Teaching intercultural communicative competence in degree programmes in English as a foreign language: Stakeholders' views

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Abstract:This exploratory case study examines programme leaders and EFL tutors' views towards integrating intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in their courses in the framework of English major programmes at university. The definition of ICC proposed by Byram (1997) and the model suggested by Barrett et al. (2014) were used. The study was carried out at a prestigious university in Hungary. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 tutors; 12 of them are programme leaders. The findings indicated that culture and interculturality were not taught in all departments; this depends on the course's aim and the importance the tutors attached to teaching ICC. Also, the tutors maintained that culture was taught implicitly in some courses.

1   Introduction

In order to be successful communicators in the world today, people need to possess intercultural communicative competence (ICC). There is a growing demand, particularly for university graduates, to be interculturally competent as their future professional success may depend on how well they present themselves. This could also have a ripple effect on their professional and social circles. The development of students' ICC has emerged among teaching goals in many countries. Deardorff (2006) maintains that the development of ICC needs to be addressed in various ways, such as courses with intercultural content, study abroad programmes, and interacting with students from different cultures. Designers of such programmes aim for students to acquire attitudes, skills, knowledge, and understanding and put them into practice in order to be able to have successful intercultural interactions (Barrett et al., 2014).

There has been little discussion about foreign language teachers' beliefs on ICC implementation (Sercu et al., 2005). Therefore, the present paper investigates the motivations of programme leaders and tutors for integrating ICC courses. While ICC is often part of the curriculum of business schools, marketing courses and other teaching programmes, this article focuses only on courses where ICC is included in courses related to foreign language (FL) development. The reason is that FL development seems to be an obvious place for ICC development, yet objections have been raised against incorporating ICC in FLT (Holló, 2017). This article also examines the way stakeholders view the value of these courses in English studies programmes at a Hungarian university. The questions that guided the research were, the following:

1. What are the considerations behind intercultural communicative competence development in the English major programmes?
2. How do the teachers involved in intercultural communicative

competence development view the value of their courses?

In the following sections, the notion of ICC is defined, and previous studies about the beliefs of programme leaders and teachers on the integration of ICC are reviewed.

1.1 Intercultural communicative competence and language teaching

1.1.1 Definition of intercultural communicative competence

Many scholars in the field of intercultural competence have used ICC and intercultural competence (IC) interchangeably when defining the concept of ICC. For example, (Fantini and Tirmizi, 2006: 12) used the term IC. They described it as "...a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself". Among the components that this complex notion includes are knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness, and mastering the target language. In relation to the foreign language teaching context, (Byram, 1997: 71) described ICC in terms of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness along with language proficiency:

> Someone with Intercultural Communicative Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. They are able to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other, and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins. Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately sociolinguistic and discourse competence and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations of the language.

In the context of this study, Byram's (1997) definition quoted above will be used not only because it is one of the most cited descriptions of ICC, but also, because he distinguishes the difference between IC and ICC. According to him, IC is composed solely of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness, while ICC also encompasses language proficiency.

One of the most recent IC models in the field is Barrett's IC model. It highlights the element of action through which the attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills are applied. This model is used in this study to complement Byram's (1997) definition. In this model, IC is shown to be a composite of attitudes, knowledge of beliefs and practices, and understanding of the different cultures, skills, and actions. Table 1 shows a summary of the components of the main elements.

All (or most) of the ICC elements can be combined with language teaching. Teachers are often free to choose the content and the teaching materials, and even if they are not, cultural topics are often presented in language teaching materials at all levels. In his book The Non-native teacher, Medgyes (2017) described the difference between formalist and activist foreign language teachers, depending on the content they prioritise. According to him, "The formalist teacher is preoccupied with the learning content, while the carrier content is merely a pretext for her to introduce and practise new language items" (Medgyes, 2017: 27). For some teachers, cultural content can simply mean "filling" the learning content with culture-related content.

