



Universitat de les
Illes Balears

A Transcultural Approach to EIL in Secondary Education: A Case Study

A dissertation for a PhD in Language and Applied Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

This thesis highlights the prominence of English as an International Language (EIL) and stresses its use as a form of communication that implies a multi-directionality of flow and mixing between speakers. This has led scholars to use the terms “translingual” and “transcultural” to refer to the competences required by EIL speakers to function at a global level, especially when English is employed by non-native speakers.

A transcultural approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language to three groups of secondary school students in Mallorca, Spain (one group), and Opole, Poland (two groups), was implemented during the school year 2010-2011. The “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog project was set up specifically for the research. A quantitative and qualitative data analysis was performed in order to answer the principal research question: *How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence?*

The results showed that this innovative approach to ELT was a positive experience for the participants and was especially effective as a means of developing both transcultural competence and a transnational identity.

RESUMEN (Spanish)

Esta tesis subraya la importancia del inglés como lengua internacional y su uso como una forma de comunicación que supone una mezcla multidireccional entre hablantes. Esto ha llevado a los investigadores a usar los términos “translingual” y “transcultural” para referirse a las competencias requeridas para que los hablantes de inglés como lengua internacional puedan desenvolverse a nivel global, especialmente cuando el inglés es usado por individuos no nativos.

Un enfoque transcultural a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera se implementó en tres grupos de alumnos de secundaria de Mallorca (España) y Opole (Polonia) durante el curso 2010-2011. El blog “EIL in Poland and Spain” fue llevado a cabo para los fines específicos del estudio. Se realizó un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de los datos para responder a la principal pregunta de investigación: *¿Cómo una metodología transcultural aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera fomenta la competencia transcultural?*

Los resultados mostraron que este enfoque innovador a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera representó una experiencia positiva para los participantes y que fue especialmente efectivo como manera de desarrollar tanto la competencia transcultural como una identidad transnacional.

RESUM (Catalan)

Aquesta tesi mostra la importància de l'anglès com a llengua internacional i el seu ús com a forma de comunicació que comporta una mescla multidireccional entre els parlants. Això ha portat els investigadors a utilitzar els termes “translingual” i “transcultural” per a referir-se a les competències requerides per tal que els parlants d'anglès com a llengua internacional puguin desenvolupar-se a nivell global, especialment quan l'anglès és utilitzat per individus no nadius.

Un enfocament transcultural a l'ensenyament de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera es va implementar a tres grups d'alumnes de secundària de Mallorca (Espanya) i Opole (Polònia) durant el curs 2010-2011. El blog “EIL in Poland and Spain” va ser dut a terme per als fins específics de l'estudi. Es va realitzar una anàlisi qualitativa i quantitativa de les dades per tal de respondre a la principal pregunta d'investigació: *Com una metodologia Fomenta la competència transcultural una metodologia transcultural a l'ensenyament de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera? Si és així, com pot fer-ho?*

Els resultats van mostrar que aquest enfocament innovador a l'ensenyament de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera representà una experiència positiva per als participants i que va ser especialment efectiu com a manera de desenvolupar tanta la competència transcultural com una identitat transnacional.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Karen Jacob, hereby declare that the thesis entitled

A Transcultural Approach to EIL in Secondary Education: A Case Study

is the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was carried out at the University of the Balearic Islands under the tutorship of Dr Maria Juan Garau and Dr José Igor Prieto Arranz;
- funding was received from the Balearic Government and the European Social Fund (FPI08 0641605C);
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
CBI	Content-based instruction
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
CMC	Computer-mediated communication
COE	Council of Europe
EFL	English as a foreign language
EIL	English as an international language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELT	English language teaching
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a second language
ESLC	European Survey of Language Competences
EU	European Union
FL	Foreign language
FLT	Foreign language teaching
GAP	Global Awareness Profile
ICC	Intercultural communicative competence
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
L1	Native language
L2	Second language
MLA	Modern Language Association
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NNS(s)	Non-native speaker(s)
NS(s)	Native speaker(s)
QT1	Background Information Questionnaire
QT2	Students' Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire
SCT	Sociocultural theory

SLA	Second language acquisition
WE	World English
WTC	Willingness to communicate
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

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PART I - SETTING THE STAGE

“We don’t have to worry much about having our world view, and especially our sense of identity, challenged by people of other cultural persuasions as long as we limit our interactions to people who think exactly like us. A dull prospect”

(Seelye & Howell Wasilewski, 1996:1)

“No man is an island”

(John Donne, 1624: Meditation XVII)

“If an e-mail network is established in English teaching in Denmark between the Danish class and schools in Russia and China, and all use English as their language of communication, this will mean a diversification of international relations”

(Risager, 2006: 28-29)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

The three quotations above capture the essence of this thesis to perfection. Globalisation potentially increases the complexity of human relations. Consequently, the nurturing of a positive and receptive attitude towards the “other” and “other cultures and languages”, and all that this would entail in terms of individual identities and worldviews, may be seen as a fundamental element of today’s multicultural approach to tertiary socialisation¹ (Byram, 2009). As the second quotation highlights, “no man is an island”, which stresses the fact that communication is between one or more persons and indicates the necessity to acquire, or to at least acknowledge, new behavioural patterns of knowledge which allow one to participate in a wider circle of communication. These skills are essential in order for such communicative engagements to be successful, and even more so when the communication is between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and the use of a lingua franca (such as English) is employed. The third quotation makes a direct reference to the scope and relevance of information and communication technology (ICT) within the realm of language teaching and international relations, which, without doubt, has become an integral and, very often, essential, part of our daily lives.

These three quotations also serve as an introduction to the term “transcultural competence”, an expression which is becoming of common use in articles within the fields of applied linguistics and foreign language (FL) education (Kramsch, 2010, 2013). Welsch (1999) was possibly one of the first scholars to tackle the conceptualisation of “transculturality” in his paper “[t]ransculturality – the puzzling form of cultures today”. Departing from Herder’s traditional concept of single cultures (1966), Welsch describes “intercultural” as concerning different cultures in different spheres, “multicultural” as different cultures living together in the same sphere, but “transcultural” as “lifestyles which go beyond the national” and are “extremely interconnected and entangled” (Welsch, 1999: 197-198).

¹ Byram takes the credit for coining the term “tertiary socialisation” in an article in 1989, which was later used by Doyé to refer to the extension of the notions of primary and secondary socialisation whereby young people acquire intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2008: 29). Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the idea of a third phase in the socialisation process as taking place within vocational institutes and institutes of higher education had been previously discussed by Takala in 1974 (Helve, 1993: 32).

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The expression “transcultural” was, however, used in other academic areas of investigation such as politics, public relations, and health and business studies, and evolved to find answers to communication problems that arose from situations where students and workers had to study or work in countries with cultures which were often poles apart from their native culture (Dressman, 2008; Takkula et al., 2008; van Hook, 2010). For example, in the 1960s and 70s, USA researchers began developing instruments with which to measure intercultural interaction competence in order to explain why or why not certain people were successful in working abroad. This was especially useful in aiding the selection of people for international posts, e.g. the US Peace Corps and the US Diplomatic Service (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009: 175).

Due to the rising interest in the concept of the prefix “trans” in connection with today’s global reality, the Modern Language Association (MLA) is encouraging practitioners and scholars to explore the cultural dimension of language(s) within the FL classroom in order to develop “effective translingual and transcultural competence” (MLA, 2007: 4). Nevertheless, as used by the MLA, the term still retains a close link to the traditional interpretation of communication between native (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs). In fact, one of its principal aims is for students “to function as informed and capable interlocutors with *educated native speakers in the target language*” (MLA, 2007: 4, my emphasis). To a certain degree, this mirrors the notion of the intercultural speaker or mediator, which Byram and Zarate (1997: 11) define as someone who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values”.

In order to fully understand how the term “transcultural” will be applied in this dissertation, we first need a working definition for “intercultural competence”. This is provided by Meyer (1991: 137), who states that:

Intercultural competence, as part of a broader foreign speaker competence, identifies the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures. Adequacy and flexibility imply an awareness of the cultural differences between one’s own and the foreign culture and the ability to handle cross-cultural problems which result from these differences. Intercultural competence includes the

capacity of stabilising one's self-identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation and of helping other people to stabilise their self-identity.

Following on from this definition, Ting-Toomey (1999: 261) describes "transcultural communicative competence" as:

An integrative theory-practice approach enabling us to mindfully apply the intercultural knowledge we have learned in a sensitive manner. Specifically, it refers to a transformation process connecting intercultural knowledge with competent practice. To be a competent transcultural communicator we need to transform our knowledge into appropriate and effective performance.

For Ting-Toomey, cultural "sensitivity" is one of the principal attributes which differentiates the intercultural speaker from the transcultural speaker. Meyer (1991) and van Hook (2010) distinguish between "intercultural competence" and "transcultural competence" in that, for them, the latter implicates first-hand experience of the foreign culture or the opportunity to communicate with people from other, very different cultures. They are, in fact, highlighting the possibility that neither of the interlocutors may be using their native language. More recently, Thompson (2011) has amplified the notion of "transcultural communication" to the NNS paradigm and contrasts it with "intercultural communication". She suggests that "trans" cultural communication captures "a sense of multidirectional movement, flow and mixing" whereas the prefix "inter" invokes "notions of bi-directionality, stasis and separation" (Thompson, 2011: 207). Pennycook (2007: 6) also understands transculturality in terms of cultural flows:

English is a translocal language, a language of fluidity and fixity that moves across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations. English is bound up with transcultural flows, a language of imagined communities and refashioning identities.

Pennycook uses the term "transcultural flows" to explore how cultural forms are reinvented as they move backwards and forwards across contexts. In this way he is not simply referring to the spread of cultural forms but to how such cultural artefacts are exposed to processes such as blending and borrowing, resulting in existing products taking on new identities. In this way, English as an international language (EIL) can also be considered a social practice which is in a constant process of construction and

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reconstruction in accordance to the more specific environment in which it is being used. This differs from Phillipson's (1992, 2010) view of the global spread of the English language and culture (linguistic and cultural imperialism), which he regards as being linked to the "Americanisation" and homogenisation of world culture, and in particular, to the media. If we draw on Pennycook's explanation of "fluidity" as "movement and flow across space and time" and "fixity" in terms of "location, tradition and cultural expression" (2007: 7) then indeed EIL becomes the language of a multitude of possible imagined communities and also serves as a tool to project an infinite number of identities.

In using the terms "fluidity" and "fixity", Pennycook also manages to merge the global with the local and avoids the debate of EIL as a focus for globalisation and homogenisation, rather, EIL and transculturality can be understood as processes that occur within specific zones of contact, and that are, furthermore, the product of an amalgamation of a variety of uses. Thus, rather than talk about international or global identities, terms which imply the homogenisation of world cultures, we believe that the expression "transnational identity" represents a more dynamic vision which combines a transcultural understanding of the world with an identity which retains the local whilst embracing the global. Hence, another important notion within the concept of transculturality is the understanding that transcultural does not imply the homogenisation of cultures, rather, it draws attention to diversity, as new cultural practices arise from transcultural contact (Welsch, 1999).

It seems logical that we should broaden the scope of investigation to include the paradigm of communication between NNSs of English, since very often the language in use in a transcultural context would be an international language or a lingua franca. In effect, the use of English as a second or additional language has quadrupled over the last half-century (Ives, 2010), strengthening beyond doubt its growing status as an international lingua franca. The growing use of EIL as "a function that English performs in multilingual contexts" has led Matsuda and Friedrich (2011: 333) to propose an English language teaching (ELT) curriculum that fosters knowledge of other world Englishes, other world cultures, issues that affect the world as a whole, and knowledge of one's own culture in order to share the information with others (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011: 340).

The concept “transcultural”, as used in the present dissertation, will thus consider the use of EIL, which *does* include communication between NNSs of English and incorporates the political and social criteria as interpreted by critical intercultural language pedagogy as defined by Matsuda and Friedrich (2011: 341):

In addition to the inclusive representation of English varieties, speakers and cultures, the EIL classroom must foster sensitivity and a sense of responsibility among students. EIL situations call for awareness of the politics of English, including such issues as language and power, the relationship between English and various indigenous languages, linguistic ecology, and linguistic divide. We are not necessarily arguing for offering a world Englishes course to middle school students or asking high school students to read and respond to such scholarly books as Robert Phillipson’s (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism*. Rather, we are advocating the empowerment of students with critical lenses that would allow them to use English effectively to meet their own needs while respecting the needs of others.

Transcultural competence, therefore, necessarily implies the adjustment of one’s view of the world as it forces one to consider oneself a member of a far wider and more complex group of people. This entails not only the use on many occasions of a lingua franca such as English, but a re-evaluation of stereotypical knowledge that one may have acquired and unwittingly applied to other groups of people. We could say that success in transcultural communication relies heavily on the ability to brush aside negative stereotypical prejudices and to adopt a transnational identity. In this scenario, communication with people from distinct cultural backgrounds would provide a challenging and refreshing revision of one’s view of the world.

This approach to language and culture teaching is taken up by Mattisson (2012) in her description of a specifically designed university course for international students at the University of Kristianstad. She draws on the tenet that the international classroom is not only a site for language skill improvement but a veritable site for transformation, since through the implementation of a specific course methodology, the students break away from the typical “us” and “them” dichotomy to embrace the world through the many eyes of the “other”.

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Having said this, the majority of research within the field of foreign language teaching (FLT) concentrates on cultural competence between a NS and a NNS of the FL and refers to intercultural, rather than transcultural competence, even when describing cultural communication in a transcultural context. This becomes especially evident in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, where a review of recent work involving cultural competence in FL students is discussed. It should, therefore, be stressed that in this dissertation “transcultural competence” is understood as the application of intercultural competence in a context of multicultural directionality.

The term “translingual” should also be clarified at this point. Although our principal area of concern is transcultural competence, it is important to elucidate our interpretation of this term within the scope of this thesis. Canagarajah (2013) differentiates between the terms “multilingual” and “translingual”. For him, multilingual competence suggests the knowledge of languages in an additive manner, as if each language was represented by a specific cognitive department. In contrast, he explains translingual competence as the ability to use one’s knowledge of languages as an integrated resource. In this way, he sees the translingual use of language as dynamic and where the knowledge of different languages becomes complementary and mutually enhancing. Central to this way of thinking is his belief that we all exercise translingual competence to a certain extent. For example, even monolinguals have the ability to communicate within a variety of registers, dialects and discourses in their L1 (mother tongue), thus, exerting a degree of translingual competence in many everyday communicative exchanges (2013: 6-9).

In accordance with Thompson’s (2011) suggestion of using the term “trans” to denote the “multi-directional movement, flow and mixing” of cultures, the criteria could be extended to the context of language. Thus, in this thesis both language and culture will be understood in terms of the ability to use all cultural and linguistic knowledge that one may possess in order to function effectively in transnational communicative contexts.

The remainder of this chapter sets out to describe the factors which have led us to consider the importance of the acquisition of transcultural competence in today’s multicultural environment and concludes with a summary of the contents of the following chapters.

1.1 RESEARCH RATIONALE

On a recent visit to the UK I needed to ask for directions. The young man I stopped in the street tried to explain by using “English” accompanied by a lot of gesturing but, unfortunately, was unable to give any precise information. It was not until the following day when I caught the local train to Southampton University that I actually realised that I had become a “foreigner” to a certain extent, in a context where I considered myself a NS. It was not only the fact that many of the people around me were not speaking English, rather an array of Asian and Eastern European tongues, but even those who were speaking English were in fact NNSs of English and it was difficult for my NS ear to understand. Moreover, the simplest of things such as travelling by train had become a totally new cultural experience for me. New technology reared its head as to get on and off the train I now had to wait and press a green button. Even when speaking to family and friends I noticed that they were using words that were unfamiliar to me. One very embarrassing moment was when I tried to pay for a meal in an Indian restaurant with my credit card. When the word “gratuity” flashed on the screen I was perplexed —this was new to me. Had I won a prize? Was my meal free for having used my credit card so often in the last few days? After a few attempts at explaining what it meant (in his Indian-accented English), the waiter finally gave up, pressed a button on the credit card machine and told me just to punch in my PIN. I did so, left a tip on the table and joined my father outside who, with a worried look on his face, asked what the problem had been. When I told him, he could not stop laughing and, as one can imagine, I felt extremely foolish when I found out that this was the “modern” way to leave a tip.

It seems, then, that, even though I class myself as a native English speaker with a presumably native British cultural background, the fact that I have not lived in the country on a permanent basis for quite a number of years means that I have not kept up with some fundamental linguistic and cultural changes. So what do I speak now? Am I a NS of English or am I a speaker of EIL or English as a lingua franca (ELF)? And where do I place myself culturally? Should I be reading up on Muslim religion, taking a course in new vocabulary and phrases that have become fashionable in the last twenty years, or should I be studying the state of technological advances around the world?

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To a certain extent, the fact that I now live on a small island (Mallorca, Spain) and rarely venture from it explains my lack of knowledge when it comes to trains and use of EIL, but all this does seem to indicate that we can no longer conform to the one language-one culture dichotomy and should reflect on how physical space (such as a country) is no longer a limited area but a space of transnational movement. People with different languages and different cultural backgrounds move freely between these different physical spaces, interweaving their “native” cultural beliefs, ways of living and their views of the world with new ones, as they progress on their journey. If, as may be the case, these transnational wanderers are using EIL, then their use of the language will also reflect the different layers of cultural “baggage” that has been accumulated on the journey. Hence, language, or in this case their usage of English, will undoubtedly reflect this complex and multidimensional process.

The fact that in the UK the English language is being used by a variety of people with varying levels of English language skills and different cultural backgrounds is nothing new. It is a very much discussed topic. However, this does lead me to the area of focus for this thesis. It is not only linguistic skills that are necessary but transcultural competence. Taken from an ELT perspective, Risager (2007) claims that “language and culture pedagogy must learn to understand their field of reference from a transnational and global perspective” (2007:1). Many countries, especially within the context of Europe, have a multilingual and multicultural status. One does not need to go to a foreign country in order to experience a foreign culture. You need only to step out onto your own doorstep to find yourself needing to deal with a new cultural experience. The cultural experiences of yesterday are replaced by those of today, which will in turn be replaced by those of tomorrow. The fact that this phenomenon is applicable to all realms of life experience strengthens the need for these issues to be taken up within ELT. Thus, the concept of transcultural competence is becoming an essential focus area within language and culture pedagogy that needs to be fully developed in order for it to be incorporated into education curricula with an aim to prepare citizens for today’s multicultural environment.

Stern (1992: 205) points out that it is natural to associate culture with the people who use a particular language rather than the language itself. This is the traditional approach taken in FLT, where the learner studies the target language along with cultural

information on the people and place where the language is spoken. If you are learning French, then you learn about the history, geography, and culture of the French along with the specific linguistic constructions used in order to comply with certain pragmatic rules of usage. In other words, an intercultural approach to FL learning is applied. However, the use of EIL further complicates the discussion of the link between language and culture, since EIL is spoken by a multitude of people from different countries and regions, with varying linguistic competences and for a wide array of reasons.

When discussing EIL and culture, McKay (2002) states that “to be considered an international language, a language cannot be linked to any one country or culture, rather, it must belong to those who use it” (2002: 12). Taken from this perspective, she is stressing the fact that, in the case of English, cultural knowledge pertinent to English-speaking countries may not be sufficient in an international usage context. She is not alone in her stance. Other authors, such as Arnett (2002), Pavlenko (2002) and Lamb (2004), have also pointed out the need for international speakers of English to develop linguistic and cultural competences which will endow them with a sense of belonging to an international community and, hence, with an identity that transcends the borders of the purely national. In the context of ELT, Byram feels that if language learners were exposed to tertiary socialisation experiences, albeit in a simulated mode, they would develop identities which would provide them with "a sense of belonging to one or more transnational social groups" (2009: 203).

Nevertheless, when we consider theories of identity, language is the principle medium through which one’s identity is shaped and further created (Norton, 1997). We use language along with all its cultural implications to communicate. This necessarily means that we use language to project our view of the world; an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) which has been shaped by our immediate cultural environment. Seen from this perspective, culture is deeply embedded in language, and vice versa. Furthermore, Risager (2007: 154), drawing on the term “languaculture” (Agar, 1994), contemplates the fact that when we communicate in a FL our native language and culture are omnipresent and this knowledge ultimately influences our interpretation and use of another language. She goes so far as to suggest that each new moment of discourse involves the creation of a new meaning since on each occasion a new

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“languaculture” is at play. It appears, then, that culture lies both in the language and in the individual. This also complements our explanations of “transcultural” (Thompson, 2011) and “translingual” (Canagarajah, 2013) above where we have emphasised the multi-directional flow of meaning.

It has been argued that the fact that it is not easy to identify exactly how culture contributes to the overall process of second language learning means that cognitive-orientated research which focuses on the psycholinguistic aspects of language acquisition cannot be readily used to explain the role played by culture in second language acquisition (Dash, 2003: 5). Models of second language acquisition (SLA) such as Gardner and Lambert’s Socio-educational Model (1959) or Schumann’s Acculturation Model (1986) tend to include culture as an aspect of motivation but are reticent to treat it as a separate determining factor of influence in SLA, thus reducing its importance. Notwithstanding, language is, in itself, a very powerful cultural tool, as we shall see in our theoretical discussion of language, culture and identity in Chapter 4, and the use of EIL or ELF has pushed issues of language, culture and identity to the forefront. As a result, an important section of research using “culture” as a valid variable is now developing in the field (e.g. Tomaščíková, 2009), more specifically within the sociocultural approach to language learning which, along with the affective dimension of SLA (e.g. Gabrys-Barker & Bielska, 2013; Jacob et al., 2013), has become an important area of discussion.

Culture pedagogy has traditionally had its point of departure in: 1) culture and social sciences, drawing on theories from sociology, history, social psychology, anthropology and cultural studies; and 2) linguistics and sociolinguistics (Risager, 2007: 9-10). The first approach takes a holistic view of language learning and puts emphasis on “man not only as a language learner but as someone who also develops other facets of the personality in connection with language learning – especially a greater understanding of the world” (Risager, 2007: 9). This approach is cognitive in orientation and shifts the focus of learning on to the students themselves and the process of learning. The linguistic and sociolinguistic approach to culture is very much connected to communicative methods of language teaching and places emphasis on the need for cultural knowledge of the target language to communicate effectively. This, therefore,

takes a more pragmatic and intercultural view of language learning and highlights the teaching of cultural differences which may hinder comprehension.

Byram, along with various colleagues (Alred et al., 2003; Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 1991a; Byram & Feng, 2006; Byram & Grundy, 2003; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Byram et al., 2001; Byram & Risager, 1999; Byram & Zarate, 1994, 1997) and Corbett (2003) have written extensively on the topic of intercultural competence and intercultural awareness within the paradigm of FL learning. More recently, the concepts of “international citizenship”² and “critical citizen discourse” have been considered from the perspective of the FL classroom as valid requisites for a universal education (Byram, 2008; Guilherme, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Risager, 2006, 2007).

However, in contrast to the volume of academic writings on the subject of culture in language learning, the context of this study is transcultural competence. It considers communication between speakers of a common FL and places the importance of a common consciousness or awareness of universal cultural skills within the paradigm of SLA. Hence, the shaping of transnational identities and worldviews become fundamental areas of discussion and investigation. For this reason, our view of language and culture pedagogy will essentially be linked to the field of the humanities and the social sciences, and will take a semiotic perspective, drawing on sociopsychological theories such as sociocultural theory (SCT), socialisation theory, social identity theory, contact theory and stereotype theory. These poststructuralist theories will be complemented by critical postmodern theories as applied within the parameters of education and, more importantly, transcultural pedagogy. By combining the two schools of thought, the scope of the theoretical framework will be broadened to include contexts where the acquisition and use of EIL may be considered in terms of multidirectional cultural flows (Pennycook, 2007; Risager, 2006, 2007).

² For reasons that will become clear in our discussion of identity (see Chapters 3 & 4), the terms “international” or “global” will be avoided in this dissertation. The notion of “European citizenship” is highly controversial, among other reasons because whether there is such a thing as a European identity is a highly debatable issue (see Prieto-Arranz, 2008). As for the notion of “world citizenship”, this would clearly contradict the very essence of Anderson’s notion of “imagined community”, which is always envisaged as “inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991: 6-7).

1.2 GENERAL AIMS OF THIS THESIS

The empirical section of this thesis explores how three groups of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners from two different countries (Spain and Poland) are able to develop an awareness of cultural diversity, using English as the mode of communication in a virtual “third space”³ (Bretag, 2006). Specific culture-orientated units of work were introduced into their English classes. Students exchanged comments and opinions on a series of cultural themes and issues via an on-line blog. Our ultimate goal was to study the attitudes of the EFL learners towards the transcultural approach applied, the effectiveness of the blog in fostering the development of transcultural competence and sensitivity towards other cultures, and the possible emergence of a transnational identity. With this intention, the following research questions (RQ) were formulated to create a point of departure for our literature review in Chapters 2, 3 and 4:

RQ1 What are our participants’ attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT?

RQ2 How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence?

RQ3 Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants?

Although RQ2 forms the body of this research, it was felt that it was also necessary to provide feedback on the teaching approach itself (RQ1). Successful language acquisition is highly dependent on maintaining interest and motivation in learners. Thus, any change in the learning style which is able to encourage learners to approach their FL studies with enthusiasm should influence language acquisition positively. A natural result of the acquisition of transcultural competence should be the ability to work within the framework of a transnational identity. It, therefore, seems only right to include some insights into this area of development. For this reason, we have also included RQ3.

³ The term “third space” was coined by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) to describe a space devoted to the reconstruction of one’s identity and was more recently adopted by Bretag (2006) in connection to virtual learning. Nevertheless, this concept was previously developed by Kramsch (“third place”) within an educational framework (1993).

By testing the ethnocentric levels of the students at the beginning and end of the project, along with an extensive qualitative analysis of their blog posts and comments throughout the research period, we hope to make an important contribution to current work in the field of transcultural competence and transnational identities. We also depart from the premise that, for a high majority of EFL learners, future use of English will be in the context of a lingua franca or an international language in non English-speaking contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

In order to develop the thesis, a thorough revision of current trends within FL education will be undertaken, with special attention being paid to intercultural communication, content-based instruction (CBI) approaches and the integration of ICT in the FL classroom context. This information will be complemented by: a review of ELT in the world today, concentrating on EFL in secondary education; the principal theoretical approaches which form a framework for our interpretation of data and which are commonly regarded as the basis for intercultural pedagogical approaches to language learning; and the important relationship between language, culture and identity.

This thesis is divided into two parts. Chapters 2 to 4 comprise the remainder of Part I and discuss the theoretical aspects that underlie the research. The aim of these chapters is to construct an overall picture of the various areas which form the framework for the empirical research in Part II. In Part II (Chapters 5 to 8), empirical research into the development of transcultural competence through a transcultural approach in the EFL class, undertaken with students from Spain and Poland, is presented.

Chapter 1 has provided a general introduction to the principal issues concerning this thesis and has presented the research questions around which this study will evolve. In Chapter 2, a contextualisation of the research is provided. The current status of the English language, both globally and locally, is discussed along with some clarification of the multitude of definitions given to the English language according to its context and user nature. This chapter also discusses the situation of FLT and ELT within a cultural studies paradigm and how this has changed the panorama of language teaching. Lastly, EFL education in Europe is discussed, with special attention being given to Spain and Poland, the two countries which provide the data for this thesis, ICT in a FL learning context and CBI.

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Chapter 3 summarises the most recent frameworks that consider the acquisition of intercultural and transcultural competence within the context of FLT. It takes up the theme of culture with regard to EIL and works towards the notion of transcultural identity. This summary also pays attention to how this can be achieved in the FL classroom context and how the use of information and communication technologies can complement traditional learning material in order to achieve a transcultural approach.

In Chapter 4 the essential theories which provide the background for the theoretical framework in this thesis are presented. These theoretical premises are linked to their importance within the concept of transcultural awareness in FL education. Drawing on theoretical underpinnings from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and anthropology, the concepts of language and culture, culture and identity, and language and culture pedagogy are discussed.

Part II begins with Chapter 5, which describes the research method applied to the empirical section of this thesis. The chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the methodological framework and research design along with information concerning the research instruments, data analysis and methodological limitations. The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 is a review of the findings and a discussion of their implications. The chapter opens up with a reminder of the principal aims and aspects of the study. It then presents a summary of the findings and, finally, the results of the research are analysed with specific reference to the research questions and the importance of these findings to the discussion of transcultural competence. Overall conclusions are presented in Chapter 8. This chapter will also include a framework of reference for the use of a transcultural approach to EIL. Lastly, some indications towards future research are highlighted.

CHAPTER 2

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON ELT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the specific issues pertinent to this thesis. These issues will then be built upon in Chapters 3 and 4 in order to provide a solid theoretical framework for the empirical research in Part II. The chapter begins with a contextualisation of the present research. In Section 2.2 the current state of the English language is discussed, with specific reference to the number, types and locations of speakers and how this may affect ELT. Section 2.3 provides current information on FLT in Europe and highlights ELT in Spain and Poland, the countries where the participants in the empirical section of this dissertation reside. Section 2.4 concentrates on current trends in ELT, with subsections on CBI and computer-mediated communication (CMC). These two areas of instruction will provide the pedagogical framework for the transcultural approach that will be implemented in the empirical research. The chapter closes with a summary and conclusions (Section 2.5).

2.1 CONTEXTUALISATION OF RESEARCH

The use of the English language has expanded to the extent that English is often referred to as “World English” (WE), ELF or EIL, (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003). According to Crystal (2003), statistics show that approximately a quarter of the world’s population is fluent or competent in English. Of these speakers, approximately 329 million have English as an L1, 430 million have English as an L2,⁴ and up to as many as 750 million speakers have learnt EFL (though in varying degrees of competency).⁵ This means that the ratio of native to non-native speakers is 1:3 (Crystal, 2003: 67-71).

Such statistical evidence demonstrates beyond doubt that the English language has become an important tool of international communication. It is the language of the Internet, the language of various world institutions such as the United Nations, UNICEF and NATO, and has long been the language of the academic and technological worlds. With this universal use of English, it is not surprising that we find statements such as

⁴ Speakers who have learnt English as a second language where English has official or special status (Crystal, 2003: 61).

⁵ Speakers who have learnt English in a country where it has no official status but very often forms part of a country’s foreign language programme in education.

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“World English belongs to everyone who speaks it, but it is nobody’s mother tongue” (Rajagopalan, 2004: 111).

From this and other similar statements, it could be interpreted that the users of the English that is now spoken in a growing number of countries worldwide have little or no necessity of specific knowledge of the cultures originally associated with English-speaking countries. Today’s learners of English may not necessarily be studying with a view to visiting an English-speaking country or contemplating living in one, or even for conversing with native English speakers, but rather to communicate on a more global level in a variety of contexts. These learners may need English to gain a place at university, to enjoy better prospects in their professional careers or to acquire the necessary skills with which to use the Internet as a tool of enquiry. Nevertheless, abandoning the teaching of cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries completely may seem a fairly severe step to take, especially when many English language learners stress that it is precisely the cultural component of learning which adds interest and thus fosters motivation to continue their studies (Jacob, 2012). For this reason, many authors support the idea of encouraging an intercultural approach to the study of the cultural content of ELT in order to foster the acquisition of intercultural and transcultural competence, which they see as a necessary requirement for a successful use of English in today’s world (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; McKay, 2002).

The role played by English in global communication is widely recognised by scholars in the field of linguistics and is nothing new to the current debate. Despite the many negative interpretations offered in the literature on the subject, the majority of scholars avoid what Phillipson has labelled “linguistic imperialism”. The notion of language or linguistic imperialism was the central theme of his influential 1992 book of the same title. Phillipson’s main critique was the continuing dominance that the English language has had, from its colonial years to its present-day position as an international language, and that English has gained ground whilst other languages have died or are in the process of disappearing. One of his principal theoretical postures is taken from Gramsci’s social and political theory (1971, 2009), of which the concept of “social hegemony” is a central notion. Gramsci used this term to “refer to the way in which dominant groups in society [...] seek to win the consent of subordinate groups in society” (Storey, 2006: 8).

The concept of hegemony can be used to explain the way in which English has worked in countries such as India. However, despite the negative connotations of the term “imperialism” due to its connection with colonisation, for many it also has a positive interpretation. In the case of India, English has become an important form of internal communication, having been paramount in the uniting of the different cultural groups that converse in a myriad of different tribal languages. Kachru expands on this idea when, speaking essentially of countries such as India, he states that: “[i]n the pluralistic regions of the outer circle, English is an important tool to impart *local* traditions and cultural values” (1992: 358). Kachru’s division of English into the “Inner”, the “Outer”, and the “Expanding” Circles will be explained in Section 2.2.

In the same way, we could classify EIL as pertaining to the same paradigm. It differs only in that it serves as a resource for international, rather than intranational, communication, and aids the spread of knowledge of local traditions and cultural values pertaining to the different speakers of English worldwide. Thus, we argue that the use of EIL could be seen as positive in that not only does it provide the starting point for communication between people with different L1s, but it also gives these speakers the opportunity to share their particular cultural background with others and create a sense of unity. This, in turn, should foster interest in other cultures and the languages which very often accompany them. In such a scenario, EIL need not be seen as an example of the dominance of the English language and its associated beliefs over other languages and cultures, but as a complement to an L1 language which actively encourages the learning of languages and cultures as part of an ongoing process of personal growth. We are not speaking of “seeking consent” between speakers in the sense implied by Gramsci (1971), in which one speaker is more dominant than the other, but of sharing experiences and accumulating knowledge by “negotiating” or “mediating” meaning between cultures on a transcultural and translanguagual level.

One of the reasons for the current language and culture debate within ELT is due to theories which connect language imperialism to the loss of identity (Schmitt & Marsden, 2006). A major concern of UNESCO is the protection of individual cultures and national languages in the ever-increasing globalisation of societies. The Council of

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Europe⁶ (COE) has the same concerns regarding Europe. According to the information found in the language policy division of its international website, the COE “promotes policies which strengthen linguistic diversity and language rights, deepen mutual understanding, consolidate democratic citizenship and sustain social cohesion” (Flemming, 2009). Their aim is that each citizen within Europe should be able to communicate in at least two or three European languages and that all European languages receive official recognition, hence the support given to minority languages within some countries (such as Catalan in Spain), as well as the state languages. This is also a way of downplaying importance given to the spread of EIL/ELF within these countries and encouraging a state of translingual competence. This point of view is also echoed by Alcón Soler (2007: 29):

[W]e believe that the spread of English in Europe will not be a threat towards plurilingualism, if it is understood within the framework of the hybridity hypothesis. This means that in communicative situations what we have is a process of language choice at different levels which enable speakers to maintain their native language and cultural identity, but at the same time being able to use different languages as an instrument to understand each other. This approach entails accepting the use of English as a lingua franca while training in minority languages and through those languages are encouraged.

By adopting a transcultural approach to the learning of English, speakers of EIL/ELF will be able to maintain their native cultural integrity whilst learning to adapt their preconceived schemas concerning other cultures in order to fully understand and make allowances for any differences. Speakers will not only use English to communicate with other speakers of English worldwide, but they will use EIL to speak about their own cultural background and learn about other cultures. They will, in a sense, be acting as cultural mediators (Alred & Byram, 2002; Byram & Zarate, 1997).

⁶ “The Council of Europe, founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, is based in Strasbourg (France), and now covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries.

2.2 ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

It is extensively acknowledged that English is at present the principal contender for the position of international lingua franca. Graddol (2004, 2006) has presented research which, whilst not denying the current position of the English language in the world today and its future importance, does provide empirical data that shows evidence of the rise of alternative candidates such as Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Hindi. Despite these predictions, his principal argument rests in the rise of global English, which he suggests will replace native-speaker English, and this will, as a consequence, need to be reflected in the way English is taught as a FL. This underlines the emerging use of a form of English that does not strictly adhere to the traditional British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) native-speaker norms but that is developing its own idiosyncrasies based on grammatical, lexical, syntactic and phonological adaptations to today's global environment.

In Europe, both the European Union (EU) and the COE have produced language policies which aim to promote the use of at least two other languages apart from one's native language. The EU comprises 27 member states and has 23 official languages, whilst the COE has 47 member states and recognises that diversity in knowledge of different languages as an essential competence. The COE language policies (COE, 2009, 2011) aim to encourage; plurilingualism, linguistic diversity, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship and social cohesion.

In the context of this thesis, perhaps the most important of these aims is that of mutual understanding. As we have stated earlier, successful use of a FL entails the incorporation of intercultural communicative strategies, one of the most important being the acceptance of differences between cultures and the broadening of the views of the world originally held by learners. This, in turn, leads to a mutual understanding of how similar elements may be understood differently depending on one's own cultural background or "languaculture" (Risager, 2007). The consequences of learning another European language apart from one's own is also recognised by the EU and COE as important for the development of European citizenship. Plurilingual (and, in our belief, translingual) individuals will be able to move freely throughout the EU and will have certain advantages in the economic context. The promotion of all European languages is

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essentially a move to maintain the cultural heritage of the countries involved, of which language is undeniably one of the most important traits of a group of people (Byram, 2008: 13-14). Thus, issues of belonging to a community built on foundations transcending the purely national will also form an essential theme throughout this thesis.

It should also be pointed out that a consequence of international mobility is that no one nation is culturally homogeneous when it comes to issues such as religion, ethnic background, or family units. However, the language of the country still maintains a homogeneous position in that whatever the native language of the citizen may be, once in the new country, the new language will be the principal mode of communication outside the family context. Language therefore acts as a cultural unifier in many cases.

The use of English is undeniably a *fait accompli* in our modern world, where its usage in communication on a global level is becoming a necessity rather than an option. The principal point for discussion rests in how “English” in its varying contexts is defined and how it should be taught within those contexts. In order to situate the reader within the linguistic and culture pedagogy framework of this thesis, a brief picture of English in the world today will be presented and the terminology associated with the English language (EIL, ELF, WE, English as a second language [ESL] and EFL) will be discussed and defined. The discussion will then move on to the teaching of English in Europe today and, in keeping with the theme of transcultural awareness, emphasis will be placed on the sociocultural content of FL education in Europe and in Spain and the role played by culture in EIL. In order to fulfil this objective, specific details concerning education policies and practices in Europe will be revised.

American linguist Braj Kachru (1985) put forward the idea of three concentric circles (see Fig. 1) to explain the distribution of speakers of English and, over the years, this Kachruvian perspective has proved to be a useful tool in the categorisation of English speakers throughout the world.

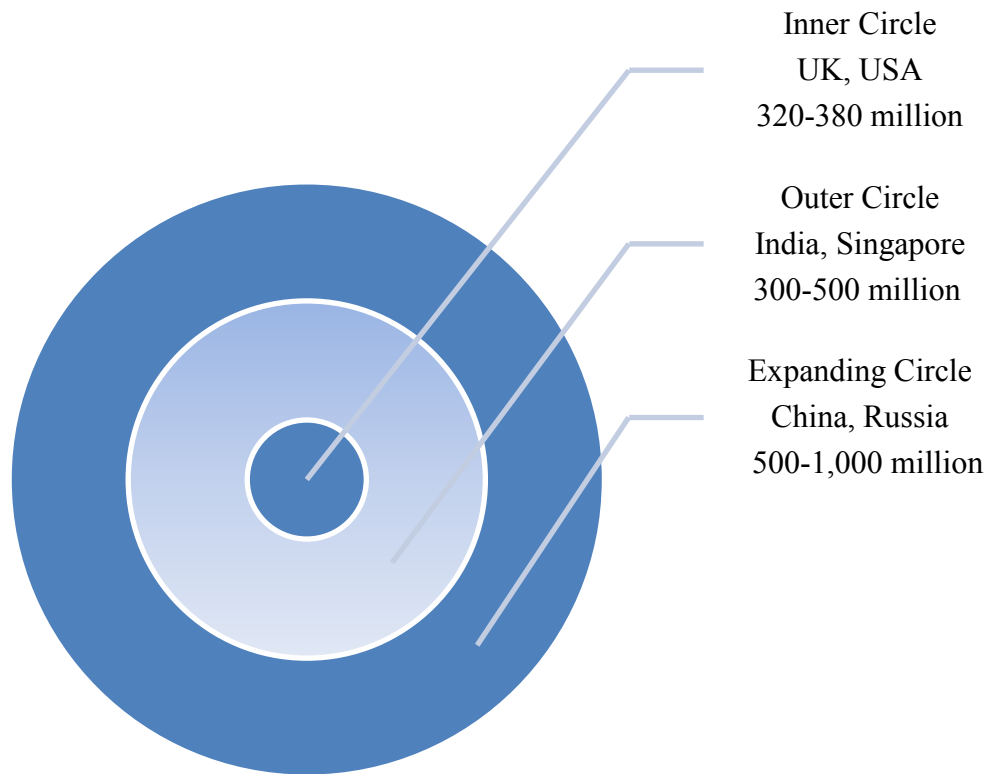


Figure 1 Kachru's concentric circles (Crystal, 2003: 61)

Inner Circle countries and speakers are those who have English as their native language (ENL or L1). They are classed as being norm-providing. Countries in this area of the circle are the USA, the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.⁷ The varieties spoken by these speakers are considered the models of competence and correctness that non-native speakers aim to achieve within the EFL learning paradigm (Graddol, 2001: 51). The countries in the Outer Circle, such as India and Singapore, are those which were once British or American colonies. In these countries, the language usually plays or has played some role in the major institutions. Traditionally, Outer Circle speakers of English, along with immigrants to English-speaking countries, are said to speak ESL (L2) (Graddol, 2001: 50). These countries are norm-developing since English “is vibrant enough for them to begin developing their own unique standard forms” (Schmitt

⁷ Although South Africa is generally classified as an Inner Circle country, we have preferred to position it as an Outer Circle country. This view is also supported by Graddol (1997) and Brutt-Griffler (2002). From 1910, when South Africa became a dominion, English co-existed alongside the more widely spoken Dutch-based Afrikaans as a co-official language and since 1995 has been one of eleven official languages in the country. Although English retains its importance in the fields of higher education, the media and the government (higher levels only), it remains a minority language, spoken by only 10% of the total population (Svartvik & Leech, 2006: 3).

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& Marsden, 2006: 179). Examples are the new Englishes such as Indian English or Caribbean English. These varieties are often referred to now as “World Englishes”. The principal differences are grammatical and are caused by simplification or by the application of general rules to the exceptions (Schmitt & Marsden, 2006: 192-198). However, language is also an important manifestation of the cultural context to which it is associated and the adaptation to these new ecologies (i.e. social environments) has given non-native Englishes new identities (Kachru, 1990: 12). The Expanding Circle is by far the largest and consists, in the main, of those who have learnt EFL very often as part of their compulsory school education. These speakers depend on the standard forms as prescribed by the Inner Circle countries and it is these versions that they are taught as part of their educative curricula.

Due to the growth of English as an essential international mode of communication, various scholars, such as Graddol (1997), Yano (2001), Jenkins (2003) and Seidlhofer (2004), have contested Kachru’s model (1985), maintaining that it will not serve to explain the global use of English in the 21st century. Graddol reasons that the traditional role within the linguistic hierarchy is changing: the Outer and Expanding English-speaking groups are appropriating the norm-providing role that has traditionally belonged to the Inner Circle speakers, since it is now the L2 and EFL speakers who are at the centre of English language growth and, subsequently, language change (this is also exemplified in the work of Seidlhofer (e.g. 2011) and Jenkins (e.g. 2002), who have pinpointed various linguistic features which differentiate EFL from BrE). Graddol suggests the use of L1, L2 and EFL to describe the speakers of each circle and also emphasises that the status of English within the L2 and EFL circles is showing signs of language shift to L1 and L2 circles respectively (1997: 10-11). Figure 2 illustrates Graddol’s overlapping circles, which he believes provide a more accurate explanation of the direction that English language use is taking.

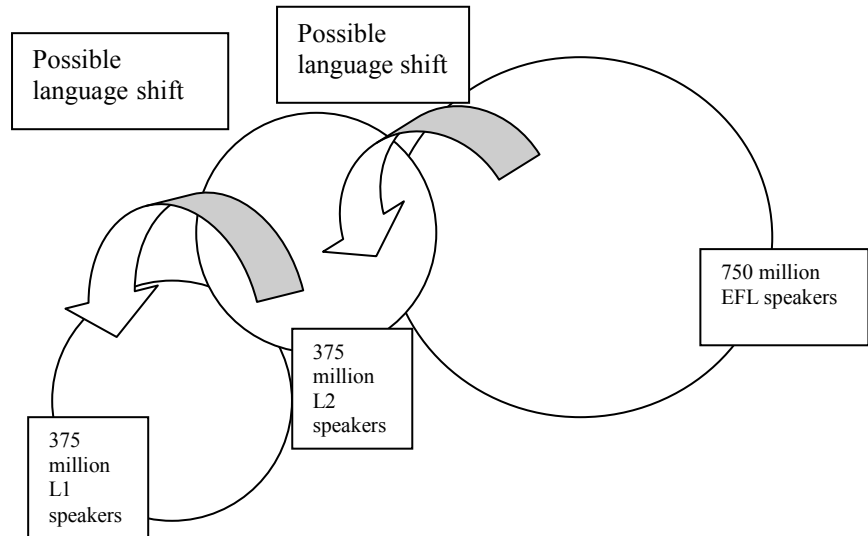


Figure 2 Graddol's overlapping circles (Graddol, 1997: 10)

Graddol also adds that the number of L1 English speakers is on the decline and that Expanding Circle countries very often have more English speakers than even the Outer Circle countries, thus confirming that English “has become a language used mainly by bilinguals and multilinguals” (Graddol, 2001: 48). He gives the examples of the Scandinavian countries where the English language has taken on the role of second language in many cases and he cites Preisler’s study of 1999, which provides statistical information of the uses of English in Denmark (Graddol, 2001: 50). Other countries which he feels are in a period of transition from EFL to ESL are the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden (Graddol, 1997: 11). As a result, Graddol questions the designation of the term “EFL” to describe the English spoken in Europe since the use and knowledge of English better fits the L2 paradigm, but he reminds us that despite this clear paradigm shift, within Europe, English is still regarded “as a “foreign”, rather than a “second” language” (2001: 50). Prcic (2003) suggests that there are three other properties which make English different from how we learn other FLs. He specifies “ready audio-visual availability”, “dual acquisition” and “supplementary language functions” (2003: 35). In this world of technological advances, the English language is available on the internet, through cable television, at the cinema, etc. This means that most children have been introduced to the English language long before they actually begin to learn it as a FL at school. This audio-visual property leads to the

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notion of dual acquisition, which Precic understands as a combination of natural acquisition and institutionally taught acquisition. Finally, his third concept involves the use of English lexis within a native language context. This borrowing of vocabulary and phrases is widespread and enters the native language via the TV, the internet, advertising, etc. As Precic comments, “English is frequently used to name domestic products, firms and businesses, pop groups and songs [...] and to create commercial slogans” (2003: 36).

Whilst reading the wide array of literature on English in the world today it becomes clear that a variety of labels, which very often overlap in meaning, are used to define English language speakers, either territorially (Inner, Outer, Expanding Circles), by language proficiency/competency (English as a native language [ENL]/L1, ESL/L2, EFL) or “variety” of English (e.g. EIL, WE, AmE, BrE, ELF, Asian English, Singapore English). In more recent research, Graddol blames Global English as the reason for a “crisis of terminology” and claims now that the traditional distinction between ESL, ENL and EFL speakers has become “blurred” (2006: 110). One of the major problems with Kachru’s tripartite model is that it automatically designates status areas of linguistic competence, favouring the ENL speakers in their condition as norm providers as the “model” of attainment for other speakers of English. However, this ignores the fact that many ESL or EFL speakers of English may have higher levels of linguistic competence than NSs, for example those using English in the academia. Moreover, in terms of intelligibility, ESL and EFL speakers are often easier to understand than many so-called NSs, even in the context of communication between two ENL speakers. For this reason, according to Graddol (2006: 110), Kachru has redefined the circles to account for these changes and now conceives the speakers in terms of proficiency rather than how the language was learnt or is used. His circle now consists of an Inner circle of 500 million proficient speakers of English and the further away from the centre one gets, the more their proficiency in English declines.

Yano (2001) proposes an interesting adjustment to Kachru’s circles which accounts for the direction which language use is taking in Europe and the rest of the world. He redefines the Kachruvian circles to accommodate the new Englishes as NS Englishes by classifying the Inner Circle speakers as “genetic” native speakers and the Outer Circle speakers as “functional” native speakers. This paradigm allows speakers of different

varieties of English to function as equals in terms of proficiency and ownership. It is also in keeping with the use of EIL as a “function” for transnational communication, as defined by Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) and as understood in this dissertation. Furthermore, Yano (2001) uses the terms “acrolect” and “basilect” taken from creole studies to explain how the varying uses of English are associated with types of speakers (2001: 123-124). In a creole continuum, an acrolectal variety would be one that most approximates a standard variety and a basilectal variety would be one that is most distinct from the standard. EIL is acrolectal and is characterised by its formal use of the language and cultural neutrality. This would also apply to the formal and public uses of everyday English. In contrast, if the use of English is for informal and colloquial domestic communication, such as BrE, AmE or Asian English, it would be classified as basilectal since it represents a specific sociocultural group of speakers and would be representative of that group’s identity.

In order to illustrate this feature, this scholar suggests a three-dimensional model which positions the acrolectal uses of language at the top and the basilectal varieties at the bottom. He also allows for the fact that in many cases, those users of EFL in the top half may be gradually extending their use to a basilectal model as over time those languages spoken move towards becoming distinct varieties. This would occur in those communities where the use of English shifts to an ESL paradigm within a specific group of speakers. He gives the shift in the EFL tradition to the ESL framework in Europe as an example of this (i.e. Dutch English, Danish English). One interesting outcome of Yano’s (2001) revised interpretation of the Circles is that it presumes that those users of English in the basilectal area of the cylinder will also be able to use EIL and thus unites NSs and NNSs of English. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Jenkins, this model may be problematic as it does not “allow for the basilectal use in international communication, a context which is becoming increasingly common” (Jenkins, 2003: 18). We therefore need to adjust the model to allow for both contexts: a basilectal or colloquial use of EIL alongside the more formal acrolectal standardised context of use.

As a consequence of this change in terms of speaker ownership-proficiency, numerous books and papers have addressed a range of issues such as linguistic imperialism or ownership and their implications on the use and teaching of English (Dewey, 2007). This has resulted in the emergence of a number of empirical studies, more specifically

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within the field of ELF (e.g. Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Modiano, 2000, 2001, 2009; Mollin, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2005, 2009; and Seidlhofer et al., 2006), which are establishing ELF as a recognised area of research within the area of world Englishes.

Additionally, a number of scholars have called for the redefining of the term “lingua franca” since today’s expansion of English cannot be compared to the original definition of a lingua franca (Kachru, 1996: 906-907). Modiano goes so far as to suggest an updated definition of a lingua franca. He proposes that ELF is “a language which has considerable utility in multicultural settings, among people with differing linguistic profiles” (2009: 212). In this way, he introduces a transcultural twist which unites language and culture in a hybrid “third space” context.

Brutt-Griffler (2002) has also contributed to the discussion of terminology, departing from the term “World English”. In her thesis, she analyses the spread of English both linguistically and sociopolitically as she posits that the acquisition of ESL is intrinsically connected to territorial expansion and that any research into WE should include both the linguistic and the sociopolitical contexts. She reminds us that Smith (1976) provided one of the earliest definitions of EIL “as a language used by people of different nations to communicate with one another” (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 5). This scholar also quotes three underlying features of EIL taken from Smith (1987):

1. It implies no essential relationship between speaking the language and assimilating an associated culture. There is no necessity for second language speakers to internalize the cultural norms of behavior of the mother tongue speakers of a language to use it effectively.
2. An international language becomes denationalized. It is not the property of its mother tongue speakers.
3. Since English as an International Language plays a purely functional role, the goal of teaching it is to facilitate communication of learners’ ideas and culture in an English medium.

(Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 5)

From this perspective, we can see that the basic tenets of EIL have not changed over the last thirty years and that the proposals of Smith are an essential theme of today’s debate

on the role of culture in ELT. It is important that speakers of English are able to use the language to learn about the world through communication on a global scale.

Whichever way we look at it, English in Europe is taking hold and seems to be linked with the idea of a “superstate” called Europe with English as its principal means of communication (Graddol, 2001: 53). The old division of EFL and ESL is becoming fuzzy as the paradigms of each are becoming more and more intertwined. This thesis will take the perspective that although the English used in Europe may be taking on some specific characterisations which differentiate it from BrE or AmE (Jenkins, 2006; Modiano, 2000, 2001, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2009), it is being used to communicate internationally. Thus, we will speak of EIL as the mode or function of communication, without forgetting that, within the paradigm of ELT, the students are learning EFL — which is based on BrE and/or AmE linguistic norms. In the context of the empirical research associated with this thesis, we take the perspective of EIL as primarily being used between NNSs, but we also include the combination of NSs and NNSs whenever it is within a cultural context that is not associated with any specific English-speaking culture. We additionally stress that “EIL is not English for special purposes with a restricted linguistic corpus for use in an international setting” (Smith, 1987), but is the use of a common language for a variety of communication acts whether formal, informal, written or oral. This thesis also recognises the importance of the work by ELF scholars in terms of encouraging the acceptance of linguistic plurality within ELT. Notwithstanding, the present study also departs from the premise that the EIL speakers may be using English that is culturally laden with their L1 cultural beliefs, hence adapting it to their own individual requirements as well as adapting to the specific cultural context of others. They will, in effect, be using EIL to broaden their cultural knowledge on a global level and thus enhance international understanding through the use of a mutually intelligible linguistic form.

By accepting that the use of EIL transcends the restrictions of national uses of English, we also need to consider the fact that very often in an ELT context the facilitator of English is not necessarily a NS. From our discussion of the changing demographics of English language speakers, it is easy to comprehend why the traditional NS model role for competence may be seen as no longer appropriate. According to Alptekin, this utopian pedagogical model of linguistic correctness should be replaced by “successful

bilinguals with intercultural insights and knowledge” (2002: 64). In fact, 80% of English teachers are NNSs (Bayyurt, 2006). Nevertheless, in the teaching of EFL, NS competence is invariably the principal goal for assessment despite possibly no longer being the most appropriate (Byram & Zarate, 1994). Graddol (2001) adds fuel to the discussion when he states that the native-teacher model is further seen as the reason why many learners give up on the way as “such a model of attainment dooms the majority of FL learners to at least partial failure, and confirms their ‘foreign’ status in relation to the target language” (2001: 52).

It is beyond the scope of this work to explore this issue in depth. Nevertheless, one of the aims of a transcultural approach is to promote a sense of “individual ownership” and “use” concerning English and to encourage language and culture learning in a broader environment. This, we believe, may be a step towards motivating the learning of other languages. In this way, a focus on the functional use of language—as a tool to obtain and exchange knowledge—rather than on form, will encourage communication and will provide speakers with positive translingual and transcultural experiences.

2.3 FLT AND ELT IN EUROPE

The previous section has discussed the current situation of EIL/ELF in the world. This section will now look at the implications this is having in Europe, more specifically in language policy in the educational ambit. Due to the ever-increasing importance of the role played by schools in developing FL competence and the central role of culture in language studies, in 2004 the European Commission, the executive body of the EU, appointed a Commissioner of Education and Culture whose responsibilities also included multilingualism. Documents such as “A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism” (COM, 2005/596) and “Key data on teaching languages in schools” (Eurydice, 2008) were an important result of the work carried out by the Commission. These reports provide a comprehensive guide to achieving the linguistic goals which had been previously outlined in the Barcelona European Council in March 2002, where one of the principal objectives was to promote the use of two other European languages from as early an age as possible.

The Eurydice report (2008) covers a range of issues regarding language learning and includes references to the variety of languages learnt, the ages of the learners, the proportion of language teachers at each level, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and the training of language teachers. The Eurydice network, managed by one of the EU's specialised agencies, The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), bases its activities on the EU Action Programme in the field of lifelong learning. The Lifelong Learning Programme supports learning opportunities from childhood to old age through different programmes such as Comenius, Erasmus, and Leonardo da Vinci.

