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**Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence with
ICT-Based Content in the Context of Secondary School
ELT**

Theses of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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1 Introduction

Globalisation and the ubiquity of digital technologies have created a contemporary social and educational context in which the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) increasingly assumes the role of fostering intercultural communication (*Reid, 2015*). The status of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) shapes the domains of foreign language communication (*Medgyes, 2022*) and poses significant challenges for language pedagogy. Within a globalised social environment, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is conceived both as a pedagogical competence model and as a learning outcome of TEFL (*Lázár, 2011*). ICC is understood as a complex system of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enables individuals to communicate effectively, empathetically, and reflectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (*Byram, 1997; Holló, 2008; Barrett et al., 2014*). The development of ICC has thus become one of the primary objectives of TEFL (*Byram, 2009*). The significance of ICC development is emphasised both in the Council of Europe's key language education document, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR, 2001), and in Hungary's principal curriculum policy document, the *National Core Curriculum* (NCC, 2020).

The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into language teaching does not merely support the development of learners' digital competences; within the framework of digital competence development, ICC can be interpreted as a set of skills connected to interaction mediated through digital technologies (*Stanley, 2013*). Integrating ICT into language lessons opens up new strategies and tools for teachers to enhance learners' language learning processes.

The aim of the dissertation is to investigate this pedagogical challenge and opportunity: to demonstrate and analyse how the development of ICC can be supported through the use of ICT-based content in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Hungarian secondary education.

2 Background

In the history of foreign language teaching, the transmission of culture has always played a central role, though its content and function have undergone significant transformations. Throughout the development of historical and twentieth-century language teaching methods, the emphasis shifted between the transmission of cultural knowledge and the fostering of cultural awareness (*Bárdos, 2002*). Communicative language teaching (CLT) conceptualised foreign language learning as a social activity and regarded culture as an integral part of the language learning process. Consequently, processes of acculturation and enculturation (i.e.

learning about another culture and reconsidering one's own cultural orientation) came to occupy a central place in language learning (*Levine & Adelman, 1993*).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the notions of “intercultural competence,” “intercultural effectiveness,” “intercultural maturity,” and “intercultural adaptation” were introduced (*Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009*). The theoretical development of intercultural competence gave rise to compositional models (e.g., *Deardorff, 2006*), co-orientational models (i.e. which define competence not as individual knowledge or skill, but as social-relational functioning manifested in shared activities), developmental models (i.e. illustrating the process of intercultural learning, e.g., *Bennett, 1998; King & Baxter, 2005*), and causal process models (in which certain factors function as prerequisites while others appear as outcomes).

As a defining construct of CLT, the communicative competence model emerged. Early models underwent several modifications, with sub-competences becoming increasingly differentiated, but none explicitly incorporated cultural competence (*Bárdos, 2002*). *Rivers and Temperley's* (1978) three-component model (linguistic competence, linguistic performance, interaction) oversimplified the complex nature of communication, excluding pragmatic knowledge necessary for avoiding misunderstandings (*Thomas, 1983*). *Canale and Swain's* (1980) four-component model (linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence) explicitly addressed the role of social context. *Bachman's* (1990) model identified three core elements: language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. One of its major innovations compared to earlier models was the emphasis on metacognitive strategies and higher-order cognitive processes (*Farhady, 2005*). In the model of *Bárdos* (2002), cultural competence emerged as a central element, conceived as the intersection of the four earlier sub-competences.

Byram's (1997) framework identified the components of intercultural competence as knowledge, attitudes, skills of discovery and interaction, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. His pedagogically oriented, structured model of ICC specifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for foreign language interaction. *Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard and Philippou's* (2014) contemporary ICC model represents a more holistic and interdisciplinary perspective, linking intercultural competence to citizenship education and active participation in democratic societies. In the Hungarian academic context, *Holló's* (2008) integrated model of language and culture teaching is particularly well-known, presenting culture, communication and language use as interconnected. The model classifies cultural elements according to their functions: knowledge of countries, behavioural culture, discourse management and textual organisation (*Holló, 2008*).