Intercultural Competence (IC)			
Attitudes	**Knowledge and Understanding**	**Skills**	**Actions**
- Respect for cultural diversity/ multiplicity

- Willingness to learn from and about people from different cultures

- Willingness to question practices and behaviours that are taken for granted

- Tolerance

- Willingness to look for opportunities for intercultural interactions

- Willingness to empathise with people from different cultures | - Awareness of one's own and other people's prejudices and preconceptions

- Awareness that people from different cultures have different verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating

- Knowledge of the beliefs and practices of culturally different people

- Understanding that one's language and cultural orientations have an impact on the way one perceives the world

- Understanding the diversity of cultural groups | - Skills of multi-perspectivity

- Skills in learning new knowledge about other people's cultures

- Skills in interpreting other cultures' practices and beliefs and relating them to one's own

- Changing one's own thinking and adapting one's behaviour to new cultural environments

- Behaving appropriately and adapting one's behaviour to the culture in question

- Skills to critically evaluate the cultures in question

- Acquiring linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills; acquiring the skills needed to mediate in intercultural interactions | - Looking for opportunities to interact with people from different cultures

- Collaborating with culturally diverse people

- Discussing differences in their cultures, negotiating a mode of interaction

- Challenging behaviours that are against human rights

- Communicating appropriately, effectively, and respectfully with people from different cultures |

Table 1: A summary of the Intercultural Competence Model by Barrett et al. (2014) (Adopted from Talbi, 2020)

1.2 Teachers' views towards teaching intercultural communicative competence

In this section, the findings of earlier studies regarding teachers' beliefs about incorporating ICC development into their language teaching are discussed. Some of the factors that can limit the teaching of ICC are highlighted.

In Hungary, Lázár (2011) carried out a mixed-methods study with two pre-service teachers. Before their teaching practice, the participants had a course to promote their cultural awareness and develop their skills and knowledge in teaching ICC. During their teaching practice, they tried to implement the intercultural dimension into EFL teaching. Even though a participant succeeded in incorporating many ICC activities in her teaching practice, she criticised the teacher education programme for not raising their intercultural awareness before. Hence, Lázár recommends that ICC courses be implemented in the first year of university learning to develop teacher trainees' understanding of the possible methods of integrating ICC in language teaching.

In the Chinese setting, Han and Song (2011) carried out a small-scale pilot study to examine how 30 in-service English language teachers conceptualised and perceived the role of ICC in English Language Teaching (ELT). Another aim voiced in the study was to discover if their perceptions were realised in their teaching practices. In this quantitative study, the researchers adapted a questionnaire designed by Sercu et al. (2005) during their investigation of foreign language teachers' beliefs and their impact on their teaching practices. The findings revealed that university English language teachers agreed that teaching culture is as important as teaching the target language and that it is inevitable for students to acquire ICC. The authors maintained that ELT should deepen students' knowledge of their own culture and other cultures. These perceptions were, nevertheless, not reflected in the teaching practices observed by the

authors. The teachers recognised the development of students' language proficiency as the primary teaching objective in ELT. However, few of them considered the objective to promote students' knowledge about the target cultures. Consequently, most teachers devoted more time to language teaching, while very few taught both language and culture. It was claimed that the type of class forced the teachers to choose the aspect they needed to address. For example, one teacher who taught History of Western Civilisations offered students a large amount of cultural knowledge input. If more details had been presented, deeper understanding would have been gained to investigate the teachers' attitudes about whether they believed culture teaching is the passing of factual knowledge about the target culture or not. In contrast, another teacher who taught English grammar stated the course aimed at improving students' proficiency. This finding reinforces Lázár's (2011) recommendation about incorporating ICC in the first year of university learning to help future teachers understand the possible ways to implement ICC in language teaching.