In 2008 a second EU Commission on Multilingualism (COM/566) presented two principal objectives:

1. To raise awareness of the value and opportunities of the EU's linguistic diversity and;
2. To give all citizens real opportunities to learn to communicate in two languages plus their mother tongue.

The Eurydice report of 2008, in collaboration with Eurostat, is part of the Key Data Series—a collection of statistics, data and indicators on education from schools in the general education sector—and includes the public sector and grant-aided schools in 31 European countries (the 27 EU members, three EEA⁸ members and Turkey) (Eurydice 2008). The Eurostat statistical data was taken from the New Cronos database and relates to data obtained in 2005/6. It also incorporated results from the PISA 2006 international survey (MEC, 2007). The report deals with the following four principal issues:

1. Language diversity within schools;
2. The position of foreign languages in the curriculum;
3. The range of different languages taught; and
4. The initial education of teachers and their qualifications.

⁸ EEA stands for the European Economic Area and includes Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

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In reference to FL education, the report states that pupils have to learn a FL from primary education (ISCED level 1)⁹ onwards in almost all countries. In certain countries, such as Belgium or some autonomous communities in Spain, FL learning may be compulsory as early as pre-primary level. In lower secondary education (ISCED level 2), 58% of students are reported to learn at least two FLs, but there are considerable differences between the countries under consideration. In some countries such as Luxembourg, students are obliged to learn two or three FLs, whereas in other countries, such as Spain, only one FL¹⁰ is compulsory and any other language subjects are optional. In many cases the offer of learning more than one FL is not possible until students are in upper secondary education. Until 2008-2009 this was the case in Poland, but as from 2009 a second FL was introduced into the curriculum for students from 13 to 19 years of age.

Despite the political encouragement for multilingual orientated curricula, compulsory FL education accounts for less than 10% of overall taught time in most countries. Since the previous Eurydice report of 2002, the time allocated to the compulsory FL (usually English) has either not varied or risen. In a total of thirteen countries English is an obligatory requirement until the end of compulsory education, and in some cases it is also a required subject in upper secondary level (ISCED level 3). In Spain all students in ISCED 3 must study at least one FL, of which English is, again, the language chosen by all Spanish education authorities. Without doubt, English is the most widely taught first FL in both primary and secondary education in Europe. In Spain, 6.5% of teaching time is dedicated to English as the compulsory language subject taught at primary level and 10.7% at secondary level each school year. In Poland, the figures show slightly less time being dedicated to language teaching as only 5% of teaching time is dedicated to compulsory language teaching at primary level and 9.6% at secondary level. Nevertheless, it is also important to understand these figures in the wider context of the total amount of hours dedicated to the teaching of English. In Spain, English, at primary and lower secondary levels, is taught for a total of 790 hours, whereas in Poland the figure drops to 456 hours of teaching.¹¹

⁹ ISCED is the acronym for International Standard Classification of Education. It is divided into 6 levels.

¹⁰ Curiously, although English is the language chosen by all Spanish education authorities as the required first FL, there is no mention that English *must* be the *compulsory FL*.

¹¹ These figures are for primary and lower secondary levels and it should be noted that in Poland the lower secondary level covers three years (ages 13 to 15).

The most frequently learnt second FL in Europe is German, followed by French and Spanish. Russian is also learnt as a second or third FL in Poland, Germany and Romania. The lack of dedication to other European languages is nothing new to policy makers. In 2003 the EU commissioned a plan of action which focused on reducing the negative effect that too much English could have on the national languages throughout Europe and encouraged the learning of at least two FLs at primary school level in order to raise awareness of linguistic diversity. The principal points raised in the report were the concept of lifelong learning, thus providing a range of learning from pre-school to adult learning, the improvement in the quality of teaching, and the building of an environment in Europe that is language-friendly (COM, 2003).

One of the most recent surveys on FL competence in Europe (European Survey of Language Competences - ESLC) was carried out in the spring of 2011 by the European Commission (European Commission, 2012). The results were discussed in reference to the CEFR levels, a framework for FL competence which is used widely in language education in Europe.¹² According to this framework, beginners are pre A1, basic users are levels A1/A2 and independent users are B1/B2. Participants were 54,000 at ISCED levels 2 and 3 (lower and higher secondary school students), with a CEFR level of between A1 and B2, from 14 European countries, which included Spain and Poland. Students were tested on the two most widely studied FL languages in each territory, in the areas of listening, reading and writing. The only requirement was that students must have had at least one year of language instruction before taking the tests. The key overall finding showed that only 42% of students were found to be competent in their first FL and only 25% in the second. Furthermore, many pupils did not even achieve the level of a basic user.

Table 1 shows the results in percentages of students from the 14 countries and their levels of attainment according to the CEFR assessment framework. In all three areas of testing, the Scandinavian countries, some of the Eastern European countries, the Netherlands and Malta achieved high levels of success consistently. In contrast, the Southern European peninsular (Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain), along with

¹² The CEFR has been widely adopted in Europe and beyond as a framework for language education, and also for developing a shared understanding of levels of language competence. It defines six levels of functional competence from A1 (the lowest level) to C2. The ESLC focused on levels A1 to B2. It was also necessary to define a pre-A1 level in order to identify an A1 threshold (ESLC, 2012: 3).

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Poland, are all found towards the bottom of the list in terms of competence for their first FL, and are considered as below average in competence. It appears that, despite the fact that in Spain more time is dedicated to FL teaching than in Poland, this is not reflected in terms of competence. This highlights the fact that perhaps there are other variables which should be taken into consideration. Failure may not just be due to a lack of teaching time, but the method employed may also be an important factor.

Table 1 First foreign language – percentage of pupils’ overall achievements (CEFR levels)

COUNTRY	LANGUAGE	PRE-A1	A1	A2	B1	B2
SWEDEN	English	1%	6%	11%	25%	57%
MALTA	English	2%	7%	9%	22%	60%
NETHERLANDS	English	2%	14%	18%	30%	36%
ESTONIA	English	7%	20%	12%	20%	41%
SLOVENIA	English	6%	22%	18%	25%	29%
CROATIA	English	11%	23%	19%	24%	23%
GREECE	English	13%	23%	16%	22%	26%
BELGIUM (GE)	French	9%	29%	22%	21%	19%
ESLC average		14%	28%	16%	19%	23%
BULGARIA	English	20%	29%	16%	16%	19%
BELGIUM (FR)	English	11%	36%	24%	19%	10%
PORTUGAL	English	20%	33%	16%	16%	15%
SPAIN	English	22%	35%	16%	14%	13%
POLAND	English	24%	34%	17%	15%	10%
BELGIUM (NL)	French	16%	41%	21%	15%	7%
FRANCE	English	31%	40%	15%	9%	5%
UK	French	30%	48%	13%	7%	2%

(Adapted from the European Commission, 2012: 9)

Key: FR: French; GE: German; NL: Dutch

In his more recent work, Modiano also reflects on how to adapt ELT to the current English language paradigm in Europe (2009). He quite rightly points out that ELT methodology will have to cater for a myriad of contexts of English language usage since it should accommodate an array of language functions, language proficiencies and language varieties. Two non-native speakers from Europe may have no communication problems when using ELF features, but this does not mean that a third non-native English speaker or a native English speaker would fully understand. An all-inclusive methodology should therefore cater for native and non-native speakers of English, for integrative and instrumental purposes, and for cultural knowledge that begins at home and reaches the cultural richness of the world or, as Modiano states, that extends “locally, regionally and internationally” (2009: 211). This perspective reflects a use of

EIL which includes speakers of English from all three of Kachru's circles and Modiano's all-embracing view of culture in ELT and which at the same time, is in keeping with Risager's call for a transnational approach to ELT (2006, 2007).

2.4 CURRENT TRENDS IN ELT IN EUROPE

Graddol (2006) refers to an educational revolution in Europe which is taking place as it adapts to new global trends. He specifies the role of education as one of providing "the generic skills needed to acquire new knowledge and specialist skills" and he underscores ICT and English as two of these most important basic skills (2006: 72). In this respect, he feels that the teaching of EFL no longer fulfils the requirements of FLT within the secondary school curriculum as it is not taught on equal terms with French or German. He also stresses the use of English in higher education, where students are encouraged to study in English-speaking universities, and the idea of transnational education in virtual universities and English-speaking universities, which are opening up campuses overseas to cater for students wishing to obtain degrees in English from UK universities. An example of this is Nottingham University, which opened two overseas campuses in 2004, Nottingham Malaysia and Nottingham Ningbo in China.

To answer the question of which model of language learning should be used to cater for such changes in the use and expansion of English, Graddol (2006) feels that there are three which depart from the traditional EFL and ESL frameworks. These models are CLIL, ELF and English for young learners and he goes so far as to suggest that these will influence how English is taught and assessed in the future. The CLIL approach to language learning is defined as a "means of teaching curriculum subjects through the medium of a language still being learned, providing the necessary language support alongside the subject specialism" (Graddol, 2006: 86). The research that forms the second part of this thesis introduces various cross-curriculum topics into the EFL lesson. In this manner, the students are able to experience a language class that is rich in its diversity of topics and, consequently, a wider range of semantic fields will be covered. As will be explained below in section 2.4.1, such ELT approaches can be considered as adhering to content-based methodologies.

2.4.1 Content and language integrated learning and content-based instruction approaches to EFL

Graddol (2006) has predicted that CLIL and immersion-based language-learning will form the basis for EFL education in the 21st century (2006: 120). Immersion programmes such as CLIL and content-based approaches to language learning are considered to have considerable potential to innovate FLT as they provide a context for language to be learnt naturally. Content-based approaches may also be described as points on a continuum from a total-immersion context to language classes that are based on a thematic content (Juan-Garau, 2012). CLIL orientation would be found at some middle-point on the continuum (Lyster, 2007: 6). As we have discussed in the previous section, CLIL is indeed becoming a supplement to conventional EFL teaching methods in many European countries. Nevertheless, as the numbers show, it is not equally distributed amongst all classes in all schools in all countries. One of the major impediments is a lack of teachers that are qualified in both the content subject and the FL it is being taught in (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010: 271). A second factor is that very often it is the better students that are considered for CLIL courses, thus limiting the projection of the experience (Eurydice, 2006). One possible solution to these drawbacks would be to create a CLIL atmosphere in the FL classroom. In this respect, content-based FL lessons could provide a good alternative. This is not a new approach to language learning by any means, but it is an approach that acts as a bridge between traditional learning based on grammar skills and immersion or CLIL approaches, and that is communicative by nature. By introducing a cross-curricular structure to the EFL class in the form of content-based material, all students should have plenty of opportunities to develop transcultural knowledge and competences.

CBI could be understood as an umbrella term for those methodologies which take a top-down focus on meaning, as opposed to the more traditional bottom-up focus-on-form approach to FL learning (Stryker & Leaver, 1997: 3). CBI is based on learning through authentic materials based on the subject matter that are appropriate to the age and level of the learner. Research has shown that such instruction is capable of accelerating language proficiency whilst broadening cross-cultural knowledge (Stryker & Leaver, 1997). Along with enhancing students' motivation, it appears that "students who experience a well-organized content-based programme are more likely to develop the

wings they need to fly on their own” (Stryker & Leaver, 1997: 5), that is, they will have been encouraged to follow an independent learning process outside of the classroom.

The principal reason for the rise in CLIL approaches to language teaching is the rising trend towards internationalisation which “puts pressure on education systems to provide skills that will allow students to stand ground in international contexts” (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 1). CLIL approaches give learners access to specific topic areas which provide them with plenty of opportunities for “real communication”. Central to CLIL frameworks are two influential learning theories: constructivism and social interaction. A constructivist approach to learning is based on the principle that “the self is not an isolated island of ‘mentation’ but that persons exist and grow in living webs of relationships which shape the world of the experiencing self” (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 8). Crucial to the constructivist way of thinking is the concept of social interaction. The socio-cognitive theories of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), whereby social interaction is seen as an essential to cognitive development, have been successfully incorporated into theories of language learning (see Chapter 4 for further discussion on Vygotsky). During FL learning, the novice (learner) acquires knowledge from the expert (teacher or peer) the same way in which a child acquires their L1 through language socialisation (Ochs, 1986); hence, the importance of collaborative teaching practices, such as group projects, in the FL classroom.

Nevertheless, the majority of the research into CBI has focused on introducing themes and issues connected to the country or countries where the FL of instruction is spoken (e.g. Grant, 2006). A transcultural approach to teaching EIL/EFL would not necessarily need to include only material or topics from English-speaking countries but could take a broader, more global attitude to the topic by encouraging the learners to consider various viewpoints. An EFL teacher can incorporate a myriad of texts (written, oral, visual) into the EFL classroom which deal with a variety of subjects, thus transforming the class into a centre for cross-curricular study.

One such study was undertaken by Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008). Their research inquired into the influence different contexts of learning (stay-at-home vs. stay abroad, and content-based English classes vs. traditional grammar-based classes) could have on proficiency development and attitudinal and behavioural change towards other

communities in Japanese high-school students. In her previous work, Yashima (2002) had taken an international posture to ELT. She extended Gardner's concept of "integrativeness" (see Section 4.3.1) to view EIL as a model of international communication which favoured stronger intergroup relations, interest in international affairs and interest in international vocations. In their 2008 study, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide found that the stay abroad students demonstrated clear advances in proficiency and international posture compared to the stay-at-home group. Yet, the stay-at-home group who were following a content-based programme based on participation in an imagined community showed significant advances in their international postures. The authors concluded that "through theme-based teaching many learners started enjoying using English and it had become a natural part of their life, as they learned to use English to express themselves and exchange opinions" (2008: 581).

2.4.2 Use of ICT in the EFL classroom

The use of ICT technologies has also become an important tool in the ambit of education as a whole (Evans, 2009a; Salazar Noguera & Juan Garau, 2009; Sieloff Magnan, 2008) and research has often focused on the cultural implications of such a learning context. Nevertheless, studies on cultural communication through ICT with primary and secondary school students with different cultural backgrounds and languages have essentially been neglected (Grant, 2006). Thus, another important area which forms part of the framework for the empirical investigation of the present thesis is ICT in the EFL class.

One of the most recent reports on the state of ICT in FL learning was commissioned by EACEA and carried out by Agogi in collaboration with an international team of experts headed by Anne Stevens from The Open University, UK. The report, "Study on the Impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and New Media on Language Learning" (EACEA, 2009), explains the current situation of ICT in language learning in eight EU member countries: Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Spain and the UK (56% of the total EU population). The data were collected between June 2008 and May 2009 by means of an on-line survey. The specific area of

the effects of ICT and new media on language learning answered the following questions:

1. Can new language-learning behaviours related to the use of ICT and new media be identified?
2. Does the use of such technologies positively affect language awareness, attitudes to multilingualism and language in general?
3. Does the use of ICT and new media appear to enhance user motivation to learn languages?

The respondents to the on-line surveys were largely regular users of ICT, at work and at home, and were essentially people with strong interests in language learning and/or the use of ICT and new media. Results showed that the use of ICT for language learning was not widespread. Less than 10% reported using it as their main media of language learning and 30% reported using it as a regular component of a more traditional language course. This may be explained by the fact that data also showed that learners were not prepared to pay for on-line learning and that there was a prevailing view that “language learning is intrinsically related to face-to-face communication and immersion in the target culture, in real (physical) rather than ‘virtual’ settings” (EACEA, 2009: 31-32). Nevertheless, the report also concluded that informal language learning was far more common via the Internet. The principal tools used were TVs, computers (90%) and to a lesser degree, radios (70%). Language dictionaries and grammars were the most consulted on-line material while films on DVDs and music CDs were recognised as being more effective language enhancers than on-line language courses and materials. Blogs were said to have been of help to 40% of language learners, though as a rule, only 1 in 5 respondents reported that virtual worlds had positively improved their language skills. Seventy-six per cent agreed that the use of the email had been much more helpful than discussion forums (40%), chats (42%), voice over the Internet (33%), SMS (27%) and video-conferencing (23%). However, the report stressed that generational differences permeated these results and that the younger respondents had a far more positive view of the new media trends such as social networking and virtual worlds.

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Clearly, ICT has fostered the use of CMC to cater for distance learning. Positive attitudes towards computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and second-generation CMC, or network-based language learning, tools such as email, chat groups, forums and blogs, have been reported (Chapelle, 2007). CALL research has shown that affective factors such as anxiety level and motivation improved noticeably when compared to more traditional language learning methodologies (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2009: 550). Likewise, Hawkes (2009) also concluded that the use of digital technologies (more specifically email, video and blogging) was instrumental in improving language competence and in providing motivation for her FL students. Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness of CMC is still open to debate. The Ofsted (Office of Standards in Education) reports (Evans, 2009b) on FL education and ICT in England describe a positive progression from 2002 to 2008 concerning the impact of ICT on modern language learning in English schools. Nevertheless, the 2004 report also highlighted evidence that ICT was detrimental to the quantity of target language use in the classroom (Evans, 2009b: 12-13).

The potential for on-line language learning is nothing new. Due to the fact that the Internet and its new uses have changed “mediated communication and communication flow” (Kim & Haridakis, 2009: 988), experts often refer to the “embeddedness [of CMC] in our lives today” (D’Urso, 2009: 710). Particularly relevant to this thesis are the new forms of CMC in the era of the characteristically interactive, co-creative new Internet or “Web 2.0” (Courtois et al., 2009: 109). Web 2.0 technology which facilitates interpersonal exchanges has become an important method to develop both student-teacher and student-student relations (Krayka, 2007). To a certain extent, blogs can be described as on-line journals which allow bloggers to post ideas, news and announcements which can then be updated and/or commented on by readers (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005). Nevertheless, within the ambit of education, the collaborative nature of blogs may provide the opportunity for the “negotiation of meaning” and for the “construction of knowledge” (Krayka, 2007: 101), thus creating an important collaborative virtual meeting space, not only for learning but for the (re)defining of one’s identity.

O’Dowd (2007a) mentions how Allport (1979) envisioned a similar scenario for the development of intercultural relations as explained in his seminal work on contact theory

(to be discussed in Chapter 4). Allport described a technique used in some more progressive schools which was called “social travelling”. The strategy was to bring together groups which had negative stereotypical views of the other. His observations revealed that contact alone did not necessarily promote positive attitudinal changes but that it was the collaborative nature of their time together which fostered understanding and tolerance (Allport, 1979). Furthermore, using sociocultural theory as a framework, Thorne (2003) considers the use of the Internet as a cultural tool that is used to mediate global communication. He considers that such artefacts become functional due to the specific human activity which they mediate. Thus, this cultural tool when used for intercultural communication also becomes a liminal or third space where FL learners can reconstruct or redefine their identity to cater for transnational language speaking contexts. Fayard and DeSanctis (2010) confirm this when they point out that on-line forums may contribute to erasing perceived differences between individuals and so help to build a common “collective” identity.

Drawing on Wittgenstein, Fayard and DeSanctis (2010) develop their thesis by classifying two on-line forums according to the type of “language games” played by the users and take a discursive approach to collective identity and culture. For them language is seen as a tool with which to achieve a result. For their discursive approach they draw on Hardy et al. (2005), who addressed the relationship between participants in an on-line forum, drawing attention to their communicative practices and highlighting a view of collaboration as “a social accomplishment” (2005: 59). Fayard and DeSanctis (2010) identified five common practices in both blogs that led to the development of a collective identity: 1) self-referring; 2) building a shared history; 3) expressing legitimacy; 4) enacting a consistent linguistic style; and 5) managing relationships.

This hybrid feature of virtual communication paves the way for students to acquire tertiary socialisation experiences in a potential area of transcultural dialogue. This notion of a “virtual third space” was successfully used by Bretag (2006) to identify the changes in student-teacher relationships, more specifically, the issue of positive politeness. This third space offered students and teachers alike the possibility for the re-imagining of the student-teacher relationship. Traditionally speaking, there is a cultural relationship of hierarchy between the two entities, but a neutral space could challenge this distinction: students would not be intimidated as in the typical face-to face communicative exchange

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and would, thus, have more opportunity for negotiation (Hannula, 2001). What is more important is that this method of communication facilitates the sharing of information whilst developing, or facilitating, transcultural understanding.

Drawing on Ferdig and Trammell (2004), Ducate and Lomicka (2005: 413) highlight four benefits of student blogging:

1. Students can become subject matter experts;
2. Students' interest and ownership in learning is increased;
3. Students become more active participants in a community of practice; and
4. Blogging opens the door for a multitude of diverse activities within and outside the course.

A further three benefits can be added to this list;

5. Blogging may foster critical thinking as they are encouraged to evaluate what they read and write (Oravic, 2002: 618);
6. In addition to language gains there are benefits concerning cultural understanding (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005: 413); and
7. Blogs support different learning styles (Bobish, 2007; Radclyffe-Thomas, 2012; Richardson, 2006)

An encouraging aspect of the development of on-line language learning is the growing number of publications in the form of journals (e.g. the journals *Language Learning and Technology* and *ReCALL*) and books volumes (e.g. Belz & Thorne, 2006; Danet & Herring, 2007; Warschauer & Kern, 2000) dedicated to this area of research. Notwithstanding, despite the extensive amount of academic writings on the use of ICT in the classroom, the majority are descriptive and there are few reports on how ICT resources have been implemented in the EFL learning context, and, more importantly, on the results that are being obtained. Essentially, the stress is on the context of the acquisition or development of intercultural competence and generally deals with university students with substantial knowledge of the FL under study. Most of the publications in this field also report the use of ICT for enhancing communication between a NS of the FL and a NNS (Canga Alonso, 2006; Leverage Project, 1999;

O'Dowd, 2003, 2007a, 2007b). However, few studies have considered communication between NNSs of English in this context, which highlights the need for research in this developing area of study.

2.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has brought together the principal issues that form a framework for the empirical research in Part 2. Importance has been given to the use of EIL and the general picture of ELT in the 21st century has been discussed. English has clearly become an essential tool for communication purposes, and, perhaps more significantly, it is seen as the means to share one's cultural background, knowledge and view of the world.

It has also been suggested that a blurring of the terms “ENL”, “ESL”, and “EFL” is in motion. This is especially significant in Europe, where in many cases users of English are learning EFL in an environment which frequently resembles an ESL context of learning. Such issues also underline aspects of identity. Mention was made of the fact that the acquisition of English may lead to the evolution of one's cultural identity as the speaker takes on an identity compatible with the new language. Nevertheless, it was also argued that linguistic practice is never neutral since one's native culture is always present in one's use and interpretation of a FL. This provides food for thought since if each new utterance reflects the cultural identity of the speaker, then we are, in fact, highlighting the link between culture, identity and language. Hence, rather than lose an identity we should, perhaps, shift the discussion to account for the emergence of a new hybrid identity—the transnational identity—which combines knowledge from both the source culture and the target culture to function in a transnational context.

This chapter has also considered how education authorities are implementing language curricula which have been proposed by the European Union and the COE in order to promote linguistic and cultural diversity. Developments in FLT include the consideration of culture in FL learning, content-based approaches to FLT and the use of ICT tools in the classroom to offer a broader scope for language study. Even so, it must be argued that the acquisition of English, either as ESL or EFL in a non-native English-

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speaking community, is largely dependent on the political landscape of the time and, as a result of this, the significance given to it by the education authorities.

The following chapter is dedicated to the cultural dimension of FLT and, in particular, ELT. The 1990s witnessed a rise in communicative approaches to FLT as a result of importance being given to the communicative nature of language learning. This culminated in a call to pay more attention to the sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of FLT and became known as “the cultural turn”. Thus, as we shall see, scholars and educators turned their attention to the description and implementation of frameworks aimed at developing intercultural and transcultural communication in the FL class.

CHAPTER 3

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF ELT: FROM INTERCULTURAL TO TRANSCULTURAL

INTRODUCTION

Statements emphasising the close relation of language and culture were prolific in the 1990s (Buttjes & Byram, 1991; Byram et al., 1994; Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000). The connection between the two encouraged a pedagogical approach which put emphasis on the comparison of the native culture and the target culture, hence forging comparisons between “them” and “us”. The 1990s also witnessed a flurry of language and culture terminology, and concepts such as “the intercultural speaker” or “mediator” (Byram et al., 1994) were developed by many scholars. The perspective of languages being culture-bound (Valdes, 1986) was another area of discussion for scholars, especially with the rise of EIL. However, the majority of work produced during this time essentially defended the bond between language and culture. As Doyé (1996: 105) declares:

The very nature of language forbids the separation of language from culture. If language is considered as a system of signs, and signs are characterised by the fact that they are units of form and meaning, it is impossible to learn a language by simply acquiring the forms without their context. And as the context of a language is always culture bound, any reasonable foreign-language teaching cannot but include the study of culture from which the language stems.

The following definition of “culture”, proposed by UNESCO as part of their universal declaration on cultural diversity on 21st November, 2001, is a useful definition that embraces a fairly straightforward, yet holistic, view:

Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society or social group, and it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Nevertheless, in spite of the definition above, cultures are seen as complex structures and, according to Edward Said, “all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic” (1993: xxix). Even so, there are still many aspects of culture that define a particular group or society. As Storey comments: “[t]o share a culture [...] is to

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interpret the world” (2006: 68) and, therefore, the language used to describe a particular view of the world is closely linked to a particular culture. For this reason we cannot only understand culture as a particular element (such as a piece of art or a novel) but we have to understand it as a process or as its significance as a meaningful object within a specific context. For example, one of the most important cultural elements of a society is the use of a specific language between its members.

If we understand language as a way of constructing maps of meaning, then we have to understand that language is a combination of signs which, in turn, somehow help to construct our social reality; in other words, language can be seen as “a resource that ‘lends form’ to ourselves and our world” (Barker, 2003: 228). This is part of the current dilemma within EIL at present. If English is now spoken by people with very different cultural backgrounds, then the English language spoken by non-native speakers will be adapted to their specific cultural maps of meanings. For this reason, many linguists and teachers of EFL feel that EIL cannot continue to be connected to any specific culture, but rather that speakers should be able to mould the language to their needs in order to express their particular reality. Various scholars point out that EIL has become increasingly depoliticised and culturally neutralised as it becomes alienated from its native-speaking community (Buttjes, 1991; McKay, 2002; Schmitt & Marsden, 2006). Nevertheless, culture, language, and meaning are constantly changing and evolving due to the interaction between the three, whether it is within the native culture paradigm or not. This highlights the adaptability of language to any context.

Bearing in mind the complex nature of culture, Pennycook (1994) alerts us to be careful with taking a simplistic view to the spread of ELT and emphasises the need for a more detailed approach to ELT within education theory, especially concerning the training of ELT teachers and the development of appropriate ELT materials (1994: 12-13). The 1980s and 1990s saw the beginnings of empirical research into the cultural dimension of language teaching which included research on student attitudes and the cultural and social content of text-books (Risager, 2007: 76). The COE published a series of articles, written by van Ek between 1986 and 1987, which touched on the themes of different competencies within language learning. The theme of cultural competence was taken up by Melde (1987), Meyer (1991) and later Brøgger (1992). For example, Meyer (1991: 142-143) divides cultural competence into levels of intercultural performance:

1. Monocultural (the learner uses native culture as a basis for cultural understanding);
2. Intercultural (the learner is able to understand the differences between native and foreign culture and “stands between cultures”); and
3. Transcultural (the learner is able to resolve cultural problems by fully understanding the different cultural values of individual cultures, which allows the learner to “stand above his own and the foreign culture”).

Kramersch (1993) proposes that what students in fact need to do when learning about a new culture is to establish a “sphere of interculturality”. Within this sphere of learning, students have the opportunity to reach an understanding of cultural differences and recognise how these differences may affect communication. After all, an important feature of interculturality is that becoming culturally competent does not mean that one needs to change one’s own cultural norms by accepting the cultural norms of the new culture but that one should understand why these differences exist and be able to use this knowledge to communicate efficiently (McKay, 2002).

In the following section (3.1), theoretical frameworks for the inclusion of culture in FL learning methodologies will be discussed, placing emphasis on the ideas and concepts contributed by Byram (1991, 1997), Kramersch (1993, 1998) and McKay (2002). Essentially, these scholars based their proposals on how they defined and interpreted the concept “cultural competence” with regard to EIL/EFL. The section will also look at some proposals for the acquisition of transcultural competence and the role played by critical transcultural pedagogy in achieving it. Section 3.2 will discuss how the cultural dimension of FLT/ELT has been implemented in the classroom over recent decades and, finally, some conclusions of the chapter will be presented in Section 3.3.

3.1 FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN FLT/ELT

Traditionally, cultural content in FL learning has been largely dependent on the course-book. Many teachers rely on the material provided by the publishers since they may have little or no first-hand experience of an English-speaking culture. The last decade

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has seen a revolution in the style and content of course-books for EFL. Publishers, always on the lookout for providing something new, have joined the band wagon or “cultural turn” and have added a more cultural dimension to course-books. An excellent example of such a course-book is *Voices 3* (McBeth, 2009). This course-book includes extra units dedicated to culture whilst at the same time each unit is cross-curricular orientated. In more recent times the Internet has also provided teachers with new and innovative ways of including the cultural dimension in their courses. Very often, a course-book may include a CD with extra cultural material or lists of Internet pages which provide cultural information.

Evaluative research on English course-books also concludes that publishers and educators are definitely moving towards a more cultural approach to language learning. Nevertheless, ELT books published in the USA or UK present cultural texts which generally promote the cultures associated with English-speaking countries (Jacob, 2011; Mendéz García, 2000) and have a tendency to neglect third world cultures (Wandel, 2003). Course-books are still, undoubtedly, a fundamental tool for presenting the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries, but they are perhaps becoming less important since most of the cultural information is present in our students’ daily lives and is an inherent part of their own culture, especially in western cultures (Jacob, 2011).

Thus, cultural knowledge is not restricted to the FL classroom, but it is a much more complex phenomenon. In the case of English, we can see that the culture of English-speaking countries is ever-present in the daily lives of many Europeans, but unfortunately very often what is represented produces stereotypical knowledge of the culture. Mariet (1991) suggests that teachers should not be influenced by these stereotypical representations of national cultures and, when teaching cultural aspects, they should keep in mind that “true” interculturality does not only mean having knowledge of another culture, but also understanding and accepting differences between cultures. Baker (2003) also stresses that we should differentiate between stereotypes, which he defines as being fixed and not open to change, and generalisations, which he defines as flexible and which evolve over time with our experience of them.

Apart from the cultural information provided by the teacher and the course-book, the most common context for the learning of intercultural competence, outside the EFL classroom, has been the “study abroad” or “stay abroad” experience (Alred, 1998; Byram & Feng, 2006). This is promoted as being essential for the improvement of learners’ linguistic abilities, especially the oral/aural skills, and for the development of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence (DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Regan et al., 2009).

Furthermore, various studies have linked the impact that a stay abroad trip may have on a learner’s willingness to communicate (WTC). WTC was originally researched within the context of L1 communication and it dwelt on the “probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so” (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 545). WTC was essentially seen as a personality trait but MacIntyre (1994) extended the variables to include situational aspects. He concluded that, although a combination of anxiety towards communication and one’s perceived communicative competence were the principal variables that influenced WTC, and that these were further affected by introversion and self-esteem, the situation itself was also a factor worth considering. He conceived these situations in terms of the degree of confidence between speakers, the number of people present and the topic. Nevertheless, he stressed that the language used was the “most dramatic” variable (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 546).

WTC has been an important area of recent study for Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008), who draw on work by MacIntyre (1994), MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and MacIntyre et al. (1998). Research on opportunities to practise English in a stay abroad experience have led Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) to suggest that study abroad students produce far better results than stay-home students when TOEFL scores, international posture and L2 WTC tests are analysed. Yashima and Zenuk’s research conclude that “[t]he variables that directly influenced WTC in a L2 were L2 communication confidence and international posture” (2008: 63). These results suggest that cultural contact is beneficial to language learners in terms of providing them with the strategies which enable them to perceive and project a transcultural understanding of the “other”, as their perspective of the world transcends the national to the transnational.

Nevertheless, one of the principal concerns within ELT is how culture is dealt with in order to maintain equilibrium between native cultures and the target culture, especially at a time when notions such as a “global village” and “EIL” are a cause for concern for many communities. One of the suggestions is to use ELT methodologies which allow students to compare native cultures and target cultures. However, we must be careful with how this is used in the language class since, although students’ awareness in difference is being fostered by this method, it does not necessarily mean that students are able to function in cross-cultural situations (Guest, 2002; Meyer, 1991). Buttjes (1991: 13) also considers that a result of cross-cultural language learning could be that learners question native cultural loyalties.

3.1.1 Intercultural competence and ELT

Within the field of FL learning in Europe, the most widely cited conceptual framework for intercultural learning has been put forward by Byram and various colleagues (Byram, 1989; Byram et al., 1991b, Byram & Zarate, 1997). At the heart of Byram’s framework is communicative competence, a term which was introduced by Hymes (1974) in communicative language teaching, but was only developed in part —the sociolinguistic area, and not the sociocultural area. Hymes himself was not writing for the FL profession and so he did not pay too much attention to cross-cultural communication (Byram, 1997). It was Canale and Swain (1989) (USA) and van Ek (1986) (Europe) who interpreted the concept for FL learning. In 1986, van Ek presented a framework for comprehensive FL learning objectives. His model of communicative ability comprises six competences: linguistic competence; sociolinguistic competence; discourse competence; strategic competence; sociocultural competence; and social competence (1986: 33).

At this point in time, the sociocultural competence area was not well developed and it was not until a new version of the *Threshold Level* (van Ek & Trim, 1991) appeared that some minimal information on possible content was introduced. Nevertheless, this model was not beyond criticism. As a result, Byram was invited to comment on the proposal made by van Ek and, along with colleague Genevieve Zarate (1994), he wrote a paper to clarify issues involving sociocultural competence. In this paper they developed the

concept of “intercultural competence” (IC), thus expanding the concept of cultural competence by basing it on the concept of the “intercultural speaker”. During the 1990s transnational workshops were organised by the COE to strengthen the project Language Learning for European Citizenship. In 1996 the COE published two fundamental documents for the consolidation of intercultural methodologies. The principal document was entitled *Modern Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment: A Common European Framework of Reference*, and accompanying this framework was *The European Language Portfolio* (COE, 1996). The framework of reference for language learning and teaching thus updated the model proposed by van Ek and Trim in 1991. As a result of the various workshops, Byram (1997) developed his framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This included four competences — linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural— the latter of which was further divided into the five *savoirs*). Table 2 below summarises this framework.

Based on this conceptual framework, Byram (1997: 71) defines ICC as the ability to be:

[A]ble 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 culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately – sociolinguistic and discourse competence – and their awareness of the specific meaning, values and connotations of the language. They also have a basis for acquiring new languages and cultural understandings as a consequence of the skills they have acquired in the first.

With this definition Byram makes a distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. He applies the former to the context of the communicative experience with a non-native speaker of one’s own language. It is only in the latter that the speaker uses a FL. The above definition therefore strives to include a more open approach to communication, although the definition still does not specify that the language spoken may be foreign to both speakers. This in itself is sufficient evidence that there is still a need for more specific research in the context of EIL which is situated within a transcultural and translingual framework.

Table 2 Byram's (1997) conceptualisation of ICC

Components		Description
Linguistic competence		The ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language (1997: 48).
Sociolinguistic competence		The ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor — whether native speaker or not — meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor (1997:48).
Discourse competence		The ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologues or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes (1997: 48).
Intercultural competence <i>5 savoirs</i>	Attitudes	Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (1997: 50).
	Knowledge	Knowledge of social groups and their practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (1997: 51).
	Skills of interpreting and relating	Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own (1997: 52).
	Skills of discovering and interacting	Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (1997: 52).
	Critical cultural awareness/ political education	An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (1997: 53).

Nevertheless, in the last chapter of Byram's seminal work (1997) he does approach the issue of ICC in the context of its use with a lingua franca and proposes the possibility of providing a different definition for ICC in connection with EIL or ELF: "[t]here is one issue which requires further discussion: the question of ICC and the use of a language as a lingua franca [...] [a] concrete formulation whether ICC in Elf should be defined differently" (1997: 112). In defence of his framework, he feels that it could be applied equally to the NS/NNS context and to the NNS/NNS context. The only area of his

framework which would possibly cause conflict would be the knowledge *savoir*, which would not essentially need to concentrate on the culture associated with the FL, in this case the cultures of English-speaking countries. However, he also stresses that replacing the FL culture context for one's own culture would not encourage the development of a critical perspective. One suggestion he makes would be to study content subjects through the medium of English, in other words, CLIL. A subject such as history offers the possibility to compare the national with the international and thus would provide learners with the opportunities to study specific historical moments from different cultural perspectives (Byram, 1997).

3.1.2 EIL and transcultural competence

The fact that frameworks for intercultural competence were essentially developed for the FL classroom means that they were often discussed in terms of acquiring the target culture of the FL being learnt. Despite positive developments in the teaching of culture in ELT, the current status of EIL calls for a remodelling of the ICC intercultural paradigm (Byram, 1997), since, as he himself admits, it lacks the transcultural context of use of EIL and does not contemplate the notion of a transnational identity, as defined in Chapter 1. Furthermore, he makes some suggestions on how this can be achieved. This challenge has been taken up by various scholars, some of which will be discussed below.

One framework which takes into account issues surrounding EIL and transnational identity has been proposed by Baker (2009). Firstly, he concentrates on the concept of intercultural awareness rather than competence and, secondly, the practical context is the use of EIL in a local and global context. He believes that, by developing specific intercultural awareness skills, intercultural communication will be a more positive experience due to higher levels of intercultural competence. He records instances of intercultural communication between international and local students studying in a Thai university, where EIL is the academic medium. Baker concentrates on how students develop an awareness of cultural differences and how this may affect their use of English in a local and a global environment. By centring on (what he refers to as) intercultural awareness, he is able to develop a framework for intercultural learning

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based on understanding how culture and language interrelate in the context of English language use between non-native English language speakers. Baker also suggests twelve components of intercultural awareness that should act as a base for the development of intercultural competence when using EIL:

1. An awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values, should lead to:
 2. An awareness of the role of culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
 3. An awareness of our own culturally induced behaviour, values and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
 4. An awareness of others' culturally induced behaviour, values and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
 5. An awareness of the relative nature of cultural norms;
 6. An awareness that cultural understanding is provisional and open to revision;
 7. An awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping.
 8. An awareness of individuals as members of many social grouping including cultural ones;
 9. A detailed awareness of common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures;
 10. An awareness of culturally based frames of reference, forms and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
 11. An awareness that initial interaction in intercultural communication may be based on cultural stereotypes or generalisations but an ability to move beyond this through:
 12. A capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.
- (Baker, 2009: 88-89)

Essentially, what Baker is proposing is a framework for transcultural awareness since he is anticipating the use of EIL between non-native speakers of English. Baker, in effect, builds on Byram's concept of critical cultural awareness, one of his five *savoirs*, by explicitly highlighting the features needed for a transcultural approach to ELT.

Levy (2007) has also proposed a pedagogical framework which concentrates on ways of using culture in the language classroom, and which also seems appropriate for a transcultural approach to ELT. He recognises five qualities of culture which he regards as necessary in order “to successfully develop elements of a pedagogy, approach or methodology” (2007: 109) for cultural education. Levy is very careful to present an approach which accounts for the multifaceted nature and the complexity of culture. The five qualities or elements which he highlights include many of the basic assumptions we know about culture. His five qualities (2007: 105-110), which are summarised below, are also presented as a continuum of acquired knowledge, although they are also to be understood as overlapping:

1. Culture as elemental – Levy stresses that the fact we have grown up in a specific cultural environment may cause one to overlook how one’s own culture shapes one’s vision of the world. In this first stage, students would need to learn about their own culture in order to open up their minds to difference and otherness;
2. Culture as relative – the fact that culture is not absolute may cause problems when a contrastive approach to culture learning is implemented. Generalisations may have some value but there may be a tendency to over generalise. In order to remedy this, the learner should be an active participant and thus perceive culture as more dynamic and engaging;
3. Culture as group membership – this facet involves knowledge of different aspects of group membership and how groups take on specific cultural identities and how groups interact with each other. It also pays specific attention to how language is employed between distinct groups to negotiate meaning;
4. Culture as contested – as one becomes more culturally knowledgeable one may quite naturally begin to contest some of one’s cultural beliefs, values and ideas as well as those of the new culture;

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5. Culture as individual (variable and multiple) – any interpretation of culture depends on one's individual knowledge which may influence the interpretation of other cultures.

Likewise, Wandel (2003) proposes an approach which could be considered transcultural. He feels that, when considering English as a world language, there are two major shifts within language teaching that need to be attended to. The first is that the geographical scope should include all L1 English-speaking countries and, secondly, the use of ELF implicitly implies the need to pay more attention to the development of intercultural sensitivity. He therefore calls for the teaching of more specific tools in order to progress from a monocultural outlook to an intercultural or transcultural perspective. He suggests working on: 1) discussion of cultural stereotypes; 2) attitudes and behaviours; and 3) empathy.

Although she does not propose a specific framework for the teaching of EFL, Ting-Toomey (1999: 272) identifies seven important skills for transcultural competency:

1. Tolerance of ambiguity – the ability to meet new situations with mindfulness.
2. Open-mindedness – the ability to respond to cultural others in non-evaluative ways.
3. Flexibility – the ability to shift frame of reference.
4. Respectfulness – the ability to show respect and positive regard for another person.
5. Adaptability – the ability to adapt appropriately to particular situations.
6. Sensitivity – the ability to convey empathy verbally and nonverbally.
7. Creativity – the ability to engage in divergent as well as systems-level thinking.

Lastly, an interesting perspective was put forward by Slimbach (2005) in his article “The transcultural journey” and his more recent publication *Becoming world-wise: a guide to global learning* (Slimbach, 2010). According to this scholar, “transculturalism is rooted in the quest to define shared interests and common values across cultural and national borders” (Slimbach, 2005: 206). Slimbach reflects on the fact that the “transcultural” era is upon us and that movement across borders is done with relative

freedom. He states that “[t]oday, who we are (by birth) and where we are (by choice) is not as relevant as it once was. More persons than ever before are pursuing lives that link the local and the global” (2005: 205). In effect, they are leading transcultural lives and are taking on transnational identities.

Slimbach (2005: 206-207) presents ten propositions for achieving transcultural competence. Each proposition is accompanied by a set of more specific learner competencies, all of which, he states, can roughly be divided into the following six categories:

1. Perspective consciousness: the ability to question constantly the source of one’s cultural assumptions and ethical judgements, leading to the habit of seeing things through the minds and hearts of others;
2. Ethnographic skills: the ability to observe carefully social behaviour, manage stress, and establish friendships across cultures, while exploring issues of global significance, documenting learning, and analyzing data using relevant concepts;
3. Global awareness: a basic awareness of transcultural conditions and systems, ideologies and institutions, affecting the quality of life of human and non-human populations, along with the choices confronting individuals and nations;
4. World learning: direct experience with contrasting political histories, family lifestyles, social groups, arts, religions, and cultural orientations based on extensive, immersed interaction within non-English speaking, non-American environments;
5. Foreign language proficiency: a threshold-level facility in the spoken, non-verbal, and written communication system used by members of at least one other culture;
6. Affective development: the capacity to demonstrate personal qualities and standards “of the heart” (e.g., empathy, inquisitiveness, initiative, flexibility, humility, sincerity, gentleness, justice, and joy) within specific intercultural contexts in which one is living and learning.

In order to develop such competences, Slimbach (2005) highlights the need to take the learner beyond the traditional classroom context of learning and into the real world of communication. By nurturing a contemporary approach to understanding the world through the eyes of the “self” and of the “other”, the author feels that the language learner will progress to a state of transcultural competence.

These proposals for transcultural competence share many aspects, the most salient being the stress on intercultural sensitivity, empathy, adaptability and global awareness. These

issues are also important factors for the development of transnational understanding, as we shall see in the following section.

3.1.3 Working towards transcultural understanding through critical transcultural pedagogy

So far in this dissertation we have spoken of transcultural competence and transnational identities as forming the nucleus for successful transcultural communication. We have used these terms in order to avoid referring to other labels such as “European” or “world citizenship”, which is, nevertheless, often the preferred terminology when discussing these concepts within the realm of FL education. Welsch’s conceptualisation of transculturality (1999, see Chapter 1) also reflected the concept of world citizenship. He described today’s cultural panorama at the macro- and micro-level. At the macro-level transculturality is seen as:

1. “A consequence of inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures”;
2. A place where “lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures and the same problems and states of consciousness appear in cultures once considered to be fundamentally different”. For example, issues concerning “human rights”, the “feminist movement” or “ecological awareness” are essentially dealt with as global issues which concern the world as a whole;
3. Being “characterised by hybridization”. Cultural production has become global, especially when we consider the fact that communication technology is able to make identical information available all over the world.

(Welsch, 1999: 197-198)

At the micro-level Welsch highlights the fact that we are, in the main, “cultural hybrids” due to our “multiple cultural connexions” (Welsch, 1999: 199). A transcultural identity is, therefore, the result of transcultural formation, and is a cultural identity which is not exclusively constrained by nationality.

In conclusion, transculturality has firm connections with the “global”, albeit in the sense of diversity and hybridisation rather than homogenisation. Notwithstanding, it also manages to retain values of individuality within the framework of “global”. For this reason, and in spite of their potentially controversial nature, it is important to consider the concepts of European, world or international citizenship as part and parcel of a transcultural approach to ELT. Major advances in this area of education came with Starkey’s work on the concepts of world citizenship and a global education in connection with FLT. Starkey (1991a, 1991b), along with Osler & Starkey (2005) and Osler et al., (1996), has written and edited numerous books and articles with the principal aim of pursuing the development of FLT within the context of the political sciences. This scholar is also the co-author of a textbook for learning French (Aplin et al., 1985) which uses global themes to demonstrate links between France and the rest of the world, thus encouraging a critical evaluation of the issues discussed.

In more recent work, Byram (2008) has also shifted his focus to the concept of European citizenship. Byram reviews recent developments in education by revising FL education policies and issues regarding FL curriculum planning and assessment. By referring to socialisation and social identity theories he develops the concept of national and international identities as related to FL learning. Lastly, he proposes a framework for political and FL education, an essential element of knowledge required for intercultural citizenship.

Byram feels that research has shown that language learning that promotes cultural linguistic competence does not automatically lead speakers to respect or better understand “others” as the EU had hoped (Byram et al., 1991a). This suggests that change in language learning pedagogy is required and still more empirical work into the pedagogy of culture in language learning is needed in order to comprehend and establish the necessary changes (Byram, 2008: 140-141).

Language and culture education has the principal aim of “developing a better understanding of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and a more refined affective capacity for a desirable relationship to ‘otherness’” (Byram, 2008: 145). Byram feels that a solid philosophical base is needed, which Guilherme (2002) provides. This naturally leads us to the discussion of the political context of FL acquisition. Within a framework of FL learning

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in education, the responsibility of providing this political dimension falls largely on the FL teacher. The principal areas to be considered important by Guilherme (2002: 121-124) are: 1) the interaction between self and other; 2) the cultural dimension; the educational dimension; the ethical dimension; and the political dimension.

An approach to tackling this list would be through the development of the notion of critical intercultural awareness in learners in order to encourage learners “to question, to analyse, to evaluate and, potentially, to take action, to be active citizens” (Byram, 2008: 146). This approach has also been suggested by Osler and Vincent (2002, in Osler & Starkey, 2005: 23) who state that:

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship must necessarily be about enabling learners to make connections between their immediate contexts and the global context; it encompasses citizenship learning as a whole. It implies a broader understanding of national identity; it requires recognition that British identity, for example, may be experienced differently by different people. It also implies recognition of our common humanity and a sense of solidarity with others.

However, such an approach implies that certain competences are needed in order to behave in an acceptable way “in and across political entities, at whatever level” (Byram, 2008: 157). Byram still prefers the label “intercultural citizenship”, since it focuses on these competences rather than identity and combines language education with political education (Byram, 2008). He warns that the term “political education” may have negative connotations, especially in Anglophone countries, since in the UK education for citizenship is a fairly recent innovation.

Jongewaard’s (2001) transcultural unification theory links the concept of transcultural competence with an education for global citizenship. His theory of multiculturalism, global education and global citizenship encompasses many of the ideas proposed by Byram (2008) and Osler and Starkey (2005). Jongewaard’s theoretical framework is based on six cultural universals which he stresses are essential characteristics of cross-cultural communication and citizenship: 1) cross-cultural adaptability; 2) geographical global awareness; 3) contextual global awareness; 4) empathetic activism; 5) shared values; and 6) transcultural awareness (Jongewaard, 2001: 5). Jongewaard’s framework

is presented as a set of concentric circles, which grow as a continuum from the personal and local to the regional and national and finally to the international, and correspond to the intracultural “I” stage, the intercultural “we” stage and the transcultural “everybody” stage. In this way he manages to combine developmental stages with environmental interactions. Although Jongewaard describes research within the USA and does not base his research within the FL paradigm, his approach could easily be adapted to the ELT context.

Jongewaard’s characteristics of geographical and contextual awareness appear to be based on Corbitt’s Global Awareness Profile (GAP) (1998). In the GAP questionnaire Corbitt (1998) assesses global awareness with 126 questions on six geographic regions and in six areas of knowledge: 1) environment (vegetation, animals, environment changes and catastrophes, natural resources, etc.); 2) culture (languages, rituals, norms of behaviour, beliefs, etc.); 3) politics (people in power, influential political persons, major political events and conflicts and wars); 4) geography (cities, states, important sights and structures, etc.); 5) religion (personalities, symbols, rituals, sacred sites, etc.); and 6) socio-economic (employment, poverty/wealth, industry, social organisation, etc.). It also includes twelve questions concerning broader global issues such as technology and global culture (i.e. sports and entertainment). This instrument is often used in combination with a series of other self-report instruments which assess intercultural adaptability and sensitivity.

Risager (2007: 227), from a transnational perspective, lists ten competence areas which she deems necessary for the acquisition of competence as a “world citizen”. She is concerned with working towards a transnational paradigm. By “national” she refers to the traditional approach to FLT which involves a NS teacher and places emphasis on attaining NS competence in a linguistic and cultural context. A transnational approach recognises the force of transnational flows and, thus, respects the proficiency of NNS teachers and allows for national *and* international discourse of the language being studied (Risager, 2007). Her framework includes linguistic and cultural competences and resources:

1. Linguistic (linguastructural) competence.
2. Languacultural competences and resources: semantics and pragmatics.

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3. Languacultural competences and resources: poetics.
4. Language cultural competences and resources: linguistic identity.
5. Translation and interpretation.
6. Interpreting texts (discourses) and media products in a broad sense.
7. Use of ethnographic methods.
8. Transnational cooperation.
9. Knowledge of language and critical language awareness, also as a world citizen.
10. Knowledge of culture and society and critical cultural awareness, also as a world citizen.

(Risager, 2007: 227).

Risager makes specific reference to the notions of critical language awareness and critical cultural awareness in her framework, corroborating the model proposed by Guilherme above (2002). Dasli (2011) is also concerned with the notion of “critical transcultural language pedagogy”. Although she agrees that the EIL classroom is an ideal location for students to develop critical transcultural awareness of the world in which they live, both in their immediate context and the broader context of the “other”, she is also critical of the possible syllogistic side effects which may overshadow their perceptions. In her words:

Even when syllogism is perceived as an act of critical thinking during which subjects reflect and notionally oppose injustice, human suffering and exploitation, it remains a partial response to public democratic culture if differences are not articulated in practice.

(Dasli, 2011: 31)

Dasli (2011) draws on Habermas’s theory of communicative action to explain how students may overcome syllogistic constraints in communication. Habermas’s basic tenet was based upon his belief in the need of “undistorted communication” as a means of “furthering emancipation from ideological delusions” (Ingram, 2010: 7). For Habermas, this is an essential concept for the construction of an open and democratic society. Dasli suggests that material provided for debate in civilisation education may not allow students the freedom to develop their own critical voice and that they need to be given the opportunities to experience “‘citizenship-as-practice’ – in order to understand the ways their lives are implicated in a wider cultural, social, political and

economic order” (Dasli, 2011: 30). She recommends the use of critical incident scenarios in the language classroom, whereby students could adopt different roles in discussions which investigate the expression of “otherness”. In this way, she feels that students will be able to analyse their own reactions to specific problem and understand the role their identities play in such reactions (Dasli, 2011: 33). She suggests that this will prepare students for more realistic intercultural challenges. It may, in fact, help in the process of transforming “passive” citizens (Weller, 2007) into citizens with their own spontaneous critical voices.

Class discussions also contribute to the process of becoming critically aware of the cultural differences and similarities of the peoples that make up this world we are a part of. Nevertheless, it is not always an easy feat in the classroom. Bass (1998) comments on how teachers frequently lament the lack of participation in class when they provide the students with opportunities to develop their “own interrogative stance toward material or look at a document or issue or event critically on their own” (1998: 2-3).

Despite the fact that there is still little evidence of research that contemplates a transcultural approach to the learning of English, various scholars have activated teaching techniques which consider the inclusion of culture on a more generic level in order to broaden cultural outlooks and perspectives (Byram et al. 1991; Jones, 1995, 2000; Grant, 2006). The following section cites some examples of recent research projects which, despite not taking a wholly transcultural approach to communication (in our definition and expectations of the term), show signs of moving in this direction.

3.2 THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF FLT/ELT IN PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

One of the first major projects of the 1990s concerning the cultural dimension of FLT was the Durham project, which was developed within the research of Byram et al. (1991a). Following Byram’s interest in developing an adequate didactic for the teaching of FLs, fostering tertiary socialisation skills and broadening cultural horizons, he and his colleagues embarked on a project which aimed to collect data on students’ attitudes and perceptions of the French and French culture. The team concentrated on collecting

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data concerning attitudes (levels of ethnocentricity), perceptions (interviews to assess knowledge of the foreign culture), teaching (classroom observations and teacher interviews) and extra-school experiences (a questionnaire on the experience of foreign people). Although the research design was not longitudinal due to time and resources, the team compared approximately two hundred primary school students (no French) with two hundred secondary school students (1-3 years of French tuition) in order to create a before and after effect. The primary school participants were elected from schools whose students generally continued their education in the secondary schools also participating in the research. Results showed that external factors, rather than what is learnt from the language learning environment, are more influential than expected. Attitudes towards the foreign culture did not improve and the researchers concluded that rather than explicitly teach the foreign culture, it would be more productive to teach ethnographic processes of analysis and foster visits to the foreign country as ways of improving students' perceptions of the "other".

As a result of this project, researchers began to concentrate on concrete aspects of intercultural communicative competence. One such project (Jones, 2000) involved researching cultural identity from two perspectives: 1) one's personal understanding of whom one is, and 2) the perspective of how one is seen by the "other". This project involved a class of 14-year-old secondary school students from the UK and a similar class from a secondary school in Bulgaria. The students exchanged shoeboxes which contained items representing their cultural identity and commented on the contents. In order to come to a consensus on the items to send, the students themselves initiated a process of defining their own cultural identities, as a group and as individuals. This also led them to consider the stereotypes that not only others had of the British, but those that they also relied on at first. Commenting on the results of similar intercultural projects between British school children and children from a variety of countries, Jones (2000) highlighted the fact that the students became aware of a mutual global culture and manifested their interest in the desire to belong to that culture.

A similar approach was taken by Morgan and Cain (2000). Like Jones (1995), they focused on developing intercultural competence taking into account the difficulty for face-to-face communication. They described an international partnership project which took place between British and French fourteen-year-old schoolchildren. Based on

previous work by Byram and Morgan (1994) that had shown how French and British children's understanding of law and order varied considerably, this project differed from Jones' (1995) in that the pupils had to create authentic material, which portrayed their knowledge of law and order in their country. The use of specifically written or designed texts meant that there was a certain degree of cross-cultural dialogue taking place. Similarly to Jones' project, the pupils had to first explore their native culture in order to create the materials, and were then able to compare their cultural context of law and order with that of the French.