The relationship between ICC-oriented classroom task types and their potential cultural content has been documented by *Holló* (2008), *Reid* (2015) and *Ivenz & Klimova* (2022). *Cullen* and *Sato* (2000), in their discussion of ICC-oriented classroom activities, identify three criteria for success: (1) cultural information should be made accessible to learners from multiple sources (e.g., authentic visual, auditory, and tangible materials); (2) task types and classroom interaction patterns should be varied in the process of developing cultural awareness; (3) materials and instructional content should present the target culture from multiple perspectives. Coursebooks play a key role in defining the content, objectives and sequencing of classroom activities, thereby providing a pedagogical foundation for competence development (*Catalan & Francisco*, 2008). In traditional EFL learning environments (i.e. school-based classroom instruction), textbooks function as the primary carriers of instructional content. *Bajzát* (2013) and *Doró* (2013) examine the intercultural potential of coursebooks for ICC development, while *Rácz* (2023) investigates the extent to which English coursebooks offer opportunities for learners' holistic personal development. According to *Rácz* (2023), coursebooks fundamentally determine the nature of learning activities carried out in language classrooms. The organisation of language input, tasks designed to support the development of skills and the texts with their messages fulfil not only informational and competence-developing roles but also value-transmitting functions.

Another important dimension of ICC development concerns the interaction between target-language normativity and ELF. Whereas traditional EFL teaching places emphasis on presenting the target-language culture, this becomes problematic in ELF contexts (*Hariri*, 2022). ELF is defined as a contact language used in communication between speakers of different languages, chosen in the absence of a shared native language (*Jenkins*, 2012). *Illés* (2013) points out that ELF differs from English as a foreign language (EFL) in that ELF exists in real-life communicative situations outside learning environments and irrespective of a specific target country, while learners usually study EFL within instructional settings in order to communicate in accordance with native-speaker norms. In contrast to pedagogical paradigms grounded in native-speaker normativity, the principles of ELF highlight the importance of intercultural communication and ICC, representing a paradigm shift (*Magnuczné*, 2014).

In response to the pedagogical implications of globalisation and the global dominance of English, *Kramersch* (2013) proposes a postmodern approach to the study of culture, conceptualizing it as discourse, as meaning-making and as representations constructed through discursive practices. *Kramersch* (2009; 2013; 2016) portrays culture as flexible, interactive, and continuously reshaped, interwoven with language, identity and social context through networks

of symbols. For this reason, the development of learners' symbolic competence (*Kramersch*, 2006) becomes essential: the ability of language learners to interpret and construct meanings, to identify power relations, identities and ideologies in discourse, and to create an intermediary space in which new meanings and identities can emerge.

For learners to be able to construct new meanings within culture as a dynamically evolving network of symbols, learning activities must be understood as opportunities of processing, interpreting, and reconstructing information in the context of learning within the information-based society (*Bruce & Hughes*, 2010). Information-based EFL teaching refers to pedagogical practices that support the process by which learners build an informational knowledge system. This process relies on cognitive operations such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, comparison, generalisation and inference. The processing of linguistic data considered as information, is a form of interpretation of data, facts, events, or phenomena and are the results of operations performed on them (*Szőke-Milinte*, 2020).

Information-based EFL teaching does not take place exclusively in traditional classroom environments. *Ollé* (2012) distinguishes five types of learning environments: (1) face-to-face (traditional), (2) network-supported face-to-face, (3) online, (4) virtual and (5) hybrid. In network-supported face-to-face environments enhanced by Web 2.0 tools, *Szűts, Lengyelne and Racsko* (2022) use the umbrella term ICT tools when referring to digital teaching aids. These tools are characterised by internet dependency, interactivity, spatial and temporal flexibility, personalisation, instant feedback and further pedagogical affordances. One of the defining features of ICT-supported or ICT-based materials is multimodality: digital technologies enable the combined representation of multiple semiotic modes (e.g. text, image, sound, video, animation), supporting active learning through the integration of visual, textual and verbal representations (*Clark & Mayer*, 2024).

The TPACK framework (Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge, *Mishra & Koehler*, 2006) emphasises the integrated application of teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, allowing ICT to be incorporated effectively into their teaching. Effective information-based pedagogy requires not only the presence of these three domains but their integration (*Mishra & Koehler*, 2006). To describe and assess the ways in which technology is incorporated into the teaching and learning of languages, *Puente dura's* (2006) SAMR model can be applied. The four levels of the SAMR ladder (i.e. substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition) outline the continuum of ICT integration from simple enhancement to task transformation (*Móser & Szűts*, 2023).