Many of the studies mentioned in the literature underscore that most teachers highlighted the importance of developing ICC, however, their teaching practices did not reflect their beliefs. On the one hand, they aimed to develop students' language proficiency, and they allocated more time to teaching grammar over culture. Yet, they believed that they should become interculturally competent (Sercu et al., 2005). This can be explained by their lack of a clear conceptualisation of ICC. A lack of training could be one reason for not knowing what is meant by ICC or how they should incorporate it into language teaching. One of the stated factors for not teaching ICC was the lack of materials. Interestingly, the participants in Han and Song's (2011) study overcame this issue using additional materials because the cultural content in textbooks was usually ignored since they were originally designed to teach and assess language proficiency. Some of the extra materials used were audio-visual materials to attract the students' attention and enrich their knowledge

about the target cultures. Other impeding factors that prevented teachers from developing students' ICC were the lack of time, lack of knowledge of teaching culture, class size, the teaching workload, school facilities (Sercu et al., 2005; Lázár, 2011).

1.3 Programme leaders' views on the implementation of intercultural communicative competence

This section sheds light on programme leaders' views on incorporating ICC in language courses. Various studies that were conducted in different contexts are presented.

Bachner (2001) reported his experience as a Dean of Global Studies and as project director at the Hartwick faculty that offered intercultural programmes to first-year students. The curriculum was fused with intercultural content, and the courses were based on several assumptions to develop students' ICC. For example, before going abroad on an off-campus trip, the students should be exposed to intercultural learning, which according to Bachner (2001: 29–30):

> would develop students' capacities to learn from experience, reduce distortions and superficial stereotypes of their own as well as of the other culture, and encourage more knowledgeable and respectful intercultural perspectives. Perhaps most importantly, it would provide a formal, faculty-assisted opportunity for students to explore the possible connections between the experience and their ongoing study, career, and other life choices.

Another assumption was the development of students' general skills. Although the importance of developing culture-specific skills and knowledge was voiced, greater emphasis was placed on developing students' skills to discover, learn, and reply effectively to people from any culture. This assumption is reasonable because it would be

more productive for the students to learn how to interact effectively in any context rather than learn how to communicate in a specific setting.

A doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Leicester examined integrating intercultural content in skills development English language courses in the Lebanese context using an action research project (Salem, 2012). The intervention lasted for three semesters. She also investigated the views of two stakeholders, namely, the head of the division of the English programme at the university and the coordinator of the Intensive English programme courses on the implementation of ICC content through interviews. It was found that they believed that the ultimate objective of ELT was for the learners to become a native or a near-native speaker of the target language, which contradicts the aim of the teaching of ICC, which focuses on developing an intercultural speaker with good language and intercultural skills. Before the implementation of the ICC course, the administrators had different attitudes towards including cultural content in language teaching. The stakeholders thought that such a course should not be included at the foundational level, and one of them disagreed with its implementation in the first place. They believed that ICC was not a useful course for the students as it could lead to conflicts, and it would not develop their language skills. However, these findings have to be treated cautiously as only two participants were involved in the study. Deeper insights would have been gained if more participants had been included.

Holló (2017) maintains that the most useful goal for language learners, in general, was not only to master the target language but also to acquire intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills to effectively and appropriately interact with people from other backgrounds. She examined the views of four educational managers in the BA and MA programmes for English language majors and teacher training at a Hungarian university. Three participants stated that there was no particular need for intercultural education; however,

they presented interculturality implicitly in their classes. They indicated that interculturality was not related to ELT and teacher training, suggesting that it is part of socialisation. Therefore, it need not be and should not be included in the educational curriculum. One of the reasons they rejected the implementation of ICC was that they considered it important to experience it rather than to learn about it. They also mentioned that the university had many international students, and as students mingled in and outside classes, this would develop their ICC. They also did not answer a question about what the students would need to develop in their ICC. Holló explained this finding with their disinterest in teaching ICC.

2   Methods

2.1   Setting and participants

This study was conducted at an institute of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of a university in Budapest, Hungary. This university is internationally recognised, and it offers a wide range of English major programmes at different levels (BA, MA, PhD) for both international and Hungarian students. The university offers the programme of teacher training in the English language and culture solely for Hungarian students. At the same time, it also runs a one-year MA programme of English language instruction for both Hungarian and international students. It should be noted that all the programmes are held in English.