Roberts et al. (2001) looked at the development of intercultural competence using an ethnographic approach. The ethnographer essentially lives with a group of people and his/her observations provide a rich description of the group's behaviour. Transferred to the context of FL teaching, this suggests learning by direct contact and integration with the target language in order to understand FL learning as a social practice. Roberts et al. (2001) report on The Ealing Ethnographic Project, which was developed for BA degree students at London's Thames Valley University. Advanced language students had to spend one year abroad to perfect language skills as a condition for their degree. Students involved in the project participated previously in a course which supplied them with basic ethnographic tools and during their stay abroad they collected observations of a specific subject such as food or religion. The principal conclusion of the project was that "language and cultural learning are not separate areas of learning: cultural learning *is* language learning, and vice versa" (Roberts et al., 2001: 5).

The above-mentioned examples put intercultural competence at the centre of their research and, even though, in all three cases, the work was part of their FL class, the discussions all took place in the participants' native languages. We move on to consider next the use of ICT as a tool for communication in the FL classroom.

CMC research concerning the use of email in FLT has been widely documented in Spain (e.g. Canga Alonso, 2006; Trenchs Parera, 1998). One of the most prolific scholars in the use of ICT in the language classroom context in Spain is Robert O'Dowd, who has published various articles on on-line technologies in FL education with specific attention being paid to email exchanges or the "email tandem" (O'Dowd 2003, 2007a, 2007b). O'Dowd (2003) reports on a project of email exchanges between

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his Spanish EFL students in Leon, Spain, and a group of Spanish FL students in London, UK. O'Dowd's principal aim was to identify what characteristics of email exchanges lead to intercultural learning. His analysis involved the identification of elements which influenced the attitudes that learners had or were developing towards their target and home cultures. Five students from each class were paired and during the time span of one year they corresponded with their partners. The participants were given a series of tasks to perform. They involved such exercises as writing an introductory email, explaining idioms, or reporting back on a visit to a tourist shop in their home town. Students wrote in the target language, i.e. the Spanish students wrote in English and the English in Spanish. Students were also asked to write a section in their native language where they should correct mistakes made by their partner in the previous exercise.

O'Dowd's (2003) tasks were specifically chosen to reflect the five components of Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence (*5 savoirs*), which aimed to develop intercultural awareness in order to acquire intercultural competence. The results identified three characteristics that are important for successful intercultural learning in email exchanges of this kind: 1) acceptance of one's own culture by one's partner; 2) the development of distancing; and 3) dialogic interaction.

Results showed that, by looking at the context of their home culture through the comments made by their email partners, an understanding of how their culture is seen from another perspective was nurtured. However, this only happened when the exchange functioned correctly. When the email exchange did not establish a successful relationship with the partner, then the student did not progress and negative cultural stereotypes appeared to be reinforced.

Another significant project in the field of ICT and FLT was the LEVERAGE project (LEVERAGE, 1999). This was a three-year project, partially funded by the European Commission, which ran from 1996 to 1999. The principal aim was to demonstrate the positive role of multimedia technology in supporting the needs of language learners in today's digital world. The project united FL students from three universities in the UK, France and Spain by means of multi-channel ISDN links. The students were put into bilingual groups and had one hour of scheduled video-conferencing per week from

October to December in 1998. They were asked to choose a topic from a list given on the LEVERAGE systems web page and to prepare and present an oral presentation as well as a written report. The LEVERAGE systems web page was equipped with links to web resources for the specific topics. Feedback from the students showed that they found the experience of working with native speakers of their target language very rewarding and emphasised the importance of hearing correct pronunciation and dialogic structures, the method of instant corrections, and the fact they were not just chatting but working towards a goal with their presentations. They also stressed the importance of videoconferencing as a viable opportunity to participate in a real communicative experience with a native speaker. This was especially important for some of the students in Madrid, of which 70% had never visited an English-speaking country. In conclusion, it was felt that such a network-based learning approach provided an interesting and motivating perspective to FL learning.

A collaborative, web-based, cross-cultural, curricular initiative entitled “Cultura” was the tool used for another research project into intercultural competence (Furstenberg et al., 2001). It was designed to develop the understanding of foreign cultural attitudes, concepts and beliefs as well as ways of interacting and looking at the world in FL students. It focused on French and American culture and took a comparative approach to culture. Learners observed, compared and analysed parallel materials from the two cultures and exchanged viewpoints. The material broached issues relating to work, leisure, nature, race, identity, citizenship, government, amongst others. The methodology implemented reflects the progressive nature of the acquisition of cultural awareness and competence. The use of a web-based platform allowed asynchronous dialogue between the participants from the USA and France, who could ask questions and share observations and points of view. The students were given a post-participation questionnaire and the results from the French students showed that 95% had learnt something about American culture.

Belz (2002) used telecollaborative student partnerships between English learners in Germany and German learners in the USA to explore the socio-institutional dimension of intercultural communication. Students used email, synchronous chat and a web-based information page to engage in a series of tasks designed to improve FL competence and intercultural awareness. The tasks involved the exchange of biographical and university

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(institutional) information, the discussion of a series of texts (written and on film) which dealt with, inter alia, the themes of racism, family, beauty, first love, and finally the construction of a web-site in larger transatlantic groups where they posted an essay based on one of the cultural constructs previously discussed in pairs. Belz's analysis focused on the social and institutional contexts of the virtual learning environment and highlighted the complexity of such communication. She found that success is dependent on a variety of social and institutional affordances and constraints which very often overshadow the pedagogic value of the experience.

Closely related to the empirical work to be discussed in Part II of this dissertation is the report on the use of a blog to promote EFL skills that involve self expression, self evaluation and recognising language progress (Trajtemberg & Yiakoumetti, 2011). Interaction with the teacher and peers in a class blog gave less competent and unmotivated university students in Chile the chance to improve their English language skills and was successful in reviving the students' enthusiasm and self confidence for learning EFL due to its highly collaborative nature.

One recent project, undertaken by Grant (2006), used an Internet web-interface design to link students from the USA with Mexico and Turkey in order to investigate whether participation in a cross-cultural distance education project would affect the development of global awareness. This differs from the previously mentioned projects in that the students were all using English as their language of communication. Nevertheless, all the participants had an advanced level of English since they attended English-speaking international schools and English was the vehicle language for all lessons. The project lasted for eight weeks. Grant used a specific program called *BLACKBOARD*, which had synchronous and asynchronous discussion, files and photo sharing, and video-streaming functions, like the on-line course management system. Students participated in five cultural exchange modules which were posted on the virtual blackboard. The modules were designed to get the students to give and ask for information about themselves their schools, their towns and their countries. Participants were also encouraged to upload videos and photos. The final exchange asked students their impressions on life in the other countries. Grant also adapted Hammer and Bennett's Inventory of Cross-cultural Sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003) to cater for younger participants (the instrument was originally designed for over sixteen-year-olds) in order to assess development in

intercultural awareness. His results showed that on-line projects are not only enjoyable for the participants but that they are a viable means of developing cultural awareness in the younger students.

Although there is evidence that the use of on-line intercultural exchange is a positive experience for FL learning, both teachers and students need to have the necessary technical skills in order to fully benefit from the experience (O'Dowd, 2007b). It has also been suggested that a combination of communication tools (e.g. blog, email, discussion forum or chat) provides the students with opportunities to concentrate on various aspects of culture. This calls for special care to be taken in the planning and execution of exchanges. Students also need to be made aware that the concept of "culture" is much more than facts and figures.

An important project that was implemented in secondary schools in Spain (Mallorca, Santiago de Compostella & Tarragona) was *Spanishkid*. A previous partnership between Great Britain, Sweden and Spain in the 1990s on the project "Eurokids" resulted in the development of various websites (e.g. Britkid, Swedekid and Spanishkid) which were dedicated to providing an educational and cultural resource to schoolchildren. The focus was on the promotion of cultural understanding between children with different cultural backgrounds, a context which is becoming very common nowadays. The *Spanishkid* website (<http://www.spanishkid.org>) was presented in both Spanish (Castilian) and English with the dual focus of being used in both the history lessons (Spanish) and the EFL classes. The students participating in the various studies were in *Bachiller* (Spanish Baccalaureate, aged approximately 16-18), and the various projects using the website were implemented from 2005-2007. The site focused on the lives of nine fictionalised characters, representing different Spanish minority groups. The students were able to choose a character and find out more about his/cultural background through a series of dialogues which centred on issues of racism. The website did not support direct intervention by the students; they could only access the site for information. The results of different areas of the project have been presented in various articles and works (e.g. Gaine & Salazar Noguera, 2006; Salazar Noguera & Juan Garau, 2009). Results showed that the website was a valid space for cultural learning and the participants reported having had a very positive experience.

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Although this website does not provide a direct experience of interaction between participants, it does work on encouraging the students to think about problems such as racism and how stereotypes may affect how different cultural groups are perceived. This will be one of the most important issues taken up in our empirical work in Part II.

The examples of the above-mentioned projects, which contemplate an intercultural approach to FLT, have shown that there is plenty of scope for the development of a transcultural methodology where the use of EIL by non-native speakers is at the heart of the communicative interaction.

3.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the cultural turn in EFL, with special attention being paid to innovations in approaches to teaching intercultural and transcultural competence. This included the exploitation of collaborative tasks between students from different countries and cultures and the incorporation of ICT. Frameworks for intercultural (Byram, 1997; van Ek, 1986) and transcultural (Baker, 2009; Slimbach, 2005) approaches to ELT have also been discussed, along with the theme of transcultural understanding within the framework of critical transcultural pedagogy and education for what is generally known in the literature as international citizenship (Byram, 2008; Dasli, 2011; Guilherme, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Risager, 2007). Central to this discussion was our interpretation of transculturality and how this concept works as a link between the local and the global. In this way, transculturality represents cultural diversity and cultural hybridisation. Culture cuts across national borders and becomes transnational in nature as it becomes available to whoever may choose to consume it and to further transform it as they see fit. From this we can see the development of transnational identities; identities which transcend the national, a notion which will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 4.

By introducing the use of ICT as an alternative to the stay abroad in FL studies we are also contemplating ecological change in teaching practices. This in itself can be classified as a cultural decision since, along with opening up the opportunity for

students to cross national borders in a virtual space, the use of the Internet can also be considered transcultural.

Nevertheless, the implementation of a transcultural approach to ELT that takes into consideration the use of EIL remains substantially unanswered by the examples of classroom practices cited in this chapter. The most recent publications in applied linguistics show a tendency among scholars to opt for methodologies which promote intercultural competence (knowing about another culture), in the context of communication between a NS and a NNS of the FL. With this approach to language teaching, the importance of attaining native-speaker competence both culturally and linguistically speaking is implied. It is felt that, by treating cultural content with a transcultural approach, EFL students will have the opportunities to acquire the necessary communicative and cultural competence, but without compromising their native language or culture. English will be treated as an international language which provides opportunities for communication that is not necessarily bound to traditional FL learning constraints. The discussion on the link between culture, language and identity in the following chapter highlights the need to provide a framework which takes into consideration the use of EIL and the acquisition of transcultural competence.

In conclusion, it seems relevant to suggest that, as a result of the process of globalisation, research into the cultural intricacies of FLT should be developed within a multidisciplinary framework that should account for the mobility and migration of workers, international business and immigration policies and technology, and where English is very often the lingua franca (Chen & Starosta, 2005). In other words, the teaching of EFL in an EIL context should be related to “integration with the global community rather than assimilation with native speakers” (McClelland, 2000: 109) in order to acquire transcultural competence.

CHAPTER 4

CULTURE, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have established the principal issues which are being dealt with in this dissertation. Firstly, that the English language is becoming a tool of communication which is very often used outside the native-culture context. In fact, it is used by people all over the world as an international language. Secondly, this use of English questions the straightforward relationship between language-culture-nation, since its context of use is far more complex and multidirectional. When transferred to the domain of ELT, the fact that English is being used not only in a purely intercultural context (in an NS – NNS relationship where one of the speakers is within the native culture context), but in a transcultural context (where both speakers may be NNSs and neither may be speaking within his NS cultural context) is an important phenomenon which needs to be further investigated. Lastly, the contexts of transculturality and translanguaging have been linked to issues of identity, and the term “transnational identity” was used to capture the essence of a person’s identity when functioning in the transnational/transcultural/translingual context. These concerns were taken up in Chapter 3, where an overview of current frameworks which consider intercultural approaches to FL learning as well as proposals for transcultural learning and aspects of international citizenship were presented. They were discussed within a framework of critical pedagogy (based on critical theory applied to FL pedagogy) and poststructuralist understandings of language and culture as fluid and dynamic.

It has been established that new situations such as cultural diversity at school, in the workplace and in international travel have brought about the need to produce culturally-sensitive citizens of the world. It has been suggested that, in order to become adept communicators, we should acquire transcultural communication competence skills, as is the case with many world leaders (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000; Ting-Toomey, 1999). We can see, then, that the need for learning a FL touches people at all levels of society. Along with learning the language, notions of cultural correctness are also necessary for the communicative experience. Current research needs to concentrate not only on face-to-face communication in NNS-NNS contexts, but also on the constant development of new ICTs, which make it possible for communication to often take place in a virtual third space.

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Even though much effort has been made to reflect the “cultural turn” in ELT (as acknowledged by the amount of literature dealing with intercultural competence), the usage of EIL demands a theoretical framework which is able to describe the transnational context of use of English, taking into account concepts of translingualism and transculturality. This also implies that some of the theories and approaches currently used in SLA up to now may need to be adapted, modified or extended in order to explain such usage of English. For example, Shi (2006) suggests that second language socialisation theory should be combined with intercultural communicative theory to form “intercultural socialisation theory”. As a result, the anthropological approach of socialisation theory, which allows for a rich description of the data, is complemented by tools that measure intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003). Likewise, Duff (2002) has linked notions taken from social constructivist views of language learning (e.g. collaborative learning) with approaches derived from language socialisation theory (e.g. learning by direct experience) in her account of language use and socialisation in an ethnically mixed Canadian secondary school.

Chapter 4 now turns to the discussion of some of the major theoretical approaches which take into account the relationship between culture, identity and language. In order to try to present a clear picture of this relationship, the first part of the chapter will review the concept of culture and how it will be used in this thesis (4.1). Secondly, following an introductory section on identity (4.2), issues concerning culture and identity will be looked at (4.3), paying attention to theories which help us to understand how we become members of a particular society through socialisation and contact. Thirdly, issues of language and culture will be addressed (4.4), and, lastly, the implications of the theoretical discussion to the teaching of EIL and transcultural competence will be outlined (4.5).

4.1 CONCEPTUALISATION OF CULTURE

In Chapter 3 a holistic definition of culture was provided as an initial introduction to the meaning of culture. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that “culture” is one of the most difficult words to define and that definitions differ depending on the academic areas of interest and the theoretical approach used (Bennet, 2005: 63-69; Kuper, 2004: 198-202;

Williams, 1976: 76-82). Barker states that, although “[t]he concept of culture is by definition central to cultural studies [...] there is no ‘correct’ or definitive meaning attached to it” (2003: 57). Keating et al. (2002: 634) also pursue this direction when they consider the “fuzziness” of the word, especially as used by researchers coming from different disciplines.

Danesi and Perron (1999), referring to a study by Kroeber and Kluckhohn published in 1963 which gathered together approximately 150 definitions of culture (now there are as many as 300 according to Faulkner et al., 2006), state that there were two concepts which were most frequently repeated: “(1) culture is a way of life based on some system of shared meanings; and (2) that it is passed on from generation to generation through this very system” (Danesi & Perron, 1999: 22).

The notion a “system of meaning” is often referred to as a “signifying order” and is a central concept in cultural studies today. Danesi and Perron define a signifying order as “the aggregate of the *signs* (words, gestures, visual symbols, etc.), *codes* (language, art, etc.), and *texts* (conversations, compositions, etc.) that a social group creates and utilizes in order to carry out its daily life routines and to plan its activities for the future” (1999: 23). In other words, this system of meaning or signifying order refers to a common knowledge or culture that a group of people interpret in the same way in order to live together in a community. Furthermore, Danesi and Perron define society as “a collectivity of individuals who, although they may not all have the same tribal origins, nevertheless participate, by and large, in the signifying order of the founding or conquering tribe (or tribes)” (1999: 24). In this definition, not only is the idea of knowledge being passed on to the next generation exploited, but Danesi and Perron go further by suggesting that more than one culture may co-exist within a specific society. Nevertheless, these cultures would be hierarchically ordered (Prieto-Arranz, 2012). This also reflects the concept of social hegemony as part of Gramsci’s social-political theory (1971) as discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1).

This interpretation of a system of meaning or signifying order also suggests that all cultures can be perceived as normative, as being on a communal level as proposed by the shared set of traditions, beliefs and values (Ting-Toomey, 1999), and as subjective, that is, on an individual level where each member of the given community decides the

degree of importance to give to these traditions, beliefs and values (Triandis, 2006: 26). Thus, culture can be conceived as both a “manifestation of a group, or community and of an individual’s experience within it, or apart from it” (Levy, 2007: 104-105). Furthermore, this highlights the concept of culture as a social activity and the idea of how people define themselves within specific cultural groups. It also stresses the fact that language is a culturally developed artefact (Swain et al., 2010: xii) used as a tool for providing such discourses of identity (Kramsch, 2000) or, as Joseph remarks, “language provides and creates identity” (2004: 167).

From this brief introduction, language and identity are seen to be the two most salient aspects of culture which necessarily demand further explanation, especially from the SLA perspective. The following sections will take up the concept of culture as a system of meaning as related to identity and language, and will situate this work within a theoretical framework which considers culture, identity and language from a sociopsychological and a sociocultural approach.

4.2 DEFINING IDENTITY

Since “identity” is a central concern within our conceptualisation of transcultural competence, this section will provide information on how this term is understood within the parameters of this dissertation. Departing from our previous definition of culture and society provided by Danesi and Perron (1999) (Section 4.1), cultural identity can be considered as “identification and perceived acceptance into a group that has a shared system of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct” (Collier & Thomas, 1998: 113). One’s cultural identity is, therefore, the “relationship between the individual and members of a particular ethnic group” (Norton, 2006: 2). These cultural groups may, in fact, be of nationality, ethnicity, language, religious beliefs, and sexuality, amongst others. For example, identity is frequently discussed within the sociopolitical framework of nationality. Guibernau characterises national identity in terms of “psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political” attributes (2004: 135). Furthermore, within these characteristics, identity is often perceived as a point on a continuum of cultural dichotomies, thus underscoring the fact they reflect values of difference. Western cultures are essentially classified as individualistic or independent,

hence giving importance to values such as “freedom, and living an individualistic life” (Nisbett, 2006: 108). Examples of these cultural groups are the Northern Europeans, the Australians, the Canadians and the Americans (USA) (Nisbett, 2006; Ting-Toomey, 2006). In contrast, Asian communities such as China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan, and, in North America, the Mexican community are considered collectivistic or interdependent. These cultural groups defend values concerning “belongingness and respect for elders” (Nisbett, 2006: 108) and, as a result, the “we” identity is seen to prevail.

Categorisations of “identity” traits which are based on highlighting the differences between the “self” and the “other” need to be re-evaluated to consider an identity which is integrative in nature, not separatist. Kim (2006) suggests the concept of “intercultural personhood”, a meeting of east and west. For Kim, intercultural personhood refers to “a way of life in which an individual develops an identity and a definition of self that integrates, rather than separates, humanity” and that promotes a self “that is open to growth—a growth beyond the parameters of one’s own cultural upbringing” (Kim, 2006: 408). This is, however, not new. As far back as 1985, Adler suggested the existence of a multicultural persona, which he defined as someone whose loyalties and identifications transcend nation, culture and ethnicity. Adler (1985: 413) characterised the multicultural man as “the person who is intellectually and emotionally committed to the fundamental unity of all human beings while at the same time he recognizes, legitimizes, accepts and appreciates the fundamental differences that lie between people of different cultures”. Three characteristics of this new multicultural man which Adler deemed important are still fundamental issues today: 1) multicultural persons are psychologically adaptive to a new culture; 2) multicultural persons are constantly undergoing personal transitions through the process of enculturation and deculturation; and 3) multicultural persons maintain indefinite boundaries of the self for openness to change. Like Kim (2006), Adler also perceived this multicultural persona as a descendant of both eastern and western philosophies. Nevertheless, although the definitions of “personhood” and the “multicultural persona” both reflect the idea of transcending the national, which is in keeping with our line of thought for this dissertation, in order to be consistent with the term “trans”, we prefer the term “transnational”, as introduced previously in Chapter 1.

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However, literature concerning aspects of identity in language acquisition is not limited to discussions of cultural or national identity, but incorporates two further related phenomena: (1) the personal identity – in relation to one’s *self* representing a view of what makes up this individual; and (2) the social identity – those traits which make individuals similar to others. It is this second phenomenon which develops the construct of in-group membership (Riley 2007: 88) and which, when enhanced by issues of loyalty and preference, increases factors of self-esteem and self-worth (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 147). Parameters of one’s social identity include gender, age, residence, income, occupation, language, marital status, etc. Given this, individuals may belong to innumerable social groups and, consequently, will have just as many social identities (Sercu, 2000: 72). Whereas one’s cultural identity is very much a reflection of the opinions and expectations that others have of us (Norton, 2006), one’s social identity is a result of the acculturation into a specific society or “in-group”, through exposure to identity discourses which permeate one’s self with a sense of belonging. An in-group is, thus, a group that is bound by a set of values, norms, and rules which provide guidance for its members in terms of everyday behaviour. In contrast, the “out-group” refers to those whose values, norms, and rules that are not consistent with those of the “in-group” (Ting-Toomey, 2006: 367). The theoretical importance of the conceptualisation of in-groups and out-groups is an integral part of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner: 1979) and will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.1.

Norton (2006) suggests that, due to interdisciplinary approaches to SLA, the differences conceived between the constructs of social and cultural identity have become much more fluid: “the intersections between social and cultural are more significant than their differences” (2006: 2).; and, drawing on scholars such as Bourdieu (1977, 1984), Bakhtin (1981), Weedon (1987), and Lave and Wenger (1991), she proposes that a sociocultural constructed identity may be a more accurate concept. Furthermore, the concept of identity is important since language, or languages, provide the means through which identity discourses are disseminated.

Nevertheless, the conceptualisation of cultural/social identity which best alludes to our concept of a “transnational identity” is, perhaps, best explained by cultural theorist, Stuart Hall (1996). In his discussion, the “fragmented self” is concerned with the

different identities that one can assume at different stages in one's life or within a specific context or circumstance. As Hall (1996: 4) points out,

[i]dentities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

Last but not least, a system of meanings, as perceived by Danesi and Perron (1999) above, is also fundamental in the formation of one's worldview. Both Helve (1993) and Sercu (2000) acknowledge that, as a concept, the term "worldview" is frequently used to mean "frame of reference", "meaning system", "perspective" or "belief system". However, they both point out that a distinction should be made between a "worldview" (*Weltbild*), which refers to "a largely unconscious but structured whole of implicit viewpoints, beliefs, attitudes and values" (Sercu, 2000: 59) and a *Weltanschauung*, which is explicit and automatically presumes that a conscious effort has been made to structure reality according to the norms and experiences as lived by the individual (Helve, 1993: 14-15; Sercu, 2000: 59-60). In the context of this thesis the concept "worldview" will be understood as an individual's representation of his/her beliefs of the world, which is made up of a combination of everyday experience (socialisation) along with views and opinions that are inherited (cultural and social factors). This means that an individual worldview begins to be developed at the stage of primary socialisation and further socialisation enhances, shapes, and changes this worldview (Helve, 1993: 14-15). As a consequence, first language acquisition is essentially conceived as a cultural process and this in turns raises interesting questions concerning the implications for SLA.

4.3 CULTURE AND IDENTITY

4.3.1 Sociopsychological perspectives

Traditionally, approaches to SLA have been based on three, albeit interrelational, frameworks: linguistic, psychological and social (Saville Troike, 2006). Social

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psychology is interested in the effect that society has on people and how they may be transformed by society or, in effect, how they may transform society (Chryssochoou, 2004: xvii). More specifically, social psychologists try to understand:

1. How people understand and construct their social reality;
2. How they feel in their environment;
3. What motivates their actions;
4. How and when they act together;
5. How people and groups act together;
6. How people and groups produce knowledge, norms and artefacts.

(Chryssochoou, 2004: xvi).

During the last four decades, research into affective factors in language acquisition has been prolific, especially factors which may enhance or reduce motivation such as attitudes towards the foreign culture or FL anxiety. Gardner and Lambert's seminal work (as summarised in Gardner, 2001) defined motivation within a framework of social psychology and paved the way for a series of empirical investigations with various colleagues in the Canadian bilingual context of SLA resulting in the Socio-educational Model of Second Language Learning (Gardner & Smythe, 1975).

Essentially, Gardner's theory is centred on the concept of integrative motivation and language aptitude as being core components that lead to success in another language. For Gardner, "an integratively motivated individual is one who is motivated to learn the second language, has a desire or willingness to identify with the other language community, and tends to evaluate the learning situation positively" (2001: 6). Gardner and Lambert (1972) concentrated on the affective and personality factors present in research into immersion language learning in Canada. They used a semantic differential scale (SDS), which was originally developed by Osgood et al. (1975), to assess pupils' attitudes towards the francophone population. The SDS uses adjectives (such as hot–cold, happy–sad and weak–strong) on a five-point or seven-point Likert scale as a means of identifying feelings towards something or someone.

Schumann's acculturation hypothesis (1986) complements and enriches the work of Gardner and his colleagues. He observes how a number of social factors influence the eventual acquisition of an L2. He introduces aspects of social distance between the

learner and the target language group. Thus, he theorises that the degree of acculturation is reflected in the eventual competence in the FL. The approaches used by Gardner and Schumann, in combination with Bogardus's 1925 scale of social distance, were successfully applied to empirical research by Byram et al. (1991a). They assessed students' concepts of the "other" on a continuum from their immediate social groups (family, school friends, the British) to people from other cultures, including the French, which were the cultural group the research team were primarily interested in. The SDS will be explained in full in Section 5.6.2 as it will be part of one of the quantitative tools used in Part II of this dissertation.

More recently, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) have pointed out that the original concept of integrativeness has become increasingly problematic should today's usage of English be considered, as the world has changed dramatically and is now a melting pot of linguistic and sociocultural diversity. This means that there may not be a specific group of speakers that learners of English are aiming to integrate with. Likewise, Yashima (2002: 57) expands the notion of integrative orientation to include "the readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and [...] openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude towards different cultures". Since the target language can no longer be defined by geographic or ethnic boundaries, speakers of EIL may be classified as "a non-specific global community of English language users" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009: 3).

Dörnyei can be considered one of the major contributors to the reconceptualisation of the socio-educational model of second language learning. Among his recent contributions is the development of the L2 motivational self-system model (Dörnyei, 2005), which moves away from a focus on integrative and instrumental orientation by shifting the focus of motivation to the learner himself. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) uses the psychological theory of "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and "discrepancy theory" (Higgins, 1987) to explain the conceptual link between "self" and motivation.

Dörnyei centres his discussion on the development of the learner's identity and differing self-perceptions as integral concepts in current ELT methodologies. His principal thesis statement is that, if proficiency in a second language is seen as a valued competence in one's ideal or ought-to self, then this will function as a strong motivator to achieve competence in the target language, since "motivation [...] involves the desire to reduce

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the discrepancy between one's actual self and the projected behavioural standards of the ideal/ought [-to] selves" (Dörnyei 2009: 18). His findings, based on the results of an extensive longitudinal research project (Dörnyei et al. 2006), provided the basis for his reconceptualisation of Gardner's model to the ideal and ought-to selves context. His model comprises three components: 1) L2 self; 2) ought-to L2 self; and 3) L2 learning experience.

Aspects of the relationship between the source and target cultures were also discussed within the work of Tajfel (1978, 1981) and Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986), who were responsible for social identity theory, one of the most important theoretical frameworks used in current social psychology (Chryssochoou, 2004: 132). Intimately linked with this theory are aspects of stereotype theory and ethnocentrism, along with Allport's inter-group contact theory (1979). Social identity theory is concerned with the relationship between in-groups (based on practices of favouritism) and out-groups (based on practices of difference) (Ting Toomey, 1999:147-148). The theory is built around two constructs: 1) social categorisation; and 2) social comparison. Social categorisation is the way in which we organise and classify thoughts and social comparison is the manner in which individuals make comparisons with their in-group and others in order to establish a positive social identity (Ting-Toomey 1999: 149-153).

Social identity theory has been successfully used to classify on-line communities (Posmes et al., 2005; Ren et al., 2007; Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012). This is of particular importance to our empirical research in Part II where we will be investigating the use of a blog as a valid space for tertiary socialisation and the acquisition of a transnational identity. According to Schwämmlein and Wodzicki (2012), the manner in which you first present yourself when joining an on-line community depends on the type of community you are joining. Communities which focus on the creation of content encourage the sharing of information and ideas, whereas social networking sites essentially provide the means for interpersonal contact. Drawing on Prentice et al. (1994), Schwämmlein and Wodzicki (2012) describe these communities as common-identity or common-bond communities. A common-identity community reflects the social identity of the group as a whole and builds on characteristics such as similar interests and attitudes or a common task or purpose for the forming of the group. In contrast, common-bond communities reflect an interpersonal attraction. As

Schwämmlein and Wodzicki point out, “common-bond communities exist only through interpersonal relationships” (2012: 388). In other words, a site which is dedicated to the build-up and exchange of information, such as a forum or a blog, would be a common-identity community (e.g. all those who use the site are engineers and only use the site for a specific purpose or task) and a site such as “Facebook” would be classified as common-bonding community (all those who use the site are brought together through a desire to “get to know” each other better). Schwämmlein and Wodzicki (2012) additionally suggest that people adjust their type of presentation according to the group they are joining. Their research showed that members of a common-bond community were more likely to interact and to bond with the other participants.

In their research on the differences in the behaviour of the two types of group, Posmes et al. (2005) found that the common-bond groups contributed more to an on-line discussion. This was due to the fact that the entries by the common-identity community were goal orientated, and so they were very specific. In contrast, the contributions from the common-bond group were longer due to additional off-topic communication.

A central concept within social identity theory is that of “stereotype”. The word “stereotype” was originally used in the world of printing where it represented the duplicate impression of an original. The modern usage of the term as to refer to “qualities perceived to be associated with particular groups or categories of people” (Schneider, 2005: 24) was coined in 1922 by American journalist Walter Lippman in his renowned work *Public Opinion*, where he described stereotypes as being pictures in our heads. Lipmann’s view of stereotypes is essentially based on his sociological observations whereas the term “schemata” is very often the preferred term in cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1976). Social identity theory posits that stereotypes are used to justify and clarify behaviours towards out-groups and, as such, they “have a function in the identity formation process” as they act as a means of enhancing in-group stability and identity (Sercu, 2000: 73). Hence, stereotypes within the in-group tend to be more positive and serve to justify certain differences in identifying traits between both groups (Glaveanu, 2007: 6). Furthermore, stereotypes play a central role in how one’s social identity is defined and, consequently, in how one’s world view is formed since such categorisations are likely to influence one’s expectations of others (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 149).

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As far back as 1985, Casmir had already stressed how preconceived stereotypes can cloud one's "perception and the 'reality' with which he or she must deal" (1985: 53), and suggested that substantial training in this field was central to the creation of a successful international work force. Thus, stereotypes play an important role in how our feelings towards another group are defined. Cultural awareness involves understanding how the knowledge of one's society and rules of behaviour are culturally-based and how this knowledge greatly influences one's own beliefs, values and attitudes. This leads us to consider the role that stereotypes play in our perceptions of other cultures. Within the field of social psychology, studies on stereotypes and related topics such as prejudice and discrimination have been prolific in recent decades (Gudykunst, 2004; Gudykunst & Kim 1997; Hewstone & Brown 1986; Tajfel 1981).

Sociologists argue that the mental categorising of information in the form of stereotypes is a natural and normal procedure within the communication process (Gudykunst, 2004: 117). According to Hewstone and Brown (1986), three essential aspects that characterise stereotypes should be considered: 1) they are easily identifiable characteristics used to identify others; 2) they can be used to describe most of a particular group and this creates a sense of difference between them and another group; and 3) it is assumed that an individual within this group is representative of the characteristics attributed to the group as a whole (1986: 25). From this we can understand stereotypes as being cognitive representations or constructs which have the capacity to exercise influence over how we feel about a particular group.

Exposure to identity discourses is the principal source for the acquisition of stereotypes. The Internet and media are considered key vehicles for the dissemination of cultural stereotypes (Barker, 1999) and are often responsible for the reinforcement of such discursive constructions. Stereotypes acquired in this way may also be negative, inaccurate and offensive (Le Roux, 2006). The size of the group to which the stereotype is applied determines the strength of influence of the stereotype. Stereotypes undoubtedly influence how we categorise others and, consequently, affect how we communicate with others due to the creation of certain behavioural expectations (Gudykunst & Kim 1997: 114-117). Only when we process all information available from an intercultural communicative act will these automatic stereotypes be altered, if at all. The ability to re-evaluate stereotypes will lead to more accurate perceptions and

predictions of the behaviour of others and result in fewer accounts of miscommunication due to cultural differences (Gudykunst, 2004: 116).

At this point, it is also relevant to link the discussion of stereotype theory to the discussion of levels of ethnocentricity and cultural relativism. From childhood, human beings receive a constant flow of cultural knowledge which functions within different contexts whilst also creating various identities, whether these may be national or more defined, such as a family, a school, or a team. When a human being demonstrates strong attachments to a particular cultural group to the extent that he/she develops a superior position in contrast to others, then we say that this person has a high level of ethnocentricity. But as McDaniel et al. (2006:12) also point out, another reason for such strong feelings may be due to a lack of contact with other groups. In effect, high levels of ethnocentricity have been hailed as a major cause of breakdowns in intercultural communication. Thus, the development of transcultural awareness is an essential competence that is needed in today's multicultural environment due to the impact on an individual's behaviour in communicative contexts which concern people from other "cultural, ethnic, religious or regional backgrounds" (Neulip & McCrosky, 1997: 390).

The term "ethnocentric" is derived from the Greek words "ethnos", which means "an ethnic group", and "Kentron", the centre of a circle, and is thus closely related to the concept of one's nation being seen as the centre of the world (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997: 120). Ethnocentrism is used to refer to the fact that one's views, cultural beliefs and norms are based on the standards of one's specific in-group and that others are judged according to these standards. Since these standards are essentially viewed as superior to those of other cultures, it is understandable that most people are unaware that they demonstrate ethnocentric tendencies as a result of primary and secondary socialisation experiences. Inter or transcultural competence therefore involves moving towards a certain degree of cultural relativism concerning other cultures in order to understand and interpret behavioural differences that may arise. Cultural relativism presumes that all cultures should be valued equally and that, in order for this to happen, other cultures should only be judged within their own specific frames of reference (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997: 124). In other words, one must learn to see through the eyes of the other or put oneself in the shoes of the other.

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Although some theorists still pursue the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism as separate issues, there are also many who choose to approach the view of them as standing at opposite ends of an attitudinal continuum. Two such examples are Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1986, 1993) and the Cross Model of Intercultural Competence (Cross, 1988). Both scholars present similar models which divide the continuum in six stages, beginning with those corresponding with ethnocentric attitudes, and at the opposite end, those that correspond to ethnorelative attitudes.

A natural consequence of globalisation is contact with diversity (Brislin, 2001). This may well affect social practices in terms of communication with strangers. For this reason, it is felt that tenets provided by "intergroup contact theory" (Allport, 1979) could be useful in our investigation into transcultural awareness. The principal premise of contact theory is that contact with others is able to produce a favourable change in attitudes and behaviours towards them, either on an individual or group level and that these changes are then observable in subsequent contact (Dörnyei et al., 2006). Nevertheless, in order for contact to be positive, Allport stresses that a series of conditions need to be met. Pettigrew's 1998 revision of Allport's work outlines the four essential factors originally proposed by Allport—equal status between those in contact; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and authority support—but adds that recent research has shown that "friendship potential" also plays an important role in the overall success of contact and, as such, should be considered as a fifth determining factor (Pettigrew, 1998: 76). Notwithstanding, he also agrees with the inclusion of individual and situational factors, which may also be powerful variables. More recently, Pettigrew et al. (2011) revised and analysed 515 studies on intergroup contact theory. Results confirmed that prejudice towards the "other" is greatly reduced through intergroup contact. They highlight the significance of intergroup friendship and stress the importance that contact has in increasing trust and reducing anxiety. Given that one of the major setbacks involving transcultural communication is linked to the perception of others due to the internalisation of pre-conceived stereotypes, a theory which takes into account the process of reconsidering such beliefs and opinions through contact could prove useful to the research which forms the second part of this dissertation.

Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna (2006) argue that “the Internet may be the best tool yet for effectively putting the contact hypothesis into practice” (2006: n.p.). According to these scholars, to a certain extent the Internet enhances the “equal status” requisite for a positive contact outcome since it removes some aspects of personal information (i.e. dress, appearance) which in face-to face contact could be perceived in a negative fashion. In their view, the Internet also reduces interference from other variables such as power relations since it allows the participants to communicate whilst in familiar surroundings, and thus, to some extent, softens the hierarchical relationship. Although it has been argued that positive face-to-face contact on an interpersonal level may not have any influence at the intergroup level in terms of reducing negative stereotypes (Hewstone & Brown, 1986), Spears et al. (2002) have counter-argued that, in this type of anonymous communication, the group identity is actually strengthened. With regard to the “friendship” variable, McKenna and Seidman (2005) have reported that a sense of anonymity leads to risk-taking, as demonstrated by examples of self-disclosure and more intimate exchanges. They also found that this sense of anonymity was also true for on-line communication between face-to-face friends and family.

Linked to the discussion of positive contact using ICT is the concept of “trust”. Interpersonal trust in CMC is becoming an important area of investigation due to the rise in work settings that rely on virtual teams and e-commerce. One of the key factors which appears to influence interpersonal trust is empathy. In their investigation into the relationship between empathy and on-line interpersonal trust, Feng et al. (2004) suggest that there is an important relationship between on-line interpersonal trust and the degree of liking a person. Hence, empathy is strongest between those who share similar interests and have lived similar experiences. These authors also hypothesise that, if someone is perceived as likeable by some members of the group, that same trust will be taken up by others. They contend that people can become more likeable by providing more personal information. Likewise, Zakara and Muhd Yusof affirm that “trust is considered as a key lubricant for cross-cultural relationships” (2005: 236). It has also been suggested that trust is often “delayed” and initial communication may show lower levels of trust, especially in text chat contexts. As the interlocutors progress in their relationship, the level of trust rises (Bos et al., 2002).

Sociopsychological approaches concentrating on the cognitive features of SLA have provided important theoretical insights. Nevertheless, one of the most important deficiencies is that much of the earlier research undertaken presumes that the L2 learner eventually wishes to be acculturated into the L2 environment and thus does not reflect the “complexity of the modern global and multilingual world” (Pavlenko, 2002: 279). For this reason, critical postmodern and poststructuralist theoretical perspectives which take into consideration the social, the cultural and the political contexts may provide new directions for SL research. Although poststructuralism is closely related to postmodernism, in that they are both prominent lines of thought within social theory, poststructuralism differs from the latter in that it takes into account how culture and the past “affect and effect histories of the present and future” (Swain et al., 2010: XI). As Vygotsky says, “all texts are influenced by particular historical, political, social, and cultural conditions” (quoted in Swain et al., 2010: XI). Nevertheless, postmodern stances that focus on contemporary capitalist culture, more importantly, on forms of image, commodity, self and meaning are also of interest in our interpretation of EIL as a global artefact. Since issues of complexity are central to our notion of “transcultural”, as understood by the multidirectional movement of cultural flows, both approximations appear to be valid for the current research.

Sociocultural theory (SCT), which is considered to be sociopsychologically orientated, is of particular interest to the present work since it focuses on the individual as a social being and the relationship of the person with their social context of learning. It is therefore of significant relevance within language teaching and learning in a context which aims to promote speakers of FLs as intercultural mediators. It also emphasises the “social turn” (Block, 2003) in language acquisition which considers language acquisition basically as meaning-making rather than information-processing. The next section will take up this perspective.

4.3.2 Sociocultural perspectives

Firth and Wagner (2007) criticise the widely-held perception that SLA is essentially understood in terms of cognitive processes and argue that value should be given to external social processes, i.e. language acquisition as a social or cultural phenomenon.

For this reason, the 1990s witnessed a change in focus in SLA research as scholars began to draw on contemporary poststructural theory (Pavlenko, 2002: 277), thus leaving aside the focus on the native-speaker model and centring on the second language speaker identities that are created during the language learning experience (Cook, 2002).

Vygotsky's (1896-1934) SCT was not made available in the West until his work was translated into English in the 1960s. Essentially, he posits that experience and interaction are fundamental to the development of cognition, and that language is the most powerful symbolic (or cultural) artefact used by individuals to mediate between themselves and their environment (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 2008). One fundamental concept in Vygotsky's theory is that all human interaction is mediated (Vygotsky, 1962). Human beings go through a process of acquiring mediational tools, which may be either material or symbolic —such as language— in order to act upon the world. These tools contain the knowledge and history of a culture and, in acquiring the tools, the cultural meanings embedded within them are also acquired. These tools are, thus, internalised, assimilated and, finally, externalised. The externalisation also contemplates the fact that the cultural artefacts have undergone a process of appropriation and have thus been reinterpreted and transformed to fulfil the particular use as needed by the individual.

Another important area of Vygotsky's theoretical discussion is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the range of tasks that a child or novice can complete independently and/or with guidance (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). In short, it is the way a society or an expert shares linguistic knowledge with a novice, and the novice gradually becomes an expert in using the knowledge or skill. SCT has been used extensively in SLA research, and has been especially useful in the research of identity (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Vygotsky's theories are often discussed in terms of social constructivism where the role played by society in the construction of new knowledge is recognised. According to SCT, "learners advance to higher levels of linguistic knowledge when they collaborate and interact with speakers of the second language who are more knowledgeable than they are" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006: 142). More importantly, research by Donato (1994) and Ohta (2001) has also demonstrated that, even in the absence of an expert in the L2, learners are able to benefit by collaboratively constructing knowledge between themselves. This understanding of the ZPD may prove to be of great value within the context of NNS-NNS communication, since it will

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strengthen the argument for the use of a virtual third space as a valid learning space as part of the transcultural approach to be implemented in Part II.

Closely linked to sociocultural theory we find socialisation theory. According to its supporters, the road taken to becoming a competent member of a particular social group begins at birth, or even before if we consider the preparation for each new member of society taken by parents or carers before the new addition arrives. In their seminal work *The Social Construction of Reality* (2007 [1966]), Berger and Luckmann developed their theory of socialisation based on the position that society, a human product, can be characterised as both an objective and a subjective reality, their principal tenet being that socialisation is a process in which an individual becomes a member of society due to the acquisition of specific social norms, attitudes and beliefs. They also make a distinction between the phases of primary and secondary socialisation, the first referring to the process of socialisation during childhood and the latter referring to further socialisations into new social contexts.

Ochs states that “the process of acquiring a language is part of a much larger process of becoming a person in society” (2002: 106). As a result of their ethnographic research with Samoan and Kaluli children, Bambi Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs (1986) created the subfield of language socialisation within developmental psycholinguistics. Schieffelin and Ochs’s original work documented how children become members of a particular social group by specific uses of language which promote the “socially recognized and organized practices” associated with the group (Ochs 2002: 105-106). One of the principal points made by these researchers is that, in order to be a competent member of any social group, one must be able to fully understand how language is used in the construction of a discourse that is group-specific, and consequently is also culture-specific. Although their original work was developed from research into first language acquisition and defined within the areas of primary and secondary socialisation, the process of language socialisation has been extended within the field of FL pedagogy to discuss what has been referred to as “tertiary socialisation” (Byram 1991, 1997, 2008; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Risager, 2006, 2007; Roberts et al., 2001).

As Risager points out, tertiary socialisation can take place in multilingual and multicultural contexts, just as secondary socialisation may. She considers that the term

“tertiary socialisation”, to refer to the kind of socialisation associated with communication between different cultures or nations, is essentially problematic (Risager 2007: 226). However, if we understand the concept as proposed by Doyé (quoted in Byram, 2008: 31), who focuses attention on those areas of socialisation such as cognition, evaluation and behaviour, tertiary socialisation can be seen as a useful expression to describe the continuation of the socialisation process from a transnational perspective. Doyé takes into account the way that schemata and behaviours learnt in childhood become modified in adult life as they are challenged by new knowledge acquired from the multicultural world. He also allows for the introduction of totally new schemata that are actually easier to incorporate since they do not require modification or the unlearning of previous schemata.

According to Berger and Luckmann (2007: 46-47) the social world that children have transmitted to them by their parents is the objective reality of an institutionalised world that may be opaque in places. They also insist that society should itself be conceived as a “continuous dialectical process which is composed of three moments; externalisation, objectivisation and internalisation” (Berger & Luckmann, 1968: 164, my translation). It is a dialectical process due to the fact that, between the individual and his social world, interaction is constant. In this way, in order to become a member of a specific society, one has to first be aware of the society as an objective reality; in other words, to understand that this reality is an external reality or institution that will always be there, no matter what (Berger & Luckmann, 2007: 47). The objectivisation of the institutionalised world refers to the observations made by the observers and about the world around them. The internalisation of the objectivised reality refers to how the observers use knowledge in order to gain an understanding of their function(s) in this objective reality and, furthermore, how it helps them understand the behaviour of others. It is at this stage when the institutionalised world becomes laden with a personal meaning and interpretation which is then subjectively meaningful. At the same time, another objective reality is constructed for future generations. In Berger and Luckmann’s words: “[w]hat is taken for granted as knowledge in the society comes to be coextensive with the knowable, or at any rate provides the framework within which anything not yet known will come to be known in the future” (Berger & Luckmann, 2007: 51). This dialectical process can essentially be said to take place in a “third space” where individuals are able to negotiate and challenge the beliefs and values with which

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they have been presented. This struggle can also be seen as a phase or phases in the development of one's self-identity (Edgar and Sedgewick, 1999).

To a certain extent, Bourdieu (1986, 1991) can be said to take a similar approach to Berger and Luckmann, but he uses a framework of critical inquiry (Pavlenko, 2002). The concepts of "capital", "habitus" and "field" are essential constructs in his approach to socialisation, which he understands as a negotiation or "exchange between individuals and groups within what he terms as an *economy of practice*" (Carrington & Luke, 1997: 100). Essentially, Bourdieu posits that there is a continual act of negotiation between the structures of society and the needs of the individual that takes place in a multi-dimensional space. This space is made of various dimensions or fields which constitute areas of discourse and social activity. This conceptualisation of "field" will prove relevant in Part II of this thesis when the selection of research tools is explained. "Habitus" refers to "the dispositions that human agents acquire, through life-long processes of learning and socialisation that give them the competence to respond in certain ways to a given social situation" (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2002: 31). "Capital" refers to the actual knowledge that is acquired and that can be used to negotiate within the different fields which then lead to forming the distinct features of each person's habitus: "[a]s individuals move across various sociocultural fields, their particular patterns and volumes of capital resources dictate the social position within each field" (Carrington & Luke, 1997: 101). Thus, knowledge or capital may not have the same importance or strength in all fields.

In both approaches, Berger and Luckmann, on the one hand, and Bourdieu, on the other, it is understood that the contents of the 'institutions' or 'fields' can be reproduced or transformed depending on the action of those negotiating meaning, thus emphasising the fact that it is an ongoing dialectical process. Berger and Luckmann and Bourdieu can all be described within the symbolic interactionist tradition, as they do not understand socialisation solely from either an objectivist view (e.g. Althusser, Lévi-Strauss) or from a subjectivist perspective (e.g. Jean Paul Sarte) but emphasise the necessity for the intervention of both perspectives in the equation (Edgar & Sedgwick, 1999: 362-364). Sercu (2000: 61) corroborates this view of socialisation theory when he states that "socialisation theory allows for defining 'culture' in FL learning both in terms of diversified and multidimensional body of objective reality out there, as well as

in terms of the temporary subjective result of an individual's interaction with the world".

Following on from the above conceptualisations of "socialisation", Hannerz (1992) incorporates the concepts of "cultural flow" and "cultural complexity" to describe a theory of the social organisation of meaning concentrating, in particular, on the concept of culture. Hannerz (1992) is principally concerned with cultural practice within a framework of globalisation. Essentially, his theory shows how the objective realities of externalisation and the subjectiveness of internalisation are in a constant mode of exchange and change, and that this process is further complicated by factors of globalisation and technological development. Hannerz links this view of socialisation with a contemporary postmodern perspective of culture which is understood as "an organization of diversity", characterised by "a multiplicity of perspectives and voices" (1992: 35).

By discussing these dimensions in terms of technological developments and globalisation, the complexity of how culture is accessed and distributed can be interpreted as the production of "intertextual chains" of meaning (see Bakhtin, 1981, for discussion on "intertextuality") or global flows, which are spread by social networks. Preisler (1999, as cited in Pennycook, 2007) argues that within the Danish context there is far less variation in the form of "English from above" (the promotion of English by the hegemonic culture for purposes of intercultural communication) than in "English from below", where "English is used as an expression of subcultural identity" (Pennycook, 2007: 2). This is indeed the attitude of the Japanese hip-hop society, within which it is felt that "hip-hop culture is international" or that "each country has its own spin on hip-hop" (Pennycook, 2007: 5). Members of the aforementioned subculture have, by all intent and purposes, taken the global and shaped it to the local, through a process of interpretation of the "intertextual chains of meaning", eventually forming their own subcultural version. Pennycook proceeds to compare the global spread of hip-hop to that of English:

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When we look at the global spread of English in relation to the global spread of subcultural style, then this can also be seen in terms of an emergence of English from below, of the wider shore of English bubbling up into everyday life.

(Pennycook, 2007: 2)

In other words, EIL could, like hip-hop culture, be understood in terms of cultural flows from the global to the local and vice versa where all users of English are able to be creative and make it their own.

4.4 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

According to Barker (2003: 88):

The significance of the relationship between language and culture has risen to the top of the agenda within cultural studies for two central and related reasons:

1. Language is the privileged medium in which cultural meanings are formed and communicated;
2. Language is the means and medium through which we form knowledge about ourselves and the social world.

These words reiterate the above discussion by highlighting language as one of the essential symbolic artefacts used to decipher and construe one's particular view of the world through a process of internalisation, appropriation and externalisation (SCT). Within the more specific context of language and culture in cultural studies, the principal approaches to its study have been based on linguistic theories as conceived by the structuralist and poststructuralist scholars. The most outstanding contribution to linguistics came from Swiss structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of the theory of signs (semiotics). He argued that any sign consisted of two parts: 1) the signifier (e.g. DOG); and 2) the signified (the image that the signifier triggers in the mind of the speaker of the language). The relationship between these two parts of the sign is arbitrary, as Barker explains:

The organization of these signs along these axis forms a signifying system. Signs constituted by signifiers (medium) and signifieds (meanings), do not make sense by virtue of reference to entities in the 'real world'; rather, they generate meaning by reference to each other. Meaning is a social convention organized through the relations between signs.

(Barker, 2003: 16)

However, for poststructuralists like Derrida, language cannot be interpreted as being stable in that words may carry multiple meanings. He conceives Saussure's binary oppositions as concealing a much more complex structure and, to explain this, he introduces the concept of *différance* (Storey, 2006). Derrida feels that a meaning can always be deferred to another so that the signified is not a specifically defined element but produces a series of ongoing meanings until "there is a temporary halt to the endless play of signifier to signifier" (Storey, 2006: 98-100).

This also ties in neatly with Risager's (2006) and Pennycook's (2007) interpretations of transcultural flows, and reaffirms the opinions of most theorists who would agree that language is not neutral in its form; rather, it plays a fundamental role in supplying intelligible meaning to the material objects and social practices which it denotes. Once again, we return to the discussion above where we argued that signifying orders, such as language, are the result of a specific way in which a specific society uses this order as a meaningful system which is culture-specific. If language is said to construct meaning, then we need to "explore how meaning is produced symbolically through the signifying practices of language" (Barker, 2003: 89). Consequently, one of the most important outcomes of societies is the use of language or languages by the members of this culture for communication purposes. Bakhtin's dialogic approach (1981, 1986) also stresses that language can never be neutral since the meanings of all words are a result of a previous dialogue. Words are assimilated and then used again in a future context or situation (Wells, 1999: 104). This, again, is reminiscent of Derrida's posture on *différance*.

Risager (2006, 2007) draws on the premises of Hannerz's (1992) cultural complexity theory to define her theory on language and culture spread. She proposes a transnational perspective to explain the relation between language and culture. She gives the example of the Japanese language, which is spoken not only by native Japanese speakers living

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in Japan, but by various groups of Japanese living in other countries, thus spreading the language to non-native speakers. The Japanese culture is also spread, very often without connection to the language, e.g. Japanese food or Japanese paper folding (Origami); in this way, certain words or cultural practices become absorbed by speakers of other languages creating complex layers of cultural meaning.

Risager (2006, 2007) also takes up the challenging feat of providing a possible answer to the generalised assumption of the inseparability of language and culture. As she points out, much of the literature which deals with language and culture has adopted the view that language and thought are irrevocably linked and this then transcends into the pedagogical issues surrounding ELT, thus creating a “culture-bound” pedagogy of language learning (Risager, 2006: 9).

This relation between language and culture was first expressed by two German philosophers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Johann Herder (1744-1803) and Wilhelm von Humbolt (1762-1835), and was later drawn upon by American anthropologists, Boas, Sapir and Whorf, in the early twentieth century. The Whorfian hypothesis was concerned with the concept of the structure of a language being at the centre of how speakers conceptualise their world, hence becoming much more than just a method of expressing idea (Gumperz & Bennett, 1981: 100). Whorf’s theoretical stance takes a cognitive perspective and, although throughout the decades Whorf’s claims have encountered plenty of opposition, allegiance still remains, albeit in a weaker form (Kramsch, 2004: 239; Risager, 2006: 11).¹³ The earlier work on language and thought did not include specific reference to culture; rather, the link between language and thought was the principal area of investigation. It was not until the 1970s, with a more pragmatic emphasis to its investigation, that culture became part of the equation (Doyé, 1996; Valdes, 1986).

For this reason, cultural content pertaining to the target culture in FL learning is an essential element in the chain of learning. The individual gradually links the chain together to develop linguistic and cultural knowledge and, as more links are added, knowledge becomes deeper and more intense. Nevertheless, this concept of language

¹³ See Gumperz and Levinson (1996) for an up-to-date review of current trends.

being culture-bound becomes much more complex when discussed within the paradigm of EIL and ELT and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, some scholars have gone so far as to suggest a complete break between the English language and its associated cultures (Alptekin, 2002). Very often, then, the relationship between language and culture is viewed from opposing extremes. On the one hand, language and culture are seen as being closely linked and, on the other hand, language is seen as a communication tool which is completely separate to culture. This view is often associated with EIL. However, from our discussion so far, and according to our position concerning language as a tool of mediation, this view of language and culture must be rejected.

Although Risager (2006: 1-2) shares the integrative view of the relationship between language and culture, she feels that the relationship is very often oversimplified and can, in fact, be separated but only in very specific circumstances. Consequently, Risager (2006, 2007) feels that a more comprehensive analysis of this complex structure is still called for. In order to achieve such insight she moves away from the cognitive relationship between language, culture and thought and proposes an alternative understanding of the language-culture link based on cultural and social theory. Her principal argument lies in the fact that much of the previous work which considered the equation language-culture was centred within the paradigm of monocultural-language contexts. The fact that we now have to consider issues of globalisation indicates that a change in context is paramount to the understanding of culture and language. In a world where languages and cultural practices are no longer static there is a need “to a view of language and culture that stresses transnational dynamics in a global perspective” (Risager, 2006: 2). In order to achieve this objective, Risager studies the concept of language and culture as “generic” and “differential” (2006: 2-5). She describes the “generic” as “phenomena shared by all humanity”, thus stressing the universal traits of language and culture (Risager, 2006: 3), which may be psychologically/cognitively based or socially based. In the generic sense, language and culture cannot be separated since “linguistic practice is always embedded in some cultural context or other” (Risager, 2006: 4). In contrast to the generic sense, which sees languages and cultures as whole phenomena, the differential centres on the specific features of individual languages and their associated cultures. Thus, taking into account the diversity of linguistic practices, she concludes that:

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At the generic level, ‘language’ in general and ‘culture’ in general are [...] inseparable and interwoven in some way or other. But at the differential (and specific) level, one can, for example, ask: what specific forms of culture are associated with the Danish language? And what specific forms of culture are associated with the English language? And these are questions that can only be decided empirically.