To achieve the goals of information-based teaching, alongside traditional didactic practices, inquiry-based learning (IBL) can provide an effective organisational approach. By encouraging learners to discover new information and construct meanings through exploration, IBL fosters learners' cognitive and metacognitive development and produces affective changes as they reflect on new knowledge and meanings (*Ismael & Elias, 2006*). In a previous study (*Mongyi, 2024*), the experiences of supporting learning activities implemented within the framework of IBL in Hungarian upper secondary EFL classrooms (15-17 age group) are described. Based on *Ollé's* (2012) typology, the language teaching experiences gained in network-supported face-to-face learning environments, supported by the use of a virtual message board (Padlet) to facilitate information-based EFL teaching (*Mongyi, 2023*) have also been published.

European policy frameworks and Hungarian curricular policy documents provide the educational regulatory context for the EFL practices examined in the research project. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR, 2001) and its *Companion Volume* (2020), the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2018; 2020), the *National Core Curriculum* (NCC, 2020) and the Framework Curriculum for the first foreign language in Hungarian upper secondary schools (grades 9-12) are analysed, focusing on the extent to which they support the development of ICC. In the 2020 NCC and its accompanying Framework Curriculum, the development of ICC is articulated along target-language normative lines. While the Hungarian documents reflect the plurilingual orientation of the CEFR, an explicit emphasis on ELF or the postmodern conceptualisation of culture have not been found during the analysis of the NCC (2020).

3 Research methods

The methods and instruments applied in the research project, along with their associated research aims, research questions and hypotheses, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Components of the Research Project

<i>Methods of data collection</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Research questions</i>	<i>Instruments</i>
Coursebook analysis	Identification of coursebook content elements that support the development of ICC.	RQ1: In what ways does a contemporary coursebook used in secondary EFL instruction support learners' ICC development through intercultural content? H1: There are identifiable coursebook task types that foster learners' communicative and	Content analysis

<i>Methods of data collection</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Research questions</i>	<i>Instruments</i>
	Semiotic analysis of coursebook tasks that can be identified as supporting ICC development.	intercultural competences in an integrated way. H2: Identifiable types of coursebook tasks exist that foster ICC development and can be examined from a semiotic perspective.	
Questionnaire survey	Identification of attitudes, views and classroom teaching experiences of participating secondary EFL teachers in relation to supporting ICC development.	RQ2: What attitudes, views and classroom teaching experiences regarding ICC development are held by the participating secondary EFL teachers?	Questionnaire
	Identification of participating teachers' ICT-supported classroom experiences in fostering ICC.	RQ3: Which ICT-based instructional materials are employed by participating secondary EFL teachers to support the development of their learners' ICC?	
Classroom observations	Identification of instructional strategies utilised by participating teachers to enhance ICC development in the classroom.	RQ4: What instructional strategies are adopted by secondary EFL teachers in classroom practice to enhance learners' ICC? H3: There are observable English language teaching strategies that support the development of secondary learners' ICC.	Focused observation notes
	Identification of ICT-based instructional material employed within ICC-supportive teaching strategies.	H4: English language teaching strategies that support ICC development include the integrated use of print-based and ICT-based instructional materials in the classroom.	

In order to ensure validity and reliability, *Flick's* (2005) approach of systematic perspective triangulation has been adopted in the research. Accordingly, a broad theoretical foundation was developed through the literature review as a means of securing theoretical triangulation. To achieve data triangulation, data were collected at different times and in different contexts, using a variety of sources. Finally, methodological triangulation was applied through the combination of different methods.

The choice of a mixed-methods approach was motivated by the recognition that the complex phenomenon in question (i.e. the development of ICC) requires not only the analysis of empirical data but also contextual understanding. Beyond examining the relationships between classroom teaching practice, teacher attitudes and the use of instructional materials, these relationships were also interpreted, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the research in line with *Flick's* (2005) principles of triangulation.

The methodological decisions were aligned with *Sántha's* (2013) reasoning, which argues that the combined use of research methods (in this case, coursebook analysis, questionnaire survey and classroom observations) together with the integration of qualitative and quantitative analyses fits within the paradigm of mixed methods, thereby contributing to a more substantiated and nuanced formulation of answers to the research questions.

4 Findings and pedagogical implications

4.1 Findings and discussion of the coursebook analysis

An analysis was conducted of the *Pioneer B2* coursebook (*Mitchell & Malkogianni*, 2015), included in the official register of approved coursebooks for Hungarian public education, with particular attention to tasks identifiable as supporting the development of ICC. An attempt was also made to analyse such tasks from a semiotic perspective. The research question RQ1 was addressed and the results of this research component summarised through the confirmation of hypotheses H1 and H2.