The stakeholders involved in this research are programme leaders and teachers in the BA, MA, and PhD programme and in the teacher training programmes. 9 teachers (T) and 12 programme leaders (PL) were interviewed. As programme leaders are teachers themselves, some people were interviewed both as a teacher and a programme leader. Tables 2 and 3 show more information about the participants.

Inter-viewees	Gender	Number of years of teaching the course	The name of the course	Level
T1	Female	10 years	Australia through documentaries	BA
		10 years	Intercultural communication	BA
		5 years	Skills for intercultural communication	MA
T2	Female	10 years	Australian Aboriginal issues	BA
T3	Male	More than 8 years	Communicating across cultures	BA
T4	Male	2 years	Specialisation in English culture	Teacher training
T5	Female	8-10 years	EFL for intercultural competence	Teacher training
		1 year	Hungarian-Israeli online collaboration	Teacher training
		5-6 years	Language education for intercultural development	PhD
T6	Male	3 years	Popular culture	BA
T7	Male	1 year	American culture	BAMA
		1 year	Nikkei in the US	
T8	Female	3 years	American popular culture	BA
T9	Male	5 years	British culture	Teacher training

Table 2: Demographic information about the teachers

Inter-viewee	Gender	Admini-strative role	Number of years in this position
PL1	Female	the coordinator of the teacher training programme	6 years
PL2	Female	the vice head of the Department of English Language Pedagogy	3 years
PL3	Female	Director of Studies of the PhD in Language Pedagogy	20 years
PL4	Female	deputy head of the department of English language pedagogy	3 years
PL5	Female	The director of studies at the school	2.5 years
PL6	Male	The head of the department of English studies	6 months
PL7	Male	The head of the linguistics department	9 years
PL8	Male	The Dean's Commissioner for international students	1 year
PL9	Female	deputy head of the Department of American Studies	6 years
PL10	Male	Head of school	6 years
PL11	Female	The programme coordinator of the English language instruction	1.5 years
PL12	Female	Deputy head of the school	2 years

Table 3: Demographic information about the teachers

2.2 Data collection instruments

Interviews are considered to be a powerful tool in a qualitative research approach to learn about participants' views and opinions (Fantini and Tirmizi, 2006; Creswell, 2009). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used as, due to their flexible nature, the wording and sequence of questions can be changed depending on what the interviewee has to say. All the asked questions are open-ended to encourage the participants to provide information freely and go more in-depth about the issue discussed (Cohen et al., 2018).

To answer the first research question (What are the considerations behind intercultural communicative competence development in the English major programmes?) interviews were conducted with 12 programme leaders. The questions were grouped according to the administrative role the programme leaders have, namely, the head of school and director of studies; the department heads and coordinators of curricular groups. All of them were asked about integrating culture, interculturality, and intercultural communicative competence in the different programmes at the school and in their courses. A senior researcher validated the interview schedule.

The interviews were conducted online during the autumn term of 2020-2021. The interviewees signed a consent form, and they allowed the interviews to be recorded. The interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were also used to answer the second research question (How do the teachers involved in intercultural communicative competence development view the value of their courses?). The participants were 9 teachers. The interview schedule was comprised of 25 questions. They were grouped according to five themes: background information on the course, the course contents, teaching approaches, the students' views on the course, and the teacher's evaluation of the course. The interview questions were validated by another researcher and piloted with a teacher.

In the present research, the interviews with the teachers were conducted between December 2019 and July 2020. The interviews were held face-to-face, and during the pandemic situation, some of them were performed on online platforms. The interviewees signed a consent form to permit the recording of the interviews.

2.3 Data analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted on the semi-structured interviews. It is a way to categorise and report themes within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The interviews were transcribed and hand-coded.

3 Results

The results are presented under two main subsections: the programme leaders' views on the integration of ICC in English language courses, and the tutors' views about the development of students' ICC.

