phonological norms as a model in the classroom and only as a reference, not as 'the only correct norm'. She highlights that teachers and students should be able to distinguish the difference between a 'model' and a 'norm'. The term 'norm' suggests that something is standard, typical and normal. In this sense, if one treats British English as a norm, s/he implies that other varieties of English are abnormal or maybe wrong which is against the objectives of the approach of intercultural competence. From Jenkins's (2000) point of view, teachers and students should acknowledge local norms and non-native varieties; however, in order to focus on teachability and learnability of phonological areas, teachers can treat native varieties of English (e.g., British English) as a model. Similarly, Kuo (2006) defends a native speaker variety as an appropriate pedagogical model. This way of looking at native varieties might help teachers to have guidelines and points of reference rather than treating native varieties as a norm which is strongly connected to the idea of correctness and superiority of native varieties (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994 cited in Jenkins, 1998). This could help in the process of having teachable and systematic pronunciation lessons before the establishment of some sort of simplified, neutral, universal pronunciation variety which is intelligible and acceptable to both native and non-native users of English (Jenkins, 1998).

Some participants of my study highlighted the point that defining one standard way of pronouncing words is crucial as some accents are too strong to be understood and some pronunciations are too vague to be followed. As this teacher explained:

Accent is something very difficult. I always think accent is the last thing my students improve and it never gets perfect. I have lived here for many years and you can see my accent is still there, your accent is there, so hard to change. I mainly ask my students to speak slowly and make their meanings known, it is so hard though. (Teacher 7)

Or another participant talked about his own experience with regard to accents:

At the beginning of my career I had difficulty to understand some of my students' accents. I mean not only students, some British accents are hard to understand too. I'm sure you know what I mean. I used to be very anxious because as a teacher I was expected to understand all accents, at least that is how I used to think. (Teacher 5)

I believe it is worth to link what these participants mentioned about accents and pronunciation to the fact that they are non-native teachers of English. As these teachers may have their own accents, as Teacher 7 mentioned, and they are not originally British, they might be more flexible with embracing and appreciating other accents than a native speaker who might insist in acknowledging the history and the origin of English more constantly (Gill and Rebrova, 2001). In addition, the point that native speaker teachers often speak English more fluently and intuitively correct than most non-native teachers (Braine, 1999) might lead these teachers to have more idealistic expectations from their students in terms of having native-like speaking skills which might be overwhelming and demotivating for some of the students (Christen, 2008).

Furthermore, accents and pronunciation problems are related to linguistic transfer from first language to English. Many accents are associated with particular nationalities and some pronunciation errors occur as the effect of learners' first languages. For example, some sounds do not exist in some languages. For example, the 'P' sound does not exist in Arabic and the 'F' sound does not exist in Korean. Thus, the speakers of these languages might find it hard to pronounce certain words or might mispronounce them which may deliver wrong meanings in some situations and may affect the quality of the communication. As this participant stated:

I have realised Italian students have problems with vowels, especially when a word begins with a vowel. Almost all my Italian students have this issue. They say 'angry' in a way that sounds more like 'hungry', 'argue' sounds like 'hug you'. I correct them but the thing is that they don't even see the difference. They can't hear the difference, if you know what I mean, Yes, I just think it is about Italian language. (Teacher 3)

Pronunciation is one of the most challenging aspects of learning English. Even though accents are hard to be changed or some may argue that it is unnecessary to force an accent to change, learners' pronunciation in English should improve for more effective communication. Correct pronunciation of words can contribute to intelligibility, no matter what accent the speaker has. Similar to Teacher 3, Teacher 7 also mentioned that some words in English might mean something totally different if they are not pronounced in a way that dictionaries suggest and that might cause problems in communication:

*Sentence stress, on what the position of stress on words, things like that. I tell my students that one wrong stress position might change the meaning of the word. There many examples I can give in the classroom... **De**serts, De**serts** and Desserts for example. The students find them very tricky.* (Teacher 7)

As this participant emphasised, one little mistake in pronouncing a word might change its entire meaning and might cause communication breakdowns in some cases. I believe this is not about trying to be native-like but it is about being understood by a majority of English speakers and having successful communication. Similar to this finding, a study recently published by Ali and Ghani (2016) in Iraq suggests that Iraqi English learners assign more incorrect responses in word stress placement in the perception task they were set because they followed different parameter-setting orders when learning English. This led to them resetting more parameters wrongly. However, this study does not go deeply enough into the aspect of intelligibility and

to what extent this wrong stress placement might not be understandable by other speakers of English.

In this respect, Jenkins (1998) suggests that we should change what we teach. Instead of conforming to a native standard such as British English, learners need to learn not a variety of English, but about Englishes, their similarities and differences, issues involved in intelligibility, the strong links between language and identity, and so on. She has wondered whether or not we should cease correcting to develop language in the classroom and concentrate instead on helping students to accommodate more.

My classroom observations also indicate that teachers do not treat native varieties of English as an ultimate goal but sometimes they have to follow one of these varieties as a model. In most of the classes that I observed, I noticed that teachers do not expect the students to follow word stress and pronunciation offered by the dictionaries and textbooks but they do correct their students' pronunciation when they utter sounds so differently that it makes a word hard to understand. For instance, similar to what Teacher 3 mentioned about Italian students' pronunciation problems, I observed that an Italian student tended to utter the sound of letter 'O' as 'H'; for example, the 'O' in 'Other' was pronounced as 'Hather' by the student. Teacher 1 kept on correcting this student and made the student practise the sound. This approach was adopted by most of my participants. Activities and exercises that were specifically related to the students' pronunciation skills were much fewer than tasks related to other skills. However, correcting students' pronunciation mistakes was often happening in the observed lessons. The following exercise is one of the few exercises that Teacher 3 focused on. The task was about diphthongs and the students were supposed to read a list of words and write them down under the right sound columns (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Pronunciation task

As I mentioned, these sorts of exercises were very few in the lessons. However, most of the participants tended to correct their students' pronunciation only when the teachers felt that a certain way of uttering a word was too different from the offered sounds by dictionaries which either may not be understood by the hearer at all or the word might turn out to have a different meaning. Nonetheless, I think this can also be problematic. As I explained above, the concept of 'being understandable' is subjective. What might be understood correctly by one listener may not be understood by another one. Therefore, it is not easy for teachers to decide what to teach their students regarding pronunciation and where they need to correct their students' pronunciation or accent without making the students think that they have to learn to speak one of the native varieties of English and they have to overcome their accents.

Unlike word stress and pronunciation norms that can cause challenges in intercultural communication and are more related to linguistics, intonation could be seen from a sociolinguistic point of view as well. Intonation is another linguistic feature which might cause

problems in intercultural communication if the learner transfers this feature of their first language to English. As Shuying and Quan (2017) point out, decent intonation is key for successful intercultural communication and teachers should take effective strategies to prevent inappropriate intonation. Two of the strategies that they offer are emphasising more teaching intonation and decreasing the negative transfer from first language through paying more attention to intonation practices.

A few of the participants of my study mentioned that the type of intonation that learners attach to their speaking norms usually has cultural foundations. In addition, they highlighted that most of the time the type of intonation could be directly linked to politeness or lack of politeness by the listener/s. As Teacher 2 highlighted, '*different students from different nationalities have specific features of intonation*'. Similarly, Teacher 7 provided an example and mentioned that '*my Arab students are very respectful but they often sound a bit too assertive*'. In different places throughout the interview, this participant highlighted that the intonation that is transferred from first language to English might be misinterpreted as being impolite or being too direct and it will eventually have negative effect on the quality of intercultural communication:

> *For example, when I teach pronunciation, it is very important to teach them intonation. Some languages have different pitch movements that might be difficult. The students go too high which sounds aggressive or they might go too low which sounds indifferent. They are things that I find myself telling them that you shouldn't speak like that in England.*
> (Teacher 7)

As is evident in the extract, this teacher refers to intonation transfer and he also highlights 'England' as a context in which the students should be prepared to communicate effectively. In addition, the emphasis on England suggests that the teacher implicitly refers to the fact that

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the particular use of language might be appropriate in a different environment, but not in the UK. This is in the same vein as House (2012) who asserts that all the basic concepts of oral discourse (e.g., politeness, impoliteness, face, face-threat and so on) need to be considered from a cross-cultural pragmatic perspective, and they need to be embedded in particular social situations such that students are aware of how the choice of form for the enactment of a particular speech act greatly depends on the particular context of situation. In most of the classes that I observed, there were some occasions in which teachers had to remind the students that they should revise how they say something or they should change the pitch of their voices in different situations if they did not want to be misinterpreted in particular contexts (mainly while they are living in England). For instance, in one of the classes of Teacher 6 that I observed, the topic was presentations and public speech:

The teacher writes down on the board: 'How would you make sure that your presentation has been understood?'

He asks: Can anybody give an example?

One of the students says: I can ask 'Is that clear?'

The teacher says: well done but you should be careful how you say it. Put it in more polite way.

The teacher repeats 'is that clear?' (With a different kind of intonation).

He writes down more examples on the board that student could use after their presentations:

'Have I made myself understood?' or 'Anything that I could explain in a different way?' or 'is that entirely clear?' (Extract from field notes, January, 2016)

The importance of 'intonation' for the participants was obvious for me both in interviews and in observations. In this regard, some of the teachers also reflected on their own experience not as teachers but as foreigners living in the UK. For instance, one of the participants shared the unpleasant experience with me that his intonation sends a wrong message as sometimes when he speaks in English, people think he patronises. He carried on saying:

I've been told by friends that, you know, I might say something and my friend would say stop patronising. I say no I am not patronising, so the friend goes 'oh the way you said it.' Then I say 'oh I am sorry I am not aware if my intonation has implied that I am trying to patronise but that was not my purpose. (Teacher 2)

As Harmer (2007) points out, intonation is a vital carrier of meaning and it has a lot to do with voice pitch. By changing the pitch of our voice we might attach different meanings to the same sentence. It is through intonation that individuals demonstrate if they are asking a question or making a statement, if they are enthusiastic or bored and many other attitudes. I believe these are relevant to the challenges that one might encounter in intercultural communication and they should be ready to prevent or tackle them. One of my participants emphasised that intonation becomes even more critical in some specific situations. One of the situations that he mentioned is when people make requests:

I think in communications misunderstandings might happen. I think it most has to do with somebody's intonation when they are asking for something and when they are demanding something or they want to disagree with you. So I think it is intonation mostly is important.
(Teacher 6)

Intonation has been perceived as a notoriously tricky area since many students find it difficult to hear changes in pitch direction or they may be in a wrong pitch direction as the result of unconscious first language transfer. As I explained earlier, this might eventually lead a

communication to somewhere unpleasant. Strange intonation makes unnatural English and inappropriate rhythm will add to the speaker's accent even though they have the right pronunciation (Shuying and Quan, 2017). As well as the students, for many teachers the most problematic area of pronunciation is intonation. The teachers themselves might also find it extremely difficult to hear 'tunes' or to identify the different patterns of rising and falling tones (Harmer, 2007). In such situations, it would be foolish to try to teach them. However, some of the participants of my study declared that instead of lecturing the students on different aspects of pronunciation (including intonation and word stress), they use audio-visual aids such as movies, songs, radio news, TV shows and so on. In the classroom observations, I noticed that a few teachers ask the students to listen to dialogues and copy the rhythm. Most of the speakers of those dialogues were native speakers. The following exercise (Figure 4.9) is an example from a textbook that was practised in a lesson that I observed.

Figure 4.9: Pronunciation-sentence stress

In such examples, it is clear that the teachers try to use one of the native varieties of English as a norm or model for their students to follow. However, as I explained, this approach has also been criticised. For example, Alptekin (2002) who strongly criticises the approach of communicative competence, questions the validity of the pedagogical model whose focus is on native speaker competence in the target language setting. He tries to show the utopian,

unrealistic, and constraining essence of the notion of communicative competence with its standardised native speaker norms. He argues that the components of the approach of communicative competence suggests "the need to become English-speaking people, different from the people who speak their native language, assuming the body language, intonation, and life view of English speakers" (Alptekin, 2002, p.59). Scholars, such as Alptekin (2002) and Harmer (2007), who offer 'intelligibility' rather than 'perfection', believe it is asking for too much and it is an unrealistic objective if teachers want their students to practise to sound like speakers of a prestige variety of English. However, as discussed above, they fail to offer a realistic and systematic approach to practise intelligibility without referring to one of the native varieties as well as acknowledging world Englishes. In addition, within the debates around the necessity of intercultural competence, most attention has been paid to pragmatics and socioloinguistic challenges and very little attention has been paid to linguistic transfers and the challenges that they may cause. More studies are needed to explore how linguistic transfers from local languages into English might lead to misunderstandings and more importantly, how learners could develop insightfulness to be ready and tolerant to deal with the linguistic transfers of other individuals in their intercultural communication.

In general, all the above mentioned findings of my study as well as the other studies demonstrate that while nowadays teachers are moving away from the position of conforming to native-speaker norms and while the teachers try to show their students that imitating native-speaker speaking norms is no longer valid, there is still a need for a rethink in terms of the role of pronunciation and intonation, and their aim within English language teaching. In other words, there is a need to consider how linguistic transfer could challenge intercultural communication and how individuals could deal with these challenges. There is also a need to consider the question of which pronunciation norms and models are most appropriate for classes aiming to prepare learners for interaction in English in international language contexts,

and to raise teachers' awareness of the issues involved. Global intelligibility rather than a narrow focus on a standard British or American accent has been recommended by scholars and practitioners. However, more research is yet to be done to offer systematic principles for global intelligibility.

4.5 Teachers' understanding of the concept of intercultural competence

The majority of the participants were not precisely familiar with the term intercultural competence and some of them had not even heard of the term. Those who had heard the term declared they had heard of it somewhere outside the English language teaching context. However, after all the discussions around it, most of them agreed that this approach could be integrated into language lessons to develop the learners' awareness and insightfulness about cultural differences, tolerating ambiguities and being patient. For example, one of the teachers explained her understanding of intercultural competence as:

I can kind of guess what it is about. It has something to do with cultural awareness; you know awareness of equality and diversity, different cultures. (Teacher 1)

Most of the participants demonstrated a similar understanding towards this approach which sounds promising. Some of them also referred back to the previous discussions on pragmatic transfer and linked it to their definition of intercultural competence:

Maybe somebody says something which looks a bit strange, it maybe because it is norm in their culture to say something, as I said, so patience... (Teacher 3)

Another participant similarly said:

... it is the case of being polite, case of being respectful, case of sort of not taking the offence perhaps... (Teacher 9)

The majority of them provided short and concise answers when I asked them to describe their understanding of the concept of intercultural competence. There were a few participants who explained that intercultural competence could be achieved through interactions with others and having curiosity to discover the difference. They believed individuals can naturally develop this sort of competence by being approachable and broad- minded and this cannot be achieved theoretically:

> *I think just being open and honest with that person, perhaps asking a little bit about them, getting to know them, I don't think the solution is necessarily reading volumes and volumes about people from different cultures, it is not feasible and practical at all* (Teacher 4)

This participant agreed that the relevant skills to enhance intercultural competence should be developed through communication and through being involved with differences. Nobody can be competent by only having theoretical knowledge about different countries. However, to get involved and to start communicating properly with people of different cultures, individuals need to be prepared to come out of their own communities and start interacting and building up relationships. Most of the participants agreed that differences can lead to struggles in communication and these differences can be on various levels, including being different in terms of personality and social class. However, miscommunications among people from different cultural backgrounds are usually more common and have more linguistic and sociolinguistic basis most of the time. Elements of speech acts such as utterances that have a performative function[3] in communication were the most commonly emphasised reasons involved in communication breakdowns in intercultural communications. All those speech acts

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[3] Performative function of speech acts means an utterance provides a function in communication. One performs speech acts when they intend to propose an apology, greeting, request, compliment and so on. For instance, one says "Sorry!" to perform an apology (Petrey, 2016).

referred to by the participants that would fit into the framework of politeness were believed to be the main source of intercultural communication breakdowns. For example, one of the participants described intercultural competence as:

The ability of a person to understand other cultures and I guess to be able to respond to them in a polite manner. (Teacher 5)

However, this participant did not make it clear what she meant by a 'polite manner'. 'Polite manner' is a subjective concept and can have different connotations in different cultural societies. Over the interviews, the most commonly mentioned situations of politeness were: ordering, greeting, inviting, refusal/acceptance of requests, appreciation/ apology, directness/ indirectness. These elements are parts of speech acts the performance of which could be culture specific and most of my participants believed their reference to these situations was usually through English culture.