(Risager, 2006: 6).

Risager also emphasises the fact that, in first and, sometimes, second language acquisition, the relationship between language and culture is a naturally acquired phenomenon which allows for the participation and acceptance into a specific or real cultural community. However, in the case of a FL, the language-culture link is fuzzy since it is not a reality but a set of “norms” which make native-like cultural competence difficult to attain (Risager, 2006: 10) and, therefore, culture could be conceived in the differential sense, or, in other words, as working parallel to language but not exactly interwoven with language. The case of EIL is even more complicated. It could be understood that the fact that it is used by NNSs and/or in a non-English speaking community context emphasises the disintegration of the link between language and culture, but it could also be argued that a new type of relationship is created; one of hybridity. More and more references can be found which describe the use of EIL as nearer to second language usage than FL usage (e.g. Holmen & Risager, 2003; Prcic, 2003) and this could also work as an answer to the current language-culture debate concerning EIL. If we consider culture and EIL on a generic level, then we can describe them as being made up of a combination of universally defined cultural features which are expressed by the use of EIL. This, therefore, should have repercussions in how EFL is learnt and taught, since it would mean developing approaches which consider cultural universals, as well as specific cultural instances of one culture and its associated language.

When these premises are transferred to the perspective of first or second language learning, it becomes clear that language is an extremely complex mediational tool since it is not only acquired to communicate with others, but it is also the principal way in which our cultural knowledge is used to mediate our connection to the rest of the world (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). When children learn their native language, this culturally laden tool shapes their attitudes, beliefs and values to such an extent that when a second

or FL is learnt they cannot avoid the projection of one's "native frame of reference on that of the culture being studied" (Omaggio Hadley, 1993: 368). Additionally, Levy (2007) alerts us to the fact that we are often unaware of the deeper aspects which influence our belief systems and values. It is as though, in many aspects, culture is silent (Hall, 1959; Kramsch, 1993; Furstenberg et al., 2001). For this reason, before FL learners begin to unravel a new culture and embark on the adventure of acculturation, they should learn to understand their native culture. As Canagarajah (1999: 186) comments, "learners must be encouraged to become reflexive about themselves, – i.e. how their values, community membership, historical background, and subject-positions motivate them to negotiate language and knowledge in particular ways".

4.5 COMBINING THEORY WITH PRACTICE: A TRANSCULTURAL PEDAGOGY

Since our object of study, transcultural competence, comprises a variety of aspects such as socialisation experiences in a virtual landscape, cultural relativism, cultural sensitivity and the shaping of transnational identities, a framework for its discussion needs to be able to explain such concepts whilst also referring to the context of multidirectional movement of global cultural flows.

One such framework is provided by Ting-Toomey's five functions of culture, namely 1) ecological adaptation; 2) cultural communication; 3) intergroup boundary regulation; 4) identity meaning; and 5) group inclusion (1999: 14-15). These functions can be defined in the following manner:

1. Ecological adaptation – culture is not static. As one's environment changes, personal adaptations are made and culture also adapts to the new context.
2. Cultural communication – language is one of the essential ways in which cultural knowledge, values and beliefs are passed on to new generations. We communicate our cultural experiences. "It is through communication that culture is passed down, created and modified from one generation to the next" (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 15).

3. Intergroup boundary regulation – this refers to regulations concerning attitudes. Research in this field explains how attitudes to in-groups and out-groups are reflected in levels of ethnocentricity. In other words, attitudes are more positive when the distance between the speakers is minimal, i.e. they are from the same in-group. The further the social distance between speakers, the more problematic communication becomes. This is even more probable when we consider that the speakers are very often speaking in a non-native language and are from culturally distinct backgrounds. High levels of ethnocentricity may cloud our judgement concerning other cultures, as they are perceived as being inferior to one's own due to differences in assumptions and beliefs. As Ting-Toomey observes, “we acquire the lenses of ethnocentrism as we are enculturated into our own social world” (1999: 14).
4. Identity meaning – this would include the identifying traits that construct one's identity according to the beliefs held by a particular group of people.
5. Group inclusion —the aforesaid identifying traits allow individuals to be associated with a particular group. According to Ting-Toomey (1999), this gives them a sense of belonging and protection.

These functions of cultures can be used to accommodate our theoretical framework and the pedagogical areas that will be taken up in our empirical research into a transcultural approach to ELT in Part II. The use of critical transcultural pedagogy in the FL classroom can be developed within the function of ecological adaptation. The use of EIL between NNSs, the inclusion of cultural material in content-based lessons, and the use of ICT to create a virtual third learning space could all be considered as relevant aspects of a transcultural approach which aims to consider the adaptation of ELT to a wider frame of learning. Furthermore, if collaborative project work between the NNSs through ICT was the focal point of the content-based instruction, then we could consider the virtual space as representative of Vygotsky's ZPD, where learners would be able to acquire and share new knowledge with their peers.

Contact theory and socialisation theory can be associated with the functions of cultural communication and intergroup boundary regulation. Within this area, a transcultural approach to ELT could help lower levels of ethnocentricity through the promotion of critical transcultural awareness. If the learners are given the opportunity to become critical cultural “thinkers” through a series of culturally-focused projects, and the chance to share their opinions with other cultural communities through tertiary socialisation experiences, then cultural relativism might be promoted and intergroup boundaries broken down. In this sense, Bourdieu’s concept of “field” could be connected to the area of virtual communication which is being used as an area of discourse and social activity. This could be applied to the blog which will be used in the empirical research in Part II. The virtual space will provide speakers of EIL with a multi-dimensional area where they can negotiate cultural meaning.

Finally, social identity theory can be interpreted within the functions of identity meaning and group inclusion. The development of a transnational identity could be reflected through these two functions.

4.6 FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION FOR ELT

This chapter has presented some theoretical aspects concerning culture, identity and language with the specific aim of helping to understand how they may be applied to the concept of transcultural competence. Since our principal focus is to explain how a transcultural approach to ELT could be implemented, the theoretical review is developed within a sociocultural framework. Our point of departure was the definition of culture as a system of meaning made up of signs, codes and texts which were then used by a group of people to organise their environments according to a specific set of agreed rules (Danesi & Perron, 1999). Sociocultural theory and socialisation theory appear to offer the means to understand the social processes involved in becoming socially competent individuals. Sociopsychological perspectives have also been summarised in order to strengthen the connection between the individual and society. These highlight the individual’s psychological or mental processes that can hinder communication such as over-reliance on stereotypes and high levels of ethnocentricity.

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Finally, social identity theory posits that contact between in-groups and out-groups encourages favourable changes in attitudes.

From the theoretical discussion in this chapter it has also been seen that, although arguments for the separation of the English language from the English-speaking communities associated with it may have some value, the crux of the matter is more complicated and far-reaching. Risager's (2006, 2007) explanation of culture from the generic and differential provides an interesting solution, as it allows for the integration of universally considered cultural traits based on common institutional premises. It also implicates the possibility of a transnational identity as the result of applying such universal parameters. This, perhaps, also explains the approach to education in multicultural communities, such as those found in many areas of the USA, where the understanding and enhancing of both one's individual identity along with a "collective cultural identity" is common procedure (Chen & Starosta, 2005: 227). In this way, importance is given to both individual values and diversity. By encouraging exposure to beliefs, values and norms of other cultures, students could develop transcultural awareness and use this knowledge in communication with members of other communities.

Neither should we ignore the variable of motivation in FLA since human behaviour is largely reflected by issues concerning motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2006: 9). Positive experiences with the "other" and "other cultures" may be reflected by favourable attitudes towards languages, language learning and transcultural communication. As far back as the 1950s, due to the extensive research of Canadian social scientist R. Gardner and various colleagues (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972), it was recognised that "the motivation to learn another community's language is not merely an individualistic affair but is strongly related to various social attitudes prevailing in the learner's community concerning the target language group and towards the sociocultural "baggage" the L2 carries" (Dörnyei et al., 2006: xi).

Likewise, Ushioda (2011) claims that future research in the field should focus on the individuality of the learner and learner characteristics, such as identity, personality factors and history. She also understands motivation as "an organic process that emerges through a complex system of interrelations" (2011: 13). Dörnyei and Ushioda's shift to

the individual should also be present in the learning materials used for motivation purposes. Such materials should be based on the concept of the speaker as a potentially transnational citizen, motivated by independent personal goals. If provided with L2 learning experiences that capture the essence of variety, individual needs and goals, learners might embark on their EIL learning with renewed interest.

The principal aim of Part I of this doctoral dissertation has been to provide information from various disciplines which together could combine to provide a solid base for the development of a pedagogical approach to ELT which takes into consideration the use of EIL between NNSs. The discussion presented in these first four chapters has highlighted the link between language, culture and identity, all of which are pertinent to this thesis. Aspects of culture and identity in FL pedagogy take on new dimensions when combined with the use of EIL and it is therefore essential that such issues should be given consideration in any approach to transcultural learning. The development of a transcultural worldview or identity appears to be intimately linked to theories of socialisation, social identity and cultural and linguistic contact, along with notions of ethnocentricity. In effect, a fundamental issue to be addressed is whether students maintain individual identities and/or create new identities whilst negotiating new multidimensional selves. Thus, Sercu (2000: 74) describes the intercultural—and we should add, the transcultural—learning process in terms of “maintenance of integrity of identity, and as a constant process of negotiation between what is own and what is foreign, what is part of one’s identity and what is new and challenging”.

From the above review it is also clear that a pedagogical shift from intercultural to transcultural and global citizenship approaches in ELT is called for. Intercultural orientated frameworks, such as Byram’s (1997), have provided a sound theoretical base on which to create intercultural communicative experiences for EFL students and theorists are now turning their attention to the concept of transcultural competence and global citizenship. Indeed, with the growing recognition of English as an international language or lingua franca, the concept of transcultural competence takes on new importance. Linked to this is the issue of tertiary socialisation, which Byram (2008: 31) neatly sums up in the following quote:

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In the cognitive, moral and behavioural changes of tertiary socialization there is a process of reassessment of assumptions and conventions stimulated by juxtaposition and comparison of familiar experience and concepts with those of other cultures and societies. The purpose is not to replace the familiar with the new, nor to encourage identification with another culture, but to de-familiarise and de-centre, so that questions can be raised about one's own culturally-determined assumptions and about the society in which one lives.

However, at this point, research into the transcultural dimension is in its early stages, and remains primarily theoretically orientated. Furthermore, research that considers the use of EIL with students from differing cultural backgrounds is sorely lacking. The second part of this dissertation will therefore be dedicated to the presentation of a research project which aims to fill a small but hopefully significant gap in the knowledge pertaining to the use of EIL in a transcultural context.

**PART II - THE STUDY: PUTTING THEORY INTO
PRACTICE**

CHAPTER 5

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

This aim of the empirical research of this thesis is to explore transcultural competence and EIL with three groups of secondary school students in Spain and Poland by taking what we shall be calling a transcultural approach to ELT. This approach consists in introducing cultural-based content to students in schools in Spain and Poland through the creation of a blog where the students can share their work and discuss specific issues connected to the content under study. This chapter will present an overview of the research method and will explain the selection of research instruments and participants. The chapter begins by highlighting the principal issues which form the justification for this research proposal (Section 5.1) and then proceeds to address the more specific issues of the research. Section 5.2 provides essential information on the research method and design, followed by an explanation of the research context and participants (Section 5.3), the role of the teachers and the researcher (Section 5.4), and a description of the pedagogic approach to be implemented in the classroom (Section 5.5). In Sections 5.6 and 5.7 the quantitative and qualitative research instruments will be presented, followed by sections on data collection procedures (Section 5.8) and data analysis (Section 5.9). The remaining sections discuss issues of reliability and validity (Section 5.10) and methodological limitations (Section 5.11). The chapter closes with a short summary (Section 5.12).

5.1 A TRANSCULTURAL APPROACH TO EIL: PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

As noted in Chapter 3, there is a distinct lack of focused research into a methodology in ELT which considers the role of EIL and prepares speakers for a multicultural experience of EIL use. Although an approach to language acquisition which considers transcultural awareness has been proposed by Baker (2009), the students participating in his research were already competent speakers of English and were all in tertiary education. Byram and colleagues (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1997), Jones (2000), Morgan and Cain (2000), and Roberts et al. (2001) contemplated a series of intercultural exchanges with secondary school students, but the emphasis was on learning about the cultures of France or Germany, the countries associated with the FL under study. Thus,

there is still a gap to be filled which considers communication in English between NNSs who have not yet attained an advanced level of linguistic competence. The present work wishes to make a contribution to this area of FL acquisition.

However, although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, any applied linguistic approach which aims to collaborate in finding a solution to the high failure rate in EFL in Spain (European Commission, 2012) is also fully justified. If new approaches to EFL succeed in providing alternatives which may result in inculcating positive attitudes towards FL learning, which, in turn, may increase the levels of attainment in FLA, then any research which departs with such aims should be considered an important contribution. Although this current research does not specifically test linguistic progress, it will offer insights into the feasibility of a transcultural approach in terms of tertiary socialisation experience with other NNSs of English.

The literature review and theoretical perspectives provided have also brought to the forefront the following features that, to our mind, appear to be compulsory components to take into consideration for the tangible construction of a framework which considers a transcultural approach to ELT:

1. An approach to language teaching envisaging the tenets of tertiary socialisation would be of extreme value to users of EIL. It could be argued that different contexts of tertiary socialisation such as those dealt with in FL acquisition may provide an environment where world views can change or become more open to change. Such an approach could, essentially, aid the formation of new knowledge or activate a process of reconceptualisation concerning previous knowledge which is often associated with stereotypical information. Since tertiary socialisation implies the acquisition of knowledge of other cultures, beliefs and ways of living through active participation, it is thought that the use of a virtual space as a “cultural connector” could be a valid mode of communication.
2. The principal factors which condition transcultural learning could be affective considerations (i.e. the emotional state concerning the communication with people from other cultures) and motivation. In a

secondary school class scenario, tertiary socialisation experiences could be embraced by introducing transcultural learning didactics involving intergroup contact. Such contact could be enhanced by a selection of didactic units able to foster interaction and reflection on a series of global cultural issues which are of mutual interest to both groups of students (Spanish and Polish). Contact between the NNSs of English would also highlight the use of EIL.

3. Implicitly attached to points (1) and (2) is the assumption that the experience would reflect a sense of “we-ness” amongst the students or, as we have referred to in Chapters 1 to 4, a “transnational identity” which, in effect, “transcends” the constraints of one’s native cultural identity and incorporates transcultural qualities. These can be classified in terms of attitudes towards others, tolerance, open-mindedness and flexibility.

These three points draw attention to some important factors which should be considered in any approach to FL learning and teaching. The students need to be made aware of the importance that knowledge of FLs will hold for them and need to be given the opportunities to use the language outside the traditional classroom context. EIL should be thought of as a “generic” skill (Graddol, 2006), in which proficiency is a necessity. The use of content-based language instructional methods could provide a sound pedagogical framework on which to construct an approach to teaching which can be adapted to the needs, interests and linguistic competence of the learners. This also has an important advantage in that it widens the circle of students available for such a teaching method, since it opens up the opportunity to all EFL learners and not just the brighter students or to students attending schools with CLIL programmes.

When considering the opportunities for learners to gain first-hand experience of other cultures and use EIL, we should also take into account that, for an elevated number of students, especially those in secondary school, a “stay abroad” is not a possibility. It is expensive and is therefore only available to a handful of learners. Nevertheless, advances in the options offered by the Internet place an infinite amount of possibilities for virtual travelling at our disposal. Chapter 3 described some recent research which used both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments for FL students. Thus,

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tools such as email tandems, video-conferencing and collaborative web-based tasks were seen to provide an interesting learning context for students, who successfully embark on virtual journeys which combine cultural learning with linguistic learning.

It is felt that, by combining new trends in ELT such as content-based approaches and the use of ICT with the more traditional “classroom” methodologies, we could offer FL students the opportunity to embrace a far more constructive approach to language learning, in the sense that their English language class could also help develop knowledge in world issues. The Internet would provide access to other EIL speakers worldwide and the tools with which to develop a “virtual third space” (Bretag, 2006) for the meeting of these cultures. The use of content-based methodologies would provide a framework for the structure of didactic units which can be incorporated into the English language classroom. Finally, the use of the textbook as a point of reference for correct grammatical and lexical input would complete the equation. The role of the language teacher would be to coordinate the various components and act as a mediator between them. The teacher would consequently act as a link between the various learning situations and would encourage student motivation and self-sufficiency in cultural learning, whilst still providing the learners with the essential information for them to reach the linguistic goals specified by the national and/or local educative curriculum.

The present research, thus, explores how three groups of EFL learners from two countries (Spain and Poland), aged fourteen to sixteen, are able to negotiate cultural meaning in a virtual third space. A series of culturally-orientated units of work were introduced into their English classes during one school year (2010-2011). Students then exchanged comments and opinions on the work they had been doing in class in an on-line blog, “EIL in Poland and Spain”, which was set up for the purpose. By testing the ethnocentric levels of the students at the beginning and end of the project, along with an extensive qualitative analysis of the blog entries, questionnaires, essays and notebooks, our aim is to discuss the feasibility of a transcultural approach to EIL within the paradigm of ELT as a way of providing tertiary socialisation experience for our students.

5.1.1 Research questions

In order to assess the viability of the implementation of a transcultural approach to EFL, and taking into account the literature review in Chapters 2 to 4, the following research questions were formulated (as proposed in Chapter 1):

RQ1 What are our participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT?

RQ2 How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence?

RQ3 Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants?

5.2 RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

In order to address the complexities of transcultural competence within the context of ELT, the theoretical framework for this research will be approached on two levels. First, from a pedagogical perspective, thus taking into account the sociocultural issues present in any act of communication; secondly, a sociopsychological perspective will shed further light on our data.

Chapters 2 and 3 centred on the pedagogical issues concerning FLT/ELT. Chapter 2 highlighted the use of EIL and the current state of ELT at present. Chapter 3 revised recent literature and research on ICC (Byram, 1997), concluding that a pedagogic approach which considers "transcultural" communication was preferable to an approach focusing on "intercultural" contexts, on the premise that the former explicitly includes communication between people from different cultural backgrounds in a NNs context. Since the lingua franca for such speakers tends to be English, then EIL should also be considered an important variable in the discussion of transcultural learning. Thus, it seems appropriate to draw on Jongewaard's transcultural unification theory (2001). At the centre of his theoretical stance is the objective of transcultural universalism, which is comprised of crosscultural adaptation, geographical global awareness, contextual global awareness, empathetic activism, shared values and transcultural awareness. As

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previously mentioned (Chapter 3), his research was not within the context of ELT, but his theory could easily be adapted to the ELT and EIL situation.

Our sociopsychological perspective takes Ting-Toomey's (1999: 261) definition of transcultural competence as its point of departure:

An integrative theory-practice approach enabling us to mindfully apply the intercultural knowledge we have learned in a sensitive manner. Specifically, it refers to a transformation process connecting intercultural knowledge with competent practice. To be a competent transcultural communicator we need to transform our knowledge into appropriate and effective performance.

Our framework for the sociopsychological perspective will, thus, draw on Ting-Toomey's (1999) five functions of culture (ecological adaptation, cultural communication, intergroup boundaries, identity-meaning, and group inclusion) as a way of classifying the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 4, albeit within a transcultural context. Table 3 shows how Ting-Toomey's classification of cultural functions can be linked to the theoretical considerations discussed in Chapter 4 and finally to the research questions presented above (5.1.1).

Table 3 Theoretical framework

Ting-Toomey's functions of culture (1999)	Ecological Adaptation	Cultural Communication	Intergroup Boundary	Identity Meaning	Group Inclusion
Underlying theoretical foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcultural pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of ethnocentricity/Contact theory • Sociocultural theory • Socialisation theory • Critical transcultural awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social identity theory 		
Transcultural approach to ELT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a content-based teaching method • Use of the Internet/virtual third space • Use of EIL – communication between non-native speakers of English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of cultural information • Transcultural awareness • Tertiary socialisation experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and self-identity • Development of a transnational identity 		
Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1). What are our participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2). How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (3). Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants? 		

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Due to the importance that should be given to the social aspects of L2 learning, the theoretical framework to be applied to the empirical section of this dissertation will have a sociopsychological and a sociocultural focus. In the ambit of research in the social sciences and education, qualitative investigation prevails and research is frequently ethnographic in nature (Dörnyei, 2007). Ethnographic research has its roots in cultural anthropology and aims to describe cultural beliefs and practices. Although traditionally linked to research into differences between cultural groups, it is essentially perceived as a method of research which provides a richness of data, thus allowing the researcher to develop an in-depth description of the issues under investigation. Typical research tools include interviews, observations and the rigorous use of a diary with field notes kept by the researcher. Applied linguists who are investigating the area of cultural communication and negotiation of identity often revert to ethnographic premises for their research design (Dörnyei, 2007).

Within the area of ethnography we can highlight the focus on case studies. Although this approach to research can be considered as limiting the generalisability of the results, if the research is conducted in combination with other tools providing statistical data, such as questionnaires, then it becomes a mixed-methodology study (a combination of qualitative and quantitative data), where both methods of data collection can work together to produce a more detailed and accurate observation and interpretation of the results (Mackay & Gass, 2005). If the case study is in fact on a group or groups of participants, then again extra validity can be given to the results and it can be argued that similar groups to those under study should produce similar results if the study is repeated in a similar context.

A mixed method design, with a predominantly qualitative approach, is deemed appropriate for the present research since the task at hand involves the discussion of abstract issues such as beliefs, identity-related issues and motivation, all of which are areas of research that cannot be easily quantified. To a certain extent, and due to the nature of the research, the method also veers towards an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis, since the researcher herself was actively involved in the process and was able to analyse the results from both an emic (subjective point of view from results yielded from the qualitative data) and etic (objective point of view from results yielded from quantitative data) perspective.

5.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

Many research projects undertaken within the ambit of education are a result of a personal experience, either as an educator or as an applied linguist. A teacher may be looking for the answer to a specific problem that has arisen in the language class, or an applied linguist may be looking into the far larger problem of deficiencies in second language learning, as in the case of EFL in the Spanish education system. Previous research has pointed towards the shifting use of English, which in turn has powerful implications concerning the need to adapt current teaching approaches to this change (Graddol, 2006). In the light of the preceding chapters, one major area of adaptation may well be the way culture is dealt with in ELT. Jacob (2011), who collected information on the cultural content of English language courses for adults in the official language schools of the Balearic Islands, confirmed that English is essentially being used as an international language between non-native English speakers and that, although the students enjoy the cultural aspects of the course, they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the global aspects of culture.

The present research contemplates the study of English as a core subject during compulsory education. The participants were aged 14 to 16 years old. This age group was considered relevant due a number of factors, of which the following two should be emphasised: 1) students are at an age where they should be thinking about their future. In this case they are future international citizens and the English language may be an important tool of communication if they are considering working in another country; and 2) despite a growth in the number of hours dedicated to the teaching EFL and CLIL classes taught in English, the level of English acquired on leaving school at 16 or 18 is still deficient in Spain, especially in the active areas of language production (European Commission, 2012).

The learning context in Spain was comprised of two groups of students from a state secondary school in Mallorca. This was complemented with two secondary schools in the city of Opole (both with two groups of students), situated in the region of Opole Silesia, in the south-west of Poland. To a certain extent, both countries share similar characteristics in their approach to language learning, as discussed in Chapter 2. English is the FL that most —if not all— schools offer for all students whilst in secondary

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school education. Although Poland is one of the largest European countries, it is still an unknown entity for many of the Spanish students, as we will see in our presentation of results (Chapter 6). Quite the reverse is observed about Spain, which appears to have far more presence for the Polish students. It was thought that the use of EIL in the cultural exchanges between English language learners from the two countries could provide a rich source of qualitative data for our study.

As with many research projects in education, the key to eventual success lies in a good relationship between the researcher, the teachers, and the students involved in the project. This should enable the researcher to have a fluid interaction with the students and ensure that any possible problems are dealt with swiftly and efficiently. In order to fulfil these requisites, a secondary school in the district of Calvià in Mallorca, IES Bendinat, was chosen as the principal focus school for the empirical research. The researcher had good background knowledge of the school, since she had completed her teacher training in the establishment and was acquainted with the teachers in the English department.

Calvià is one of the largest tourist areas on the island, as well as being a district which has a high number of foreign residents, especially German and British. As a result, there is a multicultural atmosphere in the school. Two third-year classes took part in the research. The teacher, the same for both groups, will be henceforth referred to as “BEN T”. Class 1 (BEN1) had 23 students and class 2 (BEN2) had 19 students. All of them participated in the study. It should also be said at this point that the English language classes in Bendinat are streamed according to ability and these two classes have the slightly more advanced students. These students also take part in the CLIL programme at this school. However, it must be stressed that this project was part of their formal English class and was not directly connected to their CLIL lessons. In this school the CLIL programme is offered in years two, three and four. Students may opt to study their social science subjects (history and geography) in English or in French. This does imply that the students involved in the project are accustomed to content-based learning procedures and project work. It should also be emphasised that, although we have pointed out previously that one of the strengths of a transcultural approach is that all learners, regardless of their level of the FL, can benefit from this type of instruction, our groups from Bendinat were considered good learners. However, since at this stage of

our investigation into a transcultural approach we are more interested in the feedback on the approach itself and the possible formation of an identity no longer defined in purely national terms than in measuring linguistic attainment, this group was considered appropriate as their level would be a better match for some of the Polish participants (VPLO) who were a year older.

The schools in Poland were chosen as a result of an interview with a visiting scholar from the University of Opole (Poland) who was in Mallorca as part of an Erasmus exchange agreement with the University of the Balearic Islands. Dr Elzbieta Szymanska-Czaplak played a crucial role in the coordination of the research in Poland as she arranged for the researcher to work with two teachers in the privately-run TAK secondary school, where she herself had previously worked as an English teacher for many years, and a teacher in the state-run school VPLO (Upper Secondary School Number 5, Opole).

The TAK students (N=20) which joined the project were aged 14-15. They attended the junior high school, which housed a total of 53 students. This third-year class of students was further divided into two groups for their English lessons with two different teachers. The division was based on ability, resulting in a total of 13 students in TAK1 (more proficient students) and seven students in TAK2 (less proficient). Henceforth, the teachers will be acknowledged as “TAK1 T” and “TAK2 T”. The students had four hours of English instruction per week, along with two hours of a second compulsory FL, which was Spanish. This is unusual in a Polish school but the school voted to teach Spanish rather than German to the students. Even though the project would be in English, it was thought that this would provide added incentive for the students to communicate with the Spanish participants.

The teacher from VPLO (henceforth, VPLO T) was the same teacher for both groups. The school caters for a total of 160 students. The students that participated in the research, 15- and 16-year-olds, were from two first-year classes. VPLO1 had 16 students and VPLO2 had 17 students. According to their teacher, their level of English was about the same. Although they were a year older than the other students participating in the project, we decided to include them in the project as their level of English was fairly similar to that of the students in Spain. VPLO T had already used

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blogs with her class and so her experience in the intricacies of blogging was also an asset to the overall project.

At the beginning of the project, permission to participate in the research was received from all the parents of the participants (Appendix 1). In order to maintain anonymity, codes were also used for all the participants. The codes were formed by the first two letters of the school, numbers 1 or 2 depending on the group and the first two letters of the student's first name and surname. E.g. BE1LAMU represents a student from Group 1 at the Bendinat secondary school.

Table 4 shows the distribution of students per school. In this table we have included information such as the teacher's code, the average age of the students, and the course-book used. The second column, "research function", describes the role of the group within the research project. Groups BEN1 and BEN2 were considered the full focus groups since they were those which provided data from the application of all the research tools. The Polish groups were considered semi-focus groups since not all research tools were applied to the groups. Their principal function was to communicate with the Spanish students in order for the researcher to analyse certain aspects of the transcultural approach being applied to the students in Spain. It should also be noted at this point that due to the longitudinal design of the research, not all students in each group completed all the research tools that were administered to the group. This means that for the sake of the quantitative analysis, numbers may vary for each specific research tool.

Table 4 Distribution of participants

GROUP	RESEARCH FUNCTION	TEACHER	AGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS / GENDER	COURSE-BOOK
BEN 1	Focus group – all research tools applied	BEN T	14-15	13 - male 10 - female	<i>Voices 3</i> (MacMillan)
BEN 2	Focus group – all research tools applied	BEN T	14-15	3 - male 16 - female	<i>Voices 3</i>
TAK 1	Semi-focus group – a selection of research tools applied	TAK1 T	14-15	7 – male 6 - female	<i>New English File Intermediate level</i> (Oxford)
TAK 2	Semi-focus group – a selection of research tools applied	TAK2 T	14-15	3 - male 4 - female	<i>New English File intermediate level</i>
VPLO 1	Semi-focus group – a selection of research tools applied	VP T	15-16	2 - male 14 - female	<i>New English File Intermediate level</i>
VPLO 2	Semi-focus group – a selection of research tools applied	VP T	15-16	3 -male 14 - female	<i>New English File Intermediate level</i>

5.4 ROLE OF TEACHERS AND RESEARCHER

The teachers played an important role in the research since they were in the classroom with the students and, in effect, were often the researcher’s “eyes” and “ears”. They were responsible for the implementation of the content-based didactic units in their EFL classes and for motivating the students to contribute to the blog. As an incentive for the students, all teachers agreed that student participation in the project would be acknowledged in the final mark for the subject in May.

Although visits to the students in Spain were regular, there were only two opportunities to visit the Polish participants: at the beginning (October, 2010) and at the end (May, 2011). In order to create a trusting and collaborative atmosphere, upon arrival in Poland a series of informal visits were made to the classes to give the students some information about the project, explain the blog registration process, and answer any questions. The students were given an email address to contact in the case of having any doubts or problems concerning the blog.

The first visit to Poland was also arranged so as to administer and collect initial data by means of a questionnaire and a semantic differential test (SDT) booklet (tools which

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will be fully explained in Sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2), and introduce the students to the blog format (see Section 5.7.1). This visit was also an opportunity to introduce and teach the first unit of work which had the theme of cultural stereotypes. This initial contact with the students was very beneficial in that the students felt at ease with the project and became acquainted with the researcher. The same procedure was also followed with the participants in Spain, although visits to the school were in this case continued throughout the year.

The overall role of the researcher could be classified as one of an active observer as many of my further visits to the classes in Bendinat were invitations to participate in the presentations of the different modules, explain how they would use the blog for the module in question, and observe project presentations. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the corpus of data which was produced by the blog posts had a minimum of intervention from the researcher or the class teachers.

During visits to the classrooms of the students in both Spain and Poland, a field diary was kept where notes concerning the activities observed were made and informal conversations between the students and the teachers were also annotated. These notes will occasionally be referred to in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.5 PEDAGOGIC APPROACH

The principal tool of investigation used for this research was an on-line blog where students from Spain and Poland could publish the work done in class and comment on their work. At the beginning of the research period a schedule for six units of work was established with the teachers in both countries, although this was later reduced to four. The approach used was based on content-learning principles and all three teachers were in agreement to set aside time in their class to pursue the specific didactic units which concentrated on cultural and communicative, rather than linguistic, competence.

A series of didactic units were devised along with the EFL teacher in Spain, who had extensive experience in content-based learning and had used some of the teaching units with previous learners. A schedule for the introduction of the units was agreed on by all

teachers involved, although it underwent some changes during the school year. The units that remained were “Cultural Stereotypes”, “Africa”, “Music with a Message” and “Questions and Answers”. These units are described briefly below but complete information on each one can be found in Appendix 2.

1. *Cultural Stereotypes* – This unit encouraged students to reflect on how they understand their own culture, how they think their culture is seen by others, and how they perceive other cultures.
2. *Africa* – Students did projects on different themes applied to the African continent in order to familiarise themselves with the different cultural backgrounds of these countries. The students worked either in groups or individually and did slideshow presentations for their classmates. These were then uploaded onto the blog in order to share their ideas and knowledge with the other participating students. In Bendinat the students were also filmed and a short video of the presentations was posted on the blog.
3. *Music with a Message* – The objective of this unit was for students to discover and discuss how music is used for political protest or as a means to denounce social, economic or religious problems. For instance, “Gimme hope Jo’anna”, a 1988 song by Eddy Grant, was used to protest against the Apartheid regime in South Africa, while “Do they know it’s Christmas time”, by Band Aid, was used to raise social consciousness and money for the famine in Ethiopia in 1982. Students posted the videos of their songs on the blog, along with their comments on the message perceived from the lyrics.
4. *Questions and Answers* – This unit differed from the others in that an attempt was made to unite the students from Spain and Poland in a more direct manner. Students from Spain were paired with a student from Poland with the objective of obtaining some specific cultural information about the country. The themes for questions were the result of a class discussion about Poland with the classes in Bendinat.

The students in both countries worked on the didactic units using basic, yet not strict, guidelines supplied by the researcher. The most important aspect was that the students from both countries were able to post their work on the blog and comment on the different posts. Specific questions or instructions were also posted by the researcher for each didactic unit. Along with the blog sections which corresponded to the four units of work, participants were also encouraged to communicate through three additional blog sections: 1) “Do you want to know anything about me?”, “Cultural Snippets” and “Opole and Mallorca”. Work on the blog could be individual or group work and could be done in class or for homework and, as mentioned above, students’ participation was acknowledged by teachers in their final mark for the subject.

5.6 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

5.6.1 Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were administered to the participants. The first questionnaire (Background Information Questionnaire – see Appendix 3.1) was divided into three areas: 1) personal information concerning the students, such as age, place of birth, cultural background, L1 language(s); 2) knowledge of languages and educational information, such as languages they have learnt in or out of school, languages they would like to learn, their use of the Internet, language(s) used on the Internet, experiences of CLIL as a learning technique, and the learning of culture in their FL classes; and 3) foreign travel information. The Background Information Questionnaire (henceforth to be referred to as QT1 – Questionnaire Time 1) was completed by the participants in October/November 2010, at the beginning of the research period.

The QT1 was piloted with one class from TAK (11 students) and one class from Bendinat (23 students) that were not participating in the study. The Spanish students were the same age as those participating in the study. The students from TAK were one year younger than those targeted in the study for two principal reasons: 1) there were no alternative students of the same age group in TAK to take the questionnaire; and 2) since the questionnaire was in English, it was thought that if the students with a slightly lower level were able to complete the questionnaire with a minimum of queries, then the

older students should have no difficulties. The only changes that were necessary after piloting concerned the order of the options given for the Polish students' cultural background. No changes were made to the questionnaire version which was administered in Spain.

The second questionnaire (Participants' Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL – see Appendix 3.2, henceforth to be referred to as QT2 – Questionnaire Time 2) was given to the students at the end of the research period in May/June, 2011. This questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section of the QT2 consisted of 80 five-point Likert style statements which were grouped into the following dimensions:

1. Statements 1-12: frequency of blog use
2. Statements 13-32: language competence and use of EIL
3. Statements 33-43: blog use and technical issues
4. Statements 44-64: transnational boundaries
5. Statements 65-74: translanguing aspects
6. Statements 75-80: content-based learning

These dimensions specifically address, among others, aspects concerning the attitudinal and motivational dimensions of language learning such as integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes towards other languages and cultures, and linguistic self-confidence, as expressed by Dörnyei et al. (2006: 40).

The second section of the QT2 repeated questions from the section on languages and educational information taken from the QT1. Our objective was to be able to compare the results from the beginning of the project with those at the end in order to observe and compare any possible changes. The questions that were repeated in QT1 and QT2 are shown in Figure 3.

In contrast to QT1, QT2 was in the students' native languages, Spanish or Polish (see Appendices 3.3 and 3.4 for these versions of the questionnaires). This change to the format was deemed important due to the quantity of statements we wished the students to express their opinions on in this second and much longer questionnaire. It was

thought that in this way we would avoid any misunderstanding of the statements and, thus, the data would be more reliable.

Questions in QT1 and QT2

1. Are there any other languages you would like to have the opportunity to learn?
 YES – which one(s) _____ NO
2. Which language(s) do you use on the internet?

3. Do you think the internet is a good way to practise foreign languages?
 very good quite good OK not very good bad
4. Do you think that studying a subject such as history, geography, science, etc. in a foreign language is/would be an interesting way to learn a language?
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
5. Is it interesting to learn about the cultural aspects of the countries of the different foreign languages you are studying? (This would include their history, geography, literature, art, daily life, values and beliefs).
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
6. Do you think it is important to learn about the culture(s) associated with the language(s) you are studying?
 very important important sometimes important not very important
 not important

Figure 3 Questions asked in QT1 and QT2

5.6.2 Semantic differential test booklet

The SDS (semantic differential scale), developed by Osgood et al. (1975), was originally used to assess attitudes towards different groups of people based on how they perceived different language varieties (Al-Hindawe, 1996). A SDS essentially has bipolar adjectives on a 5-, 6- or 7-point scale and participants mark at which point on the scale their answer lies, i.e. closer to one adjective or the other. Our research tool, the semantic differential test booklet, was divided into two parts (the SDT booklet is reproduced in Appendix 4.1). Part 1 consisted of 12 statements concerning participants' attitudes towards language and culture learning which students were required to grade according to two semantic differential scales. The following example (Figure 4) was given to the students with the instructions on page 1 of the booklet:

(i) Watching TV is		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

Figure 4 SDT booklet instructions – example I

In this example students had to give their opinion on two aspects of watching television: 1) boring or interesting; and 2) not useful or useful. They had to mark the line with a cross nearer to their preferred answer, column 4 being the neutral answer. In this first part of the booklet students had to grade six statements concerning language learning and a further 6 statements concerning the study of culture. All 12 statements had the same two bipolar scales (“boring–interesting” and “not useful–useful”).

The 12 statements used in Part 1 of the SDT booklet were:

1. Studying languages in general is *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
2. Studying French or German is/was/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
3. Studying English is *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
4. Studying languages like Italian, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish or Dutch, etc. (Western European languages) would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
5. Studying languages like Bulgarian, Russian, Hungarian or Czech, etc. (Eastern European languages) would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
6. Studying other “world” languages is/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
7. Studying my own culture is *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
8. Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.

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9. Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
10. Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France, Germany, Italy, Portugal or Denmark, etc. is/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
11. Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.
12. Learning about “world” cultures is/would be *boring–interesting/not useful–useful*.

SDSs have also been used successfully in research where the object has been to assess attitudes towards other cultures. Authors such as Gardner & Lambert (1972), Byram et al. (1991b) and Sercu (2000) have combined the semantic scales with a social distance scale, based on Bogardus’s work (1925) to create a semantic differential test (SDT). Although there were plenty of other tests available which allow for the testing of ethnocentricity, Byram and colleagues opted for this combination since most of the approved tests available are developed for adults. Examples of such evaluation tools are: 1) the Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale (GENE), devised by Neulip and McCrosky (1997); and 2) the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), devised by Chen and Starosta (2005). These two tests were based on participants stating their degree of feelings towards a particular statement (strongly agree – strongly disagree). Both used a 5-point Likert scale for evaluation purposes with statements such as:

1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. (ISS)
2. I respect the values of people from different cultures. (ISS)
3. Most other cultures are backward compared to my own. (GENE)
4. Other cultures should try to be like my own. (GENE)

Byram et al. (1991b) argued that, since age and gender may also influence perceptions, then it may be more realistic to use a tool which takes into account the social distance between the participant and the foreign culture. In the case of Byram, the social distance aspect was combined with the SDS by repeating the same set of bipolar adjectives with different nationalities. Although Sercu’s (2000) research into the acquisition of intercultural competence was based on Byram’s research design, he used the following

type of question and social distance scale to assess attitudes towards people from other nations:

Would you accept a German person as:

1. a member of your school?
2. a member of your class?
3. as sitting next to you on a bench?
4. as your girlfriend/boyfriend?
5. as your wife/husband?

(Sercu, 2000: 95)

The social distance test is cumulative and presumes that, if one accepts a person as a husband or wife, then they would also accept the previous statements. Hence, the application of different nations as a social (or cultural) scale should yield results which potentially reflect attitudes towards others as more or less acceptable.

The pros and cons of the SDT have also been the subject of many authors (e.g. Lee, 1971, Verberk et al. 1995), often making comparisons between the use of the SDS and Likert scale methods. For this reason, some essential aspects should be considered when constructing a SDS in order to avoid certain pitfalls which may ultimately compromise the research (Al-Hindawe, 1996). For example, adjectives should be relevant to the study context and researchers should be aware that some adjectives may be positively or negatively valued depending on one's cultural background. This may affect the validity of the results. The layout of the scale may also contribute to its reliability, and for this reason it may be best to use random polarities, and lines as opposed to numbers, in order to minimise any possible influence over the participant's choice (Al-Hindawe, 1996). Traditionally, in SDSs adjectives are either gradable, such as "entertaining – boring", or are complementary opposites, such as "honest – dishonest". Al-Hindawe (1996) suggests that suitable adjectives for the scale should be elicited from the students themselves and then piloted before administering the tool.

Following the initiative of Byram et al. (1991b), the SDT used for this research was a combination of the SDS and social distance and it formed the second part of our research tool, the SDT booklet. The following example (Figure 5) was also presented on

the first page of the booklet. Rather than present the example with a nationality, the international figure of James Bond was chosen. Students were also given the possibility of choosing the person for the example exercise.

(ii) James Bond/ _____ is								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious		--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud		--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude		--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive		--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind		--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing

Figure 5 SDT booklet instructions – example II

The above example shows the adjectives which were used in the final SDT. Nevertheless, in order to make the results of the test as trustworthy as possible, the following procedure was followed: 40 students from BEN1 and BEN2 and 17 students from TAK1 and TAK2 completed an adjective classification test (Appendix 4.2) based on a selection of adjectives that had been provided by the researcher. These adjectives were chosen as representing traits of solidarity, personality and cultural identity. Students were asked whether, in their opinion, the adjectives implied positive or negative qualities. If they felt that they could be either, then they were told to write the adjective on the dividing line. Although all the adjectives were later employed in the SDT, only those adjectives which were classified as positive or negative were considered in the data analysis. The results of this analysis (Appendix 4.2.1) showed the following bipolar pairs as apt for our overall analysis: “honest–dishonest”; “kind–cruel”; “hardworking–lazy”; “polite–rude”; “friendly–unfriendly”; “well educated–poorly educated”. This exercise also confirmed that the students from Spain and Poland

had very different perceptions concerning some of the adjectives which meant that some adjective pairs could be used in Poland but not in Spain, and vice versa. For example, with the adjective “patriotic”, 94% of the Polish students classified it positively whilst the Spanish participants were divided in their classification, and for the Spanish students, the adjective “loud” was 77% negative whereas the Polish students were divided 50-50. The Polish participants generally classified the adjective “competitive” (72%) as a positive quality, whereas only 25% of the Spanish coincided with this opinion, the majority classifying it as neither positive or negative (47.5%) or simply negative (27.5%).

In order to validate to what extent the students conceived certain countries as being further removed from their native culture, two preference tests (Appendix 4.3) were administered to 28 students from Bendinat (BEN1 and BEN2). In the first test, a cultural proximity test, the students were asked to number a list of countries from 1 – 10, with “1” representing the country which they felt they were closest to culturally and “10” representing the country which they least identified with. The countries chosen for this exercise were Spain, North America (in representation of the USA and Canada), Poland, South America, France, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, Russia and Japan. Using SPSS 19, we calculated the mean and the standard deviation (SD) for the position of each country. The results showed that students felt closer to the cultures of the UK and North America followed by France and Germany. Poland was further away on the scale (please refer to Appendix 4.3.1 for a complete breakdown of the results).

In the second test students were asked to state their preference between two groups of people by circling the group they preferred. This technique was adapted from Sercu (2000), who used the same method to validate his SDT. Complete results for this test can be seen in Appendix 4.3.2. The findings confirmed the results from the cultural proximity test. From the results of the two tests we were able to create a probable order of proximity for the students, which we were then able to apply to the order of the semantic differential tests. It should be stated at this stage that we were not interested in analysing all of the “distances”, and for this reason the order does not correspond exactly to the results from the preference classification tests. We also decided to place the North Americans at the end of the test in order to give the test an aspect of geographical distance. It was thought that this would prevent students from

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automatically giving more negative reactions to the groups of people towards the end of the test. According to the results of our analysis, we would expect the North Americans to have more positive results than Poland, and similar results to the UK, France and Germany in the SDT. Although the preference tests were only given to students from the focus groups in Bendinat, the order of the social distance scale was adapted for the Polish students taking into account the proximity of the countries. The final order of the SDT for the Spanish participants was as follows:

1. I am ...
2. My friends are ...
3. The Majorcans are ...
4. The Spanish are ...
5. The British are ...
6. The French are ...
7. The Germans are ...
8. The Polish are ...
9. The North Americans are ...
10. The South Americans are ...

The order for the Polish participants was:

1. I am ...
2. My friends are ...
3. The Polish are ...
4. The Russians are ...
5. The British are ...
6. The French are ...
7. The Germans are ...
8. The Spanish are ...
9. The North Americans are ...
10. The South Americans are ...

As with the initial questionnaire, the SDT was piloted with control groups in Spain and in Poland. There were no unforeseen problems and, as a result, the final SDT remained unchanged.

5.7 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

5.7.1 The blog: “EIL in Poland and Spain”

The blog was a free on-line blog from *Wordpress.com*. It offered an easy-to-use interface and, more importantly, it was an interface used previously by VPLO T for her two EFL classes, which meant the students were familiar with this specific tool. It also meant that a base had been found for our virtual platform which had been previously validated by the Polish VPLO group of users. The blog also offered the option to make it private, which, in order to preserve student anonymity was an essential aspect of the use of an on-line blog. As blog administrator, the researcher was responsible for adding all the students to the blog once they had gone through the registration process. As mentioned previously (Section 5.4), a visit was made to the schools at the beginning of the project to instruct students in the registration procedure.

Wordpress had a variety of blog interfaces at the disposal of its users. A style was chosen that provided a clear layout for the students. Figure 6 shows the demo page for the blog interface that was used. At the top of the page there is a horizontal band which begins with the word “Home”. This gives direct access to the home page. Next to this there is a list of pages which provide information about the blog. In the case of the “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog the pages were : 1) A bit about our project; 2) Unit 1 – Cultural Stereotypes; 3) Unit 2 – Africa; 4) Unit 3 – Music with a Message; and 4) Unit 4 – Questions and Answers. These pages provided information for the teachers on the project and the didactic units, and posts and comments could not be added.

On the right-hand side, there were two additional lists; 1) the first list contained the names of all the users and all the blog sections. The blog sections corresponded to each of the four units of work, and the sections entitled “Do you want to know something about me?”, “Cultural Snippets” and “Mallorca and Opole”. Below this list was the archives list. The archives are divided into months which made it easy to consult posts. These two lists were useful to both teachers and the researcher, as by clicking on the name or blog section created instant access to all the contributions in that area. For example, by clicking on “Cultural Snippets” the researcher could see all the posts and comments in this section, or if a teacher wanted to check posts made by any of the

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students, they only had to click on the name. It was thought that, if teachers were considering checking their students' work on the blog, this would facilitate the process. Additionally, the number of posts for each participant or blog section was also given in brackets.

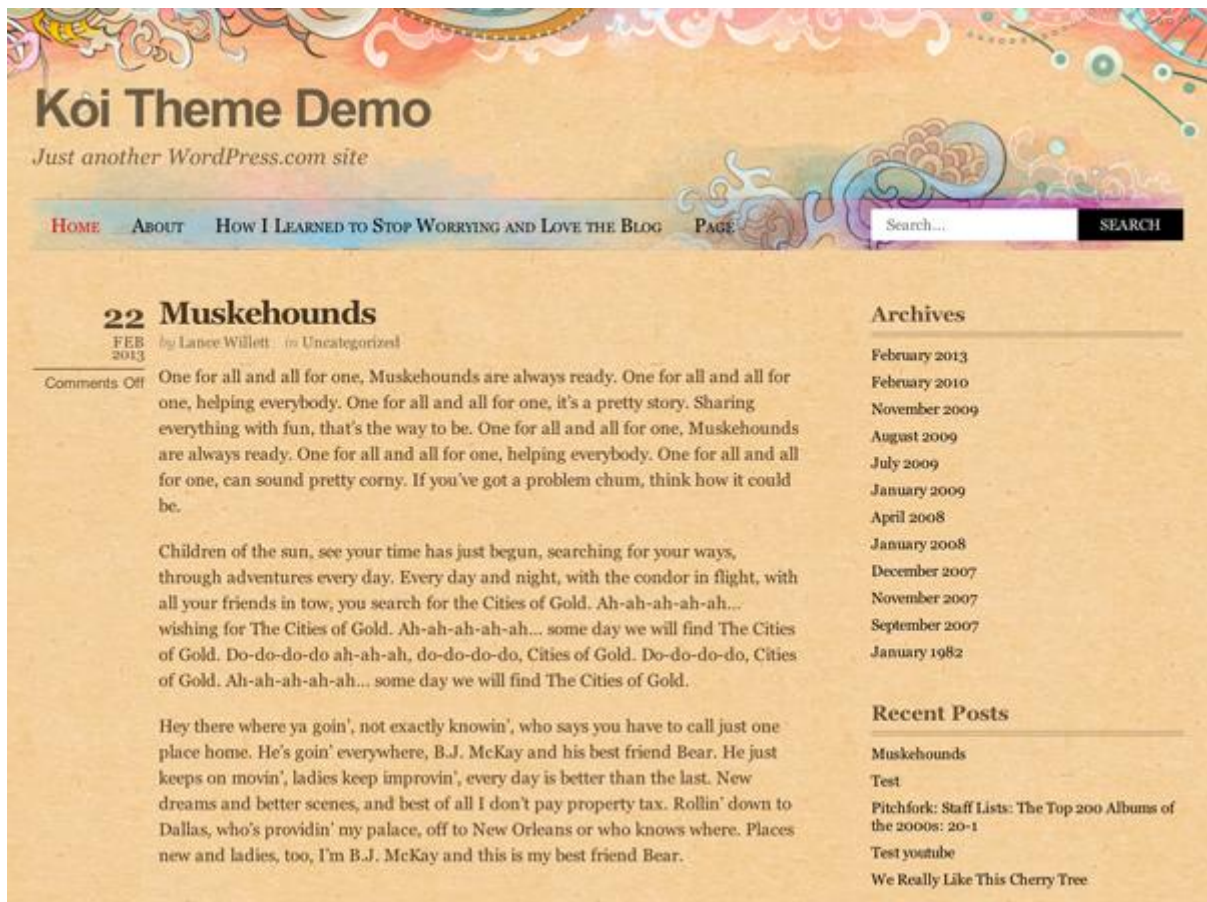


Figure 6 Demo of the *Wordpress* Interface

Although the didactic units worked on in class have been described in Section 5.5 and can be found in full in Appendix 2, it seems opportune to provide more details of the specific questions that participants were asked to answer on the blog. As a preliminary exercise, students were asked to post some information on themselves on the blog. This first venture into the blog was entitled “Do you want to know something about me?” It was a way for the students from both countries to introduce themselves to each other as well as a chance to learn how to post information and comment on other posts. Apart from participating in the compulsory units of classwork on the blog students were also encouraged to post comments in a “Cultural Snippets” section and a section dedicated to information on “Mallorca and Opole”.

For the first unit of work, “Cultural Stereotypes”, the project participants did various exercises in class. The questions to be answered on the blog reflected this classwork. This blog exercise can be seen in Figure 7. The complete lesson plans can be found in Appendix 2.1.

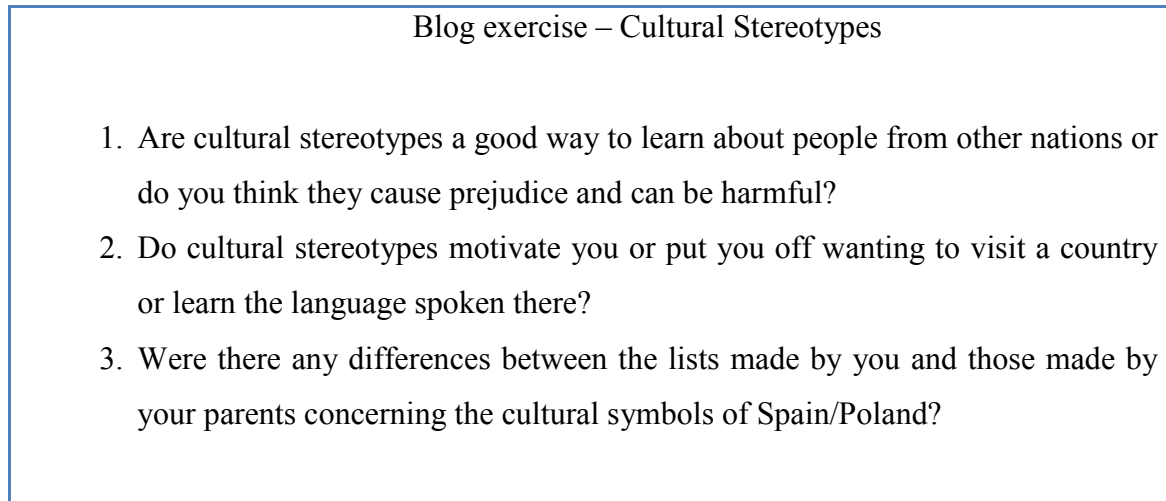


Figure 7 Blog exercise for unit 1 – Cultural Stereotypes

For the unit of work on “Africa”, participants were asked to answer some questions on the blog. For example: Q1 – How much do you know about the way of life in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America? Do you feel that you know more about some than others? Why? The blog exercise for the “Music with a Message” unit consisted in the participants commenting on the songs chosen by the other project members (Figure 8).

The last unit of work, “Questions and Answers” was completely worked on through the Internet. In class the Spanish participants discussed what they would like to know about the Polish participants. The Spanish participants were then partnered with a Polish student and they wrote questions on the blog in order to obtain answers.

Blog exercise – Music with a Message

Please comment on why you chose a specific song and whether it concerned Spain / Poland, or whether it concerned all people worldwide. Please comment on the work of your classmates and the projects of the other groups. You can consider the following questions:

- (i) Did you know the song?
- (ii) Did you understand the message?
- (iii) Did the other groups choose similar or different types of protest/awareness songs?

Figure 8 Blog exercise for unit 3 – Music with a Message

5.7.2 Secondary qualitative research instruments

A series of secondary qualitative research instruments complemented the on-line blog and the quantitative instruments. The principal objective of these tools was to confirm details obtained from the other research instruments and to help construct an in-depth understanding of data as a whole.

5.7.2.1 Cultural notebooks

At the onset of this project it was decided that the Spanish participants would keep a note of the learning process in the form of a diary. Diaries have been used in second language acquisition research as a way of obtaining “introspective information” from the participants (Nunan, 1992: 118). They are a first-person account of a specific process that takes place over a period of time, which can produce important data for the researcher. The use of a diary as part of course-work is also on the increase, especially as a pedagogic tool for the teacher, who is able to use the information to improve instruction (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 204). The principal objective for the use of this type of tool was to triangulate information with results of the questionnaire analyses and with any extra information from students that could be pertinent to the overall research analysis.

This tool was only implemented in the two focus groups at IES Bendinat. The students were told to bring a note-book to class to use for the “EIL in Poland and Spain project”. They were told to cover it, bearing in mind the theme of culture. It was also decided that, to start the students off, they would be given some guidelines (Mackey & Gass, 2005) and some introductory questions. Students were told that the idea of the diary was for them to be able to write notes about the project. They were to include their opinions on the different didactic units and the use of the blog. It was also stressed that the accounts should be accurate descriptions of their feelings and that, to make this easier, they could choose to write in English, Catalan or Spanish. For their first piece of work they were also instructed to write a short entry on “what culture means to me” and, if possible, find a definition of culture from an encyclopaedia.