3.1 The views of programme leaders on the integration of ICC in English language courses

The programme leaders were asked about their views on incorporating ICC in the various English major programmes. It is worth noting that they have two professional selves, namely, as programme leaders and university tutors; therefore, their views contain their views from their teacher selves. Not all of them voiced the importance of intercultural integration in the different programmes, reinforcing Holló's (2017) finding, revealing that the students' ICC could be developed through socialising. This finding is also consistent with Salem's (2012) study that showed one of the two stakeholders

disagreed with the implementation of ICC in the English language classes as it could lead to conflicts among students, and it would not develop their language proficiency. It seems that the stakeholder in Salem's research was not aware of the importance of the development of students' ICC and its impact on their intercultural interactions. The programme leaders who acknowledged ICC education's necessity mentioned different reasons such as promoting tolerance, facilitating interaction with people from other cultures, and recognising it as the language tutors' responsibility. The interviewees' own words are quoted in [1–4].

[1]   *We have got a real-life presence of interculturality in the class-rooms.* (PL10)

[2]   *[. . .] intercultural studies facilitate communication, tolerance, openness and asking questions, and entering discussion instead of just hating.* (PL9)

[3]   *It is important to make people tolerant and understand that there are all sorts of different people with different views.* (PL7)

[4]   *English language teachers have a very big responsibility to promote interculturality, accepting others, not judging other people [. . .] and I think that this is very typical of our department and my colleagues.* (PL12)

The programme leaders acknowledged the importance of ICC development, mainly intercultural skills such as promoting openness and tolerance, which reinforces Barrett et al. (2014)'s views. This can be explained by the fact that only some ICC aspects can be developed in educational settings, as described in the next section.

The findings also revealed that not all programme leaders included developing students' ICC in the aims of the different educational programmes they were responsible for, which was expected as other competences must be developed. It was found that courses with cultural and intercultural content were designed only in some English departments. The various aims are quoted in their words in [5–7]:

[5] *The main aim of the programme is [. . .] to prepare students in a flexible way to approach foreign language teaching.* (PL11)

[6] *To prepare future language teachers for real-life teaching.* (PL2)

[7] *The aim of an English degree is to let students do whatever they like afterwards, to be journalists, to be literary gentle people, some of them become linguists.* (PL7)

When programme leaders were asked about the implementation of ICC content in the different programmes, the majority of them revealed that it was taught implicitly. It was presented explicitly in courses focusing specifically on intercultural content. Their views are quoted in [8–10].

[8] *It is always taught implicitly. [. . .] Explicitly; I would say that it is done in the courses which are designed to teach cultural history, some aspect of cultural history.* (PL8)

[9] *It is taught explicitly, so they have one of the courses assigned as an intercultural competence course for them [. . .] I really love the diversity of these classes, and I always rely on their own experience.* (PL11)

[10] *It aims to develop students' awareness and deepen students'
       understanding of cultural differences and understand the dif-
       ferent levels of intercultural communication and how those can
       be researched.* (PL3)

The findings suggested that the programme leaders revealed the
need to develop students' ICC; however, it was taught explicitly
only in the departments that aimed to raise students' awareness
about English-speaking cultures and cultural courses. The results
are partly in line with Holló's (2017) findings that showed that three
out of the four interviewed programme leaders argued that there
was no need for the explicit inclusion of ICC development in English
major courses. In fact, they presented it implicitly in their classes.
The fact that ICC was explicitly taught in specific departments could
result in the development of the ICC of students belonging to those
departments. It would help them overcome their preconceptions,
and promote their intercultural knowledge and skills (Byram, 1997;
Bachner, 2001; Barrett et al., 2014).

3.2   The views of tutors on the integration of ICC courses for English majors

The tutors were asked about the aim of their courses, topics, ap-
proaches and methods, materials used, and good practices. They
were also asked about the challenges they met when they integrated
ICC into their courses. The data are grouped according to five
themes: teacher's aims, ICC aspects presented in the course, meth-
ods and approaches, good practices, and challenges.