H1: There are identifiable coursebook task types that foster learners' communicative and intercultural competences in an integrated way.

The tasks in *Pioneer B2* (*Mitchell & Malkogianni*, 2015) were analysed in terms of their content, text type and intercultural dimensions. Tasks were examined within the four primary skill categories: speaking, reading, listening and writing. A total of 38 speaking tasks were identified that contain civilisation-related content, as conceptualised by *Holló* (2008), thereby fostering learners' ICC development. The identified civilisation-oriented elements appear in the coursebook in the form of interviews (n=15), guided discussions (n=11), information-seeking tasks (n=7) and picture-based guided discussions (n=5). All of these task types are designed for pair work, thus creating opportunities for comparing and contrasting two learners' perspectives and cultural backgrounds during oral interaction. The tasks focusing on reading comprehension and identified as involving intercultural civilisation-related content displayed the most complex task structure. Introductory and concluding sub-tasks contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity, while the comprehension tasks following the reading of texts support learners' ICC through the practical application of discourse-analytical features. Listening tasks with intercultural civilisation-related content include monologic genres such as reports (n=3) and accounts (n=1), as well as dialogic genres in the form of interviews (n=3) and airport dialogue (n=1). By engaging with these spoken texts, learners encounter speech models with communicative and linguistic functions appropriate to given situations, as well as pragmatic and sociolinguistic features. Writing tasks containing intercultural content draw on a variety of

text types (n=9), ensuring the comprehensive development of discourse skills, including the organisation of text, justification of arguments, coherence and cohesion, sequencing of ideas, application of rhetorical devices and awareness of the relationship between text and audience.

H2: Identifiable types of coursebook tasks exist that foster ICC development and can be examined from a semiotic perspective.

The Peircean (1980) triadic model of the sign (i.e. sign, object, and interpretant) was clearly identifiable in the analysis of coursebook tasks. In tasks involving intercultural content, visual and linguistic signs form a complex unity that initiate meaning-making processes in the learners. In speaking tasks (i.e. interviews, guided discussions, information-seeking tasks and picture-based discussions), learners' intercultural sensitivity is developed through deeper engagement with cultural values and practices. These pair-work tasks encourage learners to discuss cultural differences and formulate reflective responses. According to *Peirce's* (1980) semiotic model, such tasks operate through the triadic relation of the sign (i.e. task topic and visual elements), the object (i.e. cultural meaning) and the interpretant (i.e. learner perspective).

Reading comprehension tasks were found to have complex structures: visual elements surrounding the texts function as iconic and indexical signs that facilitate the decoding of cultural meanings. For example, portraits of historical figures or depictions of locations create direct associations with the themes of the texts. Listening comprehension tasks, particularly those belonging to dialogic genres (e.g. interviews and dialogues), focus on the development of pragmatic and sociolinguistic skills, allowing learners to encounter culturally relevant communicative functions embedded in authentic speech situations. Writing tasks, by drawing on a wide range of genres, not only support structured text production and the practical application of discourse features, but also contribute to raising awareness of cultural differences. The writing tasks identified in the analysis as supporting ICC development model the complex processes of semiosis, during which learners interpret diverse signs, genres, content and cultural contexts in the course of producing texts in English.

4.2 Findings and discussion of the questionnaire survey

The aim of the teacher questionnaire survey was to gain insights into attitudes and background variables related to experiences of supporting ICC development in TEFL, as well as into the pedagogical thinking that underpins the integration of ICT-enhanced teaching strategies. Two research questions (RQ2; RQ3) were formulated and the study was carried out on a sample of 46 participants using the author's own questionnaire.

RQ2: What attitudes, views and classroom teaching experiences regarding ICC development are held by the participating secondary EFL teachers?

With regard to attitudinal variables, the survey revealed that the overwhelming majority of participants (N=46; M=4.93; SD=0.25) agreed that the primary aim of language learning is the development of ICC, as also emphasised by the National Core Curriculum (2020). Respondents also agreed that this aim can be effectively achieved within the framework of formal education (M=4.17; SD=0.64). However, opinions were divided concerning alternative means of fostering ICC, such as international student exchange programmes (M=3.87; SD=1.18) or online activities (e.g. collaborative computer games, online chatting) (M=3.85; SD=0.98). Particularly significant differences were found regarding whether a minimum of B2 language proficiency is required for ICC development (M=2.98; SD=1.51; K=-1.42). Teachers' attitudes towards target-language normativity and the ELF perspective also varied considerably (SD=1.22; 1.04).