As the interviews were directed towards exploring the integration of intercultural competence into English language teaching and English lessons' role in preparing students to develop relevant skills, the teachers did not demonstrate that they had much to share although none of them were resistant towards the approach either. They welcomed the idea and declared that English language teaching can be an excellent place to help learners develop knowledge and skills about communication issues among different cultures. For instance, as this teacher declared:

I think a lot of misunderstanding can be avoided if you have some awareness of the students' cultures. ELT context is an ideal context to develop the students' awareness. (Teacher 1)

However, the participants said they wished intercultural competence had been included in their pre-service or teacher-training courses in order to have a clearer understanding of how it can

be dealt with in the classroom and what particular activities could be practised in the classroom in this regard.

I have heard about it but I can't remember where, I think it has been advertised 'intercultural communication and so on'. I think it is university of East Anglia they have a masters course in intercultural communication studies or something. I think I have seen it as a term but I haven't heard or read about it even in the CELTA course or other training courses. I would love to learn more about it because I think it is very important. (Teacher 1)

In a similar vein, another teacher stated:

The point is to understand the relationship between English language learning and intercultural communication competence. I suppose, as a teacher, I seem to have chosen an environment where this does happen quite a lot, I think, but yea, that is probably something to enjoy learning about more. I never heard of it in the training courses I have attended. (Teacher 7)

This is also an aspect of the findings of studies conducted by Almawoda (2011) in Bahrain and Lázár (2003) in the four European countries of Cyprus, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. This suggests teacher education has to appreciate the implications of intercultural competence and provide learners with practical and theoretical support in order to prepare them to handle the challenges in intercultural communication and develop their awareness of their own cultural identity and the world they are living in. Both of them suggest that there is a need to include theoretical and practical elements of intercultural competence in teacher training programmes which would establish the foundations for systematic education in this field. In addition, according to some of my participants, intercultural consideration is already one of the fundamental bases of English lessons in the UK (as a multicultural society) and is already

present unconsciously as the students are coming from different cultural backgrounds and they bring their own cultural elements to the lesson. One of the teachers explicitly mentioned that intercultural considerations happen naturally in her lessons:

I think in ESL/EFL classrooms it happens quite naturally to be fair, it happens naturally in any speaking situation in the classroom. (Teacher 3)

This extract suggests that intercultural competence is not being taught systematically but there are opportunities in the lessons where students can gain the skills related to intercultural competence. This is similar to what Lázár (2003) found in his study. He reported that none of the teachers who participated in his study teach intercultural competence in a systematic and organised way although they acknowledge its significance. As his research did not have any observational data, he does not discuss if and how intercultural competence is being dealt with in their lessons. However, my findings suggest that intercultural competence is implicitly embedded in all classroom tasks and exercises but it only needs to be approached more explicitly. Perhaps this requires a learner-centred setting to happen. When an intercultural classroom environment is described, student learning is normally represented as learner-centred, engaging, interactive, participatory and cooperative (Byram et al., 2002; Moore, 2006). Much of the inquiry into intercultural competence defines the students as a researcher, or discoverer of knowledge, viewing the learners much like an anthropologist who explores, analyses, evaluates and investigates a topic both in and outside of the classroom (Furstenberg, 2010; Kearney, 2010; Lee, 1998; Moore, 2006). Therefore, based on what the participants mentioned, as most of the elements of intercultural competence happen spontaneously and naturally in their lessons, promoting learner autonomy seems to be important for the learners in order to be able to benefit from their multicultural classes to its fullest. In the next section I look at the relation between promoting learner autonomy and developing intercultural

competence as it is one of the themes that I can draw out from the data to explain how the participants perceive the integration of intercultural competence in their lessons.

4.5.1 Promoting learner autonomy

In my study one of the emerged themes is about promoting learner autonomy in language lessons to enhance learners' intercultural competence. The data of my study suggest that classroom interactions and the learners' self-reflection while doing different activities during their lessons have a strong role in the process of achieving elements of intercultural competence. In this regard, some examples from my lesson observations appeared in the previous sections. Most participants mentioned that mainly because their classrooms are multicultural, students naturally use every opportunity to refer back to their own cultural backgrounds and share them with others. The students will be able to get more out of these spontaneous interactions if their teachers make a conscious effort to facilitate and guide the interactions, and highlight the sensitive and problematic aspects. The following extract is representative of what some of the participants declared across the interviews:

> *If it is a multicultural classroom it is important to make them work together and raise related issues and say 'oh do you say that in your culture?' 'do you say that in your language?' we do that in English and we don't do that in English'. Or I mention my own culture saying that we Greeks are very different from British people. So I think it is important to do this. I don't think it causes problem, it causes problem only if you don't talk about it, you know, I think it is important to try to mix them up.* (Teacher 2)

As this extract implies, various aspects of cultural differences are usually raised by students in multicultural classrooms; however, it requires teachers' mindfulness to elaborate on them and help them realise how these differences might cause problems in communications. This might eventually help learners to acquire the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills that are

elements of intercultural competence suggested by Byram (1997). Another participant similarly declared that:

> *What I can add is I think it is interesting to teach in this area but you don't intend teach culture but it is part of it. So, it comes as a package, you can't avoid it. So, you end up mentioning it, you let the students relate to it, let them explore it among themselves and gain knowledge from each other maybe and at last you find yourself mentioning it.* (Teacher 7)

As this extract suggests, allowing students to relate to a particular cultural issue and allowing them to explore unfamiliar elements are related to the students' independent learning. They reflect, relate and learn through the classroom activities, and not through being directly taught but at the same time the teacher facilitates the learning process. As Byram (1997) describes, the immersion experience corresponds to the 'independent learning' concept in which learner autonomy plays a central part. Even though a broad range of studies have been conducted within the area of learner autonomy, only very few of them have linked it to the approach of intercultural competence. Zumbihl is one of those who has carried out a study in this regard in France (2012). In her study, she tries to examine the concept of learner autonomy in language and culture learning and how it can be applied to intercultural communicative competence. She particularly explores developing the capacity to learn and to take control of one's learning through self- exploration as well as self- development, as it seems to be particularly adapted to the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence. Similarly to what my study indicates (as is evident in most examples from field notes provided throughout the chapter), the findings of her study suggests that learners' self-reflection and self-development are at the centre of a process of intercultural competence in which the teacher plays the role of a guide and a facilitator.

Zumbihl (2012) agrees that the elements of intercultural competence could be learned through experience and reflection, and the students themselves have the most important role. Nevertheless, the teachers' roles should also not be neglected as it is the teachers who are responsible for promoting learner autonomy and for creating modes of teaching and learning accordingly (Byram, 1997, Zumbihl, 2012). In my classroom observation, it also came to my attention that the students who are in relatively teacher-centred classrooms, have fewer opportunities to interact with their classmates and accordingly their level of reflexivity and self-reflection is not evident. It means those teachers who have a conventional and traditional style of teaching, do not provide enough opportunities for their students to express themselves and reflect on their experiences and backgrounds. In those classes where the teacher's role is facilitating the classroom activities and group discussions, students have plenty of chances to learn from each other and to contribute to the lesson. Although through the interviews most of the teachers supported the idea of promoting learner autonomy and encouraging independent learning, only few of them were really practising to incorporate the theory of learner autonomy due to various reasons; for example, time limitations and exam-based courses. This might call for a change in the pedagogical relationship between teachers and learners. As Byram and Morgan (1994) point out, the teacher now has new roles to play. In order to teach communication skills in today's world, the role of the teacher is to create a learning environment in which learners accept responsibility for their learning role in order to become more autonomous.

Having written about some classes which appear to be still in need of practising to allow students take control of their learning, in general there were many occasions in the observed lessons where the students' self-guided interactions doing different tasks could be helpful to enhance the individual's self-reflection and self-awareness and their abilities to interact in an intercultural context. These tasks were mainly designed for various purposes such as

developing the students' grammatical and lexical knowledge but learners independently made them personal. This does not mean that teachers have no role. In regard to the objectives of intercultural competence, while I acknowledge classroom limitations, I do believe that in the observed classrooms learning outcomes could be at a higher level if the teachers could use and direct the provided opportunities in an organised way. In a similar vein, when Byram (1997) considers the objectives of intercultural communicative competence, he recognizes the limitations of the classroom context of learning but teachers can still structure and influence the learning opportunities involved.

Moreover, some of the participants of my study acknowledged the point that enhancing intercultural competence is a matter of life-long learning and it cannot only be limited to the language classroom context. Even though most of them appreciated that the English classroom can be a good place in this respect, its restrictions limit it to be fully involved in the process of fostering learners' knowledge, attitudes and skills. Particularly, considering the fact that their students have started living in the UK which, as mentioned before, is a diverse country, there are ample spaces for the students to acquire the elements of intercultural competence outside the classroom, in the society that they live in. For example, this participant said:

> *They are already in Sheffield and when you live somewhere. You pick things up just simply by living in somewhere. You pick things up because you know, you just do. It is unavoidable really. It may take some time but you finally pick things up.* (Teacher 8)

Similarly, Murphy-Lejeune asserts that "life abroad represents an extensive natural learning situation which stimulates many more aspects of learners' personalities than are usually catered for in educational institutions" (2003, p.101). Furthermore, Byram (1997) categorises three locations to acquire intercultural communicative competence: the classroom, the pedagogically structured experience outside the classroom, and the independent experience. However, these

three locations are interrelated. Even though the students might be able to develop their capabilities outside the classrooms in respect of intercultural competence, language lessons should enhance learners' autonomy in the classroom to enable them to experience the period of independent learning outside the classroom while facing different types of everyday situations.

Therefore, if teachers try to encourage autonomous learning within the classrooms, outside the classroom, in intercultural encounters, the students would be able to learn from their experience through self-reflection and their experience would not remain passive. In other words, English language lessons need to prepare the learners for the world outside the classroom by helping them to be autonomous learners. An autonomous learner would tend to analyse the situation and learn from it and would try to be more aware of self and others. Murphy-Lejeune (2003) considers autonomy and self-confidence as strategic skills as "they derive from combined efforts to reach the goal of managing one's life in a new cultural environment. They are the means by which success abroad is attainable" (p.104). It also means that preparation for study abroad experience should help students develop these strategic skills. Lesson objectives set by the teachers have important roles in this process. The language teachers' objectives should be to help students be able to learn and to understand by themselves, which, for teachers, consists of creating opportunities for learners to learn how to acquire competencies and skills in addition to knowledge. Sercu (2004) points out that "autonomous learning is already practised by many foreign language teachers who consciously or not occasionally include problem-based or task-based learning approaches in their classroom" (p.64).

Intercultural communicative competence may also be autonomously acquired by students through activities which will encourage critical thinking, collaborative learning, self-initiated knowledge acquisition, and cooperative evaluation of alternatives (Sercu, 2004). Many of these activities were included in the lessons that I observed but the teachers still need to be more

mindful of intercultural competence in order to make more explicit linkages between these activities and learning about cultures along with helping the students become autonomous learners. In those lessons I realised that while most of the students were very enthusiastic to speak, interact and reflect, there were some students who did not participate in discussions. For example, observation of teacher 6 showed a number of students busily using their mobile phones. This appears to suggest non-participation in the lesson. Lack of classroom participation might be about the students' personalities, about the cultural background they have or about their level of enthusiasm to learn. In either case, I think teachers have a responsibility to provide a more comfortable atmosphere in the classroom which encourages all students with different personalities and learning preferences to contribute to the lesson in order to raise their self-awareness and intercultural competence. The following extract is from my field notes and indicates what Teacher 6 did in order to increase the students' participation:

At the beginning of the session: asks students to re-structure their chairs and move them into circles.

The teacher divided the students into groups of four.

The teacher gave each group a topic (verb tenses) and asked each group to design a lesson on that topic and teach it to the other groups.

She emphasised that everyone in the group should take part in teaching.

She said that their teaching should include activities and tests.

The topics were grammar (the ones that they had been taught in previous lessons)

The students spent an hour to prepare and the rest of the session for teaching. (Extracts from field notes, 20 January, 2016)

I believe this was a very interesting and creative activity which obviously improved the students' participation. Even the students who were not involved in the tasks in previous sessions, had to get involved in this task. They were rather doubtful about the task at the beginning but they started to participate and help their group members eagerly. All students came up with creative ideas to design their teaching. They did find this exercise very unique. They all declared that they had never had experience of teaching other students. The task does not seem to be related to cultures but it required a lot of interaction among group members. It also helped quiet students to engage and take part in the discussions which was helpful for them to start interacting with the classmates in other tasks and be open with the students who were not necessarily from the same cultural backgrounds.

An autonomous learning environment requires a less pressured setting within which students' self- awareness and their willingness to learn from and about each other are the most important aspect of their learning process. What should be considered more is that the students need to learn more about the practical side of using English rather than learning sets of theoretical rules. One of my participants highlighted this point in a very clear way:

> *So, if you focus very much on the academic side of English, the grammar, pronunciation and so on, I imagine that would have a limited improvement in intercultural interaction compare to if you use English language lessons to discuss culture. Yea, I think practicing real life situations that you come across in a particular culture, like the culture of Sheffield in England, while learning English and learning English and the cultural knowledge that you need to navigate that interaction would be a very direct way that English language learning can help with intercultural communication.* (Teacher 4)

In spite of the point that the participants supported the idea of creating an autonomous learning environment in the lessons, the classroom observations indicated that the shift from

traditional teacher-centred classrooms towards learner- centred classrooms has still remained limited in most lessons. However, it was clear in the observations that even in the teacher-led classrooms, there were opportunities for learner initiative. Students use every opportunity to express themselves. They often reflect on their own frame of reference and cultural values through the tasks that their teachers want them to complete and they continue comparing their own perspectives with their classmates who are usually from different cultural backgrounds. Whether these practices are self-initiated or teacher-directed, they are all useful to achieve progress towards intercultural competence. According to Sercu (2004), learner autonomy does not necessarily mean that teachers play less of a role than students in the classroom. Learner autonomy can still be encouraged in the classrooms that are being dominantly directed by teachers. He believes that, even though learner autonomy is often associated with less teacher direction in the classrooms, teacher guidance and intervention are necessary as learners need a starting point to become involved with the lesson. The students might also encounter a problem and need help to solve a linguistic or intercultural problem (Sercu, 2004).

My classroom observations demonstrate that the lessons are generally being led by teachers but the teachers' role in terms of promoting intercultural competence vary in different classrooms depending on the materials that the teachers bring in or the activities that they decide to emphasise. It is clear from the examples that I have provided so far in this chapter that teachers have a key role in creating a lively and encouraging classroom environment in which all students feel comfortable to talk about various topics including their own cultural values, experiences and feelings. Within this kind of environment all learners are able to share their perspectives and attitudes towards different issues with the rest of the class which will eventually help them to broaden their views and awareness about different points of

views which will contribute significantly to developing their capability to have successful interactions in the diverse societies that they live in.

Although I have presented some classroom activities throughout the chapter and in all sections, I would like to dedicate an additional section to classroom activities in order to be able to address my third research question more explicitly.

4.6 Classroom activities in relation to intercultural competence

Observations were conducted for this study mainly in order to answer the third research question which is about the integration of intercultural competence into the classrooms regardless of the teachers' familiarity and acknowledgment of the concept. Based on the experience I had from the pilot study and also according to the literature, what participants mentioned during the interviews might have come from their theoretical knowledge and understanding, which are not always the same as what they actually practise or what they are required to practise. I believe most of the activities that were being undertaken in the observed lessons had the potential to be linked to the development of intercultural competence depending on how the teachers and the students were approaching them. Most speaking activities, including role plays and group discussions and activities that involve visual aids such as pictures and videos are all helpful in promoting intercultural communication in language classrooms. I believe most tasks encourage students to compare, contrast, identify, emphasise and provide information concerning different cultures. All the activities being practised in the classrooms, in my opinion, have the potential of being linked to the model of intercultural communicative competence. As explained in the literature review chapter, the model on intercultural competence which was proposed by Byram (1997) consists of three main dimensions: attitudes, knowledge and skills. I believe the classroom activities in the observed lessons could be explicitly linked to the elements of this model in order to make sense of the

activities in connection with intercultural competence. Below I am going to present the data in relation to each element of this model.