Teachers aimed to develop students' ICC through:
- Raising their awareness about
  - different aspects of American popular culture,
  - the materials needed to teach American culture,
  - *a lot of different aspects of Australia* (T1),

- – Canadian culture,
- – (the students') own voice. A programme leader and a tutor also argued *I want to teach this openness towards otherness and difference and develop your own English to represent yourself* (PL12).
- Promoting the students' intercultural skills.
- Creating opportunities to interact with different cultures.
- Intercultural awareness.
- Intercultural communication.
- They also aimed to boost the students' learning skills by:
  - – familiarising them with ICC development readings and keeping them updated with *the latest research in this field* (T5),
  - – critically analyse academic documents.

The aims that the teachers articulated were similar to the goals mentioned in the study of Han and Song (2011), such as promoting students' knowledge of their own culture and other cultures as well. Those aims reflect the components of ICC suggested by Barrett et al. (2014), which develop students' ICC. Some tutors revealed that they also wanted to promote pre-service teachers' awareness about the possible methods to include ICC in language teaching. *A tutor explained the practical aspect of her course, saying in my experience, this is what makes teachers change their thinking and practice* (T5). This was supported by a programme leader, affirming *an intercultural competence course in the second term to teach them how to incorporate culture in language courses in the teacher training programme* (PL3). The significance of such courses is reflected in the findings of Lázár's study (2011), in which a pre-service teacher succeeded in implementing many ICC activities that she learned in a similar course in her teaching practice. It can be concluded that when pre-service teachers become EFL teachers at secondary schools, they will implement ICC activities in their English language courses. Consequently, more people will be prepared to interact with

people who are culturally different and have successful intercultural interactions.

3.2.1 ICC aspects that are present in the courses

- Culture with a small c, culture with a capital C: people's ways of thinking and behaving, history, literature written by indigenous authors, music, humour.
- Cultural differences.
- Non-judgmental attitudes.
- Active listening.
- Identity.
- Questioning stereotypes and prejudices.
- Working with students from different cultures (online collaboration).
- Cultural clashes.
- Comparative cultural approach: English speaking cultures are compared with students' cultures.
- Relying on the students' own experiences.
- Openness and tolerance.
- Intercultural communication.
- Raising self-awareness.
- Cultural norms, values, and beliefs.

The analysis of ICC aspects presented in the different courses showed that tutors acknowledged the importance of learning about the visible and the hidden parts of culture. This result is contrary to Baltaci and Tanis (2018) study, which suggested that in-service teachers taught practical aspects of culture presented in textbooks such as traditions, food, and clothes, overlooking the communicative elements of culture. In the present study, teachers were willing to promote students' attitudes of openness, knowledge of different beliefs, values, and practices, and develop self-awareness as advocated by Byram (1997); Barrett et al. (2014).

3.2.2 Methods and approaches

The tutors used a variety of methods to integrate ICC in their courses. They did not only rely on coursebooks, but rather on diverse materials to engage students and encourage them to learn about different cultures (Han and Song, 2011), which contradicts Baltaci and Tanis (2018) findings, showing that in-service teachers used coursebooks. This result reflected the importance teachers attach and their enthusiasm to include ICC aspects in their teaching practice. These are a few examples of what they said:

- Developing students' knowledge about some cultures through texts, movies, sitcoms, poetry, and TED talks.
- Writing a summary about each of the readings.
- Bringing authentic materials to the class about the target culture.
- Debates, role plays, Kahoots.
- Online collaboration with students from different cultures.
- *Analysing the laws, the norms, the ways of living of a particular community* (T9).
- Bringing either an object or a photo that represents students' culture and explaining it.
- Reflective summaries, essays.
- Students have to collect eight activities from things they have tried out, something that the teacher or their peers saw.
- Students have to create an annotated list made up of collected internet links about intercultural issues.
- Experiential learning.

The methods used in the different courses developed students' knowledge and understanding, attitudes, and skills (Byram, 1997; Barrett et al., 2014). Some methods might have a greater influence on them, such as "creating online collaboration with students from different cultures." This method was designed for a monocultural class where all the students are Hungarian. It created an opportu-

nity for them to be in direct contact with people who have different cultural backgrounds. It helped them challenge their stereotypes and develop their knowledge about the target culture.