According to the findings, the factors that most strongly influence the support of ICC development among participants include the types of cultural content taught and the extent to which intercultural content elements of coursebooks are utilised. Most teachers emphasised the importance of presenting cultures beyond those of English-speaking countries (M=4.00; SD=1.15), while also highlighting the significance of integrating elements of the Hungarian cultural heritage (M=3.89; SD=1.10). At the same time, teachers held divergent views on the implications of English functioning as a *lingua franca* and on the declining presence of civilisation-related content in coursebooks. Awareness of the ICC-related recommendations formulated in the Framework Curriculum was found to be limited; nonetheless, participants regarded the integration of cultural content into classroom practice as important, not merely as a function of coursebook materials.

The participants identified acceptance, tolerance, cultural awareness and cultural-civilisational knowledge as the fundamental components of ICC. In terms of civilisation-related content considered important, participants frequently mentioned topics such as famous people, buildings, landmarks, history, pop music, literature, stereotypes, non-verbal communication, public speaking and formal correspondence. High frequencies were also observed for themes related to festivals and informal letter-writing. Based on the responses, the most commonly implemented classroom activity to support ICC development was the practice of communicative functions through dialogues.

RQ3: Which ICT-based instructional materials are employed by participating secondary EFL teachers to support the development of their learners' ICC?

The ICT-supported or ICT-based learner activities referred to in the questionnaire included the acquisition of information, knowledge construction through research, engagement with learning materials, increased learner participation and involvement, creative knowledge construction, creation of learner-generated products, collaboration (e.g. in researching, creating and presenting), as well as the organisation, summarisation and presentation of knowledge elements. The majority of teachers (n=43) reported assigning learner presentations for the processing of intercultural content. Other learner activity types frequently used included completing online questionnaires, writing blog posts and producing videos (n=31). Several digital visualisation tools were also reported as having been tried, including digital word clouds, concept maps, virtual noticeboards, infographics and digital posters.

4.3 Findings and discussion of the classroom observations

Classroom observations of English lessons (N=8) were conducted in secondary schools in March 2023 and October 2024, in Budapest. For data collection, the so-called focused observation protocol (*Falus*, 2004) was applied. Prior to data recording in the focused observation protocol, phenomena for observation were pre-selected: (1) classroom interaction patterns, (2) activities and (3) instructional materials employed by learners. During the observations, teaching strategies linked to learning activities that supported the development of learners' ICC based on the elements identified in *Byram's* (1997) model were systematically documented.

H3: There are observable English language teaching strategies that support the development of secondary learners' ICC.

Based on the classroom observations, it was established that observable EFL teaching strategies exist in which the focus lies on integrated language skill development and the support of ICC. Three interaction patterns were observed (i.e. individual work, pair work and group work), which enabled the implementation of varied learner activities. Within the lesson segments analysed, learning activities were identified that directly supported the development of learners' ICC. Most of the activities recorded (n=16) originated from coursebook tasks. In all observed cases, complex language skill development was integrated, with no single activity focusing on one skill in isolation, thus providing opportunities for ICC development.

According to the data recorded in the focused observation protocols, the observed learner activities contributed to the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse

competences (both written and spoken), alongside the expansion of cultural knowledge, the shaping of attitudes, the development of interpretative, observational and learning skills, and the fostering of critical cultural awareness. The cultural content addressed included both elements of target-language cultures and those associated with ELF.

H4: English language teaching strategies that support ICC development include the integrated use of printed and ICT-based instructional materials in the classroom.

Among ICT-based tools, the Kahoot application was used for vocabulary development, the Linoit digital noticeboard for collaborative written text (i.e. blog entries) production, the Canva digital design application for the creation of digital posters and the Mentimeter online polling tool for promoting learner participation and as a stimulus for whole-class discussion. Three websites not originally designed for educational purposes were also utilised: Tripadvisor (a tourism review site), the Belfast Titanic Museum website and the website of the travelling Titanic Exhibition. The use of a digital learning management platform (Google Classroom) was noted on one occasion.