Nevertheless, it was found that the students did not use their diaries unless they were given some specific work to do in them. It seemed, therefore, more appropriate to discuss the information collected from this instrument under the term “notebook” rather than “diary”. Since these notebooks did provide some important information on the participants’ perceptions of culture and on the use of the blog and the content-based lessons, it was decided to incorporate this essential information and feedback into the analysis. During the course of the research period, most students gave answers to the following questions:

1. What do you think of the blog? (November, 2010)
2. Do you think that using the blog will help improve your English? (November, 2010)
3. What would you like to learn about Poland and the Polish people? (November, 2010)
4. What is your overall opinion of working on the blog? (June, 2011)

5.7.2.2 Other data

Throughout the research period the students in the focus groups in Spain had various class assignments which BEN T believed would be useful for the study, even though they were not part of the original research design. Two of these assignments were used

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since they provided extra information on various areas of the overall study. The first was an essay on the experience of the Africa project. It included details about their project along with some comments on the projects presented by the other students involved in the project. The second essay used for our study was part of the final class exam in June, when both focus groups in Spain were asked to give their opinions on the teaching method that had been introduced that year and their overall opinion of the blog as a tool for communication in EIL.

In order to make the blog experience more meaningful for the participants, a video-conference via Skype was set up on March 14th 2011, between the students from Bendinat and the students from VPLO in Poland. This served as a means of putting faces to the names they were seeing in the blog and, above all, as motivation.

5.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The following chronogram (Table 5) shows when the data were collected using the various research tools and the times of the implementation of the didactic units during the research period 2010-2011. Crosses were used to mark the month (O–October; N–November etc.) in which the data was collected.

Table 5 Chronogram for data collection and project implementation

SCHOOL	RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	MONTH/YEAR										
		O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J		
BENDINAT, SPAIN	QT1 SDT T1 QT2 SDT T2 BLOG VIDEO-CONFERENCE		X X									X X X X
TAK & VPLO, POLAND	QT1 SDT T1 QT2 SDT T2 BLOG VIDEO-CONFERENCE		X X								X X X X	
BLOG PARTICIPATION AND DIDACTIC UNITS SPAIN AND POLAND	DO YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT ME? DIDACTIC UNIT 1 STEREOTYPES DIDACTIC UNIT 2 AFRICA DIDACTIC UNIT 3 MUSIC DIDACTIC UNIT 4 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS		X X	X X		X X	X X		X X		X X	X X

Key: QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire, QT2 – Participants’ Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire

5.8.1 Questionnaires and semantic differential test booklet

The QT1 and SDT T1 were administered to the Polish students in October/November 2010 and the QT2 and the SDT T2 in May/June 2011. Clear instructions were given to the students in English and in Polish, and the English teachers from both schools (TAK and VPLO) were available at all times to translate any queries which arose. The same procedure was followed for the students in Spain.

5.8.2 Didactic units and the “EIL in Poland and Spain blog”

The didactic units and the blog worked synchronically throughout the school year. Information for each unit was posted on the blog along with blog questions used to initiate discussion between the participants at each stage. All the posts made by the students, as individual or group entries, were then saved in the Atlas.ti7 software programme (see Section 5.9).

5.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The present research involves working with both quantitative data and qualitative data. Care was taken to assure that the results were as precise as possible. For example, in the statistical analysis of the quantitative data, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the results from the different groups and Pearson's correlation was used to reflect the linear relationship found between two variables or sets of variables.

The SPSS 19 software was used to store and analyse the data from questionnaires and the SDT. The data need to be entered into the system in numerical format, which means that qualitative data can be assigned a number code and may be treated as qualitative data if necessary. This is often necessary with open-ended questions in a questionnaire, or when student are given various options. In this case the researcher can define the variables and give number codes to the options. In the case where Likert scales are used, then each possible answer is simply assigned a number code, i.e. in the Likert style statements in the final questionnaire of this research "I strongly agree" corresponded to the code "1".

The Atlas.ti7 free software was used to store and analyse the qualitative data. This software allowed the researcher to develop a system of categories and subcategories derived from the blog interventions, the notebooks, and the essays.

5.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Every effort has been made to make the results of the study reliable. In order to preserve internal reliability, the data were randomly checked by a person who was not involved in the research. This involved checking the results that had been put on the SPSS spreadsheet, obtained from the questionnaires and from the SDT. This independent researcher also went through the qualitative data with the purpose of making a list of categories. These categories and examples were then compared with those extracted by the researcher, and no discrepancies were found. The research tools and didactic units have

been clearly explicated in order to provide information for the replication of the study, thus ensuring external reliability.

Brown and Rodgers define seven types of triangulation, three of which have been used in this research: (1) “methodological” triangulation of data adds internal validity to the results obtained since it is a way of confirming or discarding results and confirming, or not, their trustworthiness (Padgett, 1998). For example, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to assess students’ attitudes towards the transcultural methodology; (2) the use of two theoretical methods (cultural pedagogy and sociopsychology) can also be considered as “interdisciplinary” triangulation in the sense that the two approaches are able to analyse the same results in order to confirm their validity; and (3) the use of different sites of data gathering fits into the definition given by Brown and Rodgers as “location” triangulation (Brown & Rodgers, 2002: 244).

5.11 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

The most significant limitation in research of this nature is the inability to control the context. The researcher has to rely on the teachers (in this study, in Spain and Poland) to carry out the instructions provided. In the case of Poland, there was no visible evidence that the work units were carried out in the same way as in Spain, where more contact existed with the teacher and the students. For this reason the results can only be considered valid for the Spanish context. Time constraints were also a limitation. Although an original plan was devised for the implementation of six didactic units, due to the different schedules of the schools in Spain and Poland, this was not adhered to. Compromises were made resulting in two of the original units being dropped and less active participation in the didactic units by the Polish schools. This was not, however, perceived as a problem as the original research plan did not consider the Polish groups as focus groups.

During the research technological problems also arose. There were major problems with the Internet connection at the school in Spain, which meant that most of the project work had to be done by students at home. The students in Poland were lucky enough to have their English lessons in classrooms with computers.

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The fact that the decision was taken to work with teachers the researcher knew meant that the selection of students was not made with specific criteria in mind or by random. To a certain extent, it could be argued that this limits the overall generalisability of the research. However, since the principal objective is to describe the data rather than prove a hypothesis, this limitation could be an acceptable part of the process.

5.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter began with a summary of the theoretical and pedagogical issues which justify the present research and the presentation of the research questions. In order to find answers to these questions, a transcultural approach to teaching English was implemented in schools in Spain and Poland. The research is essentially qualitative in nature although some quantitative research instruments were used to allow for the triangulation of results. The principal research instrument was an on-line blog, “EIL in Spain and Poland”, which was used by students to post and discuss a variety of cultural themes and issues. As with most qualitative research, the principle aim of the study is to offer a detailed account of the process, drawing on the information yielded from the different research instruments. The final result should be a rich description of the data which will allow us to answer our research questions.

Every attempt has been made to provide a detailed description of the research context, the participants and the research tools employed in order to provide internal and external reliability in the results. This, along with the use of specific tools for qualitative and quantitative analysis, should ensure that a degree of validity is also achieved. Finally, some limitations of the research have been pointed out, which we will try to account for when drawing conclusions on the results.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and results obtained from our different research instruments. The chapter begins with an overview of the relation between our research questions and our research instruments, and how these are understood within Ting-Toomey's (1999) five functions of culture (see Section 6.1). This is followed by a review of the quantitative and qualitative data (Sections 6.2 and 6.3, respectively). The quantitative data begins with the presentation of some key linguistic and cultural background information on the participants which is important for the overall interpretation of the results. The results presented in Section 6.2 are orientated towards providing answers for our first research question (RQ1). The qualitative data section (6.3) begins with some general information on the blog posts and comments, which are later analysed in detail. The subsequent analysis forms the principal area of focus for the two remaining research questions, RQ2 and RQ3, and has been separated into three major blocks of information: 1) language use and style; 2) transcultural competence; and 3) transnational identity.

In order to set the scene, Table 6 shows the breakdown of research instruments and participants (please refer to Appendix 6 for a more detailed list of the relation between students and research tools). We can observe that not all students completed all the different parts of the research that were required for each type of group (focus – Bendinat and semi-focus – TAK/VPLO) and for this reason numbers for each research instrument may vary.

As a rule for all the analyses in this results chapter, when data were missing from some of the tests the notation N/A (no answer) was used. Whenever students did not complete a given research instrument, they were computed as lost values and were not included in the percentages drawn.

Table 6 Participants and research instruments

SCHOOL	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA			
	Q T1	Q T2	SDT T1	SDT T2	Blog	Note- book	Blog opinion	Essay - Africa
BENDINAT	42	39	41	36	40	24	31	29
TAK	20	18	20	18	16	X	X	X
VPLO	31	29	31	28	33	X	X	X

Key

QT1 – Background Information questionnaire, time 1 (October 2010)

QT2 – Participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT, time 2 (May, 2011)

SDT T1 – Semantic differential test booklet, time 1 (October 2010)

SDT T2 – Semantic differential test booklet, time 2 (May, 2011)

X – No

6.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RELATION BETWEEN RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In Chapter 5 a theoretical framework based on Ting-Toomey's (1999) functions of culture was presented along with our three research questions. In this explanatory section we will describe the areas of investigation for each research question and explain the relation between the research questions and the research instruments in more detail. Table 7 below builds on our theoretical framework (see Section 5.2) to include information on how the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from our research tools will be used to answer our research questions:

RQ1: What are our participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT?

In order to answer this question the results from the QT1 and the QT2 along with Part 1 of the SDT T1 and SDT T2 booklet will be presented. The students' opinions on the use of the blog and the learning approach (taken from students' notebooks and essays) will also be used in order to ensure that the information is as accurate as possible. More specifically, the following areas of investigation will be considered:

1. Which FLs, apart from English, were our participants studying?
2. Which other languages would our participants like to have had the opportunity to learn?

3. What were our participants' opinions on the use of the Internet for FL learning?
4. What were our participants' attitudes towards different world languages and world cultures within the context of FL learning?

There will also be a series of results from the second questionnaire which contemplate the use of the blog as a didactic tool. Students' attitudes to the blog and the didactic units worked on will form an essential part of our overall argument for (or against) the implementation of a transcultural approach to ELT. The following questions will be looked at in detail:

1. How often did the students use the blog?
2. Was the blog interface easy to use?
3. Did the students show an interest in the cultures of the other participants?
4. Were the students motivated to acquire cultural knowledge concerning the other participants?
5. Were the students motivated to study languages and culture in general?
6. What are our students' opinions on the use of a content-based approach to language learning?

RQ2: How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence?

The data used to answer this question will be both qualitative and quantitative. It will be extracted from the posts and comments made on the blog, along with some additional written material (classwork/exam work), and the second part of the SDT booklet. A detailed analysis of the qualitative data will provide a series of categories which we can associate with Jongewaard's (2001) transcultural unification theory and Ting-Toomey's (1999) skills for transcultural competency (see Section 3.1.2). These categories will allow us to discuss whether our participants show signs of becoming transculturally competent. The principal areas to be discussed are:

1. Language use and style
2. Components of transcultural competence

RQ3: Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants?

This section of results will reflect on a number of themes which emerged during the analysis of the blog with regard to finding evidence of a transnational group identity. Specific units of work, such as the unit on “Do you want to know something about me?”, “Music with a Message” and the “Cultural Snippets” sections of the blog will provide the principal material for analysis for this research question.

6.2 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Descriptive statistical analyses (frequencies) were carried out on all the quantitative research instruments. Descriptive statistics are used when the population under study, in this case the three schools in Spain and Poland, is small enough to include all the cases. Nevertheless, these statistics are not considered generalisable and are, therefore, not representative of all students learning EFL. In order to obtain results which we could generalise, where possible we have used inferential statistical analyses such as the independent sample t-test. Such tests predict the probability that the results are representative of the population. We used the SPSS 19 statistical package for all our quantitative analyses.

The results from the QT1 (Background Information Questionnaire), the QT2 (Participants’ Perceptions of a Transcultural Approach to EIL) and the SDT booklets are presented below. Essentially, these data provide insight into the attitudes that our participants have towards language and culture learning, including their attitudes towards the use of our on-line blog, “EIL in Poland and Spain”. The SDT in Part 2 of the booklet will also be significant for RQ2, where we are concerned with the different levels of ethnocentricity which our participants show, and the breaking-down of barriers between different nations. The results will be discussed in areas of interest which should make it easier to relate the information to our research questions. First of all, some background information on our participants is presented. These results will allow us to discuss the homogeneity of our groups before we continue with the results that are pertinent to RQ1.

Results

Table 7 Overview of theoretical framework and research questions

Ting-Toomey's functions of culture (1999)	Ecological Adaptation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to the language learning environment 		Cultural Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exchange of cultural information between the participants Intergroup Boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulations concerning attitudes – how attitudes are reflected in levels of ethnocentricity 		Group Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying traits which give a sense of belonging and inclusion Identity Meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying traits that construct one's identity according to the beliefs of a particular group
Research Questions	What are our participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a content-based teaching method • Use of the Internet • Use of EIL – communication between non-native speakers of English 		How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of emerging categories within the concept of transcultural competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural identity - Critical transcultural awareness - Bonding: tertiary socialisation - New and shared knowledge - Re-evaluation of worldview - Levels of ethnocentricity 		Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of common identifying traits
Research Instruments	Quantitative data Initial and final questionnaires SDT booklet (part 1)	Qualitative data Note-books and classwork/exams	Quantitative data SDT booklet (part 2)	Qualitative data Blog posts and comments, and classwork/exams	Qualitative data Blog posts and comments

6.2.1 Linguistic and cultural background information

Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the most relevant results for the first section of the background information questionnaire for all participants. At a glance, we can see that the Polish groups are homogeneous in that the participants are all from Poland, with Polish nationality and mother tongue. The only variations are seen in the cultural background area, where nearly half of the students define themselves as having a Polish background along with a European, German, North American (USA and Canada) or even international background.

The Spanish participants are far more heterogeneous in nature. Although the majority were born in Mallorca, or on the Spanish mainland, and have Spanish nationality (72.6%), we can observe that the mother tongue is often marked as “other”. Indeed, 38.1% (16 out of 42) of Spanish participants were bilingual (trilingual if we include Catalan). In our focus groups, Bendinat 1 and Bendinat 2, a total of 16 students have either one or both parents from a country other than Spain (See Appendix 5.1). In seven cases the father is Spanish and the mother is from another western European country. Only in two cases are the mothers Spanish and the fathers from another European country. In 14 out of 16 cases the students considered their mother tongue as that of their mother. It should also be pointed out that, of these 16 students, only six were from a family with an English-speaking parent, and of these six only two were from families where both parents were English. In one case, the student had lived in Mallorca for 13 years and, in the other, the student had been living in Mallorca for nearly eight years. Since all the students attended Spanish-speaking schools and spoke Spanish and Catalan with their friends, it was decided that their inclusion in the project would not have an adverse effect on the data.

These multicultural combinations were also clearly reflected in the results of the cultural background question where participants were asked to consider which of a number of cultural background options they considered more closely defined their own cultural background. As evident from the list of results, students were often unable to choose one specific cultural background and some participants marked up to four options. Many Spanish participants also differentiated between speaking Mallorcan or Standard

Catalan, and having a Mallorcan or Catalan cultural background.¹⁴ In the table of results this distinction has not been made since the information was only for the purpose of providing overall background information on our participants. Nevertheless, it is important to reflect on how the participants choose to identify themselves within Spain and highlights the ongoing campaign to promote Mallorcan as an official language, rather than a variety of Catalan.

We have also included information on travel abroad. The fifth column of the table shows the percentage of students who have at some point travelled overseas; more specifically, to other European countries. Any country that was not within Europe (western or eastern) has been classified as “other”. It should also be pointed out that, whilst generally speaking the Polish participants visited countries in both Eastern and Western Europe, the Spanish students essentially visited western European countries. This could be explained by the fact that the town of Opole is in the south western region of Poland and is very close to the German, Czech Republic and Slovak borders.

¹⁴ Mallorcan is the dialect of Catalan, which is spoken in Mallorca by over 600,000 speakers as the everyday vernacular language. It has various grammatical, phonological and lexical differences with the Standard Catalan spoken in Catalonia. Nevertheless, Standard Catalan is the language of instruction in the Mallorcan educational system (Amengual, 2011).

Table 8 Linguistic and cultural background information

SCHOOL	PLACE OF BIRTH		CITIZENSHIP		MOTHER TONGUE		CULTURAL BACKGROUND		TRAVEL ABROAD						
		N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%			
BENDINAT	Mallorca	32	76.2	Spanish	32	76.2	Spanish	16	38.1	Mallorcan/Catalan + Spanish	8	19.1	W. Europe	20	47.6
	Rest of Spain	2	4.8	W. European	8	19	Other	12	28.5	Mallorca/Catalan	8	19.1	W. Europe + other	10	23.8
	W. Europe	5	11.9	S. American	1	2.4	Catalan/Mallorcan	10	23.8	Spanish	6	14.3	Other combination	4	9.5
	S. America	3	7.1	Spanish + W European	1	2.4	Catalan + Spanish	2	4.8	Spanish + Other	5	11.9	W. + E. Europe	1	2.4
							Catalan/Spanish +	2	4.8	European	3	7.1	NO	7	16.7
										Mallorcan /Catalan + Spanish + Other	3	7.1			
									Other	5	11.9				
									International	2	4.8				
									N/A	2	4.8				
TAK	Poland	20	100	Polish	20	100	Polish	20	100	Polish	13	65	W. + E Europe	9	45
										Polish + European	7	35	W. Europe	4	20
													W. Europe + other	2	10
													E. Europe + other	2	10
													Other combination	3	15
VPLO*	Poland	31	100	Polish	31	93.9	Polish	31	100	Polish	18	58.1	W. + E. Europe	14	45.3
										Polish + European	7	22.6	W. Europe	10	32.3
										Polish + German	3	9.7	E. Europe + other	2	6.4
										Polish + N. American	2	6.4	E. Europe	1	3.2
										Polish + International	1	3.2	Other combination	1	3.2
													NO	3	9.6

*Results based on 31 questionnaire returns

Key

N – Number of students

N/A – No answer

% – Overall percentage of students per group

W – West/western

E – East/eastern

S – South/southern

N – North/northern

6.2.2 Foreign language and culture learning in ELT

Since one of the principal objectives behind RQ1 is to evaluate student attitudes towards FL and culture learning, the QT1 asked whether students were studying any other FL in school apart from English (see Table 9) and whether or not they had FL lessons out of school (Table 10). In both the QT1 and QT2 participants were also asked whether they would like to learn another language apart from those they were already learning. This question was asked at T1 (October–November, 2010) and T2 (May–June, 2011) in order to see whether the Spanish students became interested in learning Eastern European languages, such as Polish, possibly as a result of the communication throughout the year with students from the country.

Table 9 Are you studying any foreign languages at school this year apart from English?

SCHOOL	LANGUAGE(S)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
BENDINAT	German	14	33.3%
	French	2	4.8%
	No	25	59.5%
	N/A	1	2.4%
TAK	Spanish	16	80%
	German	4	20%
VPLO	German	28	90.3%
	German and Russian	2	6.5%
	Other	1	3.2%

When it comes to learning languages at school, German was the option chosen by most of the Spanish students (33.3%). This should be seen in comparison to the number of students who were not studying any other FL, a massive 59.5%, which contrasts significantly with the Polish schools, where all participants reported studying at least one other FL. Essentially, this is the expected result since the study of two FLs is compulsory in Poland, whereas in Spain only one is mandatory, with most schools choosing English as this language. Neither can we say that the Spanish students make up for this lack of foreign classes in school by attending classes out of school since the majority of those who do have classes study English, as Table 10 shows.

Table 10 Do you have any foreign language lessons out of school?

SCHOOL	LANGUAGE(S)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
BENDINAT	No	25	59.6%
	English	10	23.8%
	German	3	7.1%
	Swedish	1	2.4%
	N/A	3	7.1%
TAK	No	17	85%
	English	3	15%
VPLO*	No	31	100%

The FLs offered at secondary schools are fairly predictable in that they tend to be the most important ones in the geographic vicinity of the country or languages considered to be prestigious. In the case of Spain these languages are English, French and German and in the case of Poland, they tend to be German and Russian. Nevertheless, TAK secondary school chose to offer Spanish to their students, something that is not at all widespread in the country. In order to obtain more information on the participants' interest in learning FLs we thought it would be convenient to ask which languages they would like to learn, if any. Table 11 shows the results to this question, which was asked in both questionnaires. In all cases the students chose Western European languages over any other option, although the percentage decreased by a substantial amount at T2. What is interesting about this decrease is that, in the case of the Polish students, interest in Western European languages was transferred, in part, to eastern European languages, with Russian being the choice of language for 80% of those who chose this option.

Table 11 Are there any languages you would like to learn

SCHOOL		OPTIONS						
		No	Western European	Eastern European	Asian	Classical	Combination	N/A
	T							
BENDINAT	T1	16.7%	50.0%	2.4%	4.8%	4.8%	14.3%	7.1%
	T2	17.9%	38.5%	2.6%	12.8%	2.6%	12.8%	10.3%
TAK	T1	20.0%	60.0%	0%	15.0%	0%	55.0%	0%
	T2	27.8%	35.9%	11.1%	5.6%	0%	16.7%	
VPLO	T1	16.1%	80.6%	0%	3.2%	0%	0%	0%
	T2	23.1%	42.3%	11.5%	7.7%	0%	15.4%	

Key: T – Time, N/A – No answer

For those students who stated that they would like to learn another language apart from those already being studied, we were also interested in confirming whether the Spanish students were curious about studying Polish, and vice versa, whether the Polish students who were not already studying Spanish would want to learn that language. In the case of the Spanish students, in both QT1 and QT2 only one student (different students at each time) showed any interest in learning an Eastern European language. However, Russian was the choice of language in both cases. In the case of the Polish students, only four TAK students were not already studying Spanish. Only one of these students showed an interest in learning Spanish at both T1 and T2. In the case of VPLO, ten students stated they would like to learn Spanish at T1, but this number was reduced to nine at T2. Only six of the students from T1 also chose Spanish at T2, and there were three students who had not showed interest at T1, but who did at T2.

In our two questionnaires we also inquired about the interest and importance the participants placed on the cultural aspects of language learning. Table 12 shows the answers to our question concerning the participants' interest on the cultural aspects of language learning. If we combine the results for "very interesting" and "interesting" (highlighted), we can see that the result for Bendinat decreased quite dramatically from 83% at T1 to 47% at T2. In contrast, the results for both the Polish groups showed an increase from T1 to T2, more specifically in students who believe that it is "very interesting" at T2.

Table 12 Is it interesting to learn about the cultural aspects of the countries of the different languages you are studying?

SCHOOL		OPTIONS					
		N/A	1 Very interesting	2 Interesting	3 Sometimes interesting	4 Not very interesting	5 Boring
	T						
BENDINAT	T1	0%	35.7%	42.9%	19.0%	2.4%	0%
	T2	5.3%	13.2%	28.9%	39.5%	5.3%	7.9%
TAK	T1	0%	10.0%	35.0%	40.0%	10.0%	5.0%
	T2	0%	16.7%	33.3%	44.4%	5.6%	0%
VPLO	T1	0%	12.9%	58.1%	19.4%	9.7%	0%
	T2	0%	34.6%	50.0%	3.8%	11.5%	0%

Key: T– Time, N/A – No answer

We can observe the same trend when we inquire about the importance of culture learning in relation with the languages being studied (Table 13). However, it should be

pointed out that these questions specifically ask about the interest and importance of the culture associated with languages they are currently studying, such as English, Spanish or German.

Table 13 Do you think it is important to learn about the culture(s) associated with the language(s) you are studying?

SCHOOL	OPTIONS						
		N/A	1 Very important	2 Important	3 Sometimes important	4 Not very important	5 Bad
	T						
BENDINAT	T1	0%	33.3%	50%	16.7%	0%	0%
	T2	5.35	13.2%	34.2%	34.2%	13.2%	0%
TAK	T1	0%	15.0%	25%	55.0%	5.0%	0%
	T2	0%	16.7%	44.4%	27.8%	11.1%	0%
VPLO	T1	0%	19.4%	48.4%	29.0%	3.2%	0%
	T2	0%	28.0%	44%	24.7%	4.0%	0%

Key: T – Time, N/A – No answer

6.2.3 Attitudes towards foreign language and culture learning via the Internet

Since the principal weight of the present research falls on the use of the Internet, we were interested in finding out which languages our participants used on this medium (Table 14) and whether they thought that the Internet was a good way to practise FLs (Table 15). We asked for this information in both the QT1 and the QT2.

Table 14 Which language(s) do you use on the Internet?

SCHOOL	OPTIONS						
		N/A	Spanish */Polish	Spanish*/ Polish + English	Spanish/Polish**+ English+other	English only	Other combination
	T						
BENDINAT	T1	2.4%	35.6%	33.3%	16.7%	4.8%	7.2%
	T2	5.3%	21.1%	44.7%	23.7%	5.3%	0%
TAK	T1	0%	20.0%	50.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0%
	T2	0%	22.2%	38.9%	16.7%	16.7%	5.6%
VPLO	T1	0%	19.4%	64.5%	16.1%	0%	0%
	T2	0%	30.8%	57.7%	7.7%	3.8%	0%

* Please read as Spanish for the Spanish participants and Polish for the Polish participants

Key: T – Time, N/A – No answer

In all three schools, students reported using their native language and English as the languages they most often used. However, the Polish students relied far more on a

combination of their native language and English than the Spanish participants. At T2 all schools showed an increase in students who used English only on the Internet. The most significant group of participants were from TAK, which showed an increase of 11.7%. The Spanish students also increased the use of English on the Internet at T2, although the increase was divided between the use of English along with Spanish, and English only. Although VPLO showed an increase in the use of English only, overall there was an important rise in the use of just Polish at T2. When it came to deciding whether using English on the Internet was a good way to practise FLs (Table 15), overall, both the Spanish and the Polish groups became more positive. Though, it should be pointed out that even though the Spanish participants no longer found the use of the Internet a negative factor for practising languages, the positive opinion also decreased at T2.

Table 15 Do you think that the Internet is a good way to practise foreign languages?

SCHOOL	T	OPTIONS					
		N/A	1 Very good	2 Quite good	3 OK	4 Not very good	5 Bad
BENDINAT	T1	2.4%	21.4%	26.2%	26.2%	21.4%	2.4%
	T2	2.6%	18.4%	34.2%	31.6%	13.2%	0%
TAK	T1	5%	40.0%	35.0%	15.0%	0%	5%
	T2	0%	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	0%	0%
VPLO	T1	0%	22.6%	19.4%	58.1%	0%	0%
	T2	%	26.9%	42.3%	23.1%	7.7%	0%

Key: T = Time, N/A – No answer

6.2.4 Attitudes towards the implementation of a transcultural approach to ELT

This section will report on the results of statements (S) 1 to 75 from the QT2. The principal objective in this section of the questionnaire was to compile information that would allow us to analyse the overall use of the blog along with the opinions of the participants concerning various aspects of the project. The Likert-style statements required the student to state their degree of agreement or disagreement (1=I strongly agree, 5=I strongly disagree), except for statements 1-13, where students had to state the frequency that something was carried out (1=never, 5=very often). The statements are

reproduced here in English but the students completed the tests in either Spanish or Polish. The results have been subdivided into the following areas:

1. Frequency of blog use (12 statements).
2. Students' perceptions of language competence and use of EIL (17 statements).
3. Blog use – technical issues (10 statements).
4. Transnational boundaries (18 statements).
5. Translingual aspects (12 statements).
6. Content-based learning (6 statements)

Tables 16-22 show the mean scores for each question along with the standard deviation (SD) for each school. At the bottom of each column we have also provided an overall mean score for each school. It is also important to check the reliability of the questionnaire when using Likert scales. This was done by running a Cronbach's alpha test on SPSS. After removing S17, S29, S30, S31 and S62, results showed a reliability alpha of .835 for Bendinat, .702 for TAK and .796 for VPLO, all of which are an indication of reasonable internal consistency for the Polish groups and good internal consistency for Bendinat (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). This allowed us to run a one-way ANOVA test on each of our sections to see whether there was any significant statistical difference in the inter-group results. Another fact to consider is that the overall mean cannot always be interpreted as denoting positiveness or negativeness towards the themes of the sections themselves due to the nature of the individual questions within each section. That is, some of the statements are positive in nature and others are negative. This means that what are more important in the following sections are the mean scores for the individual statements.

6.2.4.1 Frequency of blog use

The first area of interest is the frequency of blog use (Table 16). The overall mean scores showed little difference between the three schools. An ANOVA confirmed this ($F(1.217, .466)=2.610, p=.089$). Although the ANOVA showed that the difference in the overall mean scores for the three groups was not statistically significant, a closer

look at the results for each question did highlight some important information. For example, the students from VPLO had a far higher mean for S1, S2, S3 and S4, which referred directly to the frequency that they visited, read or added a post to the blog. This could point towards the importance of the interest and the motivational skills of their teacher. The students may be more likely to use the blog when they have already discussed the issues in class. It is important to draw attention to the fact that, for the students from VPLO, the blog was not a new way of doing classwork: it had been introduced by the teacher the year before. Nevertheless, although they were accustomed to the technicalities concerning the blog, its use for international communication was something quite novel.

One important result that we would like to highlight is the fact that the students from VPLO spent a fair amount of time discussing the posts and comments in class (Researcher's field diary). This may well be the principal reason why they were also the group who stated that they visited the blog and read the post and comments more frequently. The students from VPLO were also those that most often worked with a partner or in small groups. This is confirmed in Tables 30 and 31 (Section 6.3.3), where we detail the number of posts and comments made by the participants.

Table 16 Frequency of blog use

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
HOW OFTEN DID YOU....?						
S1 ...visit the blog	2.16	.87	2.78	.88	3.21	.88
S2 ...read the posts	2.18	1.09	2.83	.92	3.39	.92
S3 ...read the comments	2.18	1.14	2.56	.92	2.93	.90
S4 ...add a new post	1.95	.73	2.12	.93	2.50	.58
S5 ...comment on someone's post	1.95	.90	2.12	.86	2.43	1.03
S6 ...answer a comment on one of your posts	2.32	1.45	2.06	1.47	2.32	1.22
S7 ...ask the Polish/Spanish students about things they had written which you did not understand	1.50	.80	1.06	.24	1.32	.61
S8 ...ask the Polish/Spanish students about things you found interesting	1.92	.98	1.44	.71	2.11	1.10
S9 ...ask for information about Poland/Spain	1.71	.90	1.11	.32	1.89	1.17
S10 ...work on your own on the blog	2.76	1.26	3.17	1.30	3.36	1.16
S11 ...work in pairs or in a group on the blog	3.32	1.25	2.83	1.30	3.93	.81
S12 ...talk about the posts and comments in class	2.32	1.07	2.89	.83	3.82	.91
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	2.19	.48	2.25	.72	2.77	.80

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 – False (I do not agree), SD – Standard deviation

6.2.4.2 Participants' perceptions of language competence and use of EIL on the blog

The principal focus of this set of statements (see Table 17) was to obtain the students' views of the blog as a valid tool of instruction in the EFL class. We were interested in their perceptions of the role the blog had for language learning. An ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between the groups in relation to their perspectives of their language competence and use of EIL on the blog. The results highlighted significant differences between the groups ($F(3.766, .399)=9.447, p=.001$). A Games-Howell post-hoc revealed that the differences in the results between Bendinat ($M=3.44$) and VPLO ($M=2.60$) was significant at the .001 level. Although not statistically different ($p= .011$), the results for TAK neared significance and suggested that the participants from this school were comparable to those from Bendinat.

A closer look at these statistics suggests that VPLO had a more positive experience with the blog than TAK or BENDINAT since the statements were nearer to true (1) than to false (5) on the Likert scale. For example, the results for S13, S18 and S19 suggest that the students from VPLO believed that their level of English and, more importantly, their confidence in writing in English had improved as a result of using the blog. The mean score for these participants was between 2.5 and 2.79. In contrast the mean scores for TAK and BENDINAT were between 3.3 and 4.2. The results for VPLO coincide with their positive reports on grammar and vocabulary learning as a result of their blog interventions (S22 and S23). This is not true for Bendinat and TAK, but again it could possibly be due to the fact that they are not accustomed to using a blog in their English classes. This is also relevant if we compare these answers to S16. Here, the Bendinat and TAK groups believed that they would learn more English by writing to native English speakers, whereas the VPLO group pointed towards the belief that this would not be of benefit to them.

Another interesting point is that of language spontaneity. The Bendinat participants appear to believe that grammatical correctness in their use of English is important (S28), which may explain why they feel that their English is not particularly spontaneous (S26). VPLO think quite differently: they report positively on spontaneity

in their use of language, the importance of the message and the role of the blog in providing a place where this communication can take place (S32). This is an essential quality in CMC. Nevertheless, both Bendinat and TAK feel that face-to-face communication is easier than virtual communication (S20).

Table 17 Participants' perceptions of language competence and use of EIL on the blog

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
S13 I have more confidence writing in English since using the blog	3.66	1.34	3.28	1.49	2.61	.88
S14 Before using the blog I worried about writing in English	3.63	1.38	4.72	.58	2.50	1.29
S15 Now I don't worry about my level of English when I use the blog	3	1.47	2.83	1.58	2.75	1.24
S16 I would learn more writing to native English speakers	2.76	1.46	2.17	1.38	3.29	.98
S43 I like using English to talk about a variety of things	2.71	1.43	2.28	1.36	2.21	.96
S18 The blog has helped me improve my English	3.89	11.18	4.17	.92	2.50	1.07
S19 In class I am more confident when I write in English	3.42	1.48	3.61	1.09	2.79	.92
S20 I think it is easier to communicate on the blog rather than face to face	3.03	1.50	4	1.19	2.46	1.35
S21 Writing on the blog in an informal way has given me more confidence to talk in class	3.61	1.31	3.94	1.16	2.63	1.08
S22 I have learnt a lot of vocabulary by reading the posts and comments on the blog	3.89	1.16	4.33	.767	2.64	1.13
S23 I have learnt a lot of grammar by reading the posts and comments on the blog	4.03	1.10	4.5	.62	3.14	.97
S24 The blog has encouraged me to enter chats and blogs in English	3.87	1.32	4.28	.96	3	1.25
S25 If I didn't understand a word I would look it up in the dictionary	3.45	1.50	2.56	1.62	1.89	1.23
S26 My English was more spontaneous on the blog	3.53	1.25	3.44	1.04	2.32	.95
S27 I would prefer to write to native English speakers	3.13	1.56	2.22	1.40	3.36	1.10
S28 The message is more important than the correct grammatical form	3.11	1.31	1.89	1.32	1.86	1.04
S32 The blog was an interesting place to practise my English	3.71	1.11	3.28	1.53	2.18	1.34
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.44	.41	3.38	.91	2.60	.44

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 – False (I do not agree), SD – Standard deviation

6.2.4.3 Blog use and technical issues

This section is similar to the section on language competence and use of EIL on the blog, but it focuses on the technical issues. The ANOVA showed that there was no significance in the overall results for this section ($F(1.543, .502)=3.076, p=.063$). However, the p value was close to the .05 cut-off level and the post-hoc revealed that the differences in the results for Bendinat and VPLO were veering towards significance.

A closer look at the results for the individual statements in the section (see Table 18 below) suggests that the students from TAK and Bendinat felt that the blog was not an easy-to-use instrument. On the other hand, The VPLO students reported it to be easy. Once again, this highlights the previous blog experience of the VPLO students, who were more “blog literate”. They were clearly not only more accustomed to the blog layout, but also more acquainted with the specific vocabulary used on the blog interface. When it comes to the overall enjoyment of the blog, mean scores for S38 reveal that students from TAK and Bendinat had negative views in comparison to VPLO, although the Bendinat students did have positive attitudes towards the projects they worked on for the blog.

Table 18 Blog use – technical issues

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
S33 The blog was easy to use	3.68	1.34	3.61	1.42	1.82	1.16
S34 I prefer to use Facebook	2.37	1.69	1.89	1.37	2.89	1.40
S35 I have learnt a lot of ‘blog’ vocabulary	3.97	.97	3.67	1.28	2.46	1.11
S36 I would like to continue using the blog to write spontaneous comments	3.63	1.42	3.83	1.30	2.29	1.08
S37 I would like to use the blog to talk about things that are happening in the world	3.82	1.25	3.78	1.51	3.29	5.89
S38 I didn’t like using the blog	2.37	1.30	2.50	1.38	4.21	1.03
S39 I didn’t like using the Internet to learn languages	3.53	1.50	1.89	1.83	2.25	1.04
S40 I didn’t like reading the posts and comments	3.42	1.45	3.17	1.51	1.96	.79
S41 I liked making spontaneous posts and comments	3.82	1.11	3.61	1.04	2.43	1.00
S42 I enjoyed the projects we did in class for the blog	2.55	1.39	3.28	1.27	2	1.16
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.32	.63	3.12	.76	2.56	.73

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 – False (I do not agree), SD = Standard deviation

6.2.4.4 Transnational boundaries

The statements in this section have been chosen to extract information on the participants' attitudes towards learning about other cultures, and whether working on the "EIL in Poland and Spain" project has influenced them. The results are presented in Table 19. Once again, the ANOVA showed significance in the statistical analysis ($F(3.177, .505)=6.286, p=.004$). A Tukey post-hoc revealed that there was significant difference in the overall mean scores for Bendinat ($M=3.32$) and VPLO (2.57) at .005 and also between TAK ($M=3.12$) and VPLO at .03. Having said this, there were also some important aspects in which the three groups were in agreement. For example, they agreed that the Polish and Spanish are different from each other (S44), probably due to cultural differences (S46). One of the propositions of the blog was to encourage an interest in the cultural aspects of other countries and their languages. The results show that the students from VPLO have significantly more positive attitudes towards the use of the blog as a cultural tool (S49, S50, S51, S52 and S53) than either Bendinat or TAK. The results of the students from VPLO revealed fairly positive attitudes and interest towards Spain, the Spanish students and other cultures in general. Nevertheless, this also contrasted with their results for S64, where they did not consider themselves as multicultural, whereas the students from Spain did. A possible explanation is that the VPLO students see the blog as a possible tool for cultural growth, whereas the Spanish students' perception of themselves is already multicultural.

Table 19 Transnational boundaries

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
S44 The Polish (Spanish) are very different from the Spanish (Polish)	2.61	1.26	2.61	1.04	2.57	.92
S45 Poland (Spain) is a very interesting country	3.03	1	1.89	1.02	1.36	.73
S46 The Polish (Spanish) culture is very similar to the Spanish (Polish)	3.45	1	3.33	.907	3.39	.97
S47 I have similar interests to the Polish (Spanish)	3.58	1.03	3	1.24	2.96	1.00
S48 I prefer the Spanish (Polish) culture over any other	2.82	1.31	2.67	1.03	3.25	1.04
S49 Working on the blog has sparked an interest in other cultures	3.82	1.27	3.78	1.17	2.57	1.14
S50 A blog is an interesting place to learn about other countries	3.29	1.33	3.11	1.45	1.82	.86

Table 19 cont.

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Q51 A blog is an interesting place to learn about global issues	2.92	1.46	3.39	1.20	2.18	.86
S52 The more I know about another country the more I become interested in learning the language	2.92	1.32	3	1.46	2.21	.96
S53 The more I learn about another culture the more I identify with it	3.26	1.06	3.11	1.13	2.21	.88
S54 I have made new friends through the blog	4.18	1.21	4.33	1.03	3.43	1.20
S55 I have added Polish (Spanish) students to my Facebook/Tuenti etc.	4.37	1.32	4	1.53	4.48	1.01
S56 I would like to meet the students from Opole in person	3.32	1.19	2.33	1.28	1.93	1.09
S57 I could learn about many other cultures talking to people on the blog	3.29	1.27	3	1.37	1.79	.96
S58 I would like to add other English language students to the blog	3.34	1.32	3.72	1.27	2.43	1.10
S59 I would like to visit Poland (Spain)	2.71	1.29	2.06	1.59	1.50	1.14
S60 I would like to visit Opole (Mallorca)	2.92	1.34	1.78	1.11	1.39	1.10
S64 I consider myself multicultural	2.63	1.38	4.33	4.58	3.07	1.18
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.28	.48	3.08	.77	2.47	.83

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 – False (I do not agree), SD = Standard deviation

6.2.4.5 Translingual aspects

This section deals with the participants' attitudes towards FLs and foreign cultures as an instrument for self improvement. In other words, an attempt is being made to understand whether students are motivated to learn about other languages and cultures, especially as an area of knowledge which is important for their future L2 'selves' (Dörnyei, 2009). The overall mean scores for each group were very similar (see Table 20 below) and this was confirmed by the ANOVA, which revealed no significant differences between schools ($F(.538, .826)=2.610, p=.08$). All students had very positive attitudes towards the importance of English for their future adult lives and appreciated its value when working and travelling abroad as well as for their immediate future as working adults. Although they also placed importance on the learning of other European languages (S68), languages such as Chinese or Russian did not seem to be considered as important for their future. The Polish students acknowledged an interest in learning Spanish, but the Spanish students did not profess interest in learning Polish.

Table 20 Translingual aspects

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
S61 When I use English I feel I belong to a group of international speakers	3.11	1.56	2.33	1.23	1.89	.85
63 I consider myself multilingual	2.55	1.20	2.72	1.36	3.39	1.20
S65 If I have a good level of English I will be able to live/work abroad	1.68	1.28	1.47	.72	1.61	.92
S66 If I have a good level of English I will be able to study a good career	1.89	1.31	1.5	.71	1.54	.88
S67 If I have a good level of English I will be able to travel around the world	1.61	1.29	1.44	.78	1.54	.92
S68 Learning other European languages apart from English, is very important for my future	2.34	1.26	2	.97	2	1.05
S69 English is very important for my future	1.58	1.18	1.5	1.04	1.43	.84
S70 I would like to learn Portuguese	3.79	1.18	3.17	1.38	2.89	1.09
S71 I would like to learn Chinese	3.39	1.39	2.83	1.51	3.61	1.26
S72 I would like to learn Polish (Spanish)	3.87	1.26	2.47	1.28	2.57	1.29
S73 I would like to learn Swedish	3.47	1.48	3.61	1.46	3.79	1.29
S74 I would like to learn Russian	3.55	1.27	2.56	1.58	3.50	1.53
OVERALL MEAN SCORES	2.74	.89	2.30	.73	2.48	.92

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 – False (I do not agree), SD = Standard deviation

6.2.4.6 Content-based learning

Statements 75-80 (Table 21) were only included in the QT2 for our focus group in Spain. Since these students have the experience of CLIL learning, it seemed appropriate to inquire about the content-based methodology implemented for the project in comparison to their traditional English classes and to their CLIL subjects (in this case, history and geography). S78 is possibly the only important result since it points towards the success of a methodological approach which does not always rely on a course-book. Nevertheless, as for the other statements, although the results are not especially conclusive, they still represent an overall positive attitude.

Table 21 Content-based learning

	BENDINAT	
	MEAN	SD
Q75 I have enjoyed working on various projects in my English class	2.5	1.33
Q76 I prefer having my geography and history classes in English rather than Spanish	2.74	1.59
Q77 I prefer to learn about things to do with history and geography in my English class	2.82	1.27
Q78 I am more motivated in class when we don't use the course-book	1.97	1.28
Q79 Learning about other countries and cultures in my English class is interesting	2.26	1.22
Q80 It is easier to talk about a wide range of topics in my English class because I don't need to memorise everything for a history or geography exam	2.58	1.27
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	2.48	.32

Key: 1 – True (I agree) / 5 = False (I do not agree), SD = Standard deviation

We now turn our attention to a question which was asked in both questionnaires (QT1 and QT2) to all the Spanish participants concerning the interest they may have in pursuing a content-based approach to FL learning, and which we feel reveals some interesting information about CLIL. Students were asked about their interest in learning a subject such as history, geography or science within a language immersion context (Table 22). For a correct interpretation of the results to this statement we need to take into account that the Polish students do not have any CLIL classes in their school syllabus. In contrast, only four of the Spanish students did not study a CLIL context in the year that this project was implemented (2010-2011). At the beginning of the school year, the results of this question in QT1 showed that the Spanish students found the CLIL learning context as “very interesting” or “interesting”. At T2 (QT2), similarly, nearly 72% were also in favour of CLIL, although the percentages for “very interesting” and “interesting” were inverted.

For the Polish participants the situation is quite different. The results showed that at both T1 and T2 they did not feel that a CLIL learning context would be of much interest. In fact, the results were even more negative at T2. Since we did not ask these students statements 75-80, we cannot come to any clear conclusions as to whether they had interpreted the question as implying the transcultural context, where we based our didactic units on content-based approaches to teaching, or whether they truly understood the difference. However, the fact that the Polish participants *did* evaluate positively Statement 42 (Section 6.2.4.3) leads us to believe that although they enjoyed

doing project work that encumbered a number of different content contexts, they are reluctant to actually learn important content material through a CLIL approach.

Table 22 Do you think that studying a subject such as history, geography or science in a foreign language is or would be an interesting way to learn a language?

SCHOOL	OPTIONS						
			1 Very interesting	2 Interesting	3 Sometimes interesting	4 Not very interesting	5 Boring
	Time	N/A					
Bendinat	T1	7.3%	46.4%	31.7%	14.6%	0%	0%
	T2	5.3%	28.9%	44.7%	13.3%	7.9%	0%
TAK	T1	0%	15.0%	25.0%	40%	10.0%	10.0%
	T2	0%	22.2%	16.7%	16.7%	22.2%	22.2%
VPLO	T1	0%	9.7%	29.0%	22.6%	32.3%	6.5%
	T2	0%	3.8%	19.2%	30.8%	38.5%	7.7%

Key: N/A – No answer

6.2.5 Semantic differential test booklet

As explained in Chapter 5, the SDT booklet was divided into two parts. The first part comprised a series of 12 statements concerning the interest and usefulness of learning different languages and learning about different cultures. Participants were asked to grade the statements on two SDSs (“boring-interesting” and “not useful-useful”). The second part of the SDT booklet was a semantic differential test. When analysing the two parts of the SDT booklet, only those participants who had completed both the SDT T1 and the SDT T2 were included. The circumstance also arose that some SDT booklets, or part of them, had been completed haphazardly. Thus, some SDT booklets were removed from the analysis when too many statements had been ignored or when there was evidence that they had been completed randomly. When only one or two answers were missing and it could be interpreted that the participant had not purposely left the question unanswered, then the average of the three or four remaining answers was computed and this mean score was used to complete the missing information. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that this strategy was only resorted to when the participant had completed at least 95% of the booklet in the required format.

6.2.5.1 Language and culture attitudes

Part 1 of the SDT booklet provided relevant information on general attitudes towards FL and culture learning. The results will help us discuss our first research question and the information will help to endorse or to provide further information on some of the items in our questionnaires. Tables 23 and 24 show the mean scores for each statement for each participating school (the full results, along with the SD for each mean score and the results of the simple paired t-test, can be found in Appendix 8.1.1). As explained at the beginning of this chapter, only the booklets of those participants who completed the tests in an acceptable fashion at both T1 and T2 were included. As a result of this requirement, nine tests from Bendinat, two tests from TAK and six tests from VPLO were removed from the analysis.

To make interpretation easier, Table 23 reflects the scores for Statements 1-6 on language learning attitudes and Table 24 shows the mean scores for Statements 7-12 on attitudes towards culture learning. The left hand-side columns show the results for the “boring-interesting” dichotomy and the right hand-side columns show the results for the “not useful-useful” dichotomy. At the bottom of each column there is an overall mean for the six statements. At a glance, the overall mean scores in Table 23 show that there was little difference between the T1 and T2 scores for each school and that the scores for usefulness of language learning were higher than the scores for interest. However, the scores for culture learning were essentially the same concerning interest and usefulness (Table 24). Although not significant, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the Bendinat students showed an increase in their perceptions of the usefulness of knowledge concerning Eastern European cultures. For the Spanish students, this was the only item in this section which increased in usefulness at T2. A similar situation occurred with the students from VPLO although, rather than show an increase, the percentage remained the same. Only the TAK students demonstrated an increase in all options concerning the usefulness of cultural knowledge.

When we looked at the results for each statement at T1 and T2, a simple paired t-test revealed that there was significant differences for statements 2A (Sig.-.016), 5A (Sig.-.028), 5B (Sig.-.017) and 10A (Sig.-.035), with statements 8A (Sig.-.060) and 12B (Sig.-.060) nearing significance for Bendinat and statement 11A (Sig.-.067) nearing

significance for VPLO. In the case of statement 2A, by consulting the SPSS table which included all the data from the initial and final questionnaire along with the SDT, it was easy to identify those students who had stated that their interest had increased. Indeed, 16 of the 33 participants who were computed in the SDT part 1 test at T1 and T2 stated an increase in interest. Of these 16 students, 12 were students who were not studying either French or German.

In order to establish whether there was any significance in the mean scores, we proceeded to analyse the results with a one-way ANOVA (Appendix 8.2). Our question was, therefore, “does the degree of positiveness towards language learning or culture learning vary according to the group?” (i.e. Bendinat, TAK and VPLO). Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance determined that equal variances were met as the p-value (Sig.) for all our variables except Statements 1A-6A (T1 and T2) and statements 7A-12A (T1) was above .05. As a result, we were only able to consult the ANOVA results for those mean scores which complied with the equal variance assumption. The ANOVA ascertained that there were no significant differences between the three groups’ mean scores.

Table 23 Attitudes towards learning languages

STATEMENTS (not interesting-interesting)	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO		STATEMENTS (not useful-useful)	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2		T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
1A Studying languages in general is <i>boring – interesting</i>	5.06	5.27	5.00	5.39	5.77	5.69	1B Studying languages in general is <i>not useful – useful</i>	6.55	6.48	6.56	6.67	6.54	6.46
2A Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>boring - interesting</i>	3.88	4.67	3.78	3.67	4.38	3.92	2B Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	5.30	5.88	5.17	5.28	5.19	4.92
3A Studying English is <i>boring – interesting</i>	4.97	4.88	5.94	5.89	6.31	5.96	3B Studying English is <i>not useful – useful</i>	6.70	6.61	6.83	6.67	6.69	6.81
4A Studying languages like Italian, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish or Dutch, etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	4.79	5.06	4.72	5.11	5.12	5.04	4B Studying languages like Italian, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish or Dutch, etc. would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.76	5.55	5.00	4.67	4.92	4.96
5A Studying languages like Bulgarian, Russian, Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	3.45	4.36	4.39	4.39	4.73	4.42	5B Studying languages like Bulgarian, Russian, Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	3.94	4.94	4.33	3.89	4.35	4.54
6A Studying other “world” languages is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	4.33	4.91	4.94	4.89	5.04	5.23	6B Studying other “world” languages is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.67	5.09	4.78	5.06	4.85	5.08
OVERALL MEAN*	4.42	4.85	4.80	4.90	5.23	5.05	OVERALL MEAN	5.32	5.76	5.46	5.36	5.43	5.45

*Overall means may differ slightly due to the rounding up of decimals

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2, 1 – boring / 7 – interesting, 1 – not useful / 7 – useful

Results

Table 24 Attitudes towards culture learning

STATEMENTS (not interesting-interesting)	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO		STATEMENTS (not useful-useful)	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2		T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
7A Studying my own culture is <i>boring – interesting</i>	4.39	4.94	4.56	4.89	5.88	5.62	7B Studying my own culture is <i>not useful – useful</i>	5.25	5.13	5.06	5.39	5.54	5.38
8A Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>boring – interesting</i>	5.15	4.42	5.00	5.11	5.73	5.62	8B Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.97	4.81	4.94	5.00	5.62	5.42
9A Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	5.18	4.76	4.83	5.00	5.58	5.31	9B Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.78	4.72	4.06	5.06	5.42	5.00
10A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France, Germany, Italy, Portugal or Denmark, etc. is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	5.15	4.48	4.44	4.67	5.50	4.96	10B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France, Germany, Italy, Portugal or Denmark, etc. is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.88	4.78	4.22	4.78	4.81	4.77
11A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	4.45	4.00	4.22	4.56	5.42	4.77	11B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	4.13	4.66	4.39	4.44	4.58	4.58
12A Learning about “world” cultures is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	5.36	4.85	4.83	4.61	5.96	5.50	12B Learning about “world” cultures is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	5.53	4.78	4.56	5.06	5.23	4.81
OVERALL MEAN	4.95	4.59	4.62	4.80	5.68	5.28	OVERALL MEAN	4.92	4.81	4.54	4.94	5.2	4.97

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2, 1 – boring / 7 – interesting, 1 – not useful / 7 – useful

We were also interested in ascertaining whether the difference, if any, in the overall mean scores for T1 and T2 was significant. For this we used a paired t-test (Tables 25, 26 and 27). If the sig. value is greater than .05 then we must assume that there is no significant difference in the pre- and post- mean scores. This means that in both language attitudes and culture attitudes there was no overall increase in perceptions of interest or usefulness after participating in the project.

Table 25 Bendinat: semantic differential Part 1

STATEMENTS	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A – 6A	T1	4.42	1.45	-1.678	32	.103
1A – 6A	T2	4.85	1.66			
1B – 6B	T1	5.32	1.20	-1.684	32	.102
1B – 6B	T2	5.76	1.14			
7A – 12A	T1	4.95	1.21	1.193	32	.1242
7A – 12A	T2	4.59	1.53			
7B – 12B	T1	4.92	1.36	.410	31	.685
7B – 12B	T2	4.81	1.26			

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2, SD – Standard deviation, t – t-value, df – Degrees of freedom, Sig. – P-value

Table 26 TAK: semantic differential Part 1

STATEMENTS	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A – 6A	1	4.80	1.40	-.388	17	.703
1A – 6A	2	4.90	1.15			
1B – 6B	1	5.46	1.08	.458	17	.653
1B – 6B	2	5.36	1.00			
7A – 12A	1	4.62	1.35	-.804	17	.432
7A – 12A	2	4.80	1.51			
7B – 12B	1	4.54	1.17	-1.252	17	.227
7B – 12B	2	4.94	1.47			

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2, SD – Standard deviation, t – t-value, df – Degrees of freedom, Sig. – P-value

Table 27 VPLO: semantic differential Part1

STATEMENTS	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A – 6A	1	5.23	.90	.918	25	.368
1A – 6A	2	5.05	.96			
1B – 6B	1	5.43	.92	-.109	25	.914
1B – 6B	2	5.45	.87			
7A – 12A	1	5.68	.68	2.001	18	.056
7A – 12A	2	5.28	1.10			
7B – 12B	1	5.20	.83	1.137	18	.266
7B – 12B	2	4.97	.94			

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2, SD – Standard deviation, t – t-value, df – Degrees of freedom, Sig. – P-value

6.2.5.2 Levels of ethnocentricity

Our research tool for measuring ethnocentrism was Part 2 of the SDT booklet. It was the combined SDS and cultural distance test. Six bipolar pairs of adjectives were chosen for the analysis in the seven-point SDT: 1) friendly – unfriendly; 2) polite – rude; 3) honest – dishonest; 4) kind – cruel; 5) hardworking – lazy; and 6) well-educated – poorly-educated. For each school an average was obtained for each cultural dimension (I, my friends, the Spanish (the Polish), the French, the Germans, the Polish (the Spanish) and the North Americans [USA and Canada]) and for each bipolar pair of adjectives. Although the SDT was comprised of ten cultural dimensions, two were removed (the Mallorcans [the Russians] and the South Americans. It was not necessary to include all the groups of people since our principal objective with this test was to assess the ethnocentric or ethnorelative attitudes of the Spanish participants towards the Polish and vice-versa.