4.6.1 Attitude

Attitude in the model of intercultural communicative competence is about features of personality in terms of openness, flexibility and tolerance, which are expressed in non-judgmental attitudes in many ways (Camerer, 2014). Attitudes can include curiosity and openness, a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Spencer-Oatey and Frankin, 2009). The attitudes people have influence their interactions with others because these attitudes generally create expectations (Guirdham, 2005). These expectations can be the result of factors such as ethnocentrism and cultural stereotypes. Teachers' alertness to these concepts plays an important role in the classroom as they can help their students realise that their attitudes might have a negative effect on the quality of their communication. For example, in one of the lessons that I observed, they were doing an activity in which they were supposed to talk about the places or countries they had visited and to reflect on their experiences. A student said he had travelled to China and he found Chinese food very strange. He went on: "*Chinese eat everything*". The teacher showed an immediate reaction gently saying: "*Chinese don't eat everything but they might have types of food which you don't have in your country*". He explained to me later that he has to emphasise those points to prevent any kind of conflict in the classroom between the students as other students in the classroom might find them offensive and these discussions in the classroom might help them in the society as well. Therefore, having various types of speaking activities will definitely aid the students to develop their awareness about existing differences and will repeatedly challenge the type of stereotypes they usually rely on which will assist them to be aware that the attitudes they have been holding towards something might not be always the reality. An extract from Teacher 4 that I have already provided earlier can also refer to this point:

We might send a wrong message but I think that is human that can happen between two people from the same culture. It might be more common more serious between people of different cultures though. Also, the expectations that people have about the other culture these expectations are formed by what you see on TV and what you read in books it is about stereotypes. It is a misconception of false generalisation that you make about a group based on a single experience. I think in communications misunderstandings might happen. I raise these things in the classroom. (Teacher 4)

Another teacher also made a similar point in this regard. He tried to warn teachers against letting their teaching be affected by their personal attitudes towards different cultures:

I suppose looking at it in simple terms, which can sound racist, encountering a black person for the first time is for a teacher who is not experienced in that, it is going to be a big challenge in knowing how to think since this person doesn't speak good English. So you might be led to think that this person is not clever, not intelligent. That can be totally wrong, can't it? Because the only thing that is right is the fact that he doesn't speak English very well. He may be , he may have a PhD in something in his country , he may be a doctor but somebody in this country is going to think in terms of what does this person represent and the answer is 'I don't know what this person represents except that he doesn't speak English very well.' But then of course I don't speak Swahili very well, you know, or whatever language it is. So I assume the fact is, depending on where we are, we all have different experiences but a lot of those experiences will be very similar, we are all human beings. (Teacher 9)

In another lesson that I observed, the topic of the lesson which was suggested by the text book was '*Stereotypes – or are they?*' The students were supposed to do the reading and discuss their thoughts. The main topic was about men and women, and the relevant stereotypes. The

reading was suggesting that research studies have proved that the stereotype that women talk and gossip more than men is wrong. Another reading within the same lesson was also suggesting that women and men are equally good at looking after children. Although these topics are not directly linked to culture, it might be useful for the students to start thinking that other ideas that they hold about a group of people might not necessarily be correct. The teacher (Teacher 2) also set them a speaking task in this regard. He wrote the following sentence on the board:

Prove that the research in A 'gossip with the girls' is wrong!

He divided them into groups of mixed genders and provided them with the following topics:

If you're a woman, try to talk for two minutes about:

Football, cars, computers

If you're a man, try to talk for two minutes about:

Fashion, shopping, your family (Extracts from field notes, 08 December, 2015).

What was interesting in this task was that the students automatically directed their discussions to the position of men and women in their countries and how they think some of the stereotypes are not right. For instance, a Saudi girl was talking about cars and she was explaining that she is very interested in different brands of cars but she is not interested in driving. She explained about her feelings when she comes across some general comments about women in Saudi Arabia:

People ask me about driving, they think we have a bad time because we don't drive but

for example me, I have a driver. I don't need to drive myself. I know all car brands. I like

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them only. I am comfortable. I am happy but people here think woman in Saudi Arabia

have problem. (Student)

As it is clear, within this lesson the students were encouraged to talk about the typical taboos in their countries about men and women and outsiders' perspectives about those taboos. This particular topic of the lesson could fit into Hofstede's masculinity vs. femininity dimension in his framework where he discusses that in different societies, women and men tend to display different values (2001). According to Hoftstede's definitions, "Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life" and "Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life." (Hofstede, 2001, p.297). Someone from a masculine social background might have difficulty in understanding the traits of a feminine culture and vice versa. This might cause each group to develop a negative attitude towards the other group and it might eventually lead to have negative impact on communication and building up relationships with people of different cultures. The examples provided from the observed lesson seem to be very helpful for learners to start challenging the controversial opinions that they have considered as the truth for their entire life and to start learning readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Byram, 2003). The dimension of attitude in Byram's model suggests developing positive attitudes towards other cultures with the aim of promoting tolerance, empathy and creating settings for peaceful life and relationships (Byram, 2003).

4.6.2 Knowledge

Camerer (2014) claims that knowledge in intercultural communicative competence does not necessarily mean having read lots of academic books, but rather being aware that my reality construct is one among many others and there is no reason to believe my view of the world is the only one and the only valid one. He tries to link knowledge to awareness saying we might not know precisely the present differences in different cultures but we must keep in mind that the differences exist and different people might see the world differently and might interpret the same phenomenon from various perspectives. This point can be elicited from what some of the participants brought up during the interviews when they were asked to explain how they perceive the notion of intercultural competence:

...it is impossible to learn about every single culture and then if it is spontaneous interaction or communication, how would you say 'oh I met a Spanish person. Oh I haven't really read about Spanish people', it is not really how the world works and you have to be aware of the situation... (Teacher 1)

Also another teacher similarly asserted:

I don't think the solution is necessarily reading volumes and volumes about people from different cultures, it is not feasible and practical at all... (Teacher 4)

Some of the participants said that this knowledge could be acquired simply by living and studying in a multicultural environment and it is usually not directly teachable. However, they also declared that classroom activities could play a great role in the process of gaining this knowledge particularly considering the fact that the classrooms are usually diverse. One of the participants referred back to his own experience in this regard and said that starting to live in the UK has helped him significantly to develop knowledge and awareness about differences:

I just use my experience. I can only use my experience about what I have learned about difficulties. I didn't have a lot of knowledge about individual cultures before I had come to this country and especially before I had started to work here. I had not met people from different cultures before. So, to this extent, this has been a great change for me for the better. (Teacher 9)

Knowledge is one of the dimensions of Byram's model. 'Knowledge' of one's self and others means knowledge of the rules for individual and social communication and includes knowing social groups and their practices, both in one's own culture and in the other culture. "Knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the speaker's country on the one hand; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and social levels, on the other hand" (Byram, 1997, p.27). Since English is a lingua franca, for learners of English, the speakers can be people anywhere in the world. Hence, in English teaching, such knowledge can refer to the different cultures and languages of people of different countries or even people of different social groups in the same country. In addition, English is a global language. People use this language to interact with other people of various cultures. These cultures are not limited to only one country. Regarding this dimension, my study reveals that, teachers primarily attempt to convey information about English and British culture as I explained in the earlier sections. They create an environment in their lessons to help the students acquire factual knowledge in the form of cultural information, (Large C culture) and ways of thinking and behaving (Small c culture) (Chastain, 1976, p.338; Doyé, 1999, p.19). The teachers' rationale for their particular focus on English norms and culture has been discussed above. On the other hand, one aspect of knowledge in Byram's model is about knowledge of self. Self- reflection is an undeniable element in the process of being competent in communication with different cultures. Thus, teachers need to encourage their students to reflect more on their own culture since retaining one's own cultural beliefs is as important as

being aware of the other culture. My classroom observations indicated that the students end up bringing up their own cultural elements during the classroom activities and teachers play a big role in allowing this to happen. It can also be motivating for the students to speak about such matters in English. I have already discussed and presented some activities in this regard in previous sections.

4.6.3 Skills

In Byram's model (1997), the 'skills' dimension has been divided into two categories. Firstly, there is the skill of interpreting and relating and, secondly, the skill of discovery and interaction. The first one refers to the ability to interpret a text (oral or written) from another culture, to explain it and to relate it to texts from one's own. In other words, it refers to one's ability to understand, to describe and to relate events and texts from another culture to one's own culture. The second one helps the individual to obtain "new knowledge of culture and cultural practices," including the ability to use existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills in intercultural communications (p.98). It is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture/cultural practices and to operate knowledge, attitudes, skills in real-time communication and interaction.

Regarding this dimension, most of the participants perceived it as important to equip their students with the ability to cope in contacts with local people of the place they live in and with whom they will probably use the language the most. They talked about the necessity of giving students adequate practice in common every-day situations as presented in the first section of this chapter (see section 4.2.1 and section 4.2.1.2). Both parts of the dimension of skills in Byrams' model could be achieved through promoting learner autonomy as discussed earlier along with developing teachers' mindfulness to expand the raised cultural points within the lessons. In this regard I have already provided examples from the field work throughout this chapter and I give more examples in the next section.

4.6.4 Classroom materials

Materials play a prominent part in the process of language teaching. Even though they are not the core focus of my study and independent studies have been and still need to be conducted focusing on the intercultural content of materials in English language teaching, it is unavoidable not to talk about them in my study as they have had a significant role in the lessons that I observed. The teachers' choices of materials and their decisions on what to focus on more can point to evidence of their attitudes towards intercultural competence. The importance and the effectiveness of classroom materials have been recognised over the years. However, the more important factor is the rationale behind the selection of these materials and to find out the purposes of utilising these materials during language lessons to see why these materials have been chosen and for what purposes. 'Classroom materials' is a broad term which can include a wide range of resources including textbooks, visual and audio aids and worksheets. Along with the development of teaching methods and approaches, classroom materials, textbooks in particular, have also developed in order to fit into the new trends in language education. Globalisation has had a great role within this process of development. Even though British and American textbooks are still the most popular ones all over the world, nowadays more diversity within the content of these textbooks is observable. The participants of this study also mentioned that diversity is being embraced in the current textbooks. Apart from the textbooks, most of the teachers have the option to bring in other kinds of materials into the classrooms. Two of the participants of this study particularly stated that they encourage and think about diversity in their lessons particularly when they are choosing classroom materials. The following extract is representative:

I think equality and diversity is something that we are consistently focusing on in our lesson plans yes, it is massive thing. Even in producing resources or materials for lessons, you've got to show that you understand a little bit about different cultures and promote

diversity in the classroom. so maybe if you are gonna have a magazine or a worksheet, have images of people from different cultures, obviously men and women, different genders, different ages, different abilities. If you have a speaking activity, you could involve students from different countries that they naturally getting to know each other...

(Teacher 4)

As discussed in section 4.4.1, the classroom textbooks and worksheets examined for this study illustrate that current materials have been affected by globalisation to some extent. Some worksheets have been modified in terms of bringing more diversity into the lesson. Having photos of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds with diverse types of skin colour or names and samples of discourse relating to non-native and non-native speaker interactions could be an example for this. Some of the used photos and names are not western and these kinds of non-English references can rarely be found in the authentic textbooks. This finding is compatible with the studies by Karabinar and Guler (2013) in Turkey and Aliakbari (2004) in Iran where the researchers demonstrated that authentic textbooks in use in both contexts are not useful in terms of developing cultural competence and cultural understanding. They explained that the reason for this inefficiency is that those textbooks focus too much on grammar and they emphasise British or American culture, and they lack content about different cultures.

The selected materials vary among different institutions depending on which language institution these teachers are teaching in. In one institution, a teacher could have more flexibility to choose classroom materials whereas in another one the course books and other materials have already been set by the management. It was clear in my study that those teachers who have more flexibility to select, tend not to rely on the authentic British textbooks most of the time, but rather they choose materials and activities that allow them more to focus on cultural differences and help the students make comparisons between their own culture and

what the textbook/worksheet suggests. They do not prepare their lessons for the purpose of promoting cultural differences but most of them attempt to pick the cultural parts of the text and elaborate on them by asking questions from the learners or designing activities. For example, in one of the sessions that I observed, the topic was 'The language of discussions'. Teacher 6 explained that '*When one person expresses an idea or an opinion, you have to decide what your own thoughts are*'. He gave them a worksheet (Figure 4.10) and explained that in a discussion, they need to decide whether they agree, disagree or whether they are not sure about the expressed idea. He was also specifying that how we respond to the expressed idea and the type of language we use to express ourselves is important. Here is a part of the activity which was on the worksheet:

University English
Taking part in a debate

I. The language of discussions

The purpose of a discussion, both in academic and non-academic situations, is to discuss ideas. When one participant expresses an idea or opinion, you have to decide what your own thoughts are. You need to decide:

- **Do you agree?** If so, do you agree completely, or do you think he/she is only partly right? Do you have any arguments or facts which support the speaker's point of view?

- **Do you disagree?** There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with a speaker, but you must always respect other people's views.

- **Are you not sure?** You may be looking for more evidence, or you may not have quite understood what the speaker is trying to say.

Useful language

1. Where would you locate the following expressions in the table below?

From my point of view - what do you mean? - I'm not sure I agree with you - Yes, you're right! - Don't you agree? - I agree to a certain extent, but... I see what you mean, but... - I'm afraid I disagree

2. Can you add any other expressions to the table?

Giving an opinion	Asking about agreement
Agreeing	**Disagreeing**
Partly agreeing, partly disagreeing	**Asking for clarification**

Figure 4.10: The language of discussions

Teacher 6 was also trying to emphasise the point that there is nothing wrong with disagreeing with a speaker, but that they must always respect other people's views. During the interview, he mentioned that people of some nationalities, especially East Asian people, do not feel comfortable showing their disagreement to someone. Therefore, he thought it is necessary for a teacher to elucidate that in western societies it is not a problem to express your disagreement

as long as you are polite. In his classroom, he also explained to the students that English people use 'indirect' language more in order to be 'polite'. He stated that:

'Don't you think...' instead of 'I disagree':

A: 'Sheffield is a nice city'.

B: 'Don't you think London is better?' Instead of saying 'No, I disagree'. 'To be polite it is always Yes but No' (Extract from field notes, 25, November, 2015).

For the rest of the activity, he gave some sentences to the students and asked them to express their opinions. This was only an example and the other teachers had similar activities in their lessons. However, I think this teacher's particular emphasis on direct/ indirect use of language could be related to his background and his own experience. He is a Spanish person who has lived in France and some other countries too. Having lived in different countries has caused him to start noticing that a lot of factors that we think are familiar are not that familiar and they can cause problems in communication. He mentioned that, in England, he has been told that he is being too direct whereas this has never been his intention. Thus, his life experiences have greatly affected his teaching practice and his particular stress on some aspects of language:

I think having lived in different countries it is, once you start living in a country, you start realising, it has happened to me in France because my partner is French and all my friends are French etc, you realise a lot of things that I thought are similar, in the end they were not that similar and there were some breakdowns in communications (Teacher 1)

I believe different factors influence teachers' choices of classroom materials and the sources they decide to bring into their lessons. Even in the cases where the teachers teach within the same language institution and under the same management, they tend to have different

approaches in selecting the exercises and activities. Some of the participants of this study extensively use additional materials like audio and video tapes; media materials such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements; the internet; song lyrics; photographs and paintings whereas some others mainly rely on the textbooks and do not use other materials. For the former group of teachers, Teacher 3 has a distinct and particular approach in her lessons that sounds relatively unique. Almost no textbook is used in her lessons. She selects a topic for each session and brings relevant materials for the selected topic. These topics are usually inspired by current social incidents or events and narrate her experiences. For instance, in one of her sessions she was telling the story of the day she went to a bank and found the cashier's behaviour not appropriate. Here is the story that I composed while she was narrating it:

She goes to a bank and enquires of the cashier. The cashier responds her: 'Alright, darling'.

The teacher to the students: She thinks she is being friendly. She is giving customer care.

Her intention is being friendly. Was she actually being friendly? What kind of reaction is she expecting from me?

A student: to smile?