The integrated use of traditional and ICT-based instructional materials observed in the lessons could be situated at different levels of the SAMR model (*Puentedura, 2006*). At the substitution level ($n=2$), videos conveyed the same information content as the traditional resources. Worksheets and coursebook tasks prepared learners for video comprehension and checked understanding. In these cases, videos replaced written texts, introducing multimodality by incorporating another type of semiotic system. At the augmentation level ($n=3$), digital content (i.e. websites and applications) introduced new functions into learning activities. Information provided on websites offered input in authentic linguistic contexts beyond what the coursebook tasks provided, while the vocabulary app ensured multimedia and interactive engagement, functionally supporting task completion. At the modification level ($n=2$), digital learner-generated products were created based on coursebook models: multimodal content such as digital posters replaced traditional text production, while learner-authored blog posts on Linoit introduced a new format of output, the sharing of which situated text production in a social dimension. At the redefinition level ($n=1$), digital technology enabled interactive opinion-sharing via Mentimeter. Learners' inputs were then compared during a teacher-led whole-class discussion. Here, the traditional communicative classroom activity of voting was digitally redefined: learners' opinions could be instantly aggregated and visualised, offering real-time feedback on the collective stance of the group.

The EFL teaching strategies' components identified through the classroom observations are illustrated in Figure 1.

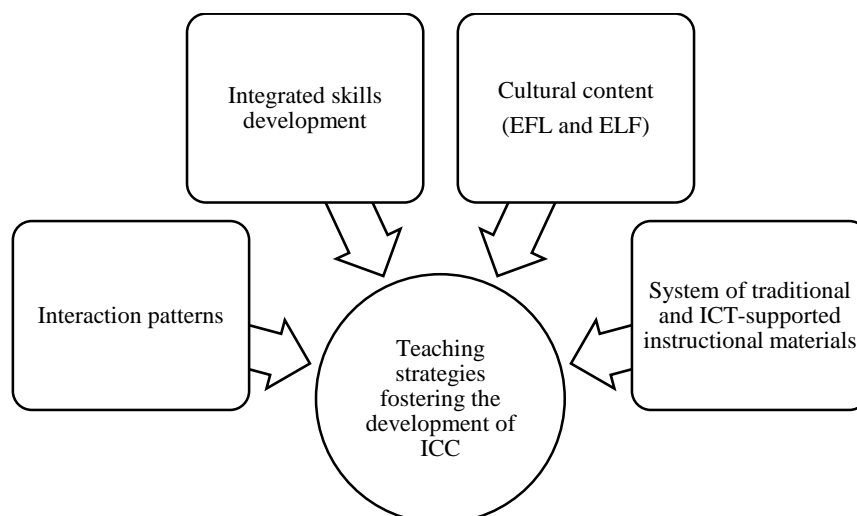


Figure 1 Components of teaching strategies identified during the classroom observations

The findings of the coursebook analysis, the questionnaire survey and the classroom observations revealed that in order to systematically develop learners' attitudes, skills and knowledge, English language teaching strategies are required that integrate the development of intercultural awareness with the objectives of communicative language teaching, through the application of both traditional and ICT-based instructional materials. The tasks, instructional materials and learning activities identified in the research effectively foster learners' critical thinking and intercultural sensitivity. The outcomes of the research project presented in the dissertation may provide a foundation for the design of EFL pedagogical innovations targeting the development of ICC.

The findings of the research project allow for the formulation of pedagogical recommendations that emphasise the development of learners' ICC in secondary school EFL classrooms. It is important for language teachers to be aware of the intercultural potential of coursebook tasks so that they can purposefully apply them in competence development. Civilisational and cultural content embedded in the coursebook should be consciously exploited to support information-based learning activities in classroom settings. In addition to cultures of English-speaking countries, other cultures, as well as the Hungarian cultural heritage should also receive emphasis in the curriculum. Alongside coursebook-based or coursebook-related materials, ICT-based or ICT-enhanced instructional content also plays a crucial role. To support information-based EFL learning activities, the creation of multimodality within the instructional material is essential.

Figure 2 illustrates how multimodality within the instructional material can be achieved during information-based learning activities that foster language skills development. The process depicted in the figure may be completed within a single lesson; however, the elements of the rightmost phase can be transferred to the subsequent lesson or another instructional unit. The arrows indicate the sequence of activities in the information-based processing of instructional content, while the combination of information sources facilitates the emergence of multimodality within the instructional material.