In order to obtain an overall mean score, the eight results were summed and divided by eight. Since we are not concerned with individual scores at this moment, the complete results will not be reported here, only the overall mean scores for each school and for each cultural distance dimension (Table 28). The complete analysis can be found in Appendix 8.3. The group mean scores were also checked for internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha analysis. The closer the alpha to 1.0, the greater the internal reliability of all the items on the scale. An alpha of $> .9$ is regarded as excellent, an alpha of $> .8$ is good and an alpha of $> .6$ is acceptable (George & Mallery, 2002). In the case of Bendinat, a level of .898 was reported, which is considered highly reliable. The

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variables “I am” at T1 and T2 were the only items which showed that, should they be removed, the alpha rating would be more reliable. The Cronbach’s alpha for TAK showed extremely poor reliability (.223). VPLO reported an alpha of .794, of which the variables “The French T1” (.846) and “the Polish” T2 (.801) could be removed to make the alpha even higher. Due to the fact that the test was the same for all three schools and the overall group means were not dissimilar (see Table 28), these variables were not removed.

It is also worth commenting that, in some of the booklets which were not considered for analysis, some students just put a line through those groups that they felt they did not know or else wrote “I don’t know”. When I asked the Bendinat students about this, they said that they had never met anyone from these countries and so could not say what they were like.

Results

Table 28 SDT Part 2

SCHOOL	STATEMENT															
	I am		My friends are		The Spanish / Polish are*		The Germans are		The French are		The British are		The North Americans are		The Polish / Spanish are**	
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
BENDINAT	2.32	2.25	2.49	2.61	3.28	3.34	3.34	3.47	3.16	3.44	2.93	2.82	3.32	3.36	3.27	3.57
TAK	2.61	2.82	2.67	2.83	3.82	3.33	3.69	3.99	3.73	3.44	3.22	3.34	3.51	3.02	3.12	3.13
VPLO	2.68	2.55	3.03	2.80	3.54	3.45	3.51	3.48	3.54	3.51	2.78	2.90	3.57	3.80	3.03	3.12

*Please read as Spanish for the Spanish students and Polish for the Polish students.

**Please read as Polish for the Spanish students and Spanish for the Polish students.

Key: T1 – SDT T1 / T2 – SDT T2

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The following graphs show a comparison of the levels of ethnocentrism on a scale of 1 to 7 for T1 (Figure 9) and T2 (Figure 10) for our three schools. These visual representations of the results from Table 28 clearly show that at both T1 and T2 the levels of ethnocentrism were fairly similar when it came to the students' assessments of themselves and their friends. The means for their own national groups, the Germans, and the French were slightly higher but similar. Levels then decreased for the British in all three cases, although slightly less for the TAK students, but, rather surprisingly, they rose again for the North Americans at T1 for all three schools. However, at T2, TAK moved closer to the North Americans (in terms of ethnocentrism), whilst VPLO appeared to move further away. The Spanish students maintained a similar position to T1. The most startling position on the graph is the move away from Poland by the Spanish students at T2, especially when we consider that, out of the three groups, the Chronbach's alpha for the Spanish group reported their results as the most reliable. This may indicate that the communication between the Spanish and the Polish participants has not managed to break through the intergroup boundary determined by levels of ethnocentrism, at least with regard to the Spanish students.

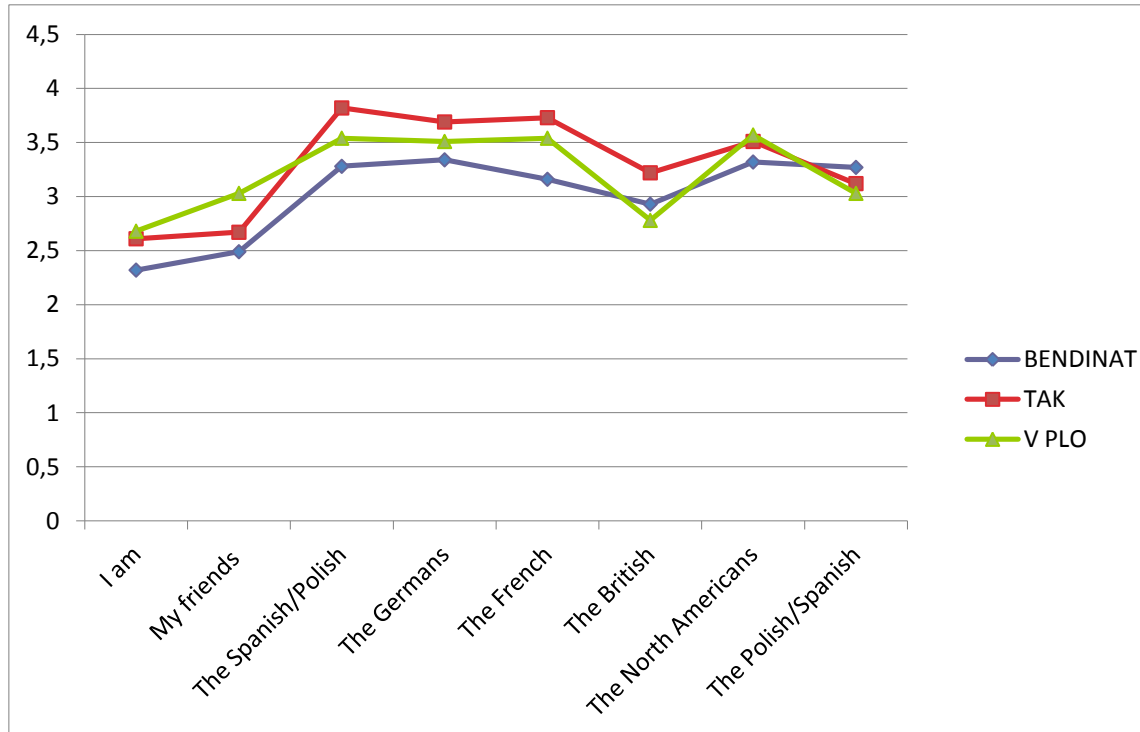


Figure 9 Levels of ethnocentrism T1

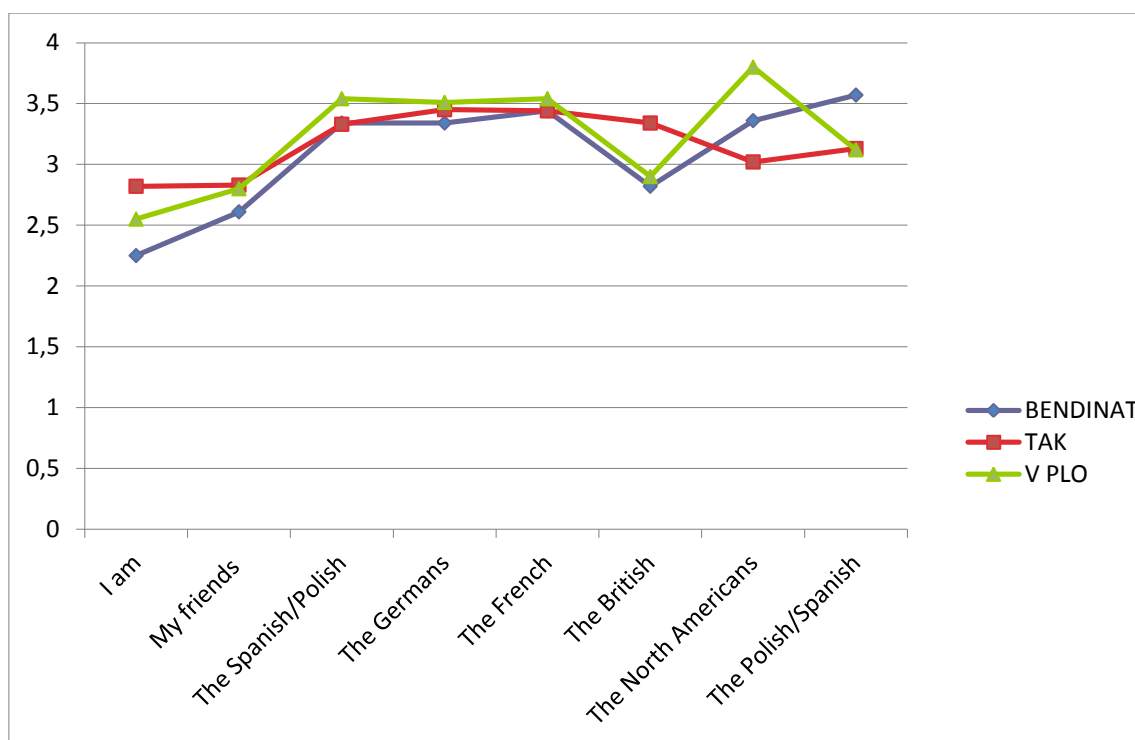


Figure 11 Levels of ethnocentrism T2

6.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

The qualitative data comprised the posts (P) and comments (C) made by the participants on the blog by all three school groups. Some additional data was obtained from Bendinat, our focus group, from resources such as the cultural notebooks, an essay on project work (Africa), and questions about the project given to students by the teacher as part of their exams. All this material was stored and coded according to patterns and themes which were considered significant for our research questions, using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti7. The data from this analysis will allow us to discuss our second and third research questions.

Table 29 shows a breakdown of the codes (a complete breakdown of the number of times a code was counted for each blog unit or section can be found in Appendix 9). Some features appeared more than once in a particular post or comment, but these have been counted as one occurrence. Likewise, most posts and comments have numerous codes attached. For this reason, it should be understood that, in the presentation of results below, some posts fulfil more than one coding category. Codes were divided into

three principal groups; 1) language use and style; 2) transcultural communication; and 3) self and group identifying issues. Before analysing the results from the blog, two short sections which deal with students' understandings of culture and attitudes towards the transcultural approach will be presented.

Table 29 Codes for blog analysis

Principal categories	Codes	Sub-codes
Language use and style	Colloquial oral features	Ellipsis Emphasis Exaggeration Code-mixing/switching Informal lexical choices Informal greetings/farewells Informal morphemic choices Onomatopoeic spellings
	Metalinguistic features	Linguistic correction Linguistic observation
	Characteristics of CMC	Emoticons and graphics Abbreviations and shorthand Visual and audiovisual content
Transcultural competence	Cultural identity	Positive effect of stereotypes Negative effect of stereotypes Levels of ethnocentricity
	Critical transcultural awareness	Political awareness Defence of human rights Consumerist society
	Bonding: tertiary socialisation	Humour Music Sport/hobbies Interpersonal trust/WTC
	New and shared knowledge	Spain/Poland ICT Sharing of knowledge through projects carried out as part of course-work
	Re-evaluation of one's view of the world	
A transnational identity	Self/group identifying features	Music Sports CMC Social networking On-line games

6.3.1 Students' understandings of "culture"

Since this dissertation is ultimately linked with the conceptualisation of culture and how this affects communication between individuals pertaining to different cultural groups, the students in Bendinat were asked to write a few lines explaining what "culture" was for them. The students exhibit fairly similar concepts which include the typical references to food, customs, and examples of a country's national heritage. The principal ideas posited by the students were:

1. Culture is the customs, beliefs and habits from all around the world;
2. Culture is meaningful or important knowledge;
3. Culture is the things that are associated with a specific people or country.

These ideas are illustrated in the following examples:

Example 1¹⁵

Son les diferents costums i hàbits de les diferents persones. També les coses que els agraden (música, menjar, teatre...). (BE2GITI)

(It is the different customs and habits of different people. And also things that they like (music, food, theatre).)

Example 2

Son las tradiciones y costumbres de cada país. También pueden ser monumentos, obras de arte ... o simplemente relacionarse con otras personas. (BE1ALBE)

(It is the traditions and customs of a country. It can also be monuments, art or simply getting to know other people).

However, two of our participants show that they have really tried to reflect on the concept and provide a more meaningful definition:

¹⁵ Transcription conventions: all quotes are verbatim unless otherwise stated and have been left unedited. This includes any grammatical errors that may have been made by the participants, although if this hinders understanding then the correct word has been given in square brackets. When necessary, the texts have been translated into English by the author. Any part of the text that is illegible has been rendered as (XXX). Examples with multiple extracts have been numerated – e.g. in Example 5, we have "ex. 5.1", "ex. 5.2", "ex. 5.3", etc.

Example 3

Cultura per a mí és tot allò que està relacionat amb les nostres costums del nostre país, envolta l'idioma, la vestimenta ... Encara que cultura també envolta la literatura, la música..... sense tenir en compte d'on sigin. En poques paraules alguna cosa que ens produeix plaer estètic o ens interessa i serveix per a aprendre i disfrutar-ho. (BE2LAMU)

(For me culture is everything that is related to the customs of our country, including language, dress.... Furthermore culture also includes literature, music... without taking into account where they come from. In other words something that produces aesthetic pleasure or it interests us and serves as a means to learn and for enjoyment.)

Example 4

Para mi la cultura es aquello de la que puedo aprender, algo que puede enseñarme cosas nuevas, que amplie mis conocimientos y me ayude a mejorar como persona. Puede ser una canción, un película favorita, un monumento, un amigo ... Todo puede ser cultura, pues cada cosa es un mundo por descubrir, y encuentres más mundos visitandoles [...]. (BE1JUSA)

(For me culture is something that I can learn from, something that can teach me new things, that broadens my knowledge and helps me become a better person. It could be a song, a favourite film, a monument, a friend ... Everything can be culture, as everything is part of a world to be discovered, and you can find more worlds by visiting them [...].)

Both of the students reflect on the use of culture as a tool for learning, and culture as an aesthetic production. Example 4 makes specific reference to the necessity of culture as an essential part of developing one's self-identity in that it contributes in a positive way to making one a "better person". This simple definition encompasses many of the ideas discussed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, it could also be interpreted as prescriptive in its view, since we do not have any specific details on whether this would include the world of sub-cultures, or references to everyday life, beliefs and rituals.

6.3.2 Attitudes towards the implementation of a transcultural approach

This section comments on data taken from the opinions given by the Bendinat students at the beginning and end of the project implementation. Participants wrote about the blog and about the content-based approach in their cultural notebooks and/or final class exam. The data can help us to understand the results of the final questionnaire in more detail and can also be used to substantiate the information from the previous section.

The relation of positive or negative opinions to each participant can be found in Appendices 6.1 and 6.2.

There were a total of 10 pre-blog opinions and 31 post-blog opinions. The pre-blog posts were very positive. Only one student (BE1SAIZ) reported negative feedback at both times. Nevertheless, the opinions were mixed in the post-blog opinions. The majority (58.1%) of participants agreed on the usefulness and potential of the blog, 25.8% of the students offered a negative opinion, essentially based on criticism towards the technical difficulties that they appeared to have. A further 16.1% valued the experience both positively (communication and project work) and negatively (lack of overall participation and technical difficulties). The most salient positive opinions highlighted that the blog was a useful tool:

1. to communicate with people from other countries;
2. to learn about other cultures;
3. to do some interesting projects;
4. to learn about the interests and hobbies of another group of people to practise English; and
5. to exchange opinions.

The following comments reflect these positive assertions concerning the blog as a tool for communication and way to learn about other cultures:

Example 5

- 5.1 In my opinion the blog is a good way to know new people and cultures. There we can talk about us, our costumes [customs], our life ... with the Polish students. I also think that we can know how Poland is, because you can put photos of the landscapes into the blog. (BE1ALBE)
- 5.2 The blog has been very useful for classwork and for communicating with the Polacs [the Polish] showing our works and changing opinions in comments. (BE2CABA)
- 5.3 I think the blog is a good way to communicate with people of other countries. We (xxx) much information of Spain and Poland, and if we didn't do that we wouldn't know (xxx) about Poland. At the beginning I didn't use the blog very much but know I log in often. (BE1LUOR)
- 5.4 Lo que me ha gustado del blog es que podemos comunicarnos con los polacos y aprender idiomas nuevas. (BE2LUMA)

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(What I most liked about the blog is that we could communicate with the Polish people and learn new languages)

- 5.5 I think the blog was interesting. It was nice to see all the projects from the students of Bendinat and Poland but, I thought it was a little bit difficult to use. I hope people keep communicating. (BE2KILO)

All the above examples underline the use of the blog for communicating with another group. BE2LUMA (ex. 5.4) also makes reference to the possibility of learning new languages. In the last example, BE2KILO (ex. 5.5) expresses her desire that communication will continue now that the project has come to an end. The following extracts from BE1JUSA (Example 6) reproduce his opinion on the blog at the beginning of the research project (ex. 6.1) and at the end (ex. 6.2). Although he finds the blog a useful tool he also points out that it did not reach its potential:

Example 6

- 6.1 Supongo que está muy bien, aunque es más bien un foro que un blog, siempre me han gustado estas cosas. El problema es que mucha gente no entiende casi nada del blog [...] (BE1JUSA)

(I suppose it is good, although it's more like a forum than a blog, I have always liked these things. The problem is that a lot of people don't understand hardly anything about the blog)

- 6.2 I think the blog is a good tool for communicating with other people and discussing things-but I think it hasn't been used at its maximum potential. Not even 2% in my opinion [...] (BE1JUSA)

This participant is quite right in his description of the blog as being more like a forum. In fact, this is one of the possibilities we had at the beginning before finally settling for the blog interface. The latter was appealing since it allowed for the researcher and teachers alike to follow the progress of the students. As we explained in Chapter 5, since each student was classified as a “category”, the teacher only had to click on the student's name and they would have all the posts made by the students, either for a specific topic or overall. This was essential information for the teachers with regard to student assessment, which had been previously determined as 10% of their final mark. We were unable to find a forum which provided such essential data control and management.

Only 25.8% of the participants valued the blog experience negatively. They believed that:

1. there was a lack of participation;
2. they would be more motivated if they could meet the Polish students;
3. the blog was difficult to use;
4. the overall experience did not live up to their initial expectations; and
5. the blog was time-consuming.

Despite the fact that students were aware of the importance of their blog contributions for their final mark for the subject, the students only seemed to enter the blog when they were specifically asked to, as pointed out by the following examples:

Example 7

- 7.1 I think that the blog it's ok, but I don't have much time to comment (BE2JOKI)
- 7.2 In my opinion the blog is good for the communication with the Poland people. I didn't see much the blog, and I only see the blog when Karen say: you have to put a new post in the blog (BE2LEBA)

One principal reason for the lack of use appears to be due to difficulties in navigating the blog.

Example 8

- 8.1 I think the blog was interesting. It was nice to see all the projects from the students of Bendinat and Poland but, I thought it was a little bit difficult to use. (BE2KILO)
- 8.2 Lo que opino sobre el blog es que nunca he sabido utilizarlo bien y nunca lo he entendido. Pero aún así lo he intentado. He aprendido cosas, pero pocas cosas. (BE2LUMA)

(What I think about the blog is that I have never known how to use it properly and I have never understood it. Nevertheless, I have tried. I have learnt things, though few things.)
- 8.3 My opinion about Karen's blog (xxx) I think it is a stupid think, because are very difficult to use (xxx) for other part is interesting, because we can relation with different people, that have a different culture, and we can learn more about their. If I can use, perhaps I like it (BE1PAAR)

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Some students also mention that their motivation to participate would increase if they were able to meet the Polish participants:

Example 9

- 9.1 I think the blog is a good way of knowing and talking with new people, but if we had the opportunity to know this people, the blog would work more fluidly and faster, without having to say to the pupils to post in the blog. (BE1EDCA)
- 9.2 I think that the blog wasn't bad but it wasn't very nice. It was boring for me. But I liked the projects that we've done but I wanted to see the Polish kids or go there to visit them. (BE2GITI)

Indeed, the lack of face-to-face communication appears to have very negative consequences for BE2VIAP as he comments below.

Example 10

I think that the blog is a way to learn but I don't like it I think that it is boring because I don't like to do homework on computers and I don't like to post comments, write redactions... to people that I don't know. (BE2VIAP)

We now turn to the opinions that the Bendinat students had on the projects that they worked on for the different units of work (Example 11). In their final class examination, the students were asked whether they preferred using a course-book or doing projects, such as those worked on for the blog. A total of 27 students gave their opinion (see appendices 6.1 & 6.2). 85.2% reported that they preferred working on projects. Only 7.4% preferred using the course-book. The remaining 7.4% stated that project work encouraged a “real” use of language, but that this should be complemented with the course-book in order to perfect grammar:

Example 11

- 11.1 I like doing more projects than following the book. That is very boring. (BE1CLMO)
- 11.2 In my opinion the blog it's a good way to learn English, because people think that it's more fun be chatting on computer, that studying with a book (BEDAGA)
- 11.3 And I prefer to make projects than follow the book because I think that making projects you learn more and in a funnier way. (BE1AIBA)

6.3.3 The “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog

The body of this section will concentrate on the analysis of the posts and comments made on the “EIL in Spain and Poland” blog by the students from both countries, although extracts from classwork (e.g. essays on “Africa”) will also be referred to. All the examples taken from the blog have been changed to the Times New Roman font, size 10, and any coloured text has been changed to black in order to homogenise the style (unless otherwise stated). As with the extracts taken from any schoolwork, all examples are verbatim, and no grammatical or orthographical changes have been made. Any within-text names have been replaced by the first letter of the name and three asterisks (***) in order to preserve anonymity. The principal aim of this section will be to highlight the areas which have specific importance for RQ2 and RQ3. These areas reflect language use and style, transcultural competence, and transnational identity issues. Four didactic units were worked on by the students in class during the school year (2010-2011). These units were “Cultural Stereotypes”, “Africa”, “Music with a Message” and “Questions and Answers”. The first three units were given a global orientation, although the cultural stereotypes unit did involve the participants reflecting on the stereotypes of their own countries. The fourth unit was aimed at encouraging them to learn a little more about their project partners.

We began the blog with a section entitled “Do you want to know something about me?” and throughout the school year students were also invited to make posts and comments in the “Cultural Snippets” section and a section devoted to information about “Mallorca and Spain”, and “Opole and Poland”. In Chapter 5 we included a chronogram for the proposed implementation of the various units of work (please refer to Table 5).

Tables 30 and 31 provide a breakdown in numbers of the posts and comments for each section. These tables also make reference to whether the posts and comments were group or individual efforts (Table 30) and to whether the respondents of the posts were inter-group or intra-group (Table 31). As we can see, there was a total of 219 posts and a total of 274 comments. We can also observe that participation from the two Polish schools was fairly erratic; there were occasions when there were no posts for a particular project. For example, VPLO did not make any posts on the “Africa” projects and TAK did likewise for the “Music with a Message” unit. This was due to time

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constraints which affected all three schools and was most salient in the first section “Do you want something about me?”, where there were 40 intra-group comments from Bendinat. Spanish students commented on each other’s posts whilst waiting for the Polish students to post theirs. The three most popular sections were “Do you want to know something about me?”, “Cultural Snippets” (only Bendinat and VPLO) and “Music with a Message” (only Bendinat and VPLO). This can be seen by the number of comments which arose from the posts.

Despite the Polish teachers’ initial interest in carrying out the didactic units simultaneously with the Spanish groups, as we progressed with the project it became obvious that this was not going to be so easy. Nevertheless, since the original research design was not dependent on their complete participation, it did not cause any major problems for the continuation of the research. The most important aspect of the blog was to encourage the exchange of comments. The results showed that in the cases of Bendinat and VPLO there was an important difference between the number of posts made and the number of comments (Bendinat: P=117, C=158 and VPLO: P=60, C=43). In the case of TAK, the differences were minimal (P=42, C=45). The Spanish participants were far more productive than the Polish when it came to commenting on posts and comments. However, the figures are slightly deceiving since the VPLO participants essentially worked during class time, and the comments, like the posts, were usually done in groups of two or three. In the case of Bendinat, comments were always individual.

Results

Table 30 Breakdown of blog posts

	Do you want to know something about me?		Cultural Stereotypes		Africa		Music with a Message		Questions & Answers		Cultural Snippets		Opole & Mallorca		Totals	
	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp	Ind	Gp
BENDINAT	31	0	23	0	3	7	9	13	9	0	11	0	4	7	90	27
TAK	15	0	9	0	12	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	40	3
VPLO	2	10	1	10	0	0	10	6	0	0	11	6	1	2	25	34
TOTAL	58		43		25		38		13		28		14		219	

Key

Ind – individual posts

Gp – group posts

Table 31 Breakdown of blog comments

	Do you want to know something about me?		Cultural Stereotypes		Africa		Music with a Message		Questions & Answers		Cultural Snippets		Opole & Mallorca		Totals	
	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter
BENDINAT	40	28	12	1	3	8	11	7	0	8	14	20	15	8	95	80
TAK	6	11	0	1	3	3	0	0	9	2	0	0	0	0	18	17
VPLO	0	1	0	0	2	7	1	10	0	12	4	21	2	4	9	55
TOTAL	86		14		23		29		31		59		29		274	

Key

Intra – intra-group

Inter – inter-group

It should also be recognised at this point that, although the number of posts for VPLO are not as high as those for Bendinat, this is in part due to the fact that the posts were made during class time and, in order for all the students to use a computer, the posts were made in groups of two or three. The students tended to form the same groups each time but were careful to stipulate who the opinion or information was from. In the following three examples, we have an introduction post with information about three of the VPLO participants (ex. 12.1); in the second post we have comments from three students about a song which had been posted by a Spanish student (ex. 12.2); and in the third post two students give individual information about themselves in the same post (ex. 12.3):

Example 12

- 12.1 We are the students from VPLO. Our names are I***, P*** and M***. We're 16. We live near to Opole. I*** has dark curly hair, brown eyes and she's slim. She's extrovert and helpful. She likes riding a horse and dance. P*** has blond, straight hair and blue eyes. She's sociable and talkative. P*** likes watching films and riding by bike. M*** has dark blonde and straight hair and blue eyes. She's crazy and friendly. M*** likes reading books and riding ski. We like very much our English teacher, because English lessons are interesting and funny. Last lessons we learnt to dance salsa. We are very good at this dance. If you want, we can teach you 😊 (VP1IWCH, VP1MAKA & VP1PACA)
- 12.2 A*** doesn't like to listen songs like this. She doesn't like Christina Aguilera. M*** thinks that this song is medium nice. Mo*** love this. (VP1ALBU, VP1MALI & VP1MODU)
- 12.3 My name is J***. I'm 16 years old. I'm tall and slender. I have green eyes. My hair is blond. I have one sister and one brother. I have 15 parrots and one very nice dog. I like reading books. My favourite book is "Diary" written by Nicholas Sparks. I haven't got a very interesting hobby. In my leisure time I listen to music. When the weather is good I meet my friends. (VP2JUWA)
- I'm K***. I am 16 years old. I have brown hair and brown eyes. I haven't any special hobby.:p I like meeting new people and I very like walking. I like travelling. I love talking with my friend and write my dairy. I like playing basketball. Often I listen to music. My favorite music group is Pink Floyd. I have one cat. It's name is Simba. It's so sweet. 😊 (VP2KRPA)

This research does not specifically identify "gender" as a variable although, when appropriate or necessary, this will be discussed. Nevertheless, the overall number of posts and comments by both groups is worth a mention. Table 32 shows the percentage of posts and comments per school and gender. More precise information on the number of posts and comments made by each student can be found in Appendix 6.

Table 32 Percentages of posts and comments in relation to gender

	BENDINAT		TAK		VPLO	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	15	25	7	9	5	28
% PARTICIPANTS	37.5%	62.5%	43.8%	56.2%	15.2%	84.8%
NUMBER OF POSTS	47	103	14	31	19	117
% POSTS	31.3%	68.7%	31.1%	68.9%	14%	86%
NUMBER OF COMMENTS	63	113	13	22	18	46
% COMMENTS	35.8%	64.2%	37.1%	62.9%	28.1%	71.9%

KEY: M – male, F – female

If we compare the percentages of posts and comments with the distribution of male and female students throughout the three schools, then we can see that the percentages vary only slightly in VPLO and Bendinat. Nevertheless, in TAK, where there is relative equilibrium in terms of male and female students, the female students are approximately 50% more productive. It should also be noted at this stage that the number of posts and comments may vary to those presented in Tables 30 and 31 due to the fact that the group posts have been computed for each student. If a post was made by a group of three students then each student was credited as having made the post. However, it was not possible to calculate individual comments as the blog interface only acknowledged the person posting the comment. This explains why the number of comments for some students (especially in VPLO where participants principally worked in groups) may not reflect the true reality of their participation.

6.3.3.1 Language use and style on the blog

Although this work is based on the presumption that the participants are using EIL since they are NNSs of English, it is not within the scope of this doctoral dissertation to provide a thorough analysis of language use on the blog. Nevertheless, certain features of language style and use may be seen to indicate that there is a clear development of both transcultural competence and the emergence of a transnational identity, the issues to be dealt with in RQ2 and RQ3. For this reason, rather than include this area of analysis within the sections dedicated to our two research questions, it was decided that the results should be presented separately at the beginning of this blog results section. The theoretical implications of EIL were discussed at length in Chapter 2 and the aim of this section is to build on current information by looking at the various communication

strategies that a specific group of EIL speakers use in the context of a blog. We shall, then, concentrate on highlighting stylistic choices related to language use within this specific context.

As outlined in Section 6.3.3 blog participation could be through posts or through comments, the like of which could be individual or in groups. The posts and comments could also be classified as inter- or intra-group. Our principal interest in this section is to observe the use of specific discoursal strategies used by the participants to create conversation flows which emulate face-to-face communication. The following example (13) by BE1EDCA in the blog section “Do you want to know something about me?” illustrates how a group of participants from Bendinat use various strategies which underscore a number of factors described by Fayard and DeSanctis (2010) as being important aspects in the development of a collective identity. The comments are from the researcher (identified as “Karen”) and from students in the Bendinat groups:

Example 13¹⁶

Hi, i'm e***, from IES Bendinat, well... I just wanted to do a little introduction about me.

I have blonde hair, I'm not very tall... brown eyes, and I like longboarding, but I'm just starting. (BE1EDCA)

Oh, come on, E***, really short... jajajajaja 😊 (BE2LAMU)

I didn't know what to put. [Duh!] 😊 (BE1EDCA)

Hi E*** – I know this may seem a silly question but what is longboarding? I think I'm really out of touch with these new sports – must be my age! (Karen)

It's like skateboarding but in hills (descense). It's with boards that are long (that's why the name longboarding). It was created by some surfers that wanted to do like surf when it was cold. Normaly it's high speed ... but I'm starting so i don't go very fast. (BE1EDCA)

Thanks for the info – sounds fun! (Karen)

do u have a long, e***? (BE2LAMU)

Yes!! 😊 [But it's not the best...] It's a GLOBE, as we say in spain: Bueno, Bonito, Barato¹⁷ 😊 (BE1EDCA)

L*** is a flooder 😊 Ok no -- But yes, E*** has a long D: (BE1JUSA)

¹⁶ Extracts which show one blog post with subsequence comments are presented with indentations for each new set of comments.

¹⁷ *Bueno, bonito barato* is a Spanish saying which means “good, nice and cheap”.

wow e***, lots of comments! (BE2SAIZ)

E*** is popular (?) xD (BE1JUSA)

yeah ^^ [eye nose (I know)] (BE1EDCA)

This exchange of comments between students from both classes and the researcher highlights a series of issues related to language style and register. The most salient feature is perhaps the informal style of writing, which is more similar to oral than to written discourse. Students use a number of strategies to produce this effect. Specifically, we can draw attention to the use of emoticons, contracted verbal forms (“it’s”, “don’t”), informal lexical use (“wow”, “yeah”, “duh”), and the use of exclamation marks and ellipsis (...) to emphasise certain words or phrases (“yes!!”, “e***, really short...”). The humorous nature of the exchange is made more realistic with the use of onomatopoeic spellings (“jajajajaja”) and the use of lexical humour to make a phonological pun (“yeah ^^ [eye nose (I know)]”). The informal style use also includes affirmative statements which are sarcastic or ironic in nature and function to incite a reply (“e*** is popular (?)”). Another important feature is the use of code-mixing: “bueno, bonito, barato”, which the student explains is a typical Spanish expression. This example serves as an introduction to stylistic features displayed by the bloggers, underlining linguistic features which are essentially found in an oral medium of communication. The following sections will look at these and other discursual strategies in more detail.

6.3.3.1.1 Stylistic choices

One of the most salient features of the blog is the use of different styles according to the type of post or comment. Language style and register appear to vary according to the section the post was under. This is especially evident in the posts made by the students from Bendinat, the focus groups for the project. Although the participants were advised that their overall participation in the blog would be rewarded in their final evaluation, it should also be pointed out that certain blog posts which involved specific projects such as those worked on for the blog sections “Cultural Stereotypes”, “Africa” and “Music with a Message” also contributed to their class mark for that unit of work. These circumstances mean that in some cases the posts may have been written on their

computers as a piece of school work and then copied as a post on the blog. This, of course, means that the students would have knowingly tried to make their English more formal and grammatically correct. Nevertheless, we cannot confirm that this was the case. It also goes without saying that the content of these posts was more serious and so it seems that this influenced their graphical layout. Those posts providing factual information on projects or where the students felt that they were simply giving their opinion, without directly aiming their comments at a particular person, lacked the sense of intimacy between writers which was abundant in the informal blog sections.

Differences in style can also be observed when posts made by the same student but in separate blog sections are compared. This can be seen in Example 14, where we have two posts from the same student (BE2KISH). The first extract (14.1) is from the student's introductory paragraph to the rest of the bloggers in the "Do you want to know something about me?" section, and the second (14.2) is his post in the "Music with a Message" section. His initial use of the vocative "[h]ey" at the beginning of the first extract introduces a sense of informality that is then continued in the post. The student uses an emoticon to separate ideas and again to end his post. He also uses ellipsis (...) as a mode to convey "and so on". The participant ends his statement on a humorous tone by claiming that he has done enough; a position which he probably feels his blog mates will find amusing. His informal farewell phrase also conveys informality and is a definite veer away from formal writing. In contrast, the second extract is from the "Music with a Message" section and contains none of the aforementioned informal features. It is a simple opinion and does not suggest that the writer is looking for or expecting to receive any comments from fellow bloggers:

Example 14

- 14.1 Hey i'm (xxx). I'm 14 years old and i live in Es Capdellà, Mallorca, i was born i england but moved here when i was 7. I have one brother, a sister and a dog 😊. In my free time i would normally go out with my friends, skate... I Love Rock, indie, Punk, Heavy metal Music, my favorite bands would be: Three Days Grace, Red hot chili Peppers and Bullet for my valentine. Right that's enough writing for one day. Cya <3 😊
- 14.2 This song is about how kids are now a days, how they don't care about anyone else then them self's all they want is money so they kill people for there money. (BE2KISH)

The second extract is somehow lacking in some form of personalised communicative strength which, in itself, could explain why the writer did not receive any comments on his post. In fact, this occurred frequently, as can be seen in Tables 30 and 31. It seems that the use of informal linguistic features is fundamental in the formation of emotional links between the bloggers, in the sense that such strategies represent the visual power usually present in face-to-face interactions. This is also further highlighted in the following comments between students from Bendinat when remarking on the rather long and developed post in the cultural stereotypes section made by BE1JUSA (Example 15), in which he himself begins by apologising for its length:

Example 15

I know, I know, the 1st one is long, but I had nothing better to do... D: (BE1JUSA)

LOL, you could just comment your opinion in the main post. (BE1EDCA)

I know, but i wanted to get comments – and i got them. (BE1JUSA)

But, ¿Why the question 4 are empty? (BE1BLMO)

Because I'll do it not today. Tomooooorow! xD (BE1JUSA)

It's very long J***!!! (: (BE1AILA)

Since the content of the comments has veered away from the formal context of homework questions to optional remarks, once again we see evidence of informal features such as abbreviations (“LOL” [laughing out loud], “xD” [a smiley icon]), emphasis by way of onomatopoeic spellings (“Tomooooorow”) or an exaggerated use of exclamation marks (“Ju***!!”), and humour. In fact, in the sentence “[b]ecause I'll do it not today. Tomooooorow!”, the student appears to be translating a famous catchphrase from one of Spain's most popular comedians into English (José Mota: “hoy no, mañana”). This exchange of comments was practically the only example where such informal language was found in the “Cultural Stereotypes” section.

Students often use a style of writing which imitates a spoken conversation and posts were written as though the bloggers were actually face-to-face with their audience to strengthen the illocutionary force of their speech acts. For example, BE1JUSA posts some information about Spanish music in response to a Polish post concerning Polish music and adds this humorous anecdote for the readers: “[...] please guys, try to hear to

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the song and stop looking at the dancers”. He is using his knowledge as a male teenager to give advice to his colleagues.

6.3.3.1.2 Colloquial oral features

This section aims to highlight the richness of the oral features that were introduced above. A wide range of informal lexis was used. In many cases, students appeared to use such language with more ease and appropriateness than one would perhaps expect from students who have learnt EFL in a classroom setting. This may suggest that they actually learn much more outside the classroom context. Example 16 shows examples of words and expressions (highlighted in italics) used by the students which clearly create the effect of an oral exchange, further accentuated by the use of exclamations and interjections:

Example 16

- 16.1 summer is *awesome*!! I love it!!!! <3333 (VP1MIGR) / he’s just too *awesome* ToT) (BE1JUSA)
- 16.2 *Cool* 😊 (BE1AILA)
- 16.3 they *rocked* in the 80s (BE1JUSA)
- 16.4 *Ohh.. my god:*) (VP2LUWI)
- 16.5 but this is *hard as hell*! (BE1JUSA)
- 16.6 if not I wouldn’t be here, *duh* ☹ (BE1JUSA)/ I didn’t know what to put. [*Duh!*] (BE1EDCA)
- 16.7 sweet 16, *yeah* ;d) (VP1ALBU, VP1RECM, VP1ANOW)
- 16.8 And In don’t think your music is *so-so*... (BE1JUSA)
- 16.9 *Wow!* Amazing photos ! (VP1RECM)

The next block of extracts (Example 17) shows the use of various informal greeting styles which are generally combined with exclamation marks, emoticons or graphic abbreviations, providing a feeling of emotional bonding and nearness towards the readers:

Example 17

- 17.1 Hi guys! (TA1KAWE)
- 17.2 Hey, I'm xxx (TA1PACZ) / Heeeey, I'm xxx! (BE2LAMU)
- 17.3 Hello Ladies & Gentelmen ;p (VP2NIBR, VP2ALTA)
- 17.4 Hi people! / so... that's it 😊 (BE!AIBA)
- 17.5 Have a nice day (bE2LAMU)
- 17.6 Bye, xxxx♥ (BE2DAGA)
- 17.7 See ya! (BE1JUA)
- 17.8 Kisses, A*** ;* (VP2ANGR, VP2ANGI)
- 17.9 kisses xD love latino and love and peace! (VP2JUWA, VP2MAGI)

We should also comment on a variety of informal morphosyntactic choices adopted by the bloggers, which once again mark the context as closer to oral rather than traditional written communication. Students frequently use informal verbal contractions such as “wanna”, “gonna” and “kinda” or do not bother to include the apostrophe as in “youre” or “don’t” We also found examples of informal ergative structures and the “-ish” suffix as in “longish” and “greenish”. Some students also reproduce the typical oral expression “see ya”. These morphosyntactic choices can be seen in Example 18, where they have been highlighted using italics:

Example 18

- 18.1 It's *kinda* special, doesn't it? (BE1JUS) / I forgot to say we're *gonna* stay 8 days (BE1JUSA) / I *wanna* be a(TA1ZOFI)
- 18.2 *youre* lying, you *dont* study (BE2LAMU)
- 18.3 *See ya!* (BE1JUSA)
- 18.4 Madrid / *Barça sucks...* (BE2LAMU, BE1SOJI, BE2CABA, BE2SAIZ)
- 18.5 I have *longish* blonde hair (BE2KAHO)/*greenish* brown eyes (BE1VAHU)

Probably the most convincing examples of the use of oral features are within the context of onomatopoeic spellings, where word lengthening is frequently used to transmit the emotional sounds used in face-to-face communication:

Example 19

- 19.1 Oh, come on, E**, really short... jajajajaja 😊 (BE2LAMU)/ Hahahah sure... (BE2LAMU)
- 19.2 Byeee! 😊 (BE1VAHU)
- 19.3 Hmmmm... Polish music? (VP2LUWI)
- 19.4 A***aa hahahahh how are you one of my best friends??? How is Phenelope? Why is your turtle bored... →? Hahahahahaha you dont know what you're missing without eating paellaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. I just commented your comment as i told you hahahah. (BE2LAMU)
- 19.5 See youuuuuuu!!! (TA1MISA)
- 19.6 ohhhh that is so interesting C*** 😊but i like (L) (BE2GITI)
- 19.7 I looove English <333 but I hate german ;/ it's eviiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii !! (VP1KAKO)

As we have already mentioned, another feature that is used very frequently amongst the bloggers was ellipsis to denote either an intentional break in the communication whilst the speaker thinks, or to trail a thought at the end of the sentence where the reader is expected to imagine or understand what the writer proposes (aposiopesis). Example 20 shows some uses of ellipsis:

Example 20

- 20.1 I don't know what else to write.... (BE1AILA)
- 20.2 Hmm... I don't know what can I say now... (BE1JUSA)
- 20.3 I like be with my friends, watch tv...(BE2DAGA)

Other important emphatic strategies were the use of capitalisation, bold type or the excessive use of exclamation marks. Once again the students relied on these stylistic elements to recreate the effect of real conversation.

Example 21

- 21.1 I thing that it can be a good way to lean about other nations, **sometimes**, because if for example someone say that the people of Spain are rude it doesn't mean that **all** the spanish people are rude. (BE2DAGA)
- 21.2 I like Harry Potter too!!!! 😊 (BE1AILA)
- 21.3 NOW YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT ME, BYE! (BE1VAHU)
- 21.4 very nice presentation, I LIKE IT. good job Jo Kinnear 😊 (TA2MAPI)

Also common, especially with people who share an alternative language, is the code-mixing (introduction of word(s) from a different language within the same phrase or sentence) or even code-switching (intermittent switch(es) to another language) phenomena (Example 22). At times, students mix linguistic codes without even realising they have done it. There is also the possibility that Spanish participants use simple words that they think the Polish students may understand (especially since the majority of students from TAK are studying Spanish) or, alternatively, it may be a way of emphasising their cultural background. Code-mixing and switching also appear to be used when students do not know a given word in English.

Example 22

- 22.1 My favourite colors are red , blue and lila. ADIOS! 😊 (BE2GITI)
- 22.2 Buy lots of things in “las rebajas”.... (BE2LAMU)
- 22.3 C*** you have to coment more things i think, 😊hahahha , but i dont know how...no puedo contactar con ningun polaco/a..nose como funciona este block... (BE2GITI)
- 22.4 ohhhh m***, hello, how are you? im not polaca pero its =. Long time no see/talk. Jajajajaj (BE2GITI)
- 22.5 Cześć!! (VP1KARA, VP1KAKO, VP1MAMA)

6.3.3.1.3 Metalinguistic features

Although there were only a few examples of this metalinguistic dimension in our corpus, they are worth mentioning since it is important to note that learners are aware of such issues, whether it is by acknowledging their difficulties in mastering the FL or simply in reference to linguistic features of other languages. To a certain extent, this suggests that the participants recognise that their errors or lack of knowledge of EIL may cause communication problems, which could ultimately affect bonding. The following excerpts demonstrate this:

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Example 23

- 23.1 I didn't know how to express what I was thinking about hehehehe that's why it's so long. (BE2LAMU)
- 23.2 I've got curly, blond-ginger- cinnamon hair (i'm not sure, how to name its colour ;P). (TA1KRKA)
- 23.3 *I like casi all the music type [I don't like the 'regge' or similar]/* Oh, wait, it isn't 'casi' it's, almost/nearly (BE1CLMO)
- 23.4 that's a stange way to writte yor name hahaha in spanish you writte LUCAS/in Spanish you write CAROLINA with a "C" (BE2SAIZ)
- 23.5 Hi! My name is Z*** F*** (Sophie). (TA1ZIFI)

In Example 23.1, a Spanish student acknowledges the fact that she finds it difficult to express her views in a clear and logical manner in English. The full post can be seen in Example 35 below. Likewise, in the second example (ex. 23.2) a Polish student reflects on his lack of vocabulary when trying to describe the colour of his hair. In Example 23.3, a student notices that she code-mixed in her previous post and corrects this with the right English word. In the fourth quote, the student comments on the Polish spelling of a typical Spanish boy's name and, finally, in the last example a Polish student actually provides the English equivalent of her name.

Similarly, in Example 24 two Polish students realise they have made simple spelling mistakes and so resend their posts, duly corrected:

Example 24

- 24.1 very nice presentation, I LIKE IT. godd job J*** K*** 😊 (TA2MAPI)
very nice presentation, I LIKE IT. good job J*** K*** 😊
- 24.2 OMG. It's horrible!!! Poor womens... (VP2DAKL)
OMG. It's horrible!!! Poor women...

In a similar vein, after a post made by three Polish students in an attempt to teach the Spanish students a few Polish words, two Spanish students comment on the language, which to them appears to be bizarre and awkward:

Example 25

- 25.1 O_O! I thought Deustch was difficult but this is hard as hell! How am I supposed to pronounce "chrzaszcz"? T_T (BE1JUSA)
- 25.2 wich language is this? (BE2GITI)

Finally, a Spanish student congratulates a Polish colleague on her knowledge of English with “you are really good at english! 😊” (BE2SIZ), herself producing a typical mistake made by Spanish EFL students by spelling “English” with the equivalent Spanish sounding letter “i”.

6.3.3.1.4 Characteristic elements of CMC

The third area of reflection in this language use and style section focuses on the use of common CMC language features such as emoticons, abbreviations or shorthand, and the Internet as a resource for information. Students express themselves with a variety of CMC-standard non-verbal semiotic codes. In fact, the use of emoticons in the “Do you want to know something about me?” section is exceptionally high. There are a total of 58 posts or comments with emoticons, smiley faces being the most popular, along with 22 cases of the abbreviations for others (e.g. ;D, <3):), both of these are present in Example 26:

Example 26

Hi my name is *** 😊 I'm 16 years old. I live with my family in a small town near Opole. I'm not very tall ;D I have long light brown hair and blue eyes. I have two younger sisters. I love music <3 In my free time I like reading books, watching films, listening to music and meeting my friends 😊 I really like my school and class 😊 My favorite subjects in school are: english and spanish. (TA1MIAT)

When emoticons are used in the more serious sections of the blog, they are essentially adapted to the situation, as in the next comment (Example 27) on a slide presentation which develops the theme of famine in Africa:

Example 27

27.1 It's really sad 😞 (TA1ALFI)

27.2 yea very sad 😞 (TA1MISA)

It was also observed that a specific emoticon or abbreviation is used in the same manner by two or more bloggers, thus creating an emotional circle. For example, in the following post (Example 28) the student ends with a specific emoticon, which is then repeated in the subsequent comments.

Example 28

Hey it was nice to see you, I hope that someday we'll talk more. See you 😊
(VP2LUWI)

yeah , but i hope next time you can hear us...did you like ur class? Are you
comming to mallorca ? 😊 (BE2GITI)

It is not certain but we talked about this with out ms. I hope that we
will go 😊 (VP2LUWI)

yes i jope so 😊 (BE2GITI)

Students also incorporate the typical abbreviations or acronyms used in instant messaging. A selection of examples is offered below followed by an explanation in italics when necessary:

Example 29

29.1 My favorite film is 3MSC. (BE2KAHO) – *this is a Spanish film which was released in 2010. The acronym stands for 3 metros sobre el cielo or 3 meters above sky.*

29.2 but i cant have one 4 a long time (BE2GITI)

29.3 I hope that u are joking with those songs:) (VP1MAMA)

29.4 m8s (TA2MAIZ) – *mates*

29.5 cya (BE2KISH) – *see you*

29.6 v.v Barcelooooonaaaaaa! (BE2SOJI) – *vive!*

The following sequence of remarks also shows how two Polish students communicate in an abbreviated form following a comment from a Spanish participant.

Example 30

hallloo im writeing with my friend XXX und my name is XXX. In poland summer is proo we are two mechanics and we are repairing some motocycles. We are both so proo in everything that u can ask us about everything . So summer in poland is very hot but sometimes its raining and everything around us changes and flover ups . THANK U VERY MUCH OUR friend we love u too and we are waiting for another questions (TA2WOPO & TA2JAKO)

You are pros in everything we ask? omg..hahahahahaha 😊 (BE2GITI)

dsad (TA2JAKO)

gfyr (TA2JAKO)

Another strong point of the blog is the addition of visual and audiovisual content in the posts. For example the students were able to personalise their user images with avatars (although it should be pointed out that these were only seen when comments and not posts were made). Most chose to use a photograph but others used humorous graphics; for example, one participant used “red lips” and “XOXO” to represent kisses, whilst another chose a picture of the cookie monster from Sesame Street. A student from Bendinat used a photograph presumably taken in the UK, which was most apt for the project.

Example 31



As mentioned above, use of the Internet was maximised with student posting links to their personal Wordpress pages, providing links to YouTube videos of their favourite music, as well as uploading photographs and videos made by the class onto the blog. The following post (Example 32) shows how three Polish students make use of such tools to invite the Spanish participants to their personal blogs:

Example 32

That's all about us xd. if you want more :

R*:** http://c1class.wordpress.com/category/***/

O*:** http://c1class.wordpress.com/category/***/

A*:** http://c1class.wordpress.com/category/***/

Very often students simply post a picture which exploits the visual power of the blog hence confirming the saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words”. For example, two students from VPLO post the following Valentine’s Day card:

Example 33



(VPMODU and VP1ALBU)

And BE1EDCA posts the following under the title of “saving for my longboard”:

Example 34



This has become somewhat of an identity marker for this student. The use of such visual displays leaves the actual interpretation of the message to the receiver. In this case, it was taken up by BE1ALHO, who asked: “can you sell me your other one?”, to which the reply was “of course, but first i have to buy one ^^”.

6.3.3.2 Transcultural Competence

The objective of this section will be to study the participants’ perceptions of “self” and their awareness of each other’s cultures by considering some of the emerging themes of the blog. To do this, we will provide blog samples which exemplify how students understand their own “imagined” communities and that of others. Another area of interest within this section will be the analysis of those posts and comments which give indications of critical transcultural awareness in the form of political, social and cultural sensitivity, bonding, as well as new and shared knowledge.

6.3.3.2.1 Cultural identity

The didactic unit entitled “Cultural Stereotypes” is extremely relevant for this section. After participating in a series of class activities (see Appendix 2.1), some which involved asking parents or carers for information, the students were asked to answer the following three questions (Q1, Q2 and Q3) on the blog:

- Q1. Are cultural stereotypes a good way to learn about people from other nations or do you think they cause prejudice and can be harmful? (40 answers)
- Q2. Do cultural stereotypes motivate you or put you off wanting to visit a country or learn the language spoken there? (36 answers)
- Q3. Were there any differences between the lists made by you and those made by your parents or carers concerning the cultural symbols of Spain/Poland? (14 answers)

The answers to Q1 are summarised in Table 33 below. It should also be noted that only the posts and comments which answered the questions have been counted. First and foremost, it should also be understood that the age and maturity of the students affected the way in which they discussed these questions, since it was a topic which required a conscious reflection on the abstract concepts of stereotypes and cultural and national identity. This meant that, on occasions, the posts were slightly confusing due to the difficulty students had in expressing their ideas on a complicated subject through EIL. This becomes clear in the extracts in Example 35:

Example 35

- 35.1 No, I think the stereotypes doesn't matter in this. The cause of you learn a new language are the usefulness and the beautiful you seem it. (BE2ANMO)
- 35.2 When you know people, you may like the way someone is or not. When you know someone from another place, and you LIKE the way he/she is, if some day someone told you bad things about the people living in this place, you'd change your thoughts about the bad things they told you, because you'd have known a nice person, and you'd think that in the end, they're not really bad, and if someone told you good things about them, you'd agree. So when you know someone from another place and you DON'T LIKE the way he/she is, if they told you good things about the people living in this place, you'd disagree and think that they're really bad persons, and they're not as you have been imagining. And if they told you bad things about them, then you agree. It doesn't mean that all

people living somewhere is bad or good, but if you just have known 1 person, our mind works like that and make us think that they're so good (or bad) as we thought. (BE2LAMU)

The latter blogger then posted the following comment “I didn’t know how to express what I was thinking about hehehehe that’s why it’s so long”, in order to apologise for her lack of coherence and inability to express herself as she would have liked.

The Polish students posted their answers and comments some time after the Spanish students. This lapse in time resulted in the exchange of fewer comments between the two groups. The students were also told that they could choose to answer two of the three questions as a homework task. Nevertheless, since Q3 was dependent on classwork, this resulted in the question being either ignored by the Spanish participants or answered with a monosyllabic “yes” (as in the case of seven students from Bendinat).

Table 33 Participants’ views on cultural stereotypes

	BENDINAT	TAK	VPLO	TOTAL
Cultural stereotypes - Q1 (total posts or comments)	24	10	6	40
Stereotypes – positive & negative to learn about other people and cultures	9	0	0	9
Stereotypes – positive to learn about other people and cultures	9	1	0	10
Stereotypes – negative to learn about other people and cultures	6	9	6	21

In answer to Q1, an important number of students from Bendinat expressed their beliefs that stereotypes were a good way to obtain preliminary information about other people and cultures (37.5%), whilst a further 37.5% stressed that, even if they served as useful references, they could also have a damaging effect on our perception of the “other”. These opinions can be seen in Example 36:

Example 36

- 36.1 I think it is a good way to learn about other people. Because it is a way of knowing things about different people and cultures in the world. (BE1PAAR)
- 36.2 In my opinion, stereotypes are a good way to know what think people from other countries about us. It is true that in some cases the criticism about people from other countries only collect a small part of the country, and that may be offensive to the rest. But maybe it’s a good form to learn somethings about people of other sites. (BE1MARI)

- 36.3 Yes and no. Yes, because it can be helpful to know, more or less, how the people of the country thinks and are and you can link things with it, like the pasta and Italy; and no, because the stereotypes can give to us a bad idea of the people of the country. Although a stereotype say that, for example, the Spanish people are noisy, not all the people must be. (BE2ANMO)

The following post (see Example 37), made by BE1JUSA, goes into more depth and offers an interesting perspective on how stereotypical information is perceived and, more interestingly, why. Whilst admitting that he himself often judges a group of people according to stereotypes, this participant insists that it is not good to generalise such information and that ultimately we should not consider groups as perfect homogeneous examples.

Example 37

It really depends. I don't think they're [stereotypes] the best way to know about other countries or people of other countries (although some of them aren't a lie and can help us), but they don't have to be harmful. Everybody is different, so you can't say "everybody in Spain likes bull-fighting" or things like that because there will be people who like it and people who dislike it. The main idea of a stereotype was a kind of signal of identity of every place. But with the time, we've misunderstood them and some of them have become racist, harmful... or just wrong stereotypes. Also, people think that all the people of the country has to be like their stereotype (for example, they say English are quiet. Ok, I think the same but, IN GENERAL, English people are quiet, don't have a surprise if you meet a fun English boy or girl). Conclusion: Stereotypes can be a good way to know something about other countries but we don't have to misunderstand them. Also, remember that not everybody is equal, and some of them won't like you saying things like: "oh, I thought you Spanish people love the Siesta and Paella! D:". Generalize is bad >_> (BE1JUSA)

This student has also made the connection between stereotypes and cultural identity. Whilst admitting his tendency to acknowledge that stereotypes affect his way of thinking, he emphasises that their principal role is to provide information about the cultural identity of a group of people and that this should not be confused with one's self-identity. This extract also reminds us to take into account the feelings of those who are defined by a series of stereotypes. This blogger is fully aware of the psychological damage that certain attitudes may have, especially in situations where communication could be thwarted by such intercultural blunders.

BE1JUSA (Example 37 above) also highlights the fact that, even though it is not correct to judge people or groups of people with stereotypical information, it is extremely difficult to keep an open mind about other groups or nations. It is a very honest

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interpretation of how our minds work and how we are influenced by positive and negative social encounters.