Teacher: But I didn't smile. I found it inappropriate. It is not professional. She could be something between being too informal and too formal. She could use other words rather than 'darling'. She is making assumptions about me which are not true. She thinks it is appropriate to call me darling. 'Darling' has connotations. You should use it to someone who you know well and you love the person. You shouldn't use to someone you have never met. It is over-familiar. 'Madam' is more appropriate in a bank. I didn't smile. I raised my eyebrows. Do not use highly emotional words and assume you can use it to anybody, words like, love, and darling. I also advise you not to use 'hate'. If you hardly know

somebody, don't use big words like hate, love. Hate is not a synonym of dislike (Extract

from field notes, 22 January, 2016).

This teacher brings all these factors into the lesson to help her learners prepare to communicate appropriately in the society. The students, on the other hand, try to relate the examples to their own culture and reflect on them. For example, the above-mentioned story was followed by a round table discussion of the students and they were clearly discussing their first impressions of hearing the usage of some terminology that they would not consider appropriate in their countries. For instance, they were mentioning how strange they have found that British people use emotional terms (e.g., love, darling) to call strangers or how they feel when they have to call their teachers by their first names and this sort of informality. As Kramsch (1993) claims, speakers have expectations based on their own experiences and consequently interpret situations based on their own cultures, and this can often lead to misunderstanding. It is important to teach culture in contrast and comparison with one's own culture (Huhn, 1978 cited in Byram, 1989).

McKay (2000) divides cultural activities and materials of the classrooms into three types: target culture materials, learners' own culture materials and international target culture materials (p.10). She believes the best of these are the international target language materials, which cover a variety of knowledge from different cultures all over the world using the target language. These will most probably raise the students' interest rather than imposing only one culture all the time and prevent students from being worried about assimilation into one particular culture. It will also help them respect other cultures. This happens naturally in the language lessons in the UK that I observed since the nature of classrooms is multicultural. Even if the teacher does not bring in any sort of additional materials, each student brings a different embodied culture into the lesson and the details of their cultures emerge regularly in most of the classroom activities. According to McKay (2000), the learners' own culture should be

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discussed along with the target culture and other cultures. The integration of home culture seems to be as important as the integration of the other cultures in language lessons. According to Stuart and Nocon (1996), a person becomes aware of his/her own cultural lens through the recognition that another person from a different background has a different lens. Individuals reach to a better understanding of their own cultural elements by realising that others see the world differently. Nobody can escape his or her own cultural lens, but each can choose to overlap lenses in order to understand better the other's perspectives and arrive at shared meaning (Kilickaya, 2004). I think, even though defining a target culture is controversial for English as an international language, in multicultural classrooms an individual's home culture can be regarded as a target culture to the other individuals and that will provide an excellent environment for the learners to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and develop the required awareness of differences in order to develop their intercultural competence. Below I provide an example of how the learners deal with their own cultural beliefs and understanding continuously within the lessons that I observed.

Among all participants, Teacher 3 was probably the only one who tended to go into more depth when it came to cultural content. She paid particular attention to the current social, political and economic incidents around the world and tried to talk about them in her lessons. For example, a day after a terrorist attack in Paris, she brought a poster of the Eiffel Tower and started talking about the attack. She also played a song in that lesson and gave the scripts to the students. The song is called 'Imagine', a famous song written by John Lennon:

Imagine there's no heaven

It's easy if you try

No hell below us

Above us only sky

Imagine all the people living for today

Imagine there's no countries

It isn't hard to do

Nothing to kill or die for

And no religion too

Imagine all the people living life in peace, you

You may say I'm a dreamer. But I'm not the only one ... (From a lesson worksheet, 11 January 2016)

After teaching some grammatical aspects using the lyrics as examples and defining the new vocabulary, she asked them to think about the deeper meaning of the song and discuss it in their groups. Then she highlighted '*You are the United Nations. Do you agree with John?'*

One group of students expressed that they could not fully agree with the poem as they think,

No religion' will not help the world be in peace. People can still live in peace altogether with believing and practising different religions. What is happening in the world is not about religions because none of the religions invite people to fight and kill. (Students)

Some of the students also expressed how sad they felt when they realised that the Paris attack had gained such a particular attention by the media and other disasters in their countries usually remain uncovered. The discussion went on and the teacher was not worried about time or other business. As mentioned before, the students enjoyed sharing their ideas and values with others. This was mentioned by some teachers and it was also observable for me. The students seemed to be more engaged with the lesson when they could find a point to relate to or when discussions arose where they could express themselves. In another lesson, Teacher 3 brought a reading to

the lesson and distributed it among the students. The topic of the reading was '*Although each religion is different, religions around the world share many commonalities*'. Figure 4.11 is the text:
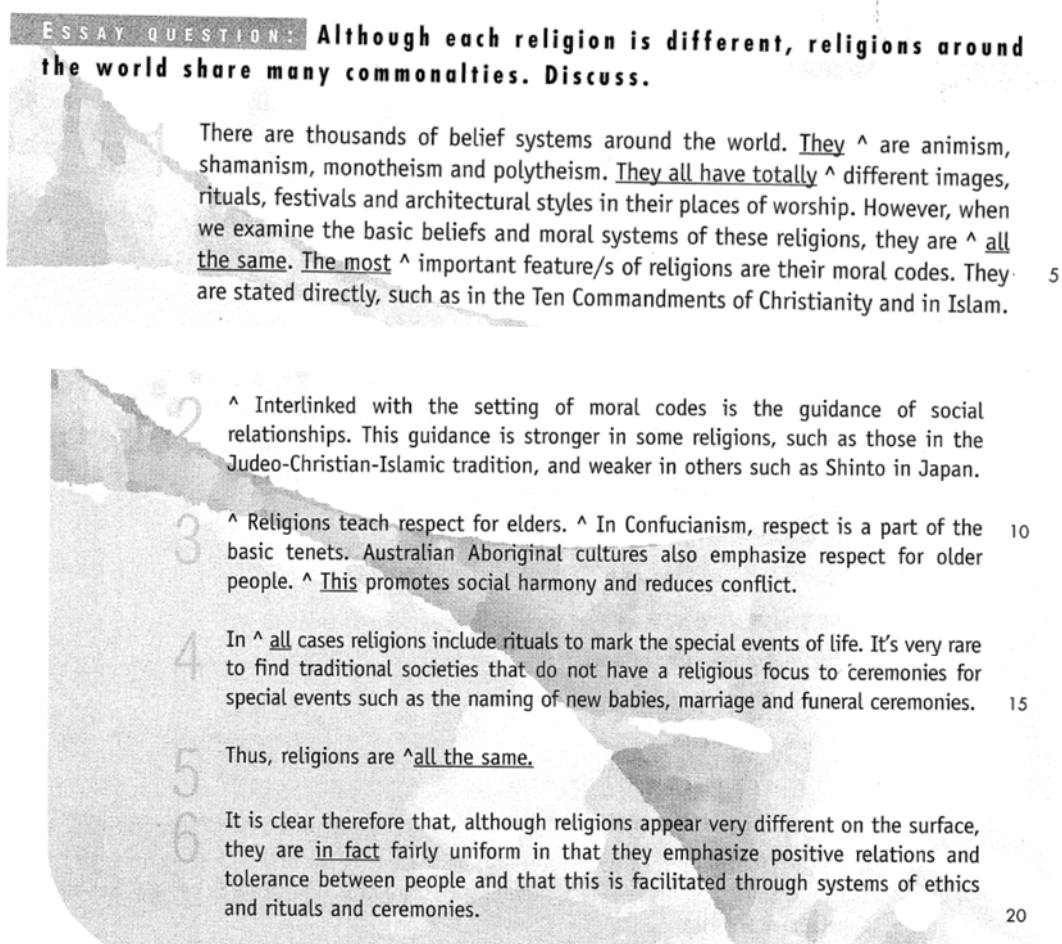
Figure 4.11: Although each religion is different, religions around the world share many commonalities

Before the students started reading the text, the teacher asked

What religions in the world are you aware of?

What do you know about their differences? (Extract from field notes, 18 January 2016)

The students began to talk about basic information such as '*Christians go to church'*, *Muslims go to mosque'* and some other similar knowledge that they had. The teacher wrote on the board that 'They are all the same'. She explained that: '*if you examine the moral*

systems and beliefs of these religions, they all have the same moral codes. All religions teach respect for elders. They try to promote social harmony and reduce conflicts'. Then she asked the students to read the text and discuss it in pairs. When their discussions were over, she focused on a paragraph in the reading and asked the students to explain what they thought that paragraph was trying to say. The paragraph was:

> *It is clear therefore that, although religions appear very different on the surface, they are in fact fairly uniform in that they emphasize positive relations and tolerance between people and that this is facilitated through systems of ethics and rituals and ceremonies.*

After the teacher tried to explain the new vocabulary of the passage to the students, she highlighted that if everyone in the world agreed with this text, the world would be a peaceful place. Some of the students participated in the discussion and expressed their opinions and the teacher welcomed all the ideas. In other lessons of this teacher she did similar tasks and raised similar points. Although the approach that she has adopted is rather unique for English language teaching and some students might not particularly favour it as it might seem rather irrelevant to the traditional purpose of learning foreign language, she brings up a broad range of social and political themes that might help the students broaden their perspectives and explicitly face opposite outlooks which might eventually contribute to developing the students' intercultural competence. Apart from this teacher, the other participants limited cultural discussions in their lessons to the topics related to expression of speech-acts such as greetings, apologies, requests, agreement and disagreement. Even for inclusion of some of these topics they mentioned they face some restrictions. The next section expands on some of the issues that they highlighted. This is linked to the fourth research question of this study.

4.7 Issues with incorporating intercultural competence into ELT

The last research question of my study is dedicated to the limitations and issues of integrating intercultural competence into English language lessons from the teachers' viewpoints. As stated above, considering intercultural communication is not a priority when the participants of this study prioritise their lesson plans. They mentioned certain reasons for not having this priority that I can connect to related problems of incorporating intercultural competence:

4.7.1 Sensitive topics

The majority of the participants agreed that provoking differences might lead to discussions of sensitive issues and might cause an uncomfortable atmosphere within the classroom for some of the students. Half of the interviewees agreed that they prevent any kind of discussions related to their religious and political beliefs. As one of them said:

You may find some students who don't understand why things are different in different cultures. They may say 'that is not logical, that is not possible or' they can be defensive. You can get a little bit of that. But I haven't had a big problem. I have done a little bit of sensitive issues and with certain students it is better not to because they become quite vocal and it can be a bit difficult... (Teacher 4)

Or another one mentioned:

...in one of the lectures here, I said that people can do whatever they want as long as they don't harm the others. So we were talking about different things like homosexuality, and different families and other things like the clothes you wear and etc. and some students were just blocked with some of the ideas, so it was difficult and you could see some other students come from a culture that is not a big problem and they said oh just calm down and let's talk about something else and it was a little bit of problem but I think it is

important to talk about this because in this western society they are gonna meet some

people who are different and they have to be polite... (Teacher 6)

As I explained earlier, Suchánková (2014) suggests that the teachers should provide an environment in the lessons within which conventional taboos and controversial matters are discussed; however, most participants of my study try to avoid these sort of subjects because they are concerned that they might make the classroom atmosphere uncomfortable even though the classroom observations suggest that in the lessons these sort of discussions seem to be unavoidable as students start expressing their opinions on certain topics.

4.7.2 Time constraints

Time constraints is another problem that was highlighted by three of the participants. They believe the intensive requirements of the syllabi followed only allow them to concentrate on the matters which will be examined and which will help their students to pass the course. This is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Karabinar and Guler (2013). As one of the participants mentioned:

At the end of the day, the students want to pass their test. They don't want to spend time

on something that they won't be asked in the exam and also our lesson is only once a

week for 1.5 hour... (Teacher 8)

Similarly, the participants of the study of Karabinar and Guler (2013) stated that time constraints is one of the reasons for not including enough cultural information in teaching. They believe teaching and including cultural information in language lessons slows teachers down and this may cause a problem if there is a tightly paced schedule that teachers have to follow.

4.7.3 Needs and expectations

Two of the teachers mentioned an interesting point about the students' needs and expectations. These teachers believe emphasising cultural elements and differences in the classroom could be considered a waste of time by some students since communicating with people is not their first purpose for learning English or that some students already come from multicultural contexts and they are alert and aware of the relevant aspects of a successful intercultural communication. Therefore, the teachers think it is important to fulfil everybody's requirements within the classroom which might lead the teacher to stick to the conventional way of teaching grammar, vocabulary and the four skills. As one mentioned:

> *It also depends on the students too. It is my job to keep them happy. Some students want me to crack on with how the exam works, how the questions will be, keep saying we need to pass this exam, etc. and some students, for example, this is not sexist, but affluent women from central Hong Kong come to the class with clothes that I could never afford and they were there for social, for using English to talk, to chat, you see, there are two extremes. So, the objectives vary in one class, people are paying fees, if people are paying fees, you do have to keep them happy, it is fair enough, a lot of money is being paid...*
> (Teacher 7)

4.7.4 Learners' levels of English

Another limitation which was highlighted frequently by the teachers was related to the level they teach. Most participants believe the students should be able to have a basic level of English before they can start thinking about its relationship between culture and potential problems in intercultural communication. As a big part of the problem in intercultural communication is related to pragmatics (the study of speaker meaning), the participants believe the students should have at least a basic knowledge of English in order to analyse the conveyed meanings

in communications and investigate what is implied or what the invisible part of the conversation is.

> *I think there are stages. I think to understand the cultural differences, you need to have a fair amount of vocabulary to begin with, in order to understand the differences. I think for the students in basic levels it is a lot harder, I think, whereas when they are more advanced they are more interested and they are more able to because they have the language I think for them it is more appropriate and possible I think when they first start, it is overwhelming them, especially when they first come to the country and they need to survive...* (Teacher 6)

Similarly, Camerer (2014) agrees that all the abilities related to intercultural competence require language competence to at least a minimal degree. It would therefore seem that evaluation of intercultural communicative competence only makes sense above a certain level of linguistic competence. However, considering the point that the expression of speech-acts (e.g., greeting, apologies, requests, agreement and disagreement) are usually not the same across cultures and may lead to miscommunication, I observed that they are being taught even in elementary classrooms.

Therefore, this can relate to the point that components of intercultural competence are often ingrained in English language lessons (at least in those I observed) no matter the level of students. However, the amount of this integration varies depending on the level the students are at. Of course, a higher level of English proficiency can help the students with understanding and digesting the differences better. If the students' level is more advanced, the teachers would probably have more chance in the classrooms to open up various types of discussion and teachers would have more chances to facilitate learner-centred classrooms and encourage learner autonomy. Hismanoglu (2011) also discusses in his study that students with higher

linguistic proficiency gave more acceptable responses to the communicative situations than those students with lower linguistic proficiency. However, this does not mean that intercultural competence cannot be incorporated at elementary levels as the basic skills of communication are being taught right from the beginning.

4.8 Practices of non-native English teachers

In this final section of presenting the findings of this study, I intend to focus on the non-native aspect of my participants. Although there are a wide range of studies about non-native speakers of English, as the majority of English language teachers worldwide are non-native English speakers, almost none of these studies particularly relate these teachers' attitudes to intercultural competence. However, the findings of this study suggest that my participants' viewpoints about the concept of culture and their approach to intercultural competence are possibly affected by the fact that English is not their first language and they have been brought up in cultural contexts different to where they are currently living and teaching. Despite the fact that more studies need to be conducted in order to support the findings of this study regarding how being a native or a non-native speaker could influence one's perception about including culture and intercultural competence in English language teaching practices, I present the parts that I could interpret and I could discuss using the existing literature.