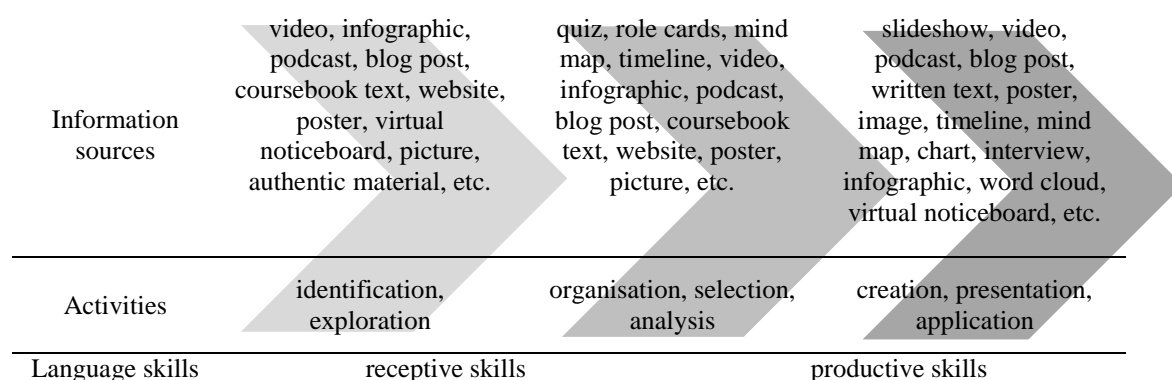


Figure 2 Multimodality within instructional materials during information-based language skills development

Recommendations related to integrated EFL skills development can likewise be formulated in alignment with the support of ICC development. In the development of both reading and listening comprehension, it is advisable to employ authentic information sources known from CLT in order to enhance intercultural sensitivity and foster the practical application of text-linguistic competences. Pair and group work activities should be designed in such a way that learners either share their own cultural experiences or engage with those of their peers or of people from different backgrounds. To prepare learners for real-life language use, information elements drawn from authentic communicative situations should be processed with attention to their pragmatic and sociolinguistic features. The use of diverse text types provides opportunities for the analysis and comparison of cultural content, thereby supporting the simultaneous development of learners' text production skills and cultural reflexivity. In tasks incorporating civilisational or cultural content, the integration of reflection into the learning process is of particular importance, as it promotes critical thinking and fosters learners' awareness of their own cultural identity. Teachers are advised to engage learners in joint reflection on the role of English as a *lingua franca*, including both its positive and negative consequences in order to enhance their awareness of the intercultural dimension of English language use.

The use of digital tools should provide opportunities for independent information retrieval, research, organisation and creative knowledge construction. During the teaching and learning process, it is recommended that learners be given the chance to approach other cultures not only at the linguistic level but also through attitude-shaping experiences. ICT-enhanced learning activities can facilitate this process, as their interactive nature increases learners' active participation and contributes to the deeper engagement with cultural themes.

5 Limitations of the research project and suggestions for future research

Data on coursebook use from the Hungarian Public Education Management and Records System (Kréta), as well as the sales statistics of coursebook publishers in Hungary, are not publicly available; therefore, no conclusions can be drawn from them regarding the distribution of coursebooks in the Hungarian public education context. At the same time, the author's experience as a language teacher in the same context, together with insights gained during professional forums for teachers of English and informal conversations with secondary school EFL teacher colleagues, induced the selection of *Pioneer B2* (Mitchell & Malkogianni, 2015), published by the international publisher MM Publications, as the object of the coursebook analysis. The coursebook analysis presented in the dissertation could be expanded by including further analyses of coursebooks listed in the official coursebook register published by the Hungarian Educational Authority.

A limitation of the questionnaire survey must be noted: the targeted, personal invitations to participate, as well as the call posted in a social media group, did not yield the expected sample size. It is assumed that the timing of the invitations was one factor contributing to the limited number of responses. Due to the small sample size, the participants cannot be considered statistically representative of Hungarian EFL teachers. However, the aim was not to generalise findings but rather to gain insight into the perspectives of respondents, some of whom also participated in the classroom observation part of the project, regarding the support of ICC development. In order to enhance the reliability and validity indicators of the research, it would be worthwhile to complement the questionnaire survey with focus group interviews in the future.

The effectiveness of the learning activities targeting ICC development, carried out through the teaching strategies identified during the classroom observations, as well as the effectiveness and possible limitations of the integrated use of printed and ICT-based instructional materials, should be investigated in further research. Additional data collection,

such as interviews, would allow for the exploration of the decision-making processes of language teachers applying the identified teaching strategies.

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