Nevertheless, not all students are willing to accept that we are naturally influenced by stereotypes, as seen in Example 38 below where a student relates a personal experience. Along with his insistence that the particular stereotype of the Irish being lazy is “made up”, he also appears to be introducing the fact that the Polish may also be stereotyped in a similar way:

Example 38

I don't really care about the stereotypes the country has. I don't listen to them I'm a kind of person that needs to meet with people. Like, the stereotype about Irish is that they are lasy but its not true!!! I lived there for 5 years and I know its something that was made up... They are hard workers just like us. (TA1DEGR)

Similarly, the following post and comment (Example 39) describe stereotypes as exaggerations and emphasise the need for “face-to-face” communication as a way of understanding other people and cultures:

Example 39

- 39.1 We think cultural stereotypes sometimes are obsolete and exaggerated. Stereotypes can hurt people. The best way to lern about foreign cultures is to travel and to meet people face-to-face. Then we can make own opinion about other nations. 😊 (VP2AGRO)
- 39.2 I also think that stereotypes do not serve to meet the people, serves only to know the country, and as you say that if you want know people have to travel and see things in person. 😊 (BE1VAHU)

Only six students (25%) from Bendinat were of the opinion that stereotypes produce a negative effect as expressed by the following three excerpts in Example 40:

Example 40

- 40.1 I think that they cause prejudices and they can be harmful, because people normally are susceptible and if you go with this idea to a place you must see, what you have in your head. And normally people aren't agree about what other people say about them. (BE2RUOL)
- 40.2 I think that the stereotypes are bad for people of other countries and for people for our country also, because the people can think badly about other people. (BE1IBE)

- 40.3 I think that the cultural stereotypes don't help to meet people of others cultures. Because, for example, if we talk about a English man, almost always say something like “¡Oh, the english man's are cold!” or “The english man's are very reserved”.The same with others cultures, from Spain, for example, they talk something like “They are partiers”. (BE1CLMO)

In fact, in contrast to the positive views given by some of the Spanish students, all the Polish students, except for one, begin their answer to Q1 with statements which reflect the negative role that they consider stereotypes to play in our perception of others (see Example 41):

Example 41

I think that stereotypes are not a good way to learn about other nations, Every group of people is different inside, 'cause we all are different inside. (TA1KAWE)

Our second question (Q2) asked whether stereotypes played a role in any decision towards wanting to visit a country or wanting to learn the language associated with a specific country. The results of Q2 are presented in Table 34.

Table 34 Participants' perceived effects of cultural stereotypes

	BENDINAT	TAK*	VPLO
Cultural stereotypes - Q3 (total posts or comments)	32	11	7
Stereotypes –both a positive and negative influence on learning a foreign language & visiting a foreign country	15.6%	18.2%	28.55%
Stereotypes – positive influence on visiting a foreign country	12.5%	18.2%	14.3%
Stereotypes – negative influence on visiting a foreign country	9.4%	27.2%	14.3%
Stereotypes – no influence on visiting a foreign country	25%	9.1%	0%
Stereotypes – positive influence in decision to learn a new language	3.1%	9.1%	0%
Stereotypes – negative influence in decision to learn a new language	3.1%	18.2%	14.3%
Stereotypes – no influence in decision to learn a new language	31.3%	0%	28.55%

*The posts for TAK and VPLO are less compared to Bendinat because they were mainly group posts

Many of the Spanish participants believe that cultural stereotypes do not influence any decision to learn a new language (31.3%) or to visit a new country (25%). This is illustrated in Example 42. The VPLO students also believe that stereotypes do not influence them when it comes to language learning (28.55%). However, they do believe that when it comes to visiting a country, stereotypes may influence their decision.

Example 42

- 42.1 Well, I like languages. Is not like if cultural stereotypes motivate me or put me off wanting to visit or learn the language. I'd be equal if I wasn't working in this project. I want to visit or learn languages just like I wanted before this. When people from another countries come here, and I talk with them, sometimes I ask them about their languages and they show me how to say some words in their languages. It's going to be useful because I'm going to talk with people from Poland, and I'd like them to teach me some Polish, but cultural stereotypes didn't change my mind about it, I'm just like I was last year and the other years. (BE2LAMU)
- 42.2 So, the cultural stereotypes, in my oppinion, haven't got any importance to impulse you to learn the language or putting you off wanting to visit it (BE1AIBE)
- 42.3 No they don't discourage us because we learn language that is needed for us. (VP1KARA, VP1MAMA)

Far from producing a negative effect, some participants from Spain acknowledge that cultural stereotypes make a country appear more interesting:

Example 43

- 43.1 Yes, because you know a little bit and you want to know more and more, it's like an interesting novel. (BE1EDCA)
- 43.2 No, because when I read some stereotypes I have more desire to learn about this culture BE1PAAR)

Nevertheless, there are opinions that stress the negative effect that stereotypes may hold over the students' interest in FLs and cultures, especially from the students from TAK and one in particular from VPLO (Example 44.4):

Example 44

- 44.1 Yes, I'm affected by stereotypes. For example, I prefer to know Italian people, rather than French. And I prefer learning English rather than German. But really this is an injustice, because a person is not like the rest. Yet for some reason or other, stereotypes influence in people is negatively and positively. (BE1MARI)
- 44.2 For me stereotypes don't have any influence on learning a language. But they do have an influence that I would like go to visit a country. For example if a friend says to me that a land is horrible, I prefer to visit to another country. (BE1ALBE)
- 44.3 Negative cultural stereotypes about some nations put off me wanting to visit or learn that language (TA2MAIZ)

- 44.4 We all think cultural stereotypes can put us off wanting to visit or hear the language spoken there. For example, I (K***) don't like China because of some cases and I don't want to hear the language nor visit their country (VP1ALPA, VP1KIPO, VP1MIGI)

On the whole, the Polish participants are more realistic in their opinions, recognising that stereotypes should not be trusted since they do exert an influence over their decisions in life.

Example 45

Yes, we can see it very often. We don't have to look so far-the best examples are U.S.: it's so big country but we think, that everywhere is like in NYC or California, don't we? Is it really true? I suppose, no. But many peoples would like to go to U.S. for holidays or to live there.

As mentioned above, the answers to our third question were very few and far between and often a simple “yes” or “no” was given. The results for this question were based on a task carried out for homework where the students had to ask their parents about cultural symbols of Spain and Poland (see Table 36 below). The table of results to this survey was published on the blog.

As an introduction to the subject, students discussed what they understood by stereotypes and made lists of stereotypes for themselves and for their parents or grandparents. As part of the classwork, students were asked to complete a table where they had to consider a question regarding what the Spanish thought about the Spanish, the English, the Polish, the Germans, the Italians and the French. This list was then posted on the blog. An essential virtue of intercultural competence is to be aware of one's own stereotypes, especially as these are how one is seen by others; that is, they are the “make up” of the “imagined world”. For example, the Spanish students saw themselves as: “relaxed, friendly, and proud” (BE1MARI & BE1MATH); “polite but noisy” (BE1EDCA & BE1NEJA); rude, too relaxed & always happy” (BE1JUSA); and “irresponsible” (BE1JOMU & BE1MASA). They also believed that the Spanish: “like sex, the good life and food” (BE1LUOR, BE1ALBE); and “eat a lot and drink a lot of wine” (BE2KAHO).

When it came to describing the English, the students stated that they were quiet, drank a lot of tea and played cricket (BE1AILA & BE1CLMO), and many coincided with the

opinion that they were polite, pale-skinned and shy. The Germans were described as being “addicted to beer” (BE1JOMA & BE1MASA), as eating “a lot of sausages” (BE2KAHO) and as being “beer drinkers, noisy and overweight” (BE1ALHO & BE1LUFA). When it came to the Polish, they were described as “loud and impulsive” (BE1LUOR & BE1ALBE) and as being “always happy and hard workers” (BE1EDCA & BE1NEJA). Perceptions of the “other” also appeared to differ when the opinion originated from a male or female student. This was especially obvious with the opinions on the Italians. The girls described the Italians as “romantic” (BE1MATH & BE1MARI), beautiful, elegant and sexy (BE1ALNA & BE1PAAR), and “good-looking” (BE1KAHO). In contrast, the boys described them in terms of being “proud, loud” and as belonging to “the Mafia” (BE1LUOR & BE1ALBE), and by saying that they “have a lot of sex & tell lies” (BE1JUSA). The attitudes towards the French produced a series of negative opinions with the use of adjectives such as “stuck-up”, “smelly”, “arrogant”, “selfish”, “lazy”, “boring” and “mean”. With these opinions, they, in fact, produced a list of stereotypical beliefs.

Very often, participants’ opinions include references to food. The Italians are associated with “pasta” and “pizza” and, according to BE1KION and BE1BIBE, they “make the best pasta in the world”. The French are linked to “snails” and “croissants”, the Germans to “sausages” and “beer” and, of course, the British are famous for their “bad food” (BE1ALNA) and “tea”.

The theme of food was also the cultural symbol that was most mentioned when students answered Q3. In the following extract (Example 46), a Spanish student reflects on the results obtained by his class (see Table 35). Although the majority of Spanish students who answered Q3 believe that there are differences between the lists made by the students and their parents, when we consult the list we see that this is not so clear cut, as BE1JUSA points out:

Example 46

The students and their parents think almost the same for Spain; both coincide in that food is the most representative stereotype of Spain. Then, there are bullfighting, sports, music, parties, etc... While the parents think about more cultural and abstract facts, the students think about objects or places like beaches or the “Camino de Santiago” (BE1JUSA)

Although the results concerning the cultural symbols from class BE1 were posted on the blog, few students actually commented on the list; rather, as we mentioned above, they gave a simple “yes” or “no” to the question. Nevertheless, the list is presented below (Table 35) and we can confirm the assertion by BE1JUSA (Example 46) in that the lists are fairly similar.

Table 35 Cultural symbols for Spanish students and their parents

Cultural symbols for students		Cultural symbols for parents	
Number of references	Most representative things of Spain	Number of references	Most representative things of Spain
15	Food paella (5), Spanish Serrano ham and cold meats (5), food in general (3), Ensamada* (1), olives (1)	22	Food paella (8), Spanish Serrano ham and cold meats (5), food in general (9)
6	Sport football (5), sport in general (1)	12	bullfighting (11) San Fermine** (1)
5	Monuments/Cultural Heritage monuments in general (3), Camino de Santiago*** (2)	7	Sport football (4), sport in general (2), Rafael Nadal (1)
4	Bullfighting	7	Music and Dance
3	Spanish Women Spanish women/girls (2), Penelope Cruz (1)	6	Mediterranean beaches (2), Mediterranean Sea (2), temperature (2)
3	Beaches	5	Monuments/Cultural heritage La Puerta del Sol**** (3), Sagrada Familia***** (1), monuments in general (1)
3	Flamenco	4	Partying
		3	Wine
		2	Spanish language (2) Crisis (2)
1	The following items were mentioned once each: Crisis Poorly educated people Siesta Partying Speak loud and fast Work in tertiary sector	1	The following items were mentioned once each: Family Madrid- Barcelona Castellers***** Patriotism Culture Don Quixote Army Spanish Flag Andalusian Easter parades Amusing people

* The “Ensamada” is a local pastry speciality from the island of Mallorca.

** The “San Fermine” are celebrated in July in Pamplona (Navarre). This festival is famous worldwide for the “running of the bulls” through the town streets.

*** The “Puerta del Sol” is the best known and busiest square in the centre of Madrid – often the place for celebrations and manifestations.

**** The “Sagrada Familia” is a minor Basilica in Barcelona, designed by Antonio Gaudí (1852-1926).

***** “Castellers” are people who form human towers. This is a traditional sport in many local festivals that take place in Catalonia.

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Despite the similarities in the overall content of the lists for both groups (food, sport, monuments and cultural heritage, bullfighting etc.), there are important differences in the answers within each content area. The parents give more specific examples which reflect their national identity in terms of a historical narrative which accounts for the past history and customs of the country. They include such items as bull fighting and the associated “San Fermines”, and show signs of their patriotic nature as they include the Spanish flag, the army and important Spanish monuments and cities. In contrast, the students’ references are quite different and this historical and cultural element is missing from them. Rather, they offer cultural examples which reflect their lives today, such as football, parties and the crisis.

Likewise, although the Polish students do not post a list of cultural symbols on the blog, there are some posts and comments which reflect their opinions. One group of Polish students (VP2AGPE & VP2EDMA) reproduce a list of Polish symbols drawn up by their parents and grandparents, which include photographs and interesting explanations of “Solidarity”, “Lech Walesa”, “Pope John Paul” and “Henryk Sienkiewicz” – Nobel laureate in literature in 1905. Another group (see Example 47) explain that the symbols given by their parents and grandparents are different to theirs.

Example 47

For us the symbols of Poland are different than for our parents or grandparents. We think that symbols of Poland are for example: Adam Małysz a famous ski jumper or our Handball and Volleyball teams (VP1KARA & VP1MAMA)

The reason for the differences between the symbols offered by the students and their parents or grandparents is explained by another Polish student:

Example 48

Our parents and grandparents are oriented to the past. We think about the present and future. For example when someone says ‘politics’ we think about the latest political situation. Our parents and grandparents think about the years 1980 an ‘Solidarity’.
(VP2LUWA)

All in all, the Polish groups offered a wealth of cultural information which pointed to the very rich cultural heritage of their country. For example, they mentioned relevant

figures that were important to the building of the Polish nation, such as Jozef Pilsudski (President of the 2nd Polish Republic), and important figures from the arts and sciences such as Nicolau Copernicus or Frédéric Chopin. In fact, the Polish students appear to have fully understood that both “imagined communities”, their own and that of their grandparents, are essentially different and, even more importantly, the fact that this is a viable possibility. History for one generation is not the same for another. Whereas for the older Polish people the relevant symbols point to historical figures, places or processes that have played an important role in the history of their city, the younger generation are marked by prominent members of today’s society, very often taken from the realm of sports.

Attitudes and interest towards other cultures were also present in the unit of work which dealt with Africa. For this unit, students worked in small groups on a specific theme. The projects were presented to the rest of the class as a slideshow presentation and then posted on the blog for the other students to see. Students were also given a series of questions to comment on in the blog, a selection of which is reproduced below:

- Q1. How much do you know about the way of life in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America? Do you feel that you know more about some than others? Why?
- Q2. Can you name ten things that come to mind when you think of Africa (the continent as a whole)?
- Q3. If you had to do a similar project on another continent, which topics would you suggest? Why?

The responses were posted on the blog by the participants. Their answers provide some important information concerning their attitudes and interest towards foreign countries and cultures. The replies to the first question were very similar. Most students express their lack of deep knowledge concerning the other continents with phrases such as “I know a little about this continents but only the most important informations” (TA2PASI). Students profess to have more knowledge about Europe and North America than any other continent. TA1MAPI’s ideas are reflected in Example 49 below.

Example 49

Africa is a poor continent especially because of the hot climate. there is not enough water for everyone. Countries like a Australia, North America, Asia and Europe is more developed, so life there is more easier. I think I more know about North America. Almost every movie, game, songs is a american production. (TA1MAPI)

In this last example, the student also makes reference to western consumer culture and the role played by the USA in exporting certain commercial artefacts. To a certain extent, TA1MIAT also questions this world dominance when, in her answer to what topics she would like to study concerning other continents, she asks: “[w]hy in USA is easier to make a carrer?- I often wonder about it and I think that others also”. Of course, this must be seen as an innocent question, but it does highlight how we are influenced by certain information related to cultural stereotypes. At least, with this question the student is beginning to ask “why?”

TA2MAIZ gives a possible reason to explain why many participants feel they lack knowledge on other continents: “I do not know too much about Africa, Asia, Australasia, North and South America, because I don’t care about these continents. I know more about Europe because I live here”. Some students do, however, acknowledge an interest in learning about other countries and cultures. In the following extracts (Example 50) the students explain how they enjoy watching documentary channels on TV:

Example 50

- 50.1 I know a little about some other countries. Generally because of some documental films , which i love to watch. (TA1PACZ)
- 50.2 Well I konow quiet a bit... I watch a lot of channels like Discovery channel, Discovery world, Discovery science etc. But it doesn’t mean that I know more than others. (TA1DEGR)
- 50.3 I know a bit, because I like towatch (and read) National Geographic, Discovery, Travel etc. There are a lot of documental programs about continents. (TA1MIAT)

Other students demonstrate their interest in world cultures in their answers to the third question, a fact which was evident in the statements made by TA1PACZ. For example, she would like to include the following topics in any future work on other continents: “tribes of Brazil”, “production in China” and “minorities at USA”. She thus veers away from the typical “famous sights” and “beautiful landscapes” which are predominant in

the answers posited by her classmates and opts for issues which are of historical and social interest in the world today. Commercial production in China is an issue that has political as well as social connotations and the fact that students are expressing their interest in such transcultural issues should be acknowledged by educators and, consequently, should be fully exploited.

6.3.3.2.2 Critical transcultural awareness

Under this heading we wish to address the areas of political, cultural, and social awareness, issues which we have conceptualised as critical transcultural awareness. The blog sections “Music with a Message” and “Africa” were the blog areas where examples of empathetic activism were most evident. Extracts from the essays on Africa by students from Bendinat have also been referred to in this section and have been marked accordingly after the post.

One of the major results from the unit on Africa was the participants’ indignation concerning certain information and the sensation that nothing has been learnt from previous mistakes. Not only were they surprised at some of the information presented, but they were disappointed to learn that so much is still a part of life for many Africans and, more importantly, that European countries have played a negative role in many of the current or recent problems in numerous African states. Commenting on a presentation about recent wars in Africa, a student from Bendinat says the following:

Example 51

I think as of the slavery, in this times, how is posible that exists the wars? It's a think stupid, don't serves for nothing, in my opinion. Look at now, Japan it's very injured by the tsunami, and even with his highs differences, China help's Japan. I think it's because the catastrophes as this, that the people dead and disappears, makes on we, on almost all the people of world, born a feel of humanity, and this do that everyone leave their differences. So, many catastrophes and wars are needed to raise awareness? (BE1CLMO) (extract from essay)

This student stresses her indignation that we appear to be able to solve some problems through solidarity despite political or cultural differences and yet we are unable to solve

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other problems in a similar humanitarian manner. Likewise, in Example 52 another student also questions Spain's involvement in the African wars:

Example 52

There were some hard pictures about people fighting, with weapons, bleeding... But they did a good job looking for all the information they put in the Power Point. I think that Africa has been suffering all this time, and we're in part guilty, otherwise, why is Spain always in the middle of all (or the majority) the wars related with Africa? (BE2LAMU) (extract from essay)

Other students draw attention to the positive help that some African nations receive from international charities, but also condemn those who caused and are still causing the problem.

Example 53

Hunger: It is not the lack of natural resources that causes this problem, for Africa has many resources, but these are owned by other places around the world such as China, Europe, the US and Britain, although there are groups of people that dedicate their lives to help people in Africa with this problem, by planting wells, for water, and taking food. (BE1AILA) (extract from essay)

Even though students speak of the need and willingness to help people living in situations of war or those affected by periodic bouts of drought (Example 54), one student in particular voices her resentment towards the fact that we do not speak more about what can actually be done to help (Example 55):

Example 54

54.1 I would like help all the poor people, children, who have nothing to eat or drink. But not only me, everyone's help, because many people die of dehydration, stomach infections, etc... (BE1VAHU - essay)

54.2 It's sad, that a lot of children in Africa are sick, hungry, they don't go to school. They must work and one of the most common diseases is AIDS. UNICEF helps people in Africa, but I think it's too little. There should be more such organizations like UNICEF. In the future I want to create own charitable organization, and I hope that I can help people not only in Africa (VP2DAMI)

Example 55

But one thing we didn't talk about is what we can do, to change the bad and sad things, what we can give to them for doing happy. (BE1LUFA) (extract from essay)

Although many speak of how shocking some of the issues being discussed are, others concentrate on the eye-opening effect they have on them. Especially provocative for the students were the presentations concerning women in Africa. From a western perspective, these presentations dwelt on some of the more shocking cultural features present in some African nations, concerning, for example, the role of woman and genital mutilation. The presentations encouraged a flurry of comments from all the students involved in the project. In Example 56, BE2LAMU expresses her disbelief concerning some of the conditions that women have to suffer:

Example 56

We understood how hard is for women living there, standing violations, machism, and being the ones who work for holding their families and to earn some money. I can't believe how this can be happening nowadays just some km from here. (BE2LAMU) (extract from essay)

There were similar reactions (see Example 57) from the students after BE2LAMU, BE2ANMO and BE2LUMA posted their slideshow presentation on “African Women” on the blog. Some of the photos they included concerning female genital mutilation were very explicit and caused the following comments from both Polish and Spanish students:

Example 57

- 57.1 OMG. It's horrible!!! Poor women... (VP2DAKL)
- 57.2 It's really sad and horrible, but unfortunately it's true. :((TA1ALFI)
- 57.3 That's frightful true... I've known about it before, but for me it's still just... terrific. (TA1KAWE)
- 57.4 very poor women, its very sad to see this things. (BE2GITI)
- 57.5 this is horrible!!!! 😞 your presentation is very good but it is very scary too !!!! (VP2ANKO)
- 57.6 bloody, but ok 😊 (TA1KRKA)
- 57.7 There is a book “Desert Flower”, which tells the story of a woman who survived these terrible things that have been shown in this presentation. We encourage you to read it much. The presentation we really liked and tuched us very. Thank you very much. (VP2NIBR)

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The comments from this last post raised an important issue concerning human rights and, more specifically, female equality. The students acknowledged that, although they had some previous knowledge of female genital mutilation procedures, this project on Africa had brought to light the horror of the practice. The last comment (57.7) also shares some information that could be of interest to the other bloggers. Examples of new and shared knowledge will be looked at in more detail further on.

Evidence for the development of critical transcultural awareness through awareness of consumerism and humanitarian issues can be found in posts and comments from the “Music with a Message” unit. One of the first posts in this section (Example 58), which encumbers all the political, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, was a very thought-provoking analysis from three Spanish students concerning the song “Where is the love” by the Black Eyed Peas. It captures the essence of many of the ideas we have highlighted so far. Despite the complicated issues developed in the song, the students were able to raise some very important questions:

Example 58

This song talk about many problems in all the world. The war, greed, racism and intolerance are some of the points that appear in this song. The death of 3000 people and the fact that other 6000 people more were hurt in the attempt of the 11th september , the once of the twin towers, was a very important point that affect to Black eyed peas a lot, so they decided to make this song to commemorate the victims. This is the reason why they did this song. Another important point is the racism, is a curiosity that the majority of the people that appear on the videoclip is black people. The symbol that appear in all the videoclip is the question mark. We think that is the general question and at the same time the real meaning of the song, the question is , where is the love? Another point is the greed, that is an excessive desire to possess wealth or goods with the intention to keep it for one’s self. This song is very explicit so it’s very difficult to splain it. There is wars in the world, poverty, violence, and they ask WHY? (BE1AIBA, BE1VAHU & BE1PAAR)

The above example touches on issues of greed and money, a theme which was pursued by various students. For example, BE1SAGO and BE1CLMO comment on the message of “money and superficiality” from Michael Bubl ’s “Hollywood” and two of their classmates post the lyrics and video of the song “Money” by Pink Floyd (Example 59). Their explanation of the lyrics provokes a sensation of solidarity and agreement in Polish respondent VP1ANOW:

Example 59

Explanation: The group is protesting about the massive production of money, the control of the world of money and of people who wastes money in a silly way, for example, when they are bored, they buy expensive things. (BE1EDCA & BE1NEJA)

I never listen to this song, but now I know it. The text is about human greed and its consequences. Today this topic is very timely. 😊 (VP1ANOW)

VP1ANOW's response to the lyrics highlights her awareness of current world economic problems. Although her words are short and concise, her criticism of human nature in the more developed countries is most appropriate and she acknowledges the importance of such a topic, which can be associated with today's economic struggles. BE2ASCA's posting of Michael Jackson's 'Man in the Mirror' (Example 60) also prompts a similar reaction from VPA1NOW:

Example 60

Man in the mirror talks about the problems in the world. We think this song was thought to make us stop and think about the problems and to make us want to change for better. In this song, Michael Jackson says "I'm starting with the man in the mirror". With that sentence we think he is trying to tell us to stop being so selfish because we have got everything we want and most of the things we have we don't need, so we have to stop being selfish and try and give something to the poorer people in our society (BE2ASCA)

I agree with You. This song is about problems in the world and it has got important message. I love it: (VP1ANOW)

In Example 61, BE2ASCA even reminds her colleagues that there are people who are close to us that may be suffering and in need of help. Another fairly detailed analysis is put forward by BE1JUSA (Example 61). His long but compelling personal interpretation of "Empty Walls" by Serj Tankian also reflects on some poignant consequences of war:

Example 61

The song I posted above is Empty Walls, one of the most famous themes of his first album. The song talks mainly about war and his consequences, but you can interpret the song by a lot of different ways. Serj didn't give a specific meaning for the song so... I'll say what I think.

I think Empty Walls talks about how childish is war (this is one of the reasons Serj uses kids for his videoclip), that most of the time is a nonsense and no one remember why it started or why are they fighting. They're like kids who don't know what are they doing until they realise the truth (final scene of the videoclip) and get horrified. In the song we can see various events related with war like the Twin Towers (0:22), The starting of a war (1:05), Pulling down the Statue of Saddam (2:00, yes, it's the bear haha), Random Imprisonments (2:26), Civilians killed at their own

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houses (2:42), The end of the war (3:13), A dead soldier being transported in a coffin and the kids realising the truth (3:37). The song also talks about how cruel is war and the things we don't see on the TV (don't you see their bodies burning, desolate and full of yearning...?) because the Government don't want us to know those things. It also could talk about the Iraq war criticizing the Bush Government and the media censurement, but I think it's a more general thing. By Empty Walls I suppose Serj means walls empty of good feelings like love, friendship or kindness, where it only matters if you survive or not, where you lose your humanity (this is also because the main idea of the album *Elect the Dead* is that society is dead and we need a change). Empty walls can be referring to the Iraq walls, empty because USA has nothing to do there, and they shouldn't have started that war in the first place. There's also a part that says:

"I loved you, Yesterday, before, you killed my family."

I think that's the point of view of an Iraqi child. Yes, my country is trying to liberate me but... they're killing my family too. Don't waste your time on coffins today could mean this: Why is the government making monuments and "taking care" (note the quotes) of their people if it is who is sending them to death? It's a vicious circle!

I could explain more but this song has 2145646341 interpretations and points of view, just take this as a general analysis and our point of view of the song. Did you like it? We're waiting for your replies! Bye! (BE1JUSA)

When I saw the video for the first time I was thinking more or less the same.
(BE2LAMU)

The explanation of the lyrics to the song "Russians", by Sting, posted by a Polish student (Example 62), led the other participants to discuss communism. This is a topic that is probably closer to the hearts of the Polish students, since they have perhaps a clearer understanding of its implications for a country and its people.

Example 62

This text speaks about Communism. It shows that Communism was a lie. The Communists promised that they will protect the public. Communism was supposed to be good, had to be better than democracy. But it was different. People were beaten, locked up in prison or even killed. Clothes were not good, food was not enough. You can say a lot about Communism, but the truth is the only one: Communism killed many people, and those who survived, has prepared hard times.
(VP2DAMI)

I think that the lyrics of this song are really clear and it's easy to understand what they're talking about, I mean, it's not as if you should think about it. It's not the kind of music I listen to but the content of its lyrics is good
(BE2LAMU)

Nice song, good lyrics (easy to understand) and great explanation! But it's not my kind of music neither (BE1EDCA)

On a similar theme, VP1ANOW and VP1MIGR posted the lyrics to "Gorky Park", an early 1990s hit by the Scorpions. According to their explanation, the lyrics "celebrate the political changes in Eastern Europe at that time". There were no comments from the Spanish students on these posts that were so representative of Polish history. Even

though one Spanish blogger acknowledged the message in the lyrics, her principal reaction was that it was not her taste of music.

To conclude this section, we include a comment made by a Spanish student (see Example 63) concerning her essay on the African projects. It sums up the need to be given the opportunities to discuss some of the injustices of the world as the students have been able to do in the “Africa” and “Music with a Message” units:

Example 63

Thanks to these powerpoints I've realized how truly evil people live and I am very sad. But thanks, P*** [BEN T] because otherwise we would never have know so much about Africa. (BE1VAHU)

6.3.3.2.3 Bonding: tertiary socialisation

This section highlights an important area for the overall acquisition of transcultural competence, that of the ability to bond with others. This issue is very apparent in many of the posts and comments on the blog. As we mentioned in Section 6.3.3.1, the participants use various communicative strategies to simulate face-to-face communication, which ultimately fosters the development of bonding between the bloggers. This section looks at other features such as likes and dislikes, humour, and common interests, which provide the basis for friendship between some of the participants. We began the blog by asking the students to post introductory information on themselves. This information is representative of a typical introduction exercise which includes supplying their names, ages, residence, family and general likes and dislikes. The posts appeared to follow a predesigned template. This is illustrated in Example 64:

Example 64

- 64.1 My name is A***. I have brown hair and green eyes. I go to IES Bendinat in Mallorca. I like being with my friends. My favourite holiday is Christmas. I love the snow, comedy films, laughing, chocolate.... I have a brother who is younger than me. I don't know what else to write.... (BE1AILA)
- 64.2 Hello I'm V*** and I'm 14 years old. I was born in Palma. I go to Bendinat secondary school. I have one sister. I'm blond , small and I have green eyes. And I like sports, specially tennis and football. I'm support Madrid, is the best team. I practise tennis. I live in Genova it's a village near Palma. (BE2VIAO)

However, as the Polish students begin participating, the posts became more personalised. The following extract shows how one post from a Spanish student catches the attention of her classmates and Polish students concerning her love of animals, and the result is a lively inter-intra conversation between bloggers:

Example 65

I like all animals but especially cats and dogs. In Uruguay I had three dogs, many chickens, a goose and more than twenty cats. Here in Spain I had three cats, five hamsters and many fish. Although now I have nothing, I always wanted a small dog. NOW YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT ME, BYE! (BE1VAHU)

Hi 😊. I like animals too, I had a dog, but I have never had chickens 😊 It must be interesting to live with them 😊 I want to have a small dog now, especially french bulldog 😊 I love this breed of dog 😊 (VP2DAKL)

Hello 😊. Well you would not believe, nor is so interesting to live with chickens haha. I also want a small dog, I like all but the most is the yorsay 😊 (BE1VAHU)

Hello V***, k***... I like dogs to, but i cant have one 4 a long time, so I only keep lost and found puppies from dogshome for a while, until they found a family 😊 Its very funny with them 😊 (GE2GITI)

Hello g*** 😊. I haven't dogs, I can not because my parents work and when I'm at school the dog would have to be alone, then my father would not let me. I really would like to do what you do you, that's fine because they are abandoned dogs and care for them until they find a house, and also as you say is very funny ...Byeee! 😊 (BE1VAHU)

The sharing of similar likes and dislikes, especially their tastes in music and film, provides an important boost to bonding. One of the posts which received the most comments was a simple “hello, what is your favourite music?” posted by BE1PAAR (Example 66). This post alone received a total of 13 comments where students from both Spain and Poland listed their favourite types of music or specific musicians or groups. As we can appreciate, even though at first sight the comments appear to be simple lists of artists, closer inspection reveals that, in some cases, one student may humorously reject the tastes of another blogger (VP2ANKO and VP2LUWI), while others appear to be simple extensions in way of agreement with a previous message (BE2LAMU and VP2ANKO).

Example 66

hello, what is your favourite music? (BE1PAAR)

Hello! This is R***, Z*** and K*** 😊 We prefer ROCK! Our favourite singers are Eric Clapton, Jimmy Hendrix, Avril Lavigne and bands Muse, Paramore, FOB.

How about you? (VPIKOKA)

Hi ^ I'm A*** 😊 I love screamo , hardrock , metalcore and deathcore

😊 my favourite bands are :

- Bring Me the Horizon
- Blessthefall
- Parkway Drive
- Alesana
- Underoath
- Bullet for My Valentine
- Funeral for a Friend ((VP2ANKO)

Hallo! Ohh.. my god:) Jimi and Eric mainly in Voodoo Child (Hendrix) and Layla or Tears in Heaven(Clapton). My favourite music are Thrash metal (Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, Antrax, Pantera,) I like Iron Meiden, Bullet for My Valentine, Sum 41, Killswitch Engage too. Well ,my music is hard.....:) (VP2LUWI)

My favorite music is classical music that I listen to for years. I think you know some songs by Strauss, Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn, even if you do not know! Besides listening to Elvis the Divine, which I am a big fan. and anyway I like any music, including Metallica, but there will always be a classic in the first place! (VP2MAPA)

Heeeey, I'm L***! 😊 My favourite band is "Staind" almost anybody know them, but I just think they're the best. Then, the second one is "System of a down" and specially I like the album of Serj Tankian (the singer) in solitary. Then there's bands like: Pendulum, escape the fate, michael jackson (I LOVE THEM!!), Tool, Muse, Paramore, FOB, bring me the horizon, bullet for my valentine, 3 doors down, metallica, 30 second to mars, Queen, sum 41, green day, my chemical romance, skillet, birds of Tokyo... etc etc... In my opinion all music styles are fantastic 😊 (BE2LAMU)

escape the fate, bring me the hoizont and bullet for my valentine !!! yeeee !!!! xd (VP2ANKO)

Metallica Yeah! This is my favourite band:) A*** ,go listen your Parkway Drive:) You EMO xDBullet is good ,but Bring me the horizont?? ohhh my.. (VP2LUWI)

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One very important moment for the students from Bendinat and VPLO was the opportunity to actually see and speak to one another via the short SKYPE session which took place on March 18th, 2011. Although this communication attempt was not free from technical problems, the students reflect their very positive views of finally getting to see the other blog participants. The most commented was the interest in visiting each other's countries. A total of nineteen posts and comments were found, some of which are included below in Example 67:

Example 67

It was great to see you 😊 We are already planning our trip to Mallorca. I'm sending you pictures of our wonderful winter. I hope that they will not alienate after seeing these pictures. xD Kisses 😊 (VP2NIBR)

hahahha we are waiting you, here in Mallorca, so come soon. We want to visit poland to, it will be incredible. And has been fantastic to see you bye;) (Be2RUOL)

It will be fun , if you guys can come here to Mallorca 😊 (BE1ALHO)

I hope that you can come, and i want to come to Poland too 😊 (BE2GITI)

Are you seriously guys coming to Mallorca? If that's true it will be amazing (and if we can go to Poland even better!) We're wating for you! 😊 (BE1JUSA)

We really want to come to Mallorca and we hope that it will go through.;) (VP2NIBR)

Although students could communicate freely with each other on the blog, it seems that one of the negative features was perhaps the lack of intimacy that it provided. For this reason, students did not hesitate to exchange Facebook account information. The reason appeared to be twofold: 1) it would offer a more personal experience which would enhance bonding; and 2) it seemed as if for some it would be easier to communicate:

Example 68

Have you got facebook or any other sites? ADIOSSS (BE2GITI)

Yes was very funny!! No sorry I havn't got Facebok I have got Tuenti that is the spanish' Facebook 😊 (BE2EDRO)

BUeno pues te haces facebook q casi todos tiene eso no tuenti. (BE2GITI)

Yes, me and my friends have facebook 😊 ((VP2DAKL)

can you give it to me, so we can talk better ? 😊
(BE2GITI)

Example 69 also highlights bonding through similar interests which then results in the exchanging of Facebook addresses:

Example 69

Hey, I'm P*** and I'm 16. I have long dark blond hair and green eyes. I'm nice, crazy and i love meeting new friends (especially from foreign countries). My passion is music . I play violin since i was 5 and besides a junior high i am studing at Music School . I'm interested too in fashion , music , cinema and theatre. I love parties <3 . I like many types of music, but one of my favourites is rock. I love 30 Seconds to Mars, My Chemical Romance, Escape the fate, The Kooks, Linkin Park, The Used and a lots of other. ;] I wouldn't live without meeting with friends, shopping with them and talking on Facebook. ; p I have one brother and one sister. They are older than me. My brother is 28 and he lives in Warsaw , and sister is 21 and she's studing in Cracow. ;]Now you know something about me. <3Kisses ; * (TA1PACZ)

Hey P***! Nice to meet you 😊Im L***. I really love Escape the fate! And I love my chemical romance, the kooks and linkin park too, then thats the reason why i wrote something to you hahaha I always wished to play the violin, but i just played the piano for 3 or 4 years, either way i still play it sometimes at home, without teachers 😊<3 (BE2LAMU)

Oh I'm happy to hear that we like similar things. ;]
Do you have facebook? 😊<3 (TA1PACZ)

yess! My facebook is: ***
do you have facebook too? 😊 (BE2LAMU)

Great. I also have : XXX . 😊 (TA1PACZ)

Another observable phenomenon of the blog was the multiple exchanges concerning friendship.

Example 70

You are lovely friends (: (BE2SAIZ)

Well, I hope we'll be friends and enjoy this. See ya! ^_^ (BE1JUSA)

Hi! Im very happy because I saw you! You are very nice people. I hope we will see each other in Poland or Spain in future 😊
(VP2DAKL)

Although we mentioned the use of humour and sarcasm as a communication strategy within the stylistic choice section, it is also necessary to understand the psychological implications that such use may have in issues of bonding. Many instances were found

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where students used humour as a ploy to make their post more attractive and possibly with a view to offering a relaxed and natural feel to their posts and comments which would aid bonding. This was more than obvious with intra-group communication but was also explicit in posts that were aimed at foreign readers. Our first example (Example 71) below shows how the first blogger makes a series of humorous phrases which are then taken up in the reply from a friend.

Example 71

I've got some pets: a stressed hamster called Phenelope (...Yes, too long for a hamster) and a bored water turtle. I hate Belén Esteban, wake up early in the mornings and paella (BE2ANMO)

A***aa hahahhh how are you one of my best friends??? How is Phenelope? Why is your turtle bored...
→? Hahahahahaha you dont know what you're missing without eating paellaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. I just commented your comment as i told you hahahah. Buy lots of things in "las rebajas".... <3<3<3 (BE2LAMU)

(Belén Esteban is a well-known TV personality in Spain and "las rebajas" means "the sales")

The following two excerpts (in Example 72) explicitly inform the reader that they were making a joke, a typical remark to ensure that the reader perceives this, especially in written communication, where the speaker cannot use his tone of voice to convey irony:

Example 72

72.1 We are the smartest, the most beautiful and general we're the best in school ;D (what a self worship!! xD) (VP1ALBU, VP1RECM, VP1ANOW)

72.2 We don't interested in boys, We love only maths (it was joke, of course 😊). (VP1ALBU, VP1MODU, VP2MART)

And in the following example the Polish students introduce some Polish vocabulary:

Example 73

przystojny – handsome – guapo

eksowna – sexy – sexy

chrząszcz – beetle – escarabajo

tańczyć – dance – danza

szkoła – school – la escuela

Konstantynopolitańczykowieczka – Constantinople – Constantinopla

The last one is a joke we doubt that you will read it 😊

(VP1KARA, VP1KAKO, VP1 MAMA)

The following comments are also full of humour as the students discuss their allegiances to Spain's most successful football teams.

Example 74

Madrid sucks... You forgot saying that l*** is the best in the world. (BE2LAMU)

Madrid is the best!!! VXX is the best xd (BE2VIAP)

Hahahah sure... (BE2LAMU)

shut up you two! S*** is the best and madrid sucks... v.v
Barcelooooonaaaaaa! (BE2SOJI)

barça sucks! Hahahahaha (BE2SAIZ)

ohhhh come on s*****yyy, you said you loved
mee! You didn't have to say this (BE2LAMU)

I agree with LXX , Madrid sucks! Jajaja
(BE2CABA)

Although no Polish students participated in this exchange it must have had some effect since, in a later post, Polish participant TA2MAIZ states "I'm good at football and I love playing football, my favourite team is Real Madrid C.F !!” and VP2MAPA posts that his "favourite football club is FC Barcelona”.

This last example from a Polish blogger really uses humour in his flirty post:

Example 75

I'm single so I waiting for propositions 😊 I like girls with long blond hair 😊
Meaby we can meet don't you think? Poland – Spain it's no so far 😊 Come to
Poland for holidays ! Invite me on FaceBook I'm XXX 😊 See youuuuuu!!!
(TA1MISA)

6.3.3.2.4 New/shared knowledge

Our last sub-section within the results of transcultural competence reflects the phenomenon of new and shared knowledge. One of the aims of the blog was to promote intercultural learning, with special interest in the development of cultural knowledge on a worldwide level. To a certain extent, this was achieved through the active involvement of the units on “Africa”, “Music with a Message” and “Questions and Answers”.

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Nevertheless, there was also plenty of evidence from other areas of the blog as to the sharing of cultural knowledge.

One of the first experiences was between the researcher and a student from Bendinat (see Example 76) who talked about his interest in longboarding:

Example 76

I have blonde hair, I'm not very tall... brown eyes, and I like longboarding, but I'm just starting. (BE1EDCA)

Hi EXX – I know this may seem a silly question but what is longboarding? I think I'm really out of touch with these new sports – must be my age! (Karen)

It's like skateboarding but in hills (descense). It's with boards that are long (that's why the name longboarding). It was created by some surfers that wanted to do like surf when it was cold. Normaly it's high speed ... but I'm starting so i don't go very fast. (BE1EDCA)

Thanks for the info – sounds fun! (Karen)

The unit “Questions and Answers” also provided the students with the opportunity to obtain more specific information on a series of subjects such as education in Poland and Spain, typical food, art and literature, job prospects, national and school holidays as well as more trivial subjects such as fashion and social networking, amongst others. The following post (Example 77) illustrates one of the questions posed by a Spanish participant:

Example 77

Hi, I wanted to ask you some things: Are there some important authors that were born in Poland? Do people in Poland read much? Which type of book is the most popular in poland? (BE1LUOR)

In Poland there are many very famous writers such as Wislawa Szymborska, Slawomir Mrozek. Prominent personalities were also Kochanowski, Wladyslaw Reymont, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Adam Mickiewicz. Several of them received the Nobel Prize. In Poland, people don't read too many books. Unfortunately. Most people read foreign literature. In Poland the most popular books are fantastic. And you what books you like most? 😊 (VP2MART)

In Spain we read many fantasy books too but also thrillers. (BE1LUOR)

The various posts on Poland and Spain proved to be a great place for “sightseeing”; students posted an important number of photographs and videos which showed off their

hometowns. These posts were always very well received by the other students and served to create an interest in the towns in question. With this new knowledge the students began to see the hometowns of both groups in a new light. As the following two extracts show (Examples 78 & 79), this was also a strategy which encouraged bonding between the two national groups. Following a post by Polish students VP1KAKO, VP1KARA and VP1MAMA which included photographs depicting the town hall, the amphitheatre, the zoo, the Piastowska tower and the Mlyynowska Canal, which they point out is reminiscent of Venice, the following comments were posted by the Spanish students:

Example 78

The amphitheater is amazing! I love it haha. I think Opole is beautiful! :O
(BE2LAMU)

The Mlynowka canal it's very impressive O: I think we have to post something about Mallorca, We have beautiful things too 😊 (BE1JUSA)

Opole has beautiful buldings! And it's funny to see a kind of Venice in Poland. I would like to see it personally in the night with the underwater lights! So romantic to take a walk with your boyfriend/girlfriend haha. Mallorca has great places too, like the cathedral. (BE2ANMO)

Needless to say, the Spanish students did not take long to post some similar information on the island of Mallorca. Photographs and information on Palma Cathedral, Bellver Castle, the **Almudaina Palace**, and a selection of beaches were eagerly received by the Polish participants, who immediately expressed their agreement concerning the beauty of the island's cultural sights and, more especially, its beaches:

Example 79

Cathedral, palace and beach are very nice 😊 Majorca is so beautiful 😊))
(VP2DAKL)

I agree 😊 Majorca = Beautiful place (TA1DEGR)

It's really impressive. If I lived in Mallorca and saw such amazing views every day, I couldn't bring myself to go to school! (VP1KAKO)

Hahaha, well the beaches I put on the post aren't near city, I mean, in these beaches you can't find buildings in front of the sea, because there's just vegetation, you just can reach these beaches by boat or on foot 😊 (BE2LAMU)

I love Majorca (VP1RECM)

I love the sights of Majorca! (VPLO T)

Majorca is very beautiful place, but the most beautiful are beaches. We want to go there, take sunbath and swim by ship. Thanks for this photos, there are amazing! (VP2MOBU)

Your welcome! I hope you all can come to Majorca someday and can see these places and a lot of places more! 😊XXX (BE2LAMU)

Despite a wealth of information being shared on the blog, rarely were there any comments which specifically stated that this was new information. One exception was the following post by BE2LAMU in response to a Polish post which mentioned some famous Polish personalities such as Lech Walesa, Pope John Paul II, and Polish Nobel laureate in literature, Henryk Sienkiwicz, where she admits not knowing that “the last pope was polish :O”.

6.3.3.2.5 Re-evaluation of one’s view of the world

Throughout the different blog sections we can also find posts and comments which reflect the way students may reassess their perceptions of the “other” after some type of contact which provides new knowledge. For example, after a Skype session between the Bendinat groups and the VPLO groups, one Spanish participant writes “PS. I really thout that the polacs alle were blond, but nearly no one was blond... haahahahahah 😊” (BE2GITI). BE2ANMO also comments on a series of photographs on Opole and says “Opole has beautiful buldings! And it’s funny to see a kind of Venice in Poland”. This student probably had a different vision of the town and was pleasantly surprised by this new knowledge.

Likewise, in response to the question about his interest in the African continent, a student stated “I don’t know much. I think that there are people, who know more, because I’m not interested in it”. Yet he appeared to have changed his mind after watching a slideshow presentation a month later. This same student suddenly became extremely interested in humanitarian issues as seen in the following example:

Example 80

It's sad, that a lot of children in Africa are sick, hungry, they don't go to school. They must work and one of the most common diseases is AIDS. UNICEF helps people in Africa, but I think it's too little. There should be more such organizations like UNICEF. In the future I want to create own charitable organization, and I hope that I can help people not only in Africa (TA1MISA)

We cannot prove whether his change in opinion is due to the focus on Africa in his English lesson, but it does appear to have had some consequences with this particular student.

There was also some evidence of a re-evaluation of their worldview in some of the essays written by the students from Spain on the African projects. Many expressed that this project had changed their view concerning the countries involved and that it had created a sense of awareness concerning their cultures, which they did not have before:

Example 81

- 81.1 Always we talk about Africa, people think of wars, poverty... but never think of anything positive. Doing this work has helped me to know that Africa has its negative part, but also has its positive part. (BE1VAHU)
- 81.2 I really like Africa because even thow they are going threw a hard time they still smile, dance and just enjoy life we should all learn from Africa it is an amazing place full of amazing people. (BE1NEJA)
- 81.3 In this redaction I will talk about 2 projects that I think they teached me new things and provide me a new vision of what's Africa now a day. [...] Apart from this I think that all of us growed like person because doing this type of work you start to valorate how privilegiate we are. (BE1AIBA)
- 81.4 Doing this work has been very interesting, because Africa is an actual issue that we think that we know everything, but we know nothing. Africa is a poor continent in economy, but very rich in culture. Their wealth is more valuable than ours, their happiness can't buy, and their life is more healthy and peaceful than ours. With the power-points we have seen their suffering, but we have also seen that their society is cleaner, happier, and worthier. (BE1MARI)
- 81.5 The truth is that this work has taught me a lot of things and to value everything more. Every time I open Power Point I think of all the things we don't valorate and that we always complain about everything, where other don't have anything. (BE1PAAR)

6.3.3.3 A transnational identity: Self- and group-identifying features

In this section we wish to comment on certain areas that reflected how the students defined themselves in terms of self- and group-identity. The principal sources of data are the blog sections “Do you want to know anything about me?” and “Cultural Snippets”. Many of the examples we will discuss here have also been discussed in other sections but are also applicable to the notion of transnational identity.

One of the most salient features was the manner in which the students defined themselves to their colleagues. Rather than describe themselves through features of cultural or national identity, almost all students defined themselves according to their tastes in music and their hobbies, ultimately positioning themselves within today’s consumerist society through various subcultural affiliations. It is thanks to these posts and comments that we see the appearance of a pattern of group-identifying features.

The earlier posts from the Spanish students follow the typical template style for an introduction (i.e. name, age, residence, physical characteristics, family, and likes and dislikes), but when real communication begins between the two groups, there is a sharp increase in references to musical tastes, thus converting the topic of music into the most popular means of identification. Nevertheless, the first two Spanish posts from BE2LAMU and BE1JUSA do include a list of favourite artists and bands. When the Polish students begin posting information which highlights their musical affiliations, these two Spanish students are also very quick to reply. The following example shows the typical posts made by the Spanish students at the beginning of the project (ex.82.1), the “atypical” post made by BE2LAMU (in contrast to her fellow classmates) (ex. 82.2), one of the first posts from Poland with a response from a Spanish participant (82.3), and finally, one of the last posts from Spain.

Example 82

82.1 Hi there! My name is S*** and I’m 14 years old. I have brown and curly hair and brown eyes. I’m not tall but I’m not short eather. I have a brother older than me, D***. I’ve been living in Mallorca all my life and I like it here. I like drawing, painting, shopping with my friends, etc. I also like football and being with my friends. (BE2SOJI) – posted on Dec 14th 2010.

82.2 [...]Hi! My name is L*** 😊 I’m 14 years old. I have always lived in Mallorca. I have long brown hair and brown eyes. There are lots of things

which I like as listening to music, watching/reading anime/manga, reading books/comics, new languages, singing, being with my friends, playing the computer, taking photos, shoes, shopping, etc. My favourite music band is “Staind” and there are some bands I like such as “Nirvana”, “Red hot chili peppers”, “Nickelback”, “Escape the fate”, “System of a down”, “Serj Tankian”, “Queen”, etc. I play the piano. I have one brother, he’s 20 years old, he’s actually in Barcelona because he’s studying. I hate people who lies, waiting for people, scary movies and I can’t remember more things... I think that’s all... Have a nice day (BE2LAMU) – posted on Dec 3rd 2010.

- 82.3 I’m P*** and I’m 16. I have long dark blond hair and green eyes. I’m nice, crazy and i love meeting new friends (especially from foreign countries). My passion is music . I play violin since i was 5 and besides a junior high i am studing at Music School . I’m interested too in fashion , music , cinema and theatre. I love parties <3 . I like many types of music, but one of my favourites is rock. I love 30 Seconds to Mars, My Chemical Romance, Escape the fate, The Kooks, Linkin Park, The Used and a lots of other. ;] I wouldn’t live without meeting with friends, shopping with them and talking on Facebook. ; p I have one brother and one sister. They are older than me. My brother is 28 and he lives in Warsaw , and sister is 21 and she’s studing in Cracow. ;] (TA1PACZ) – posted on Jan 13th 2011.

Hey P***! Nice to meet you 😊 Im L***. I really love Escape the fate! And I love my chemical romance, the kooks and linkin park too, then thats the reason why i wrote something to you hahaha [...] (BE2LAMU) – posted on Jan 14th 2011.

- 82.4 Hey i’m k*** I’m 14 years old and i live in Es Capdellà, Mallorca, i was born i england but moved here when i was 7. I have one brother, a sister and a dog 😊. In my free time i would normally go out with my friends, skate... I Love Rock, indie, Punk, Heavy metal Music, my favorite bands would be: Three Days Grace, Red hot chili Peppers and Bullet for my valentine. Right that’s enough writing for one day. Cya <3 😊 - (BE2KISH) – posted on Jan 18th 2011.

As we have already discussed above, music is unquestionably one of the principal bonding strategies and a high majority of posts in the “Cultural Snippets” section are dedicated to discussing music. Students reveal their interest in an array of different artists, most of whom do not belong to mainstream popular music but to a variety of minority genres such as metal core, post-hard core, deathcore, visual key rock, and scream, to mention but a few. In the previous post, TA1PCZ states that music is her “passion” and goes on to explain that she plays the violin and attends music school. Many of the Polish students express their fondness for classical music. This is hardly surprising, since a high number of the students attended music school in the afternoons and both of the schools participating in the project have a great tradition in music (researcher’s field notes). Table 36 lists all the performers/bands that participants mention in the “Do you want to know anything about me?” and “Cultural snippets”

sections mentioned twice or more times, along with the genre and country of origin. There were a further 42 groups or artists with one mention each.

Table 36 Subcultural affiliations through recording artists

Performer / Band	Genre (country of origin)	No of references
30 Seconds to Mars	Emo, alternative rock (USA)	4
AC/DC	Heavy metal (Australia)	2
Apocalyptica	Symphonic metal (Finland)	2
Bring me the horizon	Metal core (heavy metal and hardcore punk fusion)	2
Bullet for my Valentine	Metal core (heavy metal and hardcore punk fusion)	5
Elvis Presley	Rock and roll, country, blues (USA)	2
Eminem	Rap (USA)	2
Eric Clapton	Rock, blues, hard rock, psychedelic rock (British)	3
Escape the fate	Post-hardcore, metal (USA)	4
Jimmy Hendrix	Psychedelic rock, hard rock, blues (USA)	2
Kings of Leon	Alternative rock, garage rock (USA)	2
Linking Park	Indie, alternative rock (USA)	3
Marilyn Manson	Rock (USA)	2
Michael Jackson	Pop (USA)	3
Muse	Alternative rock, new prog, space rock (British)	3
My Chemical Romance	Alternative, punk rock (USA)	3
Nickelback	Alternative, Indie rock (Canada)	3
Paramore	Alternative rock, emo, pop punk (USA)	3
Phil Collins	Rock, progressive rock, pop rock, jazz fusion (British)	2
Queen	Glam rock (UK)	2
Red Hot Chilli Peppers	Alternative rock (USA)	2
Rise Against	Punk rock (USA)	3
Serj Tankian	Alternative rock (Armenia-USA)	3
Staind	Alternative rock, post-punk (USA)	2
System of a Down	Alternative rock, metal (Armenia-USA)	2
The Kooks	Indie pop, BritPop (UK)	2
Three Days Grace	Alternative metal, post-grunge (Canada)	4

Other areas which appear to be used to define identity are references to different sports or sports personalities and, in particular, the references to football by both groups of participants. In conversations held with the Polish students, they told the researcher that football was not one of their major sports although they were looking forward to the fact that Poland was co-hosting the European cup in 2012. Despite this lack of tradition with the sport, the Polish do frequently name their allegiances to different teams, very often to Madrid or Barcelona.

Example 83

- 83.1 I'm support Madrid, is the best team.(BE2VIAP)
- 83.2 shut up you two! Sofia is the best and madrid sucks... v.v
Barcelooooonaaaaaa! (BE2SOJI)
- 83.3 My favourite football team is Barça, obviously is the best team (5-0 ; 6-2 etc.
hahahaha) (BE2CABA)
- 83.4 I love football and I'm a Bayern Munich fan .(BE1ALE)
- 83.5 Also I like the football (FC Barcelona). (BE1BIBE)
- 83.6 My favourite football club is FC Barcelona. (VP2MAPA)
- 83.7 I'm good at football and I love playing football, my favourite team is Real
Madrid C.F !! (TA2MAIZ)

However, there is also a great deal of interest in many other sports, some of which appear to be quite unusual. For example, BE1EDCA frequently make reference to his favourite sport, “longboarding”, which subsequently becomes a mode of metonymic self-definition for him. As seen in Example 34 above, he simply posts a picture of a longboard with the title “saving for my longboard”.

Apart from music and sports, there is plenty of evidence that students identify with those who have similar interests to them. This is exemplified in the following post (Example 84):

Example 84

Hi, We are M***, D*** and A***. [...] Our common characteristics are that we love animals, cooking and the music but every of us is listening to other kind. A*** – hard rock and screamo, D*** and M*** – music from 40,'s 60's, 70's, 80' s.[...] Our hobbies :

A*** – listen to music, scrawl in the notebook, watch anime.

D*** – cooking and reading books

M*** – cooking and listen to music

We would like to know you and learn how your living in Spain looks like 😊
(VP2ANKO, VP”DAKL and VP2MART)

I love all things you like to doo! Specially cooking, music, reading and ANIME haha it's great to know about you 😊 (BE2LAMU)

i also like cooking hahaha!
you are really good at english! 😊 (BE2SAIZ)

Does any of you like to swim?? (: (BE2KILO)

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Scrawl in a notebook and listen to music are my
favourite hobbies!
You are lovely friends (: (BE2ANMO)

Another important feature of self-identification is the use of the Internet, especially the interest in on-line games and social networking. As mentioned in Section 6.3.3.2.3 many students made reference to using Facebook and frequently exchanged Facebook addresses.