4.8.1 Reflection on past experiences in current practices

The fact that the participants of this study are not native speakers of English and they have moved to the UK when they were already adults helped them reflect more on their experiences and backgrounds. This was evident in what they mentioned during the interviews and what they actually practised in their lessons. Most of the participants mentioned that their experience of coming from a different country to the UK and the challenges they faced when they first entered the country, the discrimination or unfair behaviour that they are still experiencing on

some occasions have caused them to be more alert about people's attitudes towards differences. They believe their own life experience motivates them to make their students aware of the potential challenges that a non-local person might come across as the result of cultural differences. As one of the teachers said:

I just use my experience. I can only use my experience about what I have learned about difficulties. I didn't have a lot of knowledge about individual cultures before I had come to this country and especially before I had started to work here. I had not met people from different cultures before. So, to this extent, this has been a great change for me for the better. (Teacher 9)

As this teacher highlighted, in his teaching he incorporates his own experience of moving out from his country and settling down in the UK as a foreigner. He considers this change in his life as a positive incident and he uses his life stories in his lessons which may help the students understand the challenges they are, or will be, facing in their communications and interactions with local people or people from other cultural backgrounds. Canagarajah (1999) supports this idea and points out that non-native speakers are better teachers particularly due to their multicultural experience and native speakers are better teachers because of their cultural knowledge of a particular context where English is the local and national language. Kramsch also believes that non-native speakers have a unique multilingual perspective on the foreign language and on its culture and they should not try to disregard this unique perspective in order to emulate native speakers (1997). I believe as the participants of this study could speak more than one language and they have experienced coming out of their comfort zones in order to survive, live and effectively communicate in the UK, they have broader perspectives and they can implement their wide perspectives through their teaching practices in their lessons and convey it to their students. As this teacher clearly expressed:

Sometimes I do some gestures and people say 'oh that is very Greek' and I have not realised. I share this kind of things with my students and we laugh. I have a lot to share with them, for example I tell them what I found difficult when I was communicating with British people and so on. I think they learn from my stories... (Teacher 2)

He also talked about the differences he has faced in the UK and their influences on his practice while teaching English. Non-native teachers could share their experience of cultural differences and they can also be empathetic with the students' linguistic challenges. As Barratt and Kontra (2000) assert, one of the important advantages of non-native speaker English teachers is that, they are able to empathise well with their students' learning difficulties and understand the feeling of being homesick and to experience culture shock, particularly when their students have already moved or planning to move to a different country. They argue that most of the native speakers usually cannot empathise with learners going through linguistic and cultural learning process. Similarly, one of my participants declared that:

The main one is we have been through the main process. So we might be more insightful, more understanding. We might tolerate. I don't know. I think I tolerate more mistakes. So I think I am good in explaining grammar. Maybe skills, reading and writing. (Teacher 1)

4.8.2 Non-native teachers' self-perception

As mentioned, teachers' backgrounds and life histories can play an important role in their attitudes towards teaching English and particularly towards employing elements of culture and intercultural competence. On the other hand, according to Ghanem (2015), teachers' self-perceptions of their teaching and their challenges teaching culture in foreign language lessons also have important implications for their own and their students' professional development. However, as Lázár (2003) also believes, non-native teachers of English often feel disqualified or diffident to delve into intercultural communication. This might show that these teachers feel

insecure dealing with deeper levels of other cultures as they think they are outsiders. According to Lázár (2003), culture is seen as the domain of the insider, that only being a member of a culture gives one the privilege of becoming an expert and thus being able to teach about it. This might be an answer to why intercultural communication is neglected in language education. Intercultural communication is "so much about sailing in unknown waters, with no secure answers, entering into situations in which the teacher's position of authority may be put at risk-perhaps this is the reason why intercultural teaching is avoided" (Lázár, 2003, p.145). However, some of the participants of my study demonstrated that they are confident and have a positive position in their career. They emphasised the advantages that they (as non-native teachers) bring to the lessons. For instance, this participant stated that:

> *Apart from the experience that I tell them like here they can say goodbye at a party, that's fine, so I do mention those kind of things. And these examples are based on my own experience. And I think the students appreciate that. They like... I have a lot of students come to me and ask as a non-native speaker how did you learn English, how did you find talking to English people when you arrived here, this kind of questions, when you arrived here what did you do get to know English people, I think they appreciate the fact that I am a non-native speaker because it is a kind of bridging between native and non-native speaker. We can help a little bit in that.* (Teacher 6)

Unlike some studies that suggest students often believe native speakers are more privileged to teach English and they are better models for the students (Madrid and Pérez Cañado, 2004; Díaz, 2015; Ling and Braine, 2007), most participants of my study believe their students see them as more realistic models who they can feel comfortable around to ask questions about their teachers' experiences as a language learner and as a foreigner who has decided to live in the UK. The above-mentioned extract and the following one demonstrate this finding:

For not being English, I am very welcomed because most of the students are Asian, so, we have some British teachers too but I think the students love the fact that I understand their culture. I am not Pakistani but I can understand Asian culture. We have Africans, Brazilian, Middle Eastern. Sometimes they would say something in Urdu and they would think I understand Urdu. I just smile and laugh and I remind them that I don't speak Urdu and they just laugh. They think they are comfortable that they say things in their language. I think it is really positive that I am not British. (Teacher 3)

Likewise, Nemtchinova (2005) conducted a study in the US and her study suggests that non-native teachers could bring a distinctive feature to their classrooms and that is their capability to act as a model of 'successful language learning' as they used to be learners of English and they were successful enough to be skilful and qualified to teach this language. However, I could provide two examples from the data that indicate a few participants sometimes feel uncomfortable in some situations through being non-native teachers. I have already discussed the first example on section 4.2.1.1 which was about a teacher being embarrassed for not having sufficient information about history of Christmas and feeling bored as his lesson was not related to the celebration of Christmas. The other example is about the teacher who was feeling anxious for not understanding some accents. I have already given the related extract in section 4.4.2.2 but I repeat a part of it here:

I mean not only students, some British accents are hard to understand too. I'm sure you know what I mean. I used to be very anxious because as a teacher I was expected to understand all accents. (Teacher 5)

This teacher explained that at the beginning of his career in the UK he was thinking that his students' expectations are high and it was worrying if he did not understand someone's accent. However, by gaining experience and teaching English for years, he has built up confidence and

now he worries less about understanding all British and non-British accents. These two examples are the only ones that I could present about teachers being a little insecure and being less assured in their teaching practices and about the advantages that they could have as non-native teachers. The other participants demonstrated reasonably good self-confidence and assurance.

Therefore, from the data, I could draw the conclusion that teachers' backgrounds as learners of English and how they perceive their position within the field of English language teaching could significantly help them in understanding the linguistic and cultural challenges that their students are encountering. Teachers have been through the pathway that their students are now going through and this assists them to be mindful of the potential cultural and linguistic issues which might lead them to have particular sensitivity to intercultural competence. This is not to say that native teachers are not aware of cultural and intercultural problems. Obviously, there are native teachers who have a wide vision of cultural differences as the result of travelling or living in different cultural settings and of course both native and non-native teachers can be equally sensitive to intercultural communication issues. The argument here is not which one is better than the other one. The point here is to highlight the fact that non-native English teachers should not be underestimated as their experiences and the journey they have been through can positively contribute in their teaching and their students could benefit from their teachers' learning processes and their constant reflections.

4.8.3 Merging of two selves in non-native speakers

Santa Ana (2004, cited in McCarty and Wyman, 2009) realises that language "modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it" (p.282). She believes that everybody is the sum of their languages. It is also believed that it is an advantage that two different countries are forced to merge within a non-native speaker or an immigrant (McCarty and Wyman, 2009). An

individual's mother tongue and his/her second language or the foreign language that the person has learned to actively use will eventually find a common place in the individual's mind to merge there. Some participants of this study also elaborated on this point while they were talking about being a non-native speaker of English. For instance, a participant who is Greek mentioned that he changes personality when he speaks Greek and when he speaks English. As he has lived in England for a number of years, he thinks he has been influenced by it a lot:

> *...when I go back home my friends would say, if I say something, they might find I am reserved, they might say 'that is very cheeky colour', 'that is very British', 'oh you sound very sophisticated', 'you must be living in the UK', I do think that I have been influenced but at the same time when I am here I do feel as a you know, sometimes I feel like I am a bit bubblier and I do think it is my Greek personality, Greek culture.* (Teacher 2)

He believed that sometimes an imperative note in his voice is evident and it is because he is a Greek. According to him, he tries to explain to his students that using 'imperatives' could be considered as being rude in England but not necessarily in other countries. It indicates that this teacher distances himself a little from his own linguistic and cultural background which enables him to critically analyse the implication of his home language and culture. He also tries to consciously explore his unconscious adaptation to English language and culture. This reminded me of a relatively old quote from Bakhtin (1981 cited in Baxter, 2004, p.265) who believes

> [l]anguage, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between ones' self and the other… The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's "own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.

I believe it is important for all language teachers to be aware of this complex process of merging two selves through learning a foreign language and through living in a different cultural setting.

Those English teachers who are non-native speakers of the language have already begun to develop a new identity which comprises their home culture and the one that they are living in through using English (Liu and Fisher, 2006). Most of the time this identity development is unconscious but if the teachers become more conscious about this development, they can reflect on it more in their teaching practices. This would be a great help for their students as those students are also in the process of merging two cultural identities. This is probably an aspect that a native speaker teacher who has never learned another language might lack.

Merging two cultural identities does not mean that one should suspend belief about his/her own home cultural values to some extent and try to be like people in the host culture. However, adaptation is unavoidable especially after a period of time living in a different cultural environment. The ideal form of merging would be that individuals preserve their cultural identity but at the same time be suited to the new cultural society in order to have a high quality of life. If the non-native teachers believe in this, they can convey it to their students and they can encourage their students to keep a balance between the culture they have been brought up in and the one they are currently meeting. As has been presented before, most of my participants feel confident about being a non-native speaker and teacher of English and they openly share their experiences as a learner and as foreigners with their students. However, only one of the participants mentioned that he never talks about his own nationality and his own background neither in the classroom nor in the society:

In my classrooms I never mention my own nationality. I am now British and I see myself as one of them. So I don't feel necessary to point it out where I come from because it is sensitive. I think it is important to tell the students to react positively in the society. Living in this country, I never consider myself as a foreigner and I never mention it at workplace or anywhere. There is no point mentioning it. I remember a guy asked me where I am from. I said I am from England but he said no you are not, you are from India or Pakistan.

I said no I'm from England and he insisted in that I am not. I know some people ask where

we are from with a good intention but some of them ask to judge you. So if you say I am

from this country, they will judge you saying oh you are this, you are that. (Teacher 5)

I think this participant tries to avoid speaking about his own cultural background due to his own understanding of the environment where he is currently working and living. He utilises avoidance strategy to escape from others' judgmental attitudes. What he said does not necessarily mean he is trying to neglect his background but he avoids talking about it as he thinks there are people in the place he lives who perhaps do not acknowledge diversity or who might be resistant to foreign people. As it is evident, this participant also realises that he is now merging two cultural identities and as he is consciously aware of it, he evaluates and chooses which one he should present. He also mentions that:

I talk about haters with my students. I think it is important to tell the students to react

positively in the society when they face a strange attitude from others. What I've learn is

that when people come from a different culture, they come to the country which is

different, they should give some of their values to this society. For example, haters,

somebody who hates you, if I find a hater on the street or in the bus stop or in a restaurant

and so on, I try to be who I am. If somebody hates me, I don't have to hate that person. I

just smile. I don't want to depress myself for anybody else. (Teacher 5)

As this extract illustrates, this teacher shares his negative experiences with his students and encourages them to stay positive. I am not sure how the results of this study would have been different if I had native speakers as the participants. This cannot be achievable until more comparative studies are conducted focusing on native and non-native teachers. Other studies which have been conducted in the UK do not specifically focus on the teachers' backgrounds. They might have had non-native teachers as their participants as well but this is not highlighted

in their results and they have not discussed the differences between their native and non-native participants. For example, the study that Young and Sachdev (2010) undertook had English teachers from the UK, the USA and France as their participants; however, they did not focus on the teachers' attitudes based on their first language and nationality. Therefore, at this stage it might not be practical for me to make any valid interpretations based on the participants' backgrounds and ethnicities. In addition, I am not convinced to what extent the differences in standpoints and understandings of the current participants can be related to their nationality and the country they come from. Comparison does not seem reasonable in this case and is not the aim of this study. I chose non-native teachers for this study considering the global status of English in the world along with my own positionality. Therefore, how a teacher with a particular background thinks and practises differently from another teacher with a different background is beyond the scope of this study.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter I have tried to present and discuss the data that I gathered from my fieldwork. Overall, the findings of this study indicate there are many opportunities in language lessons to develop intercultural competence. Intercultural competence, unlike how the term itself sounds, is not a very complicated and unachievable approach. It only needs awareness and preparedness of the teachers to touch on relevant aspects when necessary. All the classroom practices have the potential of being connected to this approach since culture exists in every situation in language lessons. Particularly, considering the context of this study (multicultural classrooms and a multicultural environment outside the classrooms), it is much easier to think about this approach and apply it in order to develop the learners' insights of differences and prepare them to deal with their communication barriers and contribute effectively in a global context. Other studies with similar topics have been conducted all around the world and their results are

relatively similar. However, as far as I am concerned, very few have been conducted in the UK and none (to my knowledge) has focused particularly on non-native English teachers.

In general, the participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards the approach of intercultural competence. They supported the idea and agreed that English language teaching can be a very useful context to enhance learners' intercultural competence even though almost none of them prioritised it. Regarding cultural considerations in classrooms, they believe that the national/local culture of the place that the students are aiming to use the language in should be covered in English lessons as a mandatory element of the lessons but intercultural competence, with the key aspects of knowledge, attitude and skills, is not a priority for any of the teachers. Most of them said they raise it when it comes up otherwise it is not something that they are consciously concerned about. However, in the classrooms I observed, elements of intercultural competence were consistently happening, as I gave some examples in this chapter. Moreover, I noticed plenty of activities teachers set during their lessons; for example, how to write a formal/ informal letter in England, how to order food in an English restaurant, how to make polite requests in different occasions in England. The culture presented in most of these activities was English culture. Even though this apparently lacks the consideration of English as a global language, it can still help the students to reflect on, think about and explore their own culture and develop the sort of 'knowledge' which Byram (1997) has suggested in his model. The teachers consistently brought up cultural elements in the classroom. As I have mentioned before, these kinds of focuses in a lesson are mainly not pre-planned and they usually happen spontaneously within the lesson. Therefore, learner autonomy is one of the findings in this regard as there were many opportunities where students used to self-guide the discussions and to take charge of the discussions but it was dependent upon teachers to what extent they promoted learner autonomy in the lessons. Bringing 'intercultural communicative competence' from a natural, implicit and unconscious level to the level of conscious effort and

a practical approach was considered as idealistic by some of the participants who said it might not realistically happen most of the time. However, I should again state that these teachers think highly about the integration of the components of intercultural competence and they give credit to it but almost none of them teach it systematically in the same way that they teach grammar, vocabulary and the other skills. Conceivably, a common reason for this, which was also mentioned by the majority, is that intercultural competence is not included in the syllabus and curriculum of the language centre they work at and they have not been trained in this domain.

In the lessons, the students were making comparisons between their own cultures and their classmates' cultures and the teachers were encouraging this to happen. However, the teachers did not possess sufficient knowledge to plan to teach and integrate intercultural competence systematically. Comparison of cultures appears to be an unplanned activity frequently practised along with other activities aiming at the acquisition of intercultural skills, such as reflecting critically on one's sources of information, exploring an aspect of the foreign culture, or practising skills useful in intercultural contact situations. Teachers still need be more prepared for adapting their teaching approaches with intercultural competence. As Secru et al. (2005) suggest, teachers should be able to employ teaching techniques to promote the acquisition of intercultural competence. Teachers should be able to help pupils relate their own culture to foreign cultures, to compare cultures and to empathise with foreign culture's points of view. They should be able to select appropriate teaching materials and to adjust these materials to allow the achievement of the aims of intercultural competence teaching.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study has been to explore non-native English language teachers' attitudes towards the incorporation of intercultural competence into their ESOL lessons in the UK. The study has tried to explore how these teachers define the notion of culture and how they perceive its place in English language teaching. It has also attempted to explore intercultural communication challenges from the teachers' viewpoints along with their understandings and behaviours towards the approach of intercultural competence. To achieve the aims of the study, semi structured interviews and classroom observations were conducted to gather and analyse the views and practices of the participants. This thesis consists of five chapters and this final chapter provides a summary of the main conclusions, the study's contribution and implications drawn from the findings. It also includes recommendations for future studies along with discussing the limitations that the study had.

5.2 Summary of the study

In this section I provide a brief summary of each chapter of this thesis. I also refer to the research questions and I briefly discuss how these questions were addressed.