3.2.3 Good practices

The tutors mentioned some good practices for integrating ICC in their courses. Most of them said that in the past, they had specifically relied on reading academic papers. However, they affirmed that now students are no longer interested in reading long texts but rather in watching video clips and movies. As a result, the tutors use visual materials. This shows that the teachers are changing their teaching practices to help students become interculturally competent. These are the good practices they mentioned:

- *A discussion leading exercise for the first 20 minutes of the class where they would bring in questions about the text to their fellow students* (T8).
- Peer teaching.
- The teacher's academic development, a tutor said: *I constantly try to educate myself further about my subject* (T5).
- The use of images, charts, tables, PPT slides, short videos, and videos clips.
- The students fill out a questionnaire at the end of the semester on what topic they would like to learn more about. Their responses have a diverse interest in American culture: literature and cultural issues, politics, ethnic studies. Such a practice is particularly useful, as it helps teachers meet the needs and match the interests of their students.
- *At the beginning of the class, we always spent 10-15 minutes on current issues, and students would bring in an article or question on current events* (T7).
- Five to ten minutes review to check what the students have taken from last week.

- The concept test, in the middle or towards the end of the course, to force the students to go over the whole course.
- A series of presentations about the home culture of different participants.
- The students have to ask three questions. The course teacher explained it: *you have to ask questions that you do not know the answer to, that you are not sure that your answer is acceptable, or you have your doubts, whether you want to hear others' opinions on their specific questions* (T6).
- Using literature from different cultures.

3.2.4 Challenges

The tutors faced various challenges when integrating ICC in their teaching practice. One of the recurrent obstacles was students' reluctance to read long texts. This finding was also reported by Holló (2017). Other barriers such as students' reluctance to read texts, student motivation and class size were echoed in the results of Lázár (2011) and Sercu et al. (2005). These are the challenges they faced:
- Keeping the students interested and motivated.
- Devoting more time on the cultural aspect instead of focusing on language development. The course tutor commented: *Maybe spend a little more time on the cultural aspects in place of the language activities and develop their knowledge. Instead of spending fifty minutes on language exercises, maybe instead of that, 30 minutes on language and then 60 minutes on culture* (T4). It is worth noting that this course aims to develop students' knowledge about British culture.
- The students do not respect the time allotted for presentations. A tutor said: *They are not sure about giving a presentation, keeping to the time limit, and it takes away much time from the class* (T7).
- The students do not have a self-critical attitude towards their

output.
- Plagiarism.
- Students complain about the amount of work they have to do and the long readings they have to read.
- The uneven language level of the students.

4   Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the programme leaders and teachers' views about integrating ICC in the various English degree programmes at a Hungarian university. The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the programme leaders revealed that not all of them articulated the importance of implementing intercultural content in the English major programmes, saying that ICC can be developed through socialising. Those who acknowledged the need to integrate ICC suggested different reasons such as promoting tolerance and openness, helping students have successful intercultural interaction, and identifying it as the language tutors' concern. However, the research also found that not all programme leaders included developing students' ICC and that courses with cultural and intercultural content were designed only in some English departments where ICC was explicitly present.

In examining the tutors' views about the integration of ICC in their courses, it was found that they aim to develop students' knowledge about English-speaking cultures and promote their ICC. Some of the aspects of ICC present were culture with a small c, culture with a capital C, and cultural differences that echoed the tutors' awareness of the importance of these two levels of culture. The results also suggested that the tutors used a variety of methods and practices to implement ICC development in their courses. To understand the impact of those methods and practices on the development of students' ICC, it would be worth examining their application in

the classroom and investigating students' views.

A limitation of this study was the use of interview data; however, it will complement class observation and materials analysis in my larger study. While some programme leaders voiced the need for ICC integration, the different ICC aspects were present only implicitly in the various courses. Further research might explain the discrepancy between the theoretical and pragmatic perspectives. It is important that alongside the teaching of academic subjects and developing language proficiency, English major students' ICC is seen as a significant element of their training.

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