This thesis begins with an introductory chapter which includes the aims and objectives of the study, research questions, background of the study and my positionality. It also provides justifications for conducting this study and my choice of participants. The chapter also presents an outline of the remaining chapters. The second chapter of the thesis reviews the literature around the topic of culture in relation to foreign language education. It discusses how culture has been perceived by scholars in foreign language education generally and in English language

specifically. It also provides literature that discusses challenges that have been identified in intercultural communication and how these challenges could be addressed in English language teaching. The literature review chapter carries on to provide a historical background to the approach of intercultural competence, its elements and the studies that have been conducted on it.

The third chapter is dedicated to a detailed account of the study's methodology, methods of data collection and data analysis. It provides justifications for my philosophical standpoints in this study and my choice of doing a qualitative exploratory study. It also introduces the participants of the study through giving a short biography of them and explains how these participants were recruited. These participants are nine non-native English language teachers. Data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and observations) are also explained and justified in Chapter Three. The ethical issues that were considered in this study are also referred to. The chapter also discusses the process of transcribing, analysing, interpreting and presenting the findings. The issues related to the trustworthiness of the study are also provided which are about credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and transparency.

Chapter Four of the thesis includes the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings from the collected data. I structured this chapter based on the themes that emerged from the data and linked them to the research questions. For each theme I present and discuss participants' answers to the interview questions along with some of my observation field notes. The data presented are also linked to the relevant literature and discussed. Before I present a brief summary regarding my research questions, I would like to refer back to the conceptual frame that I presented at the end of Chapter Two. As I explained in section 2.10, in this study, teacher attitude is the central concept that other concepts have been oriented around. Those key concepts that I drew on for this study in order to devise the research questions are mainly the

concepts of culture, challenges in intercultural communication, intercultural competence and its place in English language teaching. After exploring teachers' attitudes towards these concepts, I am now able to expand the already-presented framework according to the findings of the study. The following diagram sums up this framework:

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                           ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                           │      Teacher Attitude        │
                           └─────────────────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │     Culture      │⇨ │ Intercultural        │⇨ │ Intercultural competence │
              │                  │  │ challenges           │  │                          │
              └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │ Transferable     │  │ The effect of        │  │ Promoting learner        │
              │ facts            │  │ globalisation on     │  │ autonomy                 │
              └──────────────────┘  │ intercultural        │  └──────────────────────────┘
                                    │ communication        │
              ┌──────────────────┐  └──────────────────────┘  ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │ Modes of thought │                            │ Classroom activities     │
              └──────────────────┘                            └──────────────────────────┘
                                    ┌──────────────────────┐
              ┌──────────────────┐  │ The effect of        │
              │ Bi-directional   │  │ glocalisation on     │
              │ belief           │  │ intercultural        │
              └──────────────────┘  │ communication        │
                                    └──────────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────┐
              │ Skills           │
              └──────────────────┘
```
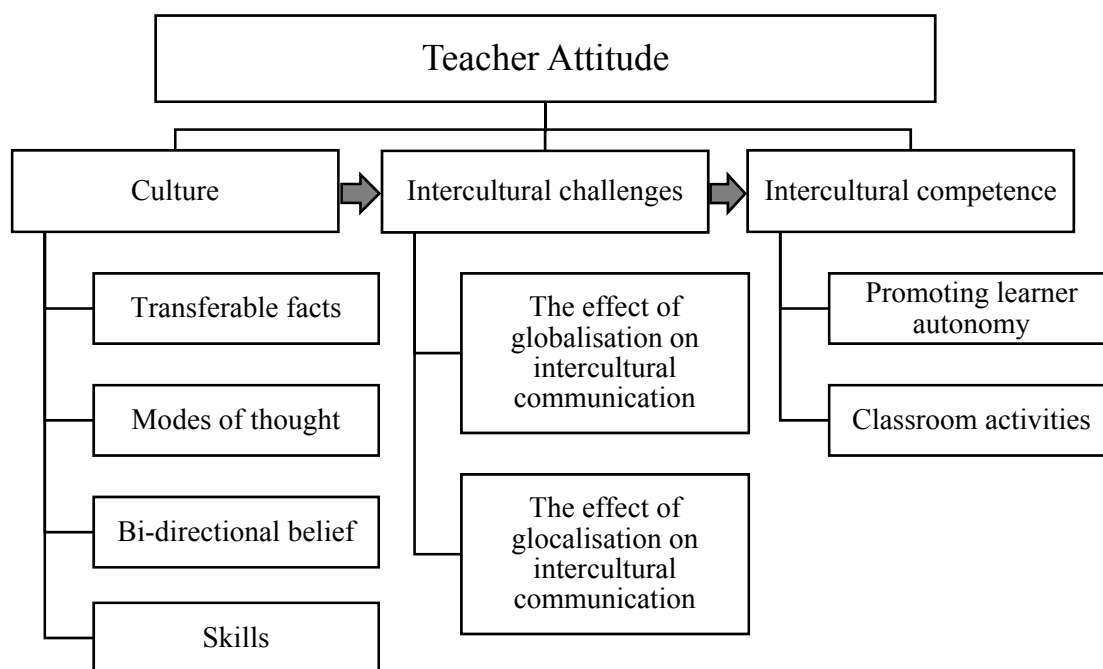
I have explained the elements of this diagram throughout Chapter 4 but below I refer back to them and summarise each of these elements while I address the research questions.

5.2.1 Research Question One: How do some non-native English language teachers understand the relationship between culture and language in their English language teaching practices?

Regarding the first research question, the teachers' understandings of the concept of culture, its relation to language and its place in their teaching practices were sought. Their responses to the relevant interview questions and their classroom practices in this regard were generally not too diverse. I was able to categorise their understandings of the concept of culture under four themes of culture as transferable facts, culture as skill, culture as a two-way belief and culture as modes of thought. Culture as transferable facts is mainly related to the participants' face-

value definitions of culture. This theme refers to general information about a country and also its cultural products. Some of the topics that they included in their definitions and also in their classroom practices were food, weather, sports and literature. The participants believed it was important to teach about England as their students have travelled to this country and are currently living there. Culture as skill refers to the participants' attitude towards perceiving culture as skills that need to be learned by the students in order to be able to live in the UK. I was able to divide their understandings in this regard into two groups of social skills and sociolinguistic skills. Social skills are about learning how to act and behave appropriately in a given cultural context. Sociolinguistic practices are about the skills of knowing how to use language in a particular society.

Culture as modes of thought was also elicited from data. The related data to this theme indicates the participants' extended understanding of the concept of culture. Some of the participants referred to culture as a way of thinking and perspectives that people of a cultural group share. This is related to the mental system that people develop while growing up which might be different from people who are not members of a particular culture. The theme which emerged while exploring the participants' attitude towards the notion of culture and its place in their language teaching was perceiving culture as a two-way belief. This finding is probably the most interesting finding and is most related to the study of intercultural competence. Seeing culture as a two-way, or bidirectional, belief means that one's own culture should not be taken for granted. The findings demonstrate that awareness of one's own culture is an unavoidable foundation for conscious comparisons that the learners make when encountering other cultures. The gathered data from the observed lessons clearly indicate that students continuously make comparisons between their own culture and other cultures. Classroom tasks were intentionally or unintentionally making students start comparing cultures. The data also suggest that students were more engaged with the lesson and they were more motivated to take part in the tasks when

cultural topics were raised. However, some teachers let the discussions grow and let the students learn more from each other through discussing their own cultures and making comparisons but a few others were more disciplined about time, the lesson plan and exams.

5.2.2 Research Question Two: To what extent do teachers acknowledge the term 'intercultural competence'?

Regarding the second research question, most of the participants were not familiar with the term itself. They all declared that they had never been trained to include intercultural competence in their lessons systematically. However, they were aware that cultural differences can cause problems and barriers in communication and English language lessons have the potential to develop learners' awareness and skills to know about the differences and how to be empathetic, tolerant and respectful. Their viewpoints about the identification of the significance of intercultural competence could be discussed under two main themes one of which is the impact of globalisation. They believed that globalisation has widened international and intercultural communication mainly through information technology and immigration. They highlighted the fact that globalisation has both positive effects and negative effects. It is positive as there is more awareness about different nations and different cultures compared to the past. It can also have negative effects as through globalisation western ideologies become dominant in the world and can affect other cultures. The second theme that emerged from the data was related to the glocalisation of English. The participants were aware that learners of English transfer their own linguistic and cultural elements into English. I was able to divide this transfer into two categories of linguistic transfer and pragmatic transfer. Interviews and observations indicate that learners of English tend to use the elements of their first language while communicating in English. This could be evident mainly in their accents, pronunciations and intonations. Even though the participants appreciate the concept of intelligibility in

communication, there is still a lack of criteria for intelligibility and the teachers are not sure how far they should go with respect to helping their students not to apply linguistic transfer. The second category that emerged from the data, with regard to the participants' acknowledgement of intercultural competence, is sociolinguistic transfer. The participants referred to the point that learners transfer from their first language not only linguistically but also pragmatically. The main element that most of them referred to was about the concept of politeness. The participants declared that elements of politeness vary from one culture to another one and that students tend to transfer their norms from their culture to their communications in English.

The data also suggest that most of the discussions that involve fostering students' awareness of cultural differences and which help them to reflect more on their own culture were being initiated and self-guided by the students themselves. Therefore, I believe promoting autonomous learning in the lessons could help significantly with regard to developing intercultural competence. In the lessons where the teacher facilitated the class rather than giving lectures, students had more opportunities to bring up cultural issues and then start engaging with the discussions although teachers had to lead the lessons and guide the discussions.

In general, regarding the second research question, the participants acknowledged the importance of intercultural competence and they did believe that English language teaching context could be an excellent place to incorporate intercultural competence. The classroom observations indicated that there are plenty of opportunities in the classrooms where students could develop intercultural competence and it was up to the teachers to decide if they would like to encourage autonomous learning in the lessons or not. The participants also referred to the point that they do not agree that British English or American English should be imposed

on the learners. However, they have not been systematically educated in this regard and that is why they are uncertain about the extent in which they should deal with intercultural issues.

5.2.3 Research Question Three: Regardless of (2), to what extent do teachers integrate 'intercultural competence' into their English language teaching practices?

In order to be able to address this research question, I mainly relied on the classroom observations. Most of the observed activities and tasks in the lessons had the potential to be fitted into the model of intercultural competence. The teachers did not include these tasks intentionally to develop learners' intercultural competence but it is my interpretation that the tasks have the potential to help students develop their attitudes, knowledge and skills as proposed in the model of intercultural competence. For instance, there were opportunities in classrooms where teachers highlighted the wrong stereotypes that some students were referring to and there were opportunities for the students to tell the other students what they believe about their own culture was not true. These types of discussions, which happened rather often in the lessons, could expand the learners' attitudes towards difference which is usually about openness, flexibility and tolerance and having non-judgmental attitudes in many ways. The students can also gain knowledge about other cultures and develop the skills of interpretation and discovery which are usually about curiosity and having positive attitudes when interpreting unfamiliar situations.

Classroom materials were also considered while analysing the collected data. I did not analyse the materials in detail but I could not exclude them from the field notes as classroom materials were important parts of the lessons. Different teachers used different materials but they all generally used authentic (American and British) materials. Some teachers also used movies and songs in the lessons. The textbooks that were being used in the classrooms did not have much culturally diverse content. However, the questions within the textbooks often asked the

students to compare the given topics with their own countries. There were a few references to other cultures but they were not very in-depth. It was mainly the students who tended to get hints from the topics of the materials and elaborate on them through reflecting on their own cultures. Therefore, I could address the third research question by saying that intercultural competence is being integrated into the lessons but it is often not intentionally or consciously by the teachers. There are many chances in the classrooms for intercultural competence that are being used by the students and teachers but this does not happen in a systematic and planned way.

5.2.4 Research Question Four: What problems do teachers identify that could be construed as related to the inclusion of intercultural competence?

This question aimed at finding out whether the participants could identify any issues with regard to the integration of intercultural competence. As said before, the teachers have not been trained and guided about this approach but they mostly supported the idea of intercultural competence and believed it is a necessity in today's world. However, they also referred to some points that make them careful about thinking of actively and systematically incorporating intercultural competence. I divided these points under the headings of: time constraints, students' levels, controversial topics, students' needs and expectations. Some of the teachers referred to the point that lessons are rather intensive and they have tight schedules. They have to be careful on how much time they dedicate to each task as the courses end quickly and the students need to be prepared for their exams. Some of them also discussed the issue of the level of the students. These teachers believe the students should be on higher levels of English to be able to understand cultural differences. They said in lower classes, they are unable to incorporate cultural topics. Controversial topics were also another issue that was discussed by some of the teachers. These teachers believed that dealing with culture could sometimes be

problematic as some students could be threatened by the impact of other cultures or they might be defensive towards their own beliefs or show aggressive reactions. The last limitation that a few teachers highlighted was about the needs and expectations of the students. These teachers declared that some students only want to pass their exams and cultural topics are not included in the exams. Therefore, the students might be disappointed with the lesson if the teachers try to do tasks that are different from what they would be examined on.

Having addressed the research questions, the next section discusses this study's contribution.

5.3 The contribution of the study

In this section I provide an outline of the main contribution that I hope this study will make to studies of intercultural competence in relation to teaching English as a second/foreign language.

I believe this study can make a contribution to literature for a few reasons. As I mentioned in the Literature Review, to my knowledge, this is one of the few studies that have been conducted on this topic in the UK focused on non-native English language teachers. In addition, there has been a lack of qualitative data and observational data in this area. Most of the studies that have asked English teachers about their perceptions regarding the integration of intercultural competence were either large-scale quantitative studies or used only questionnaires or interviews to collect data. I believe my study provides clearer insights for educationists and teachers who are interested in this area. Furthermore, there are studies that offer practical techniques for teachers to teach intercultural competence. However, my study found out that the participants do not find it practical to dedicate particular time and effort for intercultural competence. It also revealed that the relevant knowledge and skills that are required for being competent in intercultural communication could be fostered through the typical tasks of language lesson. All the teachers need is to be mindful and knowledgeable about this approach

in order to embrace it when it comes up. This mindfulness and knowledge could be gained through teacher training courses and through any other educational settings that teachers attend. Although the results of the study are not generalisable, I believe my study is useful for those who would like to know more about how non-native teachers who teach English in England perceive culture in relation to their teaching practices, how they perceive communication barriers caused by cultural differences and how they deal with culture and cultural difference in their lessons in order to promote intercultural competence. The study could also help teachers re-think about their practices and reflect more on what they teach in the classroom and what they want their students to learn. Finally, the study might encourage language education policy and curriculum designers and teacher training course directors to re-assess their training programmes and to integrate intercultural competence into their courses. As almost all the participants mentioned, intercultural competence was not included in any of the teacher training programmes and university courses that they attended. I believe it is now timely to incorporate intercultural competence as an up-to-date approach into English language teaching which considers today's communications as an intercultural process. All relevant teacher training programmes should ensure that they sufficiently prepare the teachers for the globalised world and I believe this study could contribute in this process.

5.4 Limitations of the study

All studies have limitations and this study was not an exception. This section reflects on the limitations that the study confronted despite my efforts to restrict them.

The initial problem that I faced before starting the field work was about not having the exact number of participants that was originally planned. That was because I was not contacted by enough volunteers, one of the participants withdrew and another one suddenly refused to be recorded although he had signed the consent form. My sample was therefore diminishing. I did

my best to go through recruiting participants again using various types of techniques. I eventually succeeded to have nine participants although I was initially aiming at twelve. Although I consider this as one of the limitations, I am satisfied that I collected sufficient data to complete the study.

The other limitation is related to my observation field notes. I did not audio or video record the lessons in order to minimise distractions in classrooms. Therefore, I had to make notes of all activities and discussions in the classroom. I confronted some problems in this regard. The first one was that in most lessons different things happened at the same time and it was hard for me to take note of all details and follow both students and teachers at the same time. This was even worse when a lesson's pace was fast and I could not interrupt. In addition, some discussions were in pairs or in small groups. I was unable to listen and make notes of all their discussions although I knew that the majority of them would be useful for my analysis. Even though the main focus of this study was on teaching, it was not possible to draw a line between a teacher's performance and students' performance as they are usually interrelated. It might have been better if I had collected more data from the students' practices and discussions in the classrooms. Considering the fact that some of the teachers reassured their students that my presence in the lesson was for observing the teacher and not the students, I could not go into those small groups and take note of all the communication tasks that were happening. In those cases, I only took note of the given topics and what the students were asked to do.

Not recording the lessons also limited my data presentation. As I mentioned, I tried my best to follow the lessons and took notes while the teachers and students were speaking or doing tasks. However, the extracts that I have presented in Chapter Four is all what was written and not what was recorded. I understand that errors might occur even while transcribing the records but if the sessions were recorded, I would have had a chance to refer back to the records and

listen or watch to them over and over to make sure that the extracts were almost the same as the actual event (similar to what I did for my interview transcripts). In addition, as I was taking notes, in some cases I had to compose what happened in the lesson in my own words to describe the events. This occasionally caused my extracts from field notes to look like I had paraphrased them.

The final limitation that I would like to mention is about conducting an interpretive approach. Due to the subjectivity of interpretive study, data might be interpreted differently by different individuals but their viewpoints have equal truth value (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). In this study, the data was interpreted based on my own knowledge and beliefs. Although the interpretations were revised and analysed using the literature, not everybody will agree with them. This is due to the subjectivity of the interpretive approach which makes the results unique, useful and at the same time subjective.

5.5 Key areas for future research

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the limitations of this study was not having enough observational data from the students' practices in the lessons. Even though there have been studies that have focused on students' perceptions about intercultural competence, there is a need for more studies to explore how the students deal with the concept of culture and what their attitude is in the lessons. In my study, one of the major findings is about students' own culture and how they bring it to the lessons. There is a need for further research in this regard which would mainly include observation of students. For example, a longitudinal study that consists of long-term classroom observations would contribute significantly to the literature. The effect of learner autonomy on developing intercultural competence and the effect of cultural studies on enhancing learner motivation are also parts of the results of this study and they both need further research in order to be extended to wider contexts.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, there are not numerous studies that focus only on the UK. My study has already contributed in that sense. However, there is need for other studies to focus on native teachers. Then, it will be possible to make a comparison between native and non-native teachers' attitudes towards intercultural competence and how they perceive their place in English language teaching. Most of the studies that have some native teachers as participants have focused on more than one country which has made it impossible for me to elaborate much on the 'being a non-native' aspect of my participants.

Materials or teaching resources is also an area that needs further research. There have been relatively few studies that have focused on the cultural and intercultural aspects of English materials that are dominantly being used in the language centres in the UK. Considering the point that materials play an important role in directing the lessons, it is important to explore how much they consider cultural differences and intercultural competence. For example, a desk-based study which specifically focuses on the content of the materials would be useful.

5.6 Summary of my reflection

In the final section of this thesis, I would like to look back along my PhD journey and picture it to my readers. Doing a PhD and particularly doing a qualitative study was a challenging experience for me as I was new to the field of qualitative studies but it had many constructive and positive effects on me. It took time for me to go through the process of learning, where to start, how to collect data, how to analyse them and how to write the findings combined with the discussion. Making sense of the collected data was hard and time consuming. It was not easy but I believe it was worth it as the things that I have learned from this journey are priceless. I have learned from all stages of this PhD and have developed skills particularly within the field of qualitative research. Those moments of feeling lost, confused and stuck were my

teachers as I have learned from those moments; they have made me think and work harder. Obviously what I have learned within these years will influence my future life and plans.

Analysing qualitative data requires unpicking every single word in every single sentence. The researcher needs to uncover all the hidden details. Although it was my biggest challenge or even struggle, I have learned from it and I have a more expanded vision now. Having conversations with non-native teachers during interviews helped me develop my knowledge and understanding of the complex nature of culture and foreign language literacy. Observing the classrooms helped me reflect on my own teaching approaches and gain new knowledge from their practices. There were moments where I could relate to the challenges that the teachers were facing and there were moments where I gained new insight about the challenges that those non-native English teachers encounter while teaching in the UK. I now appreciate more all the efforts that they are putting into their careers to be effective and useful in teaching a language that is not their home language and in a country that is not their home country.

Criticality is also a skill that I have developed and at the beginning of the PhD I was not where I am now in terms of being critical while reviewing literature and reading other scholars' works, and while writing my own work. I should mention that I found the PhD student community at the University of Sheffield very helpful along with all the support I was getting from supervision meetings, student seminars, conferences and training courses. They all helped me to develop knowledge and skills although I still think there is so much to learn and unlearn, and of course this is only a beginning for me.

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Appendix A

Suggested classroom techniques to develop intercultural competence

Cultural assimilation

In this technique the students are presented with a critical occasion or incident that might be misunderstood. Students are provided with some possibilities, from which they select the one which they think is right. For example, non-verbal greetings (Reid, 2015). A teacher can show somebody different types of greetings and the students should decide which type of greeting is right. According to their own experience, they would select the sort of greeting normal for their own culture. Then the teacher should explicate that all types of greetings are right but differ in different cultures. The teacher should also explain that in some cases these types of greetings vary from one country to another one and in some other cases they vary from region to region (Reid, 2015).

Cultural capsule

This technique point to a custom, for instance, which varies in two cultures. This one can also go with visual aids to demonstrate the differences and a set of questions for class discussion (Hughes, 1986). This activity practices sociolinguistic, pragmatic competences and socio-cultural knowledge. For instance, the topic of discussion could be the main meal of the day and then the teacher can emphasise that the main meal of the day could be different depending on each country. Photos of various typical meals can be presented. The students should discuss the pros and cons of the eating habits of each culture. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic phrases associated to eating habits should be compared (Reid, 2015).

Cultural island

This technique is simple and effective and it affects the students subconsciously. As Hughes suggests, the posters and pictures of artist such as actors, singers, films, writers or books, and well-known places should be put on the walls in the classrooms to attract the students' attention and evoke comments and retain the cultural atmosphere (1986). According to Byram (2002), students mostly do not find grammar charts, vocabulary posters and other language connected

pictures very attractive. They would be more attracted by popular posters and pictures which present and maintain cultural knowledge.

Noticing and Reformulation

According to Cullen (2000), reformulation is retelling a story to a partner in their own words and noticing is paying attention to specific features. For example, both activities could be utilised with the formerly shown video of the British school day. Learners could retell parts of the story through which they practise speaking and their sociocultural knowledge and at the same time they can refer to their own experience of a school day and discuss how it is different from what has shown in the video. Through the technique of noticing, learners look for particular features linked to the topic (Reid, 2015). For instance, the number of times the word "please" is repeated. These activities are useful to practice socio-cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and also nonverbal competences.

Prediction

In the relevant activities for this technique the learners are asked to predict and finish a half told story. They should guess the contents of a book or an article from the headlines and also guess the contents of a topic based on some pieces of information. No matter if their predictions are right or not, this helps the learners to develop their sense of curiosity and evoke their interest to talk (Cullen, 2000). For instance, a headline from a newspaper is 'Angelina Jolie to adopt again' suggests this famous person and the generally known knowledge of her adopted children. The students predict what the article is about and then they discuss the topic of adoption in deeper ways and they compare different cultural views. This activity has been suggested to advanced mature learners and it can practice systems of values other than sociocultural knowledge (Reid, 2015).

Total Physical Response (TPR)

This technique is designed to respond to oral commands to act out a cultural experience (Hughes, 1986). It is suitable for different age groups and for practicing non-verbal communication. Students should acknowledge gestures and their meanings in various cultures. Some example are: a hand shake, thumbs up and shaking of the head. These physical behaviours usually have different meanings in different cultures. A student acts out different gestures and other students link it to the cultures where the gesture is suitable or unsuitable (Pokrivčáková, 2013).

Role play

This is probably the most commonly mentioned activity in developing the learners' intercultural competence. It is a very useful and effective technique for practising sociolinguistic and pragmatic phrases, socio-cultural knowledge and non-verbal communication. For instance, it can provide an opportunity for learners to practice situations in real life such as in a restaurant, bus station and a shop (Reid, 2015). It can be practiced in all levels. As Byram suggests role-play activates the students' background knowledge about other countries and cultures (2002). In other words, students play the role of visitors to their own country and meet with other students playing role as themselves and not as the stereotypes that the visitors are expecting. This type of experiential learning is great to develop self-awareness as and perceptions of other nations.

Treasure hunt and Drama

Treasure hunt is a kind of research which includes looking for certain items set in advance, for instance people, dates, events in a news or magazine article. It is an influential learning tool which brings learning and interests together. Learners are asked to study any aspects of the culture that they are interested in and also they are asked to present their research by creating posters. Moreover, using Drama, the students can be asked to act out short scenes of

misinterpretation and clarification of something that happens between two cultures, which is

caused by misunderstanding the different culture (Reid, 2015).

Appendix B

Ethics documents

- **Research Ethics approval letter**
- **Participant consent form**
- **Information sheet for participants**

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education.

Simin Sasani
PhD

Head of School
Professor Cathy Nutbrown

School of Education
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield
S10 2JA

19 November 2013

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 8180
Email: MPhil-PhD@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Simin,

ETHIOAL APPROVAL LETTER

"Intercultural understanding among non-native teachers of English"

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

We recommend you refer to the reviewers' additional comments (please see attached). You should discuss how you are going to respond to these comments with your supervisor BEFORE you proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dan Goodley
Ohair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc   Andrey Rosowsky
       Davy Heymann (RIS)

Enc   Ethical Review Feedback Sheet(s)

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project:
 Intercultural understanding among non-native teachers of English

Name of Principal Investigator: Simin Sasani

Researchers: Simin Sasani

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw myself at any time without giving any reason. (Contact ….if you wish to withdraw)

☐

I understand that my responses will be anonymised after analysis.

☐

I agree to take part in the above research project.

☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher: Simin Sasani   Date   Signature

Information Sheet for Teachers

Research Project Title: Intercultural understanding among non-native teachers of English

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done, and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1. What is the project's purpose?

This project is in partial fulfilment of my doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. This study aims to explore non-native English language teachers' perceptions about developing students' intercultural knowledge, understanding and skills.

The development of English as a global language is a reason why many non-native speakers of English from different countries with different cultures along with native speakers use the language as a tool of communication. Therefore, in international communications intercultural awareness seems important.

Intercultural Awareness is one of the bases of international communication and it includes the ability of becoming aware of our own and the target language's cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. This awareness is vital when we want to interact with people from other cultures. People see, understand and evaluate things in a various ways. What is considered an appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality. (Quappe and Cantatore, 2005).

However, different researchers and teachers have different views about teaching culture in English language classrooms. The first view supports the implementation of a culture-free curriculum for foreign language teaching, protecting the cultural integrity of the 'non-native speaker'.

The second major view instead supports the idea that culture and language cannot be separated from one another. Language is the mirror of the culture. Therefore, the presentation of the target language culture should be an essential part of the foreign language teaching curriculum.

I would like to know if you agree with the first view or the second one. And what you do in terms of developing students' intercultural awareness and to what extent the materials you use in teaching English consider cultural awareness.

2. Why have I been chosen?

I think you have some unique insight and special contribution to make to this study as you are currently a non-native English speaker teaching English in the UK. Hopefully, nine more teachers will participate in this research.

3. Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, so it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep, and I will ask you, as part of the university regulations, to sign a consent form to prove that you have voluntarily consented to participate in this study. However, if at any time or for any reason you feel you want to withdraw or do not want to participate, you are free to do so. You do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

Once you have given your permission, I will arrange with you, either by email or telephone call, a mutually convenient time for me to attend and observe some of your English classes.

The number of observation sessions depends on your permission. I would prefer at least five full sessions. It is obvious that the more observations I do the more accurate data I will collect. My role, as a researcher in this study, is not judging, assessing or evaluating the performance of you and the students. I can reassure you that the research's aim is to explore the perceptions of the teachers involved and there will not be any judgment or inspecting the quality of teaching or learning.

I would also like you to participate in a one-to-one interview. The interview will take around fifteen minutes and it will be recorded with your permission. The venue for the interview is totally up to you. I can come where you suggest or where is convenience for you.

5. What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in an interview that aims to explore your point of view about the teaching of intercultural knowledge, understanding and skills. Moreover, you will be requested to allow me observe at least 5 sessions of your teaching. The place and time arrangements will be done as I explained in the previous question.

There is nothing you have to do in this research. All the participations are optional. There is no restriction.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no possible dangers or risks of participating in this study. However, if any unexpected discomforts or risks arise during the research, please let me know immediately.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in this study, it is hoped it may offer some exploratory insights into the teaching of English as a foreign or second language.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

If this is the case, the reason (s) will be explained fully.

9. What if something goes wrong?

If you feel unhappy about any aspect of my research at any time, please let me know immediately. I will address any concern as soon as possible. Feel free to contact me on ……… or on s.sasani@sheffield.ac.uk. In the event of you still not being satisfied, your enquiry can be investigated by my supervisor Dr Andrey Rosowsky, at a.rosowsky@sheffield.ac.uk. If your enquiry has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the University's Register and Secretary.

10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect during this research will be strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications for any reasons. Furthermore, the data will be stored in secure places. If at the conclusion of the project you would like your data to be erased, please inform me.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this research will be used expressly for my doctoral thesis which will be available at the University of Sheffield library and as an e-thesis after completion. It may also be that some part of the thesis be published in a peer reviewed academic journal or professional publication. Reports on the research may also be shared at conferences or for additional or subsequent research projects. You will not be identified in any such publication.

12. Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is totally self-funded.

13. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This research has been ethically reviewed in accordance with the University of Sheffield Ethics

Review Procedure as operated in the School of Education.

14. Contact for further information

The contact point for further information: Dr Andrey Rosowsky, Senior Lecturer in the School

of Education, University of Sheffield, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2JA, Tel:

(+44) (0)114 222 8136, email: A.Rosowsky@sheffield.ac.uk.

Appendix C

Interview questions

Background Information

1. What is your educational background? What is your highest level of education?

2. Have you attended in any teacher training course?

3. Do you have any teaching qualification?

4. How long have you been engaged in teaching English?

5. How long have you been in the UK?

Teaching Objectives

6. What is the most important objective for you in teaching English? What are your other priorities?

7. Have these priorities amended or changed during your career? How?

8. How much are you familiar with any of the ELT methods and approaches?

Culture and Intercultural Communications

9. How do you define culture?

10. How do you perceive the relationship between language and culture? Have you thought of this relationship considering English as an international language? How do you see it?

11. Have you ever thought of the place of culture in ELT?

   If yes: How do you perceive it? Do you consider it in designing your lesson plans?

12. Do you think cultural differences might cause problems in communications among people of different cultures?

   If yes, what kind of problems can you think of? As a non-native speaker of English, have you ever experienced such problems? (Share your stories if you would like to.)

13. As a non-native speaker of English, can you think of any examples that sometimes what you say in English (or your body language) is being interpreted differently due to cultural differences? Have you noticed this kind of misinterpretation among your students' classroom interactions?

14. What do you think about including activities or/and discussions which involve comparing and contrasting cultural differences?

15. What do you think as major issues related to the integration of different cultures into language teaching in this classroom?

Intercultural Competence

16. Have you ever heard of 'Intercultural Competence'?

   If yes, how can you define it? Do you remember where you heard or read about it? If no, what do you think it might mean?

17. To what extent do you think ELT can help learners to develop their awareness and skills to handle the challenging features of their intercultural communications?

18. Do you usually include activities that deal with cultural differences and make the learners think about their own culture and others'?

   If yes, do you do that intentionally for a specific reason? What is that reason?

   If no, why?

19. As a non-native English language teacher who lives and communicates in a multicultural setting, have your personal experiences affected your priorities and objectives in teaching? Can you give some examples?

20. Based on your experience, how did you find adjusting with a new cultural context? Have you ever experienced that you are being judged/treated based on stereotypical generalisations about your nationality/race? Do you address any of these problems in your lessons?

Appendix D

An example of interview transcripts

Background Information:

I studied 5 year degree in English literature and linguistics what we call philology in Spain and then I did a five year degree in French the same and then I studied that in Spain mainly but I did a year abroad in France and another year abroad in Canada. So when I finished that, I went to live in France and I started my teaching there and I taught English, didn't know it's gonna be possible but actually it was possible. So I taught English there for four years, English and Spanish, mainly English and then I came to the UK four years ago and I started doing my MA in TESOL. So I taught some free lessons and I taught also French and Spanish in an academy, in higher education, from year 7 to year 10. That was only a month and a half, I didn't really like it. At the same time I was doing some academic in Sheffield international college and teaching Spanish in the university and then I got the job here in 2011 and since then I have taught here. I am teaching for eight academic years. I have also done DELTA.

What is the most important objective for you in teaching English? What are your other priorities?

I want to help them to be able to communicate in English and to feel more confident in using the language. I also want them, is not about the language but about the study skills, I want them to be more independent learners and be or study any other language even if they are not with us. Mainly what I want them to do, is to discover other cultures, yes, I do talk a little bit about cultures and giving them opportunities to use the language basically.

My first priority is to help them communicate and feel confident.

Have these priorities amended or changed during your career? How?

The thing that I have developed a lot is about helping them to be independent learners a lot more than before. Before it was more about teaching them English, teaching them how to

communicate in English, whereas now I try to teach them how to learn English, to learn the language, they can, when they finish with us, they can still learn the language because it is impossible to learn everything you want to learn in a course . So that is a little bit of an idea to continue learning a language.

And I think because we are non-native speakers, we realise we are still learning new things now while teaching. So, we know that is impossible to learn everything in that particular course that you are going to continue learning and you have to help students notice they are studying independently and etc. Maybe that change happened because of my experience in the UK , my DELTA as well. Because when I was in France, I was more teacher-centred but now I am a lot student-centred. I have changed a little bit of my philosophy, not my philosophy because I don't think I even thought about independent learning when I was in France, to be honest.

How much are you familiar with any of the ELT methods and approaches?

I think I have been taught in different degrees. I was taught in my English degree that I did in Spain. I also did a certificate in teaching Spanish as a foreign language. So I also learned a little about communicative approach, grammar translation and etc. and then during my DELTA program I also learned about that. Now if you tell me give all those theories, I would not be able but yes.

It(current teaching) is towards to communicative approach but I also believe that it has to be accurate. So, obviously depending on the level, certain things that I think they definitely have to be accurate in certain situations, although it really depends on the activities, in some activities, e.g., ok, it is just for fluency, just speak, or we need to get these things accurate, especially for written English for example or when they are preparing for presentations and etc. I try a little bit on pronunciation. I focus a lot more on pronunciation because I think it is very important, eg. Stress because it helps a lot if you learn how to pronounce. When I was in France

I had to teach both pronunciations, American and British. I know there are also other pronunciations like Indian pronunciation, Australian one but we focused on these two. Here in the UK I normally focus on British pronunciation but if they pronounce American one, that's fine, it doesn't matter as long as that is understandable.

How do you define culture?

I am not going to give a definition but I am gonna talk about something that we normally talk about in class, because I have done the 'cultural ice berg or the ice-berg culture, something like that. I've done that in the class, this is what you see, this is what you don't see. I think having lived in different countries it is, once you start living in a country, you start realising, it has happened to me in france because my partner is french and all my friends are French etc, you realise a lot of things that I thought are similar, in the end they were not that similar and there were some breakdowns in communications, politeness for example. In Spanish you don't say please or thank you to your friends all the time because they are your friends and that is how you show the close relationship whereas in france you have to say please and thank you all the time if you are talking to your friends. So that is an example that I give to my students. I mention these kinds of example, e.g. remember to say please. Sometimes we laugh at that because I remember we were doing something about presentations and working on 'how would you make sure that your presentation has been understood', or something like that, and they said 'is that clear?' but the intonation was a bit rude. And I said try to put it in more polite way and just say 'have I made myself understood' or ' anything that I could explain in different way', or 'is that entirely clear?'. I tell them Remember in the UK, you have to put the effort on the person, and try not to have an strong/direct intonation.

How do you perceive the relationship between language and culture?

It is very very important, very very important, very very close because the way you say things depends on the culture. So the way you write an email, the way you ask a question, I always say, e.g., in Spain we would say 'Can you do this?' whereas in English we would try to say 'would it be possible to do this?' and you say it in a very personal way that you are not… telling people what to do, you have to be polite. So the language is expressing this, the culture is expressing this implication of this idea, so yes, this is very important. I do believe that even the language here in Britain and the language in America are different because of the cultural difference, the ways things are being said.

Have you thought of this relationship considering English as an international language? How do you see it?

It's very interesting.. Here we focus on British culture a little bit because we are in the UK.. And I found it more manageable. When I was in France it was English as an international language and it was too broad. So it was too difficult. It was more in terms of pronunciations and vocabulary, like in England you say this and in America you say this. When you live here you should teach British English. There are other varieties of English but they are not very useful here. Linking it to the language and culture in the English language, I think we just have to make students aware that cultures are different and then this is the communication we do in England and this is the communication we do another countries and to let them know that for example if a Spanish doesn't say 'please', it is not rude, it is just a part of culture. Something that I really like here, but the problem is that we got a lot of Chinese students, and sometimes you only have 16 Chinese students and that's it, if you come to my lessons, you may see the majority of them or all of them are Chinese, but when I have Arabic speakers, Chinese, Korean, Japanese , etc. it is great to have them in groups and then , they all naturally talk about their

culture, like, what would you do in Japan, what do you do in Saudi Arabia, what do you do in this culture, so they like talking about their own culture.

Have you ever thought of the place of culture in ELT?

Yes, it is very important. Specially I focus a lot on politeness. Also register is part of the culture, like, you write this formal email, informal email, how you write, when you say.. yea .. I think everything is implicit.. culture is everywhere.. I don't question all the cultural aspects all the time.. I try to.. but sometimes all these westernisation and etc. sometimes I focus on the text and don't focus too much on the .. Depends on the level of the students.. but I believe that culture is very important for the students because it makes life easier for them if they are familiar with it, they can find new friends easier, and things like that.

Do you structure your lesson plan before each lesson?

Yes.

Do you consider it in designing your lesson plans?

No, it comes up in the class. I don't think .. explicitly I don't have, for example, I might have grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary but I don't have a section on culture. It's sth that comes up while teaching.

Do you think cultural differences might cause problems in communications among people of different cultures?

Yes, because then you may think someone is rude when it is not and there is some aspect some aspect of behaviour that you may expect and then you can be angry at the person and it can create a problem in communication and even in relationships. Let me give an example, when I was in Canada, majority of my friends were French and it is really, I think it is a good example, because Spanish culture and French culture are very similar but you've got this bottom level

of the ice berg that is quite different. So, for example, in Spain, if you are at a party and you say 'I am leaving now', you expect people to say' oh, don't leave now, come on, stay a bit longer and etc.' and it is impolite not to say so whereas in France and in the UK, you say 'I'm leaving' and they are like 'ok, bye' which is kind of good because it is your freedom, do whatever you want, you are free but at the first time, I had like 'ok, bye', in Spanish culture, that is 'ok, we don't want you here, go, that is why we are not insistence'. So I felt really angry and insulted when they said 'ok, bye' and I got angry at them actually. So yes it can create.. and I think we need to explain these things as well. So it is not all about language but about expectations. What answers to expect. Now that I am thinking what answers to expect, so you said this, you can expect this answer. However, now I really like French and English culture, because when I want to go home, I want to go home, I have my freedom.

I should also add this that, it is impossible to learn about every single culture and then if it is spontaneous interaction or communication, how would you say 'oh I met a Spanish person. Oh I haven't really read about Spanish people', it is not really how the world works and you have to be aware of the situation.

As a non-native speaker of English, can you think of any examples that sometimes what you say in English (or your body language) is being interpreted differently due to cultural differences? Have you noticed this kind of misinterpretation among your students' classroom interactions?

Here sometimes I do some gestures and people say 'oh that is very Spanish' and I have not realised. The thing is that English people normally don't say a lot of things even if they think that is wrong… I've got the feeling that they don't usually say that oh I wouldn't do that or etc. In France they tell you. They are quite direct, we don't do it here.

What do you think about including activities or/and discussions which involve comparing and contrasting cultural differences?

Yes I do

What do you think as major issues related to the integration of different cultures into language teaching in this classroom?

I think… Discussions are very important in the classroom. You may find some students who don't understand why things are different in different cultures. Or in some cases they might become vocal but it is not a big problem as long as they learn something out of the discussions. After a while, you will see they know more about each other. But.. then again, in some topics, they may say 'that is not logical, that is not possible or' they can be defensive. You can get a little bit of that. But I haven't had a big problem. I have done a little bit of sensitive issues and with certain students it is better not to because they become quite vocal and it can be a bit difficult. I try to do it in a professional way because in one of the lectures here, we talked about homosexuality and said people can do whatever they want as long as they don't harm the others. So we were talking about different things like homosexuality, and different families and other things like the cloths you wear ant etc. and some students were just blocked with the idea of homosexuality.. so it was difficult and you could see some other students come from a culture that is not a big problem and they said oh just calm down and let's talk about something else and it was a little bit of problem but I think it is important to talk about this because in this western society they are gonna meet some people who are gay and they have to be polite. What I tell them is that 'you don't have to understand or you don't have to agree but you have to respectful', that is the only thing. Or.. for example, If they want to be more polite, or they want to tell a joke or be sarcastic, you know, I do find myself saying things like' oh, no no no, we

don't do that in the UK. But I don't plan for these. It just happens, depending on what the students would say or what the textbook would bring up.

Have you ever heard of 'Intercultural Competence'?

I think I have. To be honest with you, I think I have seen it in university website or something like that .. is like 'learn another language' because one of the things that employers value is intercultural competence. I think I have seen it in that context. I have heard about it but I can't remember where, I think it has been advertised 'intercultural communication and so on'. I think it is university of East Anglia they have a masters course in intercultural communication studies or something. I think I have seen it as a term but I haven't heard or read about it even in the CELTA course or other training courses. I would love to learn more about it because I think it is very important.

How can you define it?

You are able to communicate with different cultures and you can adapt your communication. I can kind of guess what it is about. It has something to do with cultural awareness; you know awareness of equality and diversity, different cultures.

Has including activities about other cultures helped your students to develop their awareness?

I think so but I can't give you a prove for that. I think to some extent. I think a lot of misunderstanding can be avoided if you have some awareness of the students' cultures. ELT context is an ideal context to develop the students' awareness. I think they communicate better if the topic is culture and I think it raises their curiosity and then they ask questions later. Sometimes you are going to do an activity for 10 minutes or 20 minutes and it takes one hour and half because they are very into it or they keep asking questions.

As a non-native English language teacher who lives and communicates in a multicultural setting, have your personal experiences affected your priorities and objectives in teaching? Can you give some examples?

Yes it has. I like your questions because they are making me think. The main one is we have been through the main process. So we might be more insightful, more understanding. We might tolerate. I don't know. I think I tolerate more mistakes. So I think I am good in explaining grammar. Maybe skills, reading and writing. Also, for example, before I came to the uk and I did my DELTA, Diploma. I was not that aware of teacher talk and DELTA is like you can't talk. Teacher talk reduces to its maximum which we can agree or disagree with. And now I noticed that sometimes I feel that I'm a little bit afraid of speaking too much to my students. Because of Delta, they say you talk too much, you have to reduce you have to reduce. So it is like students talk students talk and you don't talk that much. and sometimes I look back at my lessons before when I talked more, and I think students also enjoyed that and I think it is something that has been lost in a way that I don't share a lot of my experience with them. I ask them to share their experience within themselves. I think you can also learn from the teacher and that is something that I questioned about teacher talk. Yes, I think they have to talk but I think a little bit of teacher talk is not always bad. So that is basically the question of the diploma, other things that have affected my teaching, apart from the experience that I tell them like here they can say goodbye at a party , that's fine, so I do mention those kind of things. And these examples are based on my own experience. And I think the students appreciate that. They like.. I have a lot of students come to me and ask as a non-native speaker how did you learn English.. how did you find talking to English people when you arrived here, this kind of questions, when you arrived here what did you do get to know English people , I think they appreciate the fact that I am a non-native speaker because it is a kind of bridging between native and non-native speaker. We can help a little bit in that.

Based on your experience, how did you find adjusting with a new cultural context? Have you ever experienced that you are being judged/treated based on stereotypical generalisations about your nationality/race? Do you address any of these problems in your lessons?

I think I have been lucky. I haven't been treated in a bad way. Probably because of my skin colour etc., I didn't have that problem. I think my biggest problem was in French culture because it was my first experience living abroad and I found that really difficult and because, for example, the question of politeness, suddenly people were telling me that I am not being polite, I'm being rude and I have never been told in Spain. So I was like, am I being rude? Am I being impolite? So I questioned my own culture saying we don't do that and then the problem was that I was judging my own culture saying this is not as good as French culture because we don't do this and we should do this and sometimes when my family were coming there, they were doing things which seems not good in French culture and then I see I have now reached to the stage where I see this is French culture, this Spanish culture .That is it. They are different and no one is better than the other. So, I reached to that point before I move to the UK. So, now in the uk, I think I have that adaptation to another culture, let's put it in this way, it is not just French culture, British culture, Ok, in England they do it that way, in Spain they do it this way and I think I feel comfortable in those different cultures, which is good, in general I feel comfortable. There is a book called 'intercultural communication' or something like that. We've got it upstairs. I have used it in my lessons.

In France, we had a term that we used to university level students, it was called "The culture of engineer" and there we did a lot of cultural differences. So we taught specifically. We started with a game called "banga game". They play with cards, on different tables, they've got, they all have different rules and they have to find what is happening and it is just to tell them about the hidden rules of different cultures. It was very good. This book is used for higher level but

I think for the basic levels, we can at least show them the idea of cultural ice berg. We can tell them what culture etc is.

Appendix E

An example of observation field note

26/01/2017

An exercise on countable and uncountable nouns. Filling the gaps.

The language of discussion:

Taking part in debates: Agreeing, Disagreeing, Partly agreeing, partly disagreeing, Asking for clarification

The teacher asked the students to work in their groups and think about some phrases that they can use for agreeing/disagreeing. Students came up with some phrases: I think so/ I don't think so, Same here/ Do you agree? what do you think?

The teacher gave some phrases to the students and asked them to decide which phrase is for agreeing/disagreeing/asking for agreement/ asking for clarifications/ asking for an opinion/ Giving an opinion/ partly agreeing/ partly disagreeing.
tip: If you find it difficult, think of a context: Where would you use this phrase
Simin → "look at the handout"

The teacher gave some sentences and asked the students to express their opinions. He asked them to use the above mentioned phrases to agree/disagree or partly agree/disagree.
Sentences are:
" Good communicators are born, not made." Do you agree with this sentence?

"Men are more interested in sports than women. Discuss"

" There isn't enough sport on TV."

" It is good for children to take part in competitive sports."

" The more security cameras, the better."

He writes on board:

I agree
I disagree } (with) + noun

I agree (with) you.
"   "   (")   this sentence.

But: I agree (that) this is true.
                    Sentence

Typical mistake: "Maybe I agree with you"
Try to use : I agree with you to a certain point.

He played a video and asked them to think about these questions:
a) What does the moderator do?
b) Does everybody participate?
c) How does a discussion develope?

The video is a debate about " Should we give homework to students?"

The teacher asked the students to work in groups and think about the above 3 questions.

The structure of a debate is similar to the structure of an essay. It should have an introduction, other people's ideas, conclusion.

He explains what a <u>moderator</u> does.
chair person

Eye contacts & talking to people are important.

He displayed a text about the role of a moderator. There are some gaps in the text. He asked the students to fill the gaps with the given vocabulary. Asked the students to start reading the text to the rest of the class. Each sentence was read by a student.

He displayed some sentences and ask the students to think where in a debate, these sentences could be used.

a) Getting started   b) Managing contribution
c) clarification   d) concluding
   * We're running out of time, so ....
   * Thanks, Pete, for contribution.
   * Shall we begin?
   * Does anyone want to make a final point?
   * So what you mean is...
   * If you've understood you correctly...
   * Who would like to begin?
   * Ok, Pete. Would anyone else like to comment?

He wants student to have a debate on
" Are the sport people paid too much?"
He asks who wants to be the leader.
He sets roles to students. He gave them the role cards.
Simin → See the role cards.

He divided the students into two groups. Each group
had a chairperson. The mediator started up.
The students try to use the phrases that they
learned ±earlier.
He wants them to think how what they learned
tody can be transferred to their writing.

For the next session, he asks them to read a
text in their textbook and do the exercises.