Example 85

- 86.1 Nice to meet you! I invited you on facebook (I'm A*** F***) ;> (TA1ALFI)
- 86.2 Have you got facebook or any other sites? ADIOSSS (BE2GITI)
- 86.3 Invite me on FaceBook I'm M*** 😊 See youuuuuu!!! (TA1MISI)

Two Polish students (see Example 86) also mention that they enjoy playing computer and on-line games. They provide their user names and invite the Spanish students to challenge them:

Example 86

- 86.1 I am found of football and tennis, but I also like playing computer games like Counter-Strike 1.6 or source 😊(if somebody want to challenge me call me on steam I'm k***12295 (TA2JANO)
- 86.2 In my spare time I usually go out with my mates or play PS3 multiplayer games like COD Black Opps , my PSN ID is *** , feel free to add me 😊 I hope you now know something about me:) (TA1LUTR)

Finally, possibly the most important evidence that our participants can be considered to show signs of a common group identity comes from our earlier results concerning CMC. Apart from drawing the students together as a group, it seems that we can clearly define our participants as digital natives. They have no problems in conversing in such a way that they appear to be having an actual face-to-face conversation and are adept at using a number of (not exclusively verbal communication) strategies which emphasise their mood or the nature of their message.

6.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter began with an outline of the relation between our research questions, the research instruments and Ting Toomey's five functions of culture (1999). Her framework has provided a solid base on which to build up the information from our different research tools and on which to develop the concept of transcultural competence.

Her first function of culture is ecological adaptation. The students participating in this research have had to adapt to a new learning environment: a change in the way they learn English (working on culturally-orientated units and sharing the learning with students from another country on an on-line blog) as well as the type of communication, which was with other non-native speakers of English in a "virtual third space". The results from our two questionnaires, Part 1 of the SDT booklet, and some extracts from the students concerning their opinions of the blog have provided us with plenty of information with which to address RQ1, which inquires into the attitudes our learners have towards language and culture learning.

RQ2 falls within another two of Toomey's cultural functions: cultural communication and intergroup boundaries. A wealth of data has been gathered from the blog, which has allowed us to tackle our second research question as we look into the feasibility of a transcultural approach to ELT. The data has been presented in five principal blocks of information: 1) cultural identity; 2) critical transcultural awareness; 3) bonding (tertiary socialisation); 4) the exchange of cultural information; and 5) the re-evaluation of a worldview. All this will allow us to develop the areas of cultural communication that are pertinent to our discussion of transcultural competence in Chapter 7. The information for these areas of interest has been extracted from the blog sections "Cultural stereotypes", "Africa" and "Music with a Message". The project work connected to these blog sections was thought-provoking for the students, resulting in some very interesting opinions and discussions on the blog, which, combined with the results from Part 2 of the SDT, provide data for an interesting discussion of cultural communication and the ethnocentric levels of the students.

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Finally, RQ3 looks into the possibility of the development of a transnational identity. Toomey's final two functions of culture, group inclusion and identity meaning, are intricately linked to this concept. The analysis of data has highlighted a number of features that are shared by both the Polish and the Spanish groups. These individual identifying traits may be seen to provide the means to argue for the emergence of a new collective transnational identity for these groups of digital third space EIL speakers, as shall be duly discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The principal objective of this doctoral dissertation has been to put into practice a transcultural approach in the FL classroom and to report the findings of this innovative methodology. Three research questions were formulated with the purpose of presenting the data in a manner which would allow us to discuss the feasibility of such a teaching approach. The research questions emphasise three specific areas of the project: 1) learners' attitudes towards the transcultural methodology put into practice for this research and, by extension, the participants' attitudes towards language and culture learning; 2) the effectiveness of such an approach in fostering transcultural competence; and 3) whether we can find evidence of an emerging transnational identity. Chapter 6 presented the results obtained from our research tools and this chapter extracts information from the different areas of analysis to discuss the more salient issues in more depth.

One of the main discussions presented in the MLA report (2007) was that the curriculum for US language-major students should "be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence" (MLA, 2007: 3-4). A close examination of recent research indicated that there was a clear gap in academic knowledge concerning these competences within the secondary school sector. Thus, our proposal was to begin this process within compulsory education and to at least prepare students for future ventures into international waters. Second to this objective, but integrated in the overall result, is the initiative of encouraging not only linguistic and intercultural communicative competence (as defined by Byram, 1997), but to inculcate a way of thinking, perceiving and behaving in a transnational environment with the aim of developing transcultural competence.

In this chapter, the research findings will be discussed within the parameters of our research questions with the final aim of presenting a possible model for a transcultural approach to EIL in the EFL classroom at secondary education level as part of our conclusions in Chapter 8. Our discussion will concentrate on the results of our focus group in Spain, although the results from the Polish participants will also be referred to in order to show comparisons when necessary.

7.1 RQ1: What are our participants' attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT?

The transcultural approach to ELT implemented in this dissertation has involved a change in the habitual style of teaching in the schools that participated in the project. Innovations included the use of a blog as a virtual learning area where students from Spain and Poland were able to communicate between themselves and where they could publish their classwork on a series of culturally-orientated units of work or projects. This change in the structure of the learning environment has meant a change in the culture of learning or, in terms of Ting-Toomey's (1999) functions of culture, a case of ecological adaptation. With regard to this concept, we understand that the change is not only in relation to the classroom culture but that it is a transformation which also reflects the bigger picture of FL education and the evolution of the global village concept within the context of ELT.

In the case of our Spanish and Polish students, EIL was the medium used for communication with the other group of students and it was hoped that this contact would produce an interest in learning about the new culture and possibly the language with which it is associated. In this discussion of the results there are five principal issues which we wish to address concerning attitudes towards the transcultural approach to EFL implemented in the two countries:

1. the increase in positive attitudes towards FL learning, especially concerning French and German (the two most common FLs studied after English), and Eastern European languages on behalf of the Spanish participants;
2. students' recognition of the motivational power of EIL;
3. the positive attitudes towards foreign culture learning;
4. English on the Internet; and
5. the mixed attitudes towards the transcultural approach and the "EIL in Poland and Spain blog" as a learning tool.

7.1.1 Attitudes towards foreign language learning

One of our major concerns within this area was whether the transcultural approach taken to EFL in the Spanish classroom could influence, positively or negatively, the attitudes towards the learning of English and other FLs and cultures. Although students from all three schools essentially graded their overall interest in languages between 5 and 6 (on a scale of 1 – 7/boring – interesting) in Part 1 of the SDT T1 and the SDT T2 (with results rising slightly for Bendinat and TAK at T2), the results for paired samples t-tests revealed some noteworthy differences, especially for the Spanish group; the increase in interest towards French and German and towards Eastern European languages was statistically significant. In the case of French and German, 75% of the Spanish students who showed an increase in interest for learning these two languages in the SDT were not learning either of these languages at school or out of school during their participation in the project. The statistically significant rise in interest towards Eastern European languages by the Spanish participants was also a vital result for the overall intention of this research, especially since, on this occasion, the results were also significant concerning the rise in the “usefulness” of learning such a language.

It would be reasonable to interpret the development in the “interest” and the “usefulness” of multilingualism within the expanded notion of “integrative motivation” as proposed by Yashima (2002). With regard to ELF, Yashima (2002: 57) posited that an integrative orientation should account for interest in communicating with different intercultural partners, thus encouraging cultural relativity. Although she links this with the use of ELF, there is no reason why her proposal cannot be applied to the results described above. The developing interest in learning Eastern European language by the Spanish participants could be interpreted as being derived from integration with the Polish group via their interaction on the “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog. In order to go beyond the initial process of bonding which has taken place on the blog and integrate more fully, further effort, such as knowledge of Polish (for the Spanish participants) and Spanish (for the Polish), would be required. In the wake of this possibility, the results, therefore, suggest that some participants may be demonstrating non-ethnocentric attitudes by breaking free of their immediate surroundings and becoming open to new linguistic and cultural experiences.

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Results which reflect an interest in learning other languages are very positive within the context of this research project, as they represent key objectives of the transcultural approach as proposed by the MLA (2007) and the COE (2009) reports, amongst others. A methodological approach that aims to foster transcultural competence in our students should be concerned with the broadening of their linguistic aspirations and results such as these suggest a positive move towards the fostering of trans/multilingualism.

Nevertheless, despite the evidence in the SDT (Part 1) that suggests our participants appreciate the importance or usefulness of languages in their education, when asked more specifically about taking up a second or third FL in QT1 and QT2, the Spanish group revealed a certain lack of interest in language learning; only 38% of the students chose to study a second FL at school. All the Polish participants were already learning a second or third FL (Spanish, German or Russian). In defence of the Spanish participants, we should, perhaps, consider a second FL is generally an optional subject, and additionally, the students in the Balearic Islands are already studying two L1s (Spanish and Catalan). For example, the Bendinat students can choose between a second FL (modern languages: German or French; or classic languages: Latin), and ICT. These subjects account for two hours of the total timetable and, in the case of Bendinat, the majority of participants opted for ICT. Furthermore, at least in the context of secondary education in Spain, being computer-literate is also of great importance to today's students, especially for their future, and the fact that students have to choose between FLs and ICT may be a contributing factor to the lower number of students who opt for studying a further FL. ICT is a very attractive option for today's "digital natives".

The interest in learning Spanish as a FL shown by the Polish participants serves to draw attention to the importance of Spanish in the world today. It is the second most used language in international communication, with over 330,000,000 speakers (Arteaga & Llorente, 2009). We have to understand that, from the point of view of the Polish, Spanish could be considered a world language, in very much the same way as English is for both. Spanish is therefore also seen as playing an important role in one's linguistic development. The presence of the "Spanish" language amongst the Polish students was obvious from the beginning. The fact that one of the Polish schools offered Spanish as the second FL as opposed to German or Russian demonstrates the far-reaching interest

there is in the Spanish language, and emphasises the consequences of the decline in importance of the Russian language for the Polish after the break-up of the Soviet bloc. Nonetheless, not only are we speaking of an instrumental use of Spanish by the Polish participants but the overall interest that they had towards Spanish culture also suggests that integrative motivation is important. Their comments on the blog highlighted their interest in the Spanish people, customs and, in particular, the beauty of the island of Mallorca. This again underlines that fact that it is very difficult to draw a fine line between whether a language is learnt for integrative purposes or for instrumental purposes.

On this point we should also highlight the fact that, at T1, when the Polish students were asked which FLs they would like to learn, the result for both Polish schools was 0% for Eastern European languages. However, at T2 this had risen to 11.1% for TAK and 11.5% for VPLO. Although we cannot claim that any significance in the results is due to participation in the project, it does suggest that students had reflected on the importance of certain languages; more specifically, on Russian. Repa (2007) reported that a Polish newspaper had published an article saying that Russian is once again becoming a favourite FL for students in the country. He mentions that a possible reason is the importance given to the language by western employers when choosing applicants for jobs.

The principal aim of the COM (2008) and COE (2009) reports was that all European citizens should be competent in two FLs, as well as their mother tongues, after completing compulsory education. In the case of Spain, the recent ESLC report states that the Spanish students at ISCED level 2 achieved good levels of competence for a second FL (French) (European Commission, 2012: 9). As mentioned above, there was a rise in interest by students who would like to learn French and German as a second FL. This fact, combined with the results of the ELSC report (European Commission, 2012) (see Section 2.3) suggests that, if students were provided with more possibilities within secondary education to pursue further FL instruction, the results for language competence in their chosen FLs would be positive.

Another point to consider is the choice of a second FL at a national level. Education authorities do not have the financial means to offer more FLs to students and have to

select those that are closest to them geographically or which are deemed most prestigious for the immediate communication needs of the generation at hand. This explains the fact that French, rather than English, was the dominant FL in Europe up to the 1970s and in Poland the dominant language was Russian until the 1990s. This has all changed with the developments in international communication and the rise of EIL. Nevertheless, the results of this research show that contact with people who speak a lesser known language in Europe, in this case Polish, appears to have struck a chord of interest in our participants. This suggests that positive communicative experiences could provide students with the encouragement they need when it comes to broadening interests in the learning of other European languages.

7.1.2 The perceived importance of English as a FL

What is also clear from the results is that all the students appreciate the importance and usefulness of English. A high proportion of students in Bendinat do not have FL classes out of school, although the 23.8% that do choose English as the language to study. This highlights the importance of the English language in comparison to other FLs. English is seen as being crucial for learners' future, especially for travel and work. None of the languages (Portuguese, Chinese, Polish [Spanish], Swedish and Russian) included in QT2 (S70-74) which inquired into the participants' possible desire to learn in the future was rated below 2 on the Likert scale (1-5/I agree-I do not agree). Once again, this stresses the lack of interest or importance given to other languages in general when compared to English. Only "Spanish" for the Polish students came anywhere close to English as a language they felt was important to learn.

Even though we will discuss issues concerning identity in Section 7.4, it is important to appreciate the influence that a positive attitude has on achieving one's "possible self" (Markus & Nurius, 1986). It is clear that the students recognise the power that competence in English will bestow on them. The fact that they rate the importance of English for their future highly can therefore be discussed within the concept of the "ought-to self" identity proposed by Dörnyei (2009). Although in terms of the theory put forward by Markus and Nurius possible selves are inherently linked to one's individual aspirations and fears, they also add that these possible selves are "distinctly

social” (1986: 954). In this respect, the results of certain sociocultural experiences or comparisons could provide a framework for these learners’ future “self”. For example, if the students have seen or have been told that English is the “key to the world”, they may incorporate this into their vision of the “ought-to self”.

7.1.3 Attitudes towards foreign culture learning

As with the results for interest and usefulness of learning various languages, the interest and usefulness of cultural learning was also well over the midway point on our scale of 1-7. This, in itself, suggests that cultural knowledge is important to our students.

Nevertheless, both the Bendinat and VPLO students showed a significant decrease in interest towards the cultures of their immediate surroundings at T2. In the SDT part 1, the t-test demonstrated that the Spanish students showed a significant decrease in interest towards the cultures of Western European countries. Likewise, the results for the Polish students concerning their interest in Eastern European cultures, although not statistically significant, were very close to significance concerning a decline in interest in their surrounding cultures. This contrasts with their interest in learning the Russian language and suggests that the linguistic interest is perhaps purely instrumental.

Bendinat students also showed a substantial decrease in interest towards the cultures associated with the UK and the USA and towards the usefulness of world cultures. The decline in interest in this groups’ immediate surroundings could be explained by the increased interest in the new cultural reality they have encountered. In the case of Bendinat, the fact that students showed an increase in their perception of the usefulness of cultural knowledge concerning Eastern European countries is important information. If we look at this in combination with the results for the interest and usefulness of Eastern European languages, the results provide a positive scenario for encouraging further ventures into the cultural and linguistic world at hand. This is the result which should be highlighted and acted upon as it points to the fact that, when given the opportunities to learn about the “unknown”, there are positive reactions from the learners.

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These secondary school students have had the opportunity to look into the world of others. More importantly, it was not through the eyes of a history book, a documentary, a newspaper article, or some information in their English course-book, but it was through their own eyes and the information came directly from an authentic source. We cannot claim that the Spanish students have learnt a lot about Opole or about Poland, but they have had the opportunity to learn what was important to the Polish students concerning their country, and vice versa. They have also learnt that this provides a new set of perceptions about a group of people that may confirm previous information, serve for the re-evaluation of previous knowledge or provide completely new knowledge. The Polish students also demonstrated a clear interest in Spain, slightly more so than the Spanish students for Poland, when it came to assessing the country as a whole. The photographs showing various parts of the island of Mallorca were well received by the Polish students and provoked a number of comments on how much they would like to visit the island. Again, as with the language, this may be due to the fact that Spain and the Spanish culture do have important repercussions on an international scale. An example of this was seen on the blog by the number of Polish students who made reference to the Spanish lifestyle, cultural heritage, food, and language, among other features.

Previous results recorded by Byram et al. (1991a) in research into students' perceptions of the French and the French culture highlighted the fact that the attitudes of their participants (of a similar age-group to those in our investigation) did not improve with explicit FL culture teaching in the classroom. However, the results did suggest that if ethnographic processes of analysis were taught and visits to the foreign country were arranged, then results would be more positive. Our results appear to validate this proposal since interest in other countries has clearly increased, and this could well have been as a result of the combination of the tertiary socialisation experience on the blog and the ethnographic processes involved as participants gradually built up information concerning the other groups.

7.1.4 English on the Internet

Our participants reiterate the position of English as an essential language when it comes to using the Internet. At T1 the Polish students relied on a combination of their native language and English more than the Spanish, who used their L1 to access content on the Internet rather than a Spanish-English combination. However, this perhaps points towards the fact that Spanish is a principal language for international communication. Information on the Internet World Stats web page (2010) estimates that Spanish is the third Internet language (153.3 million users) used after English (536.6 million users) and Chinese (444.9 million users). Nonetheless, at the end of the research the Spanish participants relied less on their L1, and increased their use of a Spanish-English combination.

Furthermore, there was an important increase in students who stated that they only used English on the Internet for all three schools at T2. The results were especially significant for the TAK group who jumped from using English 5% of the time to 16%. In terms of success for our research project, these results are extremely positive as once again they suggest that when students are given the opportunity and encouragement to use English, they are able to take full advantage of the Internet resources available in English.

The increase in the use of English on the Internet appears to be linked to the Polish participants' perception of the use of FLs on the Internet as a means to practise their language skills (see Table 16 in Section 6.2.3). Once again, the students from TAK are those who were most convinced of this fact. These results suggest that there is a positive link between attitudes towards the usefulness of the Internet as a tool for learning and the actual use of English on the Internet. Nevertheless, the Spanish students did not appear to confirm this result. Again, this could be due to the fact that they have access to an enormous amount of material published on the Internet in their L1 and, as such, have no need to look for information in English.

The negative perception of the usefulness of the blog for improving English language competence by the Spanish students was also reflected in the section on "language competence and use of EIL on the blog" in the final questionnaire. Surprisingly, the

results for TAK in this section also suggest that, although they see the Internet as a valid space for language learning, the blog was not so highly considered. The results for TAK are, therefore, slightly ambiguous, but we should emphasise that, for both Bendinat and TAK, this was their first experience of using the Internet for project work and perhaps would need more time to assess their perception of growth as competent users of English. Only VPLO appeared to be of the opinion that using the blog had been of benefit to their competence in English. They were also the most positive of the three groups when it came to using self-improvement strategies, such as looking up problematic vocabulary, and they also graded positively the experience of learning vocabulary and grammar on the blog.

To a certain extent, the fact that both Bendinat and TAK students did not feel that the use of the blog improved their language competence is also reflected in their assertions that they would learn more by writing to native speakers of English. This dissertation has focused on the use of EIL, that is, English spoken between non-native speakers. Thus, the focus was on the actual ability to communicate rather than the overall correctness of the language. Nevertheless, for these two groups of students their ultimate aim is clearly to attain native-like competence and they feel this can only be achieved through exposure to native-speaker input. This confirms other studies that have found a definite preference towards native English-speaking teachers (Llurda, 2009). In fact, in Spain, Lasagabaster and Sierra's research has shown that the higher the level of English being taught throughout the different educational periods (i.e. primary school, secondary school, university), the more important a native English-speaker teacher was to the learners (2005: 226). In contrast, the students from VPLO gave far more importance to the positive use of the blog as a virtual space where they could practise their English. This may be due to the fact that, since they had previous experience of using a blog for posting classwork, they were able to appreciate the added value of communicating with other users of English and that any type extra input is beneficial for their growth in competence.

Nevertheless, apart from the results from the questionnaire concerning the use of English on the Internet, it should also be acknowledged that, according to the post-blog opinions given by the Spanish participants in their cultural note-books, they did have

mainly positive opinions on the usefulness of the blog for communication with others and as a means of practising English.

7.1.5 Attitudes towards the implementation of a transcultural approach

According to the opinions of the Spanish students, the content-based approach to the language class was well received. The students enjoyed learning through a methodology which involved more active participation and which did not revolve around the use of the course-book. The Spanish students expressed how much they had enjoyed the work on “Africa” and “Music with a Message” and how much they had learnt from the different presentations. Their work was also acknowledged by the Polish students who, despite only presenting a few projects for both units themselves, did contribute with their comments. We can, thus, conclude that the content-based approach which was orientated towards developing transcultural awareness had a positive reaction from the Spanish participants. Despite the fact that our participants are still fairly young, their comments on the blog can be acknowledged as a beginning in the construction of their own individual voices when it comes to international issues. Similarly, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) also concluded that a content-based programme of study that encouraged participation in an “imagined community” (in our case it was the virtual third space created for the blog) was beneficial for the language learners’ progress concerning their “international postures” (2008: 581).

The content-based approach in the ELT classroom appears to have been successful, to the extent that, when the Spanish participants were asked about their interest in learning history and geography through CLIL in the QT1 and the QT2, although replies were positive at both times less students rated it as very interesting in the QT2. A possible reason for this change could be that the CLIL experience this year (2010-2011) did not meet the expectations the students had in comparison to the previous year, when they had studied history and their teacher for the “English” area of the subject was their present English teacher, BEN T. Another reason could be that the transcultural approach implemented, which differs from CLIL in that their English class is used as the vehicle for learning material that would usually be dealt with in another content subject, was the preferred learning context. There is, of course, no clear evidence for this conclusion,

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since the percentages for S76 and S77 show a middle-of-the-road attitude towards both types of learning contexts, but it does leave food for thought and, of course, the necessity for more research in this area.

At the centre of our transcultural approach was the “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog. Therefore, for the success of the project, the smooth running of the blog was an essential requirement. This was never an easy feat due to the need to coordinate three teachers and six classes in two countries. In order for a project that relies heavily on the Internet to work, access to this tool is fundamental. Although this was one of the areas that was checked before embarking on this venture, it did in fact become one of the principal reasons for the lack of synchronous communication. Right from the beginning, the computer room at Bendinat proved dysfunctional. The Internet connection was extremely unreliable and, as a result, the students from Spain had to make their posts and comments as homework. This automatically converted the use of the blog into an extra activity that took up their “spare” time. Thus, rather than act as motivation, the opposite was achieved in some cases. A small number of students also complained that the blog was difficult to navigate. Nonetheless, those who entered the blog regularly had no problems whatsoever, while those who reported navigational problems were the ones who did not persevere. Again, if the Internet connection had been optimum, these problems would have been solved during class.

All in all, and despite some negative feedback on areas concerning the blog interface and setbacks concerning the coordination of didactic units, many of the participants defined the blog as useful and stressed its potential for language learning. More specifically, the students from Bendinat highlighted the opportunity to communicate with people from other countries whilst also learning about their culture, their interests and hobbies, thus corroborating findings by Grant (2006: 97). With regard to our objective of encouraging a critical voice, we can highlight the fact that some of the students mentioned the importance of the blog as a virtual space for the exchanging of opinions. This is a fundamental issue if we wish to pursue the theme of active citizenship with our learners, and points towards the potential of the transcultural approach to ELT as a valid way of introducing our students to the legitimacy and power of their individual and collective voices.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that the attitudes of some of the Spanish students do suggest a general lack of interest in using the Internet as a tool for learning. As we have said above, this may have been remedied if, like the Polish students, they had been able to access the Internet during class time. Nevertheless, this attitude may also be concerned with the students' "readiness to learn" (Shraim & Khlaif, 2010). According to Shraim and Khlaif, it is of utmost importance that, in order to benefit from e-learning, certain criteria, such as the acquisition of specific Internet skills, should be previously met. In short, students should be technically 'ready' to use the Internet, especially specific tools such as blogs and wikis (2010: 160-161). This suggests that the root of some negative attitudes may not necessarily be due to not wanting to use technology for learning, but to a lack of technological skills that could impede their learning. In research using interactive whiteboards in the classroom, it was found that the implementation of new technology was "a slow evolutionary process" (Hennessy et al., 2007: 285). Incidences concerning the blog manageability and emotional distance were also reported by other researchers who used similar tools. For example, in the "Cultura" project (Furstenberg et al., 2001) only approximately half of the participants were content with the web interface used for the project, the principal complaints being the complexity of the log-in system, a lack of interactive tools such as a chat tool, and pictures of the students.

In informal chats with the researcher, the students from Bendinat revealed that the students would have liked to use the Facebook interface for the project (researcher's field notes). When asked why, the students replied that it was easier and that they had direct access through their mobile telephones. The students appear to be more comfortable with social networking as their principal mode of communication and are perhaps slightly reluctant to make the effort to log in to a formal blog which requires them remembering a password each time.

Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the blog interface for the "EIL in Poland and Spain" blog was in English. Although students were given simple initial instructions, the language may have been the cause of some of the difficulties described by the students. Another possible explanation for lack of participation from some students could be explained by WTC (willingness to communicate) theories. In a conversation with the Bendinat teacher, Ben T, (recorded in researcher's field notes) the students who

had the lowest language competence scores at the beginning and the end of the school year (2010-2011) coincided with the researcher's list of students who made less contributions to the blog. Tentatively, we could link this result to those found by Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008), who affirmed that learners' confidence in the ability to communicate was an important variable for WTC. Nevertheless, reluctance to participate could also be related to the degree of passiveness that some students have towards learning itself, but such an assertion is beyond the scope of the results of this research.

The students also claimed that they would have been more motivated if they had had more opportunities for face-to-face communication and the possibility to visit Poland or Spain. These issues may explain the lack of overall motivation that transpired from some of our Spanish participants. After the Skype video conference, all the students became excited and interested in the blog and there was a flurry of messages between the students, which highlighted their delight at having finally "met" their Polish and Spanish friends. This has important implications for the future, as it highlights the value that the learners also give to face-to-face communication or, at least, to encouraging and strengthening the emotional contact between the participants. Until this point, the students' only visual image of their foreign partners was through avatars with their photos or a more personalised picture that appeared every time they made a comment.

The role of the teacher also appears to be a fundamental variable for the success or failure of our transcultural approach. The students from VPLO were already familiar with the blog interface and the requirements demanded by their teacher concerning its use. The use of the blog for transcultural communication appeared to be an added bonus for them. To a certain extent, they were at an advantage since their class teacher monitored their progress using the blog, which in turn motivated them to make posts and comments. They also had frequent class discussions on the topics, which aided their understanding (researcher's field notes).

7.1.6 Conclusion

In this initial section of the discussion, we have dwelt on the most important results in relation to the transcultural approach proposal, with a special interest in the results pertaining to the Spanish participants. One of the aims of the COE report of 2009 (Fleming, 2009) was to promote interest in other languages and other cultures. The results show that the Spanish language learners exhibit a certain interest in learning other languages and about other cultures, despite some reluctance in general to take up a further language of study at this point in time. What we wish to stress here is the interest in Eastern European languages from and cultures the Spanish learners which rose from completing the QT1 (October, 2010) to the QT2 (May, 2011). This result points towards the fact that collaboration with the Polish students has had an extremely positive effect on broadening the scope of language and culture interests of the Spanish students and action should be taken to provide more experiences that involve transcultural communication.

Despite the problems of some students when it came to navigating the blog, many stressed its usefulness and its potential for language learning. The use of content-based units at the heart of our learning approach was also fundamental for its success. The topics caught the attention of the participants and clearly contributed to motivating them to use the blog.

Finally, although adaptation to the use of a virtual space is not without its difficulties, in terms of tertiary socialisation it has opened up a valid space where language learners can learn about other cultures, practise their language and begin to create links to other speakers of English in countries where English is not the native language.

7.2 RQ2: How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to EIL foster transcultural competence?

In our review of literature on the subject of transcultural awareness and transcultural competence in Chapter 3 we argued that, due to the use of EIL, the concept of ICC (Byram, 1997) should be broadened to include the context of communication between

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non-native speakers in international speaking contexts. Various scholars have put forward proposals for what they consider to be the major skills which they associate with transcultural competence (intercultural sensitivity, affective development, global awareness, ethnographic skills, transnational co-operation, critical transcultural awareness, and culture as group membership, to name but a few). Although a vast majority of the skills are comparable to those associated with ICC, they have been duly extended to cater for the transnational context of FL learning. Nevertheless, much of the work within the transcultural and the translanguaging paradigm as proposed by the MLA report (2007) has been essentially theoretical in nature (Jongewaard, 2001; Risager, 2007; Slimbach, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1999;) and most empirical research has centred on tertiary level students (Baker, 2009; Roberts et al., 2001) or secondary school students with an advanced level of English (Grant 2006). There is, thus, a distinct lack of empirical investigation that concentrates on students with an intermediate level of English.

The principal areas for discussion in reference to our research question will be based on the emerging categories of transcultural competence as identified through the blog participation and the classwork done by the students on the various units of work. It is our intention to compare these results with those found in previous research (whether theoretical or empirical) and to explain the importance of these categories within the context of the transcultural approach to FL learning.

In reference to Ting-Toomey's functions of culture (1999), this research question can be analysed in the light of two cultural functions: 1) cultural communication and 2) intergroup boundaries. In our presentation of results, and with respect to these two cultural functions, we identified five areas of interest: 1) cultural identity and levels of ethnocentricity; 2) critical transcultural awareness; 3) bonding (tertiary socialisation); 4) new and shared knowledge; and 5) re-evaluation of one's worldview.

7.2.1 Cultural identity and levels of ethnocentricity

Since the concept of "culture" is central to this dissertation, it is important to remind ourselves of the perceptions the students had of the term. The perceptions of culture as

defined by the Spanish participation united the principal ideas included in the definitions discussed in Section 4.1. Fundamentally, they defined culture as customs, beliefs and habits associated with a specific people or country, including language and aesthetic productions such as art and literature. More importantly, some students also demonstrated maturity by stressing the instrumental force of culture as an essential identity-building instrument. This is an important consideration for our argument concerning the acquisition of a transnational identity in Section 7.4. Furthermore, this conceptualisation of culture by the students is perfectly compatible with current, holistic, semiotic approaches to culture such as that proposed by Danesi and Perron (1999), whereby culture is understood as a form of knowledge which is transmitted through both formal and informal means (Prieto-Arranz et al., 2013).

As with most research that investigates intercultural communication, we began by looking into the possible influence that cultural stereotypes could have on the students' perceptions of the "other". The students from all three groups stressed that they were aware of the damaging effect that stereotype discourse could have on the perceptions of the "other", but only the students from Bendinat reported that they were also useful (37.5%), especially as a way of providing initial information about a group of people and their country. In fact, only 25% of the Spanish participants believed that they had an entirely negative influence. Furthermore, when asked specifically about whether stereotype discourse would exert any influence on a decision to visit a country, 25% of the Spanish group felt that negative stereotypes would not influence them, and when it came to learning a FL, 31.3% claimed stereotypes would not affect any decision they made. It appears that the Spanish participants believe themselves to be quite impervious to negative stereotype discourses, and in consequence, they could be said to have a much less realistic image of themselves than the Poles, who, in contrast, were perfectly aware that negative cultural discourse had repercussions when making decisions concerning foreign travel and FL learning. The results of the SDT Part 2 confirms this impression in that despite the fact that the SDT did show that the ethnocentric levels were veering towards acceptable levels of ethnorelativity for all the groups considered, the results did suggest that the Polish groups were slightly more ethnocentric than the Spanish group. A possible explanation for this could be that the Polish context is far less multicultural than the Spanish and thus, the students are influenced far more. On the other hand, the Spanish participants believed that they are not affected by stereotypes

and the fact that they are aware of this nuance, however unrealistic it may appear to be, was reflected by some students in the completion of the SDT. As we mentioned in Section 6.2.5.2, a number of students attending Bendinat commented that they could not complete the SDT for certain groups as they felt that they did not have enough information on which to make any type of reliable judgement. They were confirming the position that it would not be correct to make any decision based on possible stereotypical knowledge that they have of a group of people. The fact that students positioned themselves in this way allows us to suggest the following:

1. the students had already reached a significant level of relativity before embarking on the project;
2. the students were aware that judging people from different countries or geographical areas based on stereotypical information was not an ethical procedure.

Although the Spanish participants insist that they are not affected by stereotypes, the SDT Part 2 did confirm that there are certain groups of people that one feels closer to culturally, and others that are further away on the scale. Despite the Spanish participants insistence in that they are not adversely influenced by stereotypes, after working with the Polish students for nearly eight months, the results for the ethnocentric test showed that the gap between the Spanish and the Polish had widened. In other words, after working on the blog, the intergroup boundary determined by levels of ethnocentricity had not been dissolved. Nonetheless, the qualitative analysis does not support this interpretation as students did not appear to adhere to these ethnocentric constraints in their blog communications and from this we can extract two important consequences:

1. The results suggest that these teenagers are able to put aside preconceived stereotypes and knowledge in order to construct a vision of the “other” on equal terms. From a sociocultural point of view, they were all learning English, in a similar situation, and they had very similar lifestyles and interests. They did not appear to be specifically interested in the broader cultural or national identity of their colleagues, even though the results of the SDT did show that cultural distance was further between the Spanish

and the Polish than between the Spanish and the British or the Polish and the British.

2. The results also reveal that the students may not be seeing the other participants as Polish or Spanish but as international users of English. After all, they are communicating in neutral ground, in an international imagined community set in cyberspace. Thus, in this context we can claim equal status between the participants.

These two points of reflection suggest the hypothesis that there are more inclusive categories, such as Western European and Eastern European or European and American (Rodriguez et al., 2005). It may also indicate that people may develop multiple identities and that these identities are context-dependent. Thus, although the Spanish and Polish students are further away from each other on an ethnocentric continuum than, for example, the Spanish and the Germans or the Polish and the Germans, communication between the two groups via the blog was a different context and it might thus be possible to hypothesise that the students were working with a transnational, rather than national, identity framework.

Working on the projects on Africa provided the Spanish students with the opportunities to discuss cultural practices of a continent that they knew little about. They were surprised by much of the new information they acquired. Many Spanish students were shocked that Spain had been involved in so many wars throughout the history of Africa. Until that moment, they probably had a worldview that had evolved from knowledge acquired in their history lessons that was always presented from the Spanish perspective. This alternative vision of the “other” is a starting point for the acquisition of empathetic activism, or critical transcultural awareness and, of course, is an integral part of the development of what we could describe as a transcultural worldview.

Unfortunately, with respect to cultural stereotypes and cultural knowledge, there was no convincing evidence that students had been able to fully put themselves “above cultures” (Meyer, 1991: 142-143) by accepting that some cultural practices are inevitable and that, rather than passing judgement, they should just be accepted as cultural differences. Nevertheless, the subject of genital mutilations horrified the

students and it would have been very difficult to argue that they should try to understand this cultural practice from the point of view of those it concerned. Nonetheless, it seems clear that students have been taken out of their “comfort zones”, and this experience may help them to develop a more global sense of awareness of the “other”.

7.2.2 Critical transcultural awareness

As seen in the previous section, there is evidence in the blog that students have begun to be critical in their discussion of certain cultural practices and political differences. According to the frameworks for transcultural competence discussed in Chapter 3, this is a fundamental area of development (Dasli, 2011; Slimbach, 2005).

The students used the virtual space to express their disbelief that nations do not appear to learn from previous mistakes causing history to repeat itself. Primarily, they referred to the negative role played by Europe in Africa during the colonising years, subsequent wars and, more recently, to the fact that many of the natural resources to be found in some of these countries continue to be owned by European countries. They were ashamed to admit that problems, such as those caused by natural catastrophes, could be solved through solidarity, but that the same logic was not applied to politically or culturally-rooted problems. One participant quoted the recent tsunami in Japan, where China offered help despite the animosity that the two countries have in their political relations. Students were also critical towards issues concerning human rights, female equality and the western world’s consumerist society. These are issues that are of interest and are probably easier to comprehend since they are part of their immediate context of reference. Students also reflected on the ethical dimension associated with the consumerist society of which they themselves are part. They condemned the superficiality of western society in connection to money and power. Students showed awareness of the economic struggles that are now also affecting the more developed countries and even suggested that there are people close to us that need financial and moral support.

Such reflections had an eye-opening effect on the students and, as a result, one of the principal grievances expressed by the students was the fact that, although plenty is spoken about the necessity to help those in need, there is not enough information on what they can actually do to help. This is partly due to the fact that these teenagers are still socially classed as “passive citizens”; they have not yet acquired the rights associated with full citizenship, such as that of voting or are fully fledged members of an adult working society, and their participation in certain activities is therefore limited (Weller, 2007: 164).

It is therefore essential that these teenagers are given the opportunities to understand socially-politically and culturally-related issues around the world, and the use of a content-based approach to the English class has certainly provided the students with food for thought in that direction. Even though they may have had some problems in articulating their ideas in English, the students have been provided with an opportunity to discuss and become more aware of certain issues of social relevance.

Knowledge concerning citizenship and human rights has also been taken up within the school curriculum in Spain. In adherence to the Royal Decree 1631/2006 (BOE, 2007), which is in reference to the Organic Law for Education, the subject of citizenship and human rights is a compulsory subject in the Spanish secondary school curriculum. This was influenced directly by a recommendation from the COE in 2002. As it stands, schools are only obliged to offer this subject during one school year, choosing from year one, year two or year three. In the case of Bendinat, the students have one hour per week in their second year. Nevertheless, this subject has also been the subject of many complaints from those who see it as a way to inculcate the students with specific values decided by the state, considered by some as a form of “ideological aggression” (El País, 2006). At present, a new proposal by the Spanish government for improvements in the quality of education does not contemplate retaining this subject. It will be replaced by *valores éticas* (moral values) and secondary students will be able to choose between this subject and religion. The new law “La Ley Orgánica de mejora de la calidad educativa” (LOMCE, 2013) has been approved by the Senate and is currently being processed in Congress.

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Since a subject that deals with topics such as tolerance, human rights, and justice is so important for integration into today's society at a global level, it makes sense that the EFL class can also contribute to education in this respect. This becomes more important when we consider the context of use of EIL, and, more especially, when there is often no specific subject within the school curriculum dedicated solely to the teaching of such issues.

Class discussions also played a fundamental role in the process of becoming critically aware of the cultural differences and similarities of the peoples that make up this world we are a part of. Bass (1998) comments on how teachers frequently lament the lack of participation in class and how they wish to foster the development of their students' "own interrogative stance toward material or look at a document or issue or event critically on their own" (1998: 2-3). For this reason, importance was given to the class discussions the teachers had with the students concerning the different issues covered in each unit of work.

7.2.3 Bonding: tertiary socialisation

One of the principal aims of the blog was to provide a context for the development of knowledge through tertiary socialisation. In order for this to be achieved, it was important for contact between the participants to be as fluid as possible. The fact that we began our blog with personal presentations was not coincidental. It is an essential step in becoming a member of any virtual community. It marks the initiation of the communication process and is an essential aspect of relationship building and, in many cases, it provides access to knowledge. Schwämmlein and Wodzicki (2012) theorise that people adjust their type of presentation according to the group they are joining. Their research shows that members of a common-bond community are more likely to interact and to bond with the other participants. In the case of the "EIL in Poland and Spain" blog, the objective was to create a site where information could be built up and exchanged (so as to ultimately enable the creation of a common-identity group of EIL speakers), but we were also aiming at encouraging a more personal relationship to foster bonding (common-bond group).

The type of introductions in the earlier posts were fairly representative of a common-identity community in that the students offered information on their age, place of birth, residence, family and, sometimes, likes and dislikes. Although it may be argued that this is personal information, we need to understand it in terms of the writing context. It could be classified as an exchange on a common topic which was to be done by all the participants as an activity. However, as the Polish participants began posting information and comments, communication between the two groups became more fluid and there was a change in the content of the introductory posts. Students began providing more specific data concerning their hobbies and musical tastes. The comments became longer and more frequent as interpersonal relationships were built upon and bonding took place. Those students who were the last to post personal information tended to provide more specific information: they were already seeing the community in common-bonding terms as they were adapting their presentations to connect emotionally with those who had similar interests to theirs. These observations support the results found by Schwämmlein and Wodzicki, who also reported that people modify the type of information they provide in accordance with the interaction setting (2012: 401).

According to intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1979; Pettigrew, 1998), equal status between communicators is one of the principal conditions for successful intergroup relations, as is the friendship potential. Both of these conditions appear to be at play here. The practice of these conditions enables the students to maintain a flow of communication which is similar to any face-to-face exchange among a group of friends. The significance, therefore, of potential friendship was one of the most salient results from the analysis of the blog. Initially, bonding appeared to be through the acknowledgement of similarities between the participants. This was especially evident when students talked about their interests and, in particular, their musical interests. It proved to be a fundamental area for bonding.

Many students dedicated time to posting videos of their favourite bands and to commenting on the music posted by others. The fact that the theme of music was important to the bloggers stresses the relevance of finding themes to work on that are interesting for the students whilst also providing motivating material to encourage debate. This was the result of the “Music with a Message” unit of work. It combined an

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interest in music with the power that the lyrics often have when it comes to denouncing certain behaviours, giving opinions on past occurrences, and defending past and current human rights issues. The songs chosen by the students covered a vast range of topics, from current issues concerning consumerism to the consequences of war, communism and the political changes in Eastern European countries. The learning environment provided a stimulating context for the students who, as a result, had a more enriching experience of tertiary socialisation.

Nevertheless, although there were early examples of bonding through the discussion of hobbies and music, the breakthrough appeared after a short Skype video conference. Suddenly the students wanted to communicate. Furthermore, they wanted to visit Spain or Poland and meet the people they had been writing to. This suggests that, for successful bonding, features that simulate face-to-face communication such as video conferencing are extremely beneficial in creating a context of trust.

Our results appear to support the findings of Feng et al. (2004), who affirmed that those participants who shared information concerning their specific likes and dislikes, or their tastes in music, attracted a higher number of responses. Very often, the responses were to acknowledge similar interests or views, which encouraged others to add their opinions. This appears to back up Zakara and Muhd Yusof's assertion that trust is an essential element for the success of cross-cultural relationships (2005: 236). In our participants' case, the boundary became more permeable after the Skype experience. Students began to ask for Facebook pages and there were multiple exchanges concerning friendship. Again, this draws attention to the transformation of the blog from a common-identity context to a common-bond context of communication.

Nevertheless, despite plenty of evidence of the flourishing relationships between some bloggers, there was also evidence of some reluctance in communication on the blog. This could, perhaps, be explained by the fact that the comments were seen by everyone who had access (teachers and students alike), which some might have perceived as an intrusion on their privacy. As students consolidated friendships, they began asking for Facebook addresses to talk between themselves. The blog in this sense was not always conceived as a social meeting place by the participants; rather, it was a place of work for students, teachers and the researcher. Nonetheless, the fact that this actually

happened validates the success of the bonding process since, in terms of intergroup contact theory, as it points to the acceptance of others who were initially regarded as belonging to the “out-group” into the more immediate “in-group”.

We should also emphasise that the imaginary boundary between the in- and out-groups was softened by the use of a number of strategies which imitated face-to-face conversation. Students’ use of such resources as onomatopoeic word lengthenings, emoticons and capitalisation simulated an actual conversation. Humour also played an important role in bringing the students together and for providing a friendly informal setting. These are typical strategies which convey openness and WTC.

7.2.4 New and shared knowledge

Although there were few examples where the acquisition of new knowledge was explicitly acknowledged, we can presume that students did obtain new information as they read the posts and comments where knowledge sharing took place. As a result of our different projects, plenty of knowledge was shared between our bloggers. Thus, the value of the blog as a transcultural virtual space for learning should be stressed. Along with the compulsory posting of project work, students also offered information about their immediate surroundings, schools and towns. There was a vast amount of information on the blog that could be classified under the concepts of geographical and contextual global awareness (Corbitt, 1998; Jongewaard, 2001). The projects on “Africa and “Music with a Message” were especially beneficial to these areas of interest as they afforded new insights for the students in a series of issues, especially within the areas of environment, the socio-economic, the cultural and the political. Students were able to construct alternative “knowledges” as a result of interaction and collaboration via the blog. This method of learning is supported by Vygotskian views of social constructivism (Grant, 2006), whereby the expert shares information with the novice.

Furthermore, there is a shift in the construction of knowledge from expert-to-novice to peer-to-peer. Through the process of “peer scaffolding” (Yang & Wilson, 2006: 369), the new knowledge the learners acquire becomes part of an ongoing construction of knowledge, which may eventually allow them to act upon this knowledge according to

their newly developed or re-evaluated principles. To a certain extent, this new knowledge may then play a role in the evolution of these cultural learners from passive into active members of society. Furthermore, we can link the process of autonomous learning to that of autonomous thinkers and doers. We may, in fact, be contributing to the creation of autonomous transcultural practitioners.

It is also important to acknowledge the discursal process that these students are using in order to construct this new knowledge. In many instances it was the act of communication which generated collaboration between interlocutors. For example, many students posted videos of their favourite groups or artists, or provided links to music videos and Facebook addresses. Fayard and DeSanctis refer to this practice of “[l]inking; forwarding; quoting; weaving” as “the building of a shared history” (2010: 391). Although their analysis of forums was related to global economics queries, the students using the “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog used many of the same strategies (self-referring, enacting a consistent linguistic style, managing relationships, expressing legitimacy and building a shared history) to construct what the above-mentioned authors refer to as a “sense of we-ness” (2009: 391). Through these practices, the blog became a centre of learning where the students weaved a shared knowledge (e.g. of subcultural music affiliations), a group creation which can be said to form an integral part of their evolving group identity.

This virtual area of communication also served to encourage a sense of interest in world affairs amongst our students. When the students were asked about their knowledge of the world, some students mentioned that a lack of knowledge constituted a lack of interest despite the fact that in the SDT booklet part 1 the students were essentially interested in learning about culture at a worldwide level. It is therefore vital that the students should be given the opportunities to learn about other areas in the world from an international point of departure and not by necessarily following the history book, which essentially provides a nation-based historical point of view. It is fully recognised that the “nation” lies at the core of any historical narrative and that an indisputable consequence of such discourses is the reinforcement of a national identity based on a sense of pride and self-esteem (White, 2008), of belonging to a specific “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). The content and objectives of the themes that our students worked on can also be understood within the parameters of the definition of

social constructivism supplied by theorists Jackson and Sørensen (2007), whereby they state that social constructivism concentrates on “human awareness or consciousness and its place in world affairs” (2007: 162).

Apart from the cultural knowledge shared by the students, the blog was also the venue for a technological learning experience. For many students it was the first time that they had had to use the Internet for a large part of their classwork. Even though the blog was criticised by some users, and the Bendinat and TAK students did not report learning much “blog vocabulary”, the fact that most of the students managed to make a post or upload a video or a slide presentation shows that they probably learnt more than they gave themselves credit for. Nevertheless, we should also draw attention to the fact that computer technology and ICT is part of an international culture, which means that very often the vocabulary that students will come across is in English. This may be another explanation as to why they did not report learning more “blog vocabulary”.

7.2.5 Re-evaluation of one’s view of the world

There was evidence on the blog that some participants were re-assessing their perceptions of the world, especially after working on the projects concerning Africa. Many were surprised at the beauty of the continent and its wealth of fauna and wildlife. Such geographical awareness demonstrated the positive elements of a continent many only associated with third world connotations. Essentially, they were able to put aside their preconceived constructs as they realised that they were basing their views on stereotypical information. What is more important is the fact that the students were simply becoming aware that they were able to form their own worldview and did not need to accept everything at face value. They also realised that it is important to be informed in order to acquire and develop a worldview. We should, therefore, highlight the importance that the blog and the work units have had in providing students with the tools to develop their particular view of the world through this tertiary socialisation environment.

7.2.6 Conclusion

This discussion of the results pertinent to the acquisition of transcultural competence has tried to unite many of the features suggested by scholars concerning the conceptualisation of the term, as discussed in Chapter 3, with some new concepts which have arisen as a result of the analysis and of which have been incorporated into this chapter. Participants showed signs of:

- understanding their knowledge and awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
- acquiring the ability to question the source of cultural assumptions by using ethnographic skills of investigation —as demonstrated by their projects on "Africa" and "Music with a Message"— and thus developing the ability to make their own individual ethical judgements through the development of a critical eye;
- awareness that any perception of culture is provisional and open to revision;
- understanding that initial interaction in intercultural communication may be based on cultural stereotypes or generalisations, but that they can move beyond such behaviour;
- having taken advantage of the experience to acquire knowledge concerning other cultures, including references to art, history, and lifestyle;
- accepting multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping, as demonstrated by the range of the different themes represented in the posts and comments between the students from both countries;
- creating a cultural group based on the concept of "a collective identity" and hence the understanding of individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
- communicating successfully in EIL; and
- developing affective attitudes in areas of intercultural sensitivity, empathy, and openness.

There is also evidence that the students who participated in this research were between the intercultural "we" stage and the transcultural "everybody" stage as posited by Jongewaard (2001), due to their development of a better understanding of the "self" and

the “other” (Byram: 2008). This virtual tertiary socialisation experience may therefore be seen to have created the foundations on which to keep working on in order to prepare the students for the future by “sowing the seeds of inquisitiveness”, so to speak, whilst also facilitating the circulation of transcultural values across borders.

7.3 RQ3: Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants?

It is clear from the discussion in the previous section that there is evidence that our learners show (or are in the developmental stages of acquiring) some of the skills required to be transculturally competent. One of the most important areas is that of the breakdown of ethnocentric barriers in order to work towards an understanding of the “self” and the “other”. The use of the blog in combination with specific culturally-orientated content-based instruction has enabled the students to experience a form of virtual tertiary socialisation which has, in turn, encouraged a process of openness and acceptance of the “other”. One of the principal reasons for this is that the students have acknowledged each other on equal terms, very often through a series of features derived from common interests, knowledge and worldviews. From this we can hypothesise that what we are witnessing is the emergence of a transnational identity in our learners.

In accordance with Ting-Toomey’s (1999) functions of culture this research question will be divided into two sections: 1) identity meaning; and 2) group inclusion.

7.3.1 Identity meaning: national and self-identity

In answering this research question we will discuss the salient features of the transnational identity and describe the process of its acquisition. It seems fitting to first look at how the students described themselves in terms of national identity or self-identity. Let us begin with a look at national identity. The participants appear to be well aware of the power exerted by national identity discourses, even if not all are prepared to admit that they are influenced by such discourses. Essentially speaking, the Spanish participants state that the discourse that disseminates stereotypes is positive and useful

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when perceived strictly as an introductory framework of reference. This could be due to the fact that they perceive themselves as far more impervious to stereotypes, possibly as a consequence of the multi-cultural context of their school and place of residence. This is verified when the Spanish students are asked to draw up lists which present their perception of themselves as a national group, along with other nations such as France, Italy, Great Britain, Germany and Poland. The students provided a list that was made up of the typical stereotypes in terms of behaviours and attitudes, such as “eat a lot, are too relaxed, are polite but noisy”, thus presenting themselves from the same perspective as which they are seen, or believe they are seen, by the “other”.

This consolidates their view that certain cultural stereotypes are used as a convenient description of different national groups, including their own. As could be expected, these students do not feel compromised by accepting that they themselves are part of the group they are describing since they are also adamant that cultural stereotypes only provide initial information about the “other”.

When it came to reflecting on their own “imagined communities” via the cultural symbols that are associated with their nations, the Polish and Spanish participants presented fairly similar patterns. The Polish participants drew attention to the fact that the cultural symbols for their parents and grandparents reflected the historical and cultural time in which they had lived (e.g. Solidarity and Lech Walesa), whereas the symbolic world of the students mirrored their immediate historical and cultural surroundings, although they did also acknowledge internationally renowned figures. For example, they mentioned famous sports stars and figures that have contributed to an international culture such as Pope John Paul, Copernicus or Chopin. The historic nature of Polish symbols underscores the differences between the imagined communities, and stresses the idea of change and adaptation through time. The older generation included aspects of communism as part of their life ‘story’ whereas, for the younger generation, such facts could be said to be part of their country’s life story or in other terms ‘history’. Consequently, this suggests that the perceptions of what constitutes the essence of their nation (as an imagined community) may well vary throughout time, and that has understandable repercussions when it comes to participants defining their national identity.

The Spanish students proffered a similar account on the cultural symbols for themselves and for their parents but, whereas the Polish parents and, to some extent, the students, defined their symbolic world in terms of the rich cultural heritage (past and present) and history of the country, the Spanish students and their parents referred to symbols such as food and wine, sports, music, bullfighting, Don Quijote and the Mediterranean. An explanation for this could be that, as a country, Spain is often promoted in terms of tourism: good food, good wine, beautiful beaches and sunny weather. In recent decades, these aspects of life in Spain have, for many, been more important for attracting visitors than some parts of its recent history. Furthermore, the Spanish participants in the blog have grown up on an island dedicated to tourism and it seems only natural that they should define themselves using discourse narratives connected to this fact. A lack of historical symbols could also be explained by the fact that many of the Spanish parents were, in fact, not of Spanish nationality and so their list of cultural symbols would essentially reflect a more cultural than historical position.

As we have remarked earlier, the fact that the contents of one's national history are important components in the construction of one's national identity could be an important reason as to why there are obvious generational differences concerning the cultural symbols given by the participants and their parents. The cultural symbols offered by both the Spanish and Polish students reflect culture on a more international level. It would seem that a natural consequence of living in today's world, where national boundaries have been weakened due to travel and technology, is that it is becoming more and more difficult to define oneself through national identity discourses. This ultimately reflects a move towards a transnational, rather than national, identity. In addition, the results of this research suggest that the adoption of a transnational identity entails an extension of the in-group in terms of nation to embrace an in-group in terms of transnationality.

7.3.2 Group inclusion: The formation of a transnational identity

The position of the Spanish and Polish students in terms of a transnational identity appears to be further consolidated by the evidence provided in the "EIL in Poland and Spain" blog, which draws attention to similarities on a transnational level. As we

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pointed out in Chapter 2, self-referring, building a shared history, expressing legitimacy, enacting a consistent linguistic style and managing relationships were deemed important aspects of the development of a collective identity (Fayard & DeSanctis, 2010). Our results can be divided into two principal areas: 1) identification within today's consumerist society; and 2) digital nativeness.

As was discussed in Chapter 4, a cultural identity denotes identification and perceived acceptance into a group that has a shared system of symbols and meanings. The results of this thesis point towards the fact that our virtual bloggers are members of an imagined community which has been constructed in a virtual third place. This virtual community has also proved to be representative of various subcultures. We will first look at the evidence that places our bloggers within the same consumer society through their participation in specific subcultures and then we will see how this generates the operationalisation of a transnational identity.

Youth subcultures can be said to be transnational in nature. Subcultural affiliations are mostly expressed through consumption, and this often involves the music that individuals buy and listen to. The different subcultures representing different styles of music are especially significant for this group of people. Music was one way in which our students identified themselves on an individual level, and then as members of a group on the blog. The type of music was varied but demonstrated the common trait of youth cultures as a form of rebellion against the adult world and the opportunity to innovate and set trends. The list of artists and groups provided on the blog covered a vast field of music which included references to international mainstream classics, but mostly centred on non-mainstream music. As we have mentioned previously, many of the posts and comments made reference to the type of music which the students enjoyed. The students made use of Internet technology to upload videos of their favourite bands or singers or provide links to "You Tube" where they could see the video clips. The list of bands included music from the subgenres of metal core, post-hard core, death core visual key rock and scream, to name but a few.

Along with making a statement about their individual identities, the participants were situating themselves within what Muñiz and O'Guin (2001) refer to as "brand communities". They define a brand community as "a specialized, non-geographically

bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muñiz and O’Guin, 2001: 412). As a result of this mutual interest in the same and similar styles of music, the learners appear to strike up an immediate connection. Therefore, we can see that the students are consuming a transnational brand (or in this case brands if we classify each band as an individual consumer brand), which means that we can establish a link between their transnational consumption and a transnational identity.

Although a brand community essentially pivots around a commercial and mass-mediated ethos, the way the students use the Internet to upload videos and encourage the other students to watch the clips employs a similar commercially-orientated treatment of music. The identities of these bloggers are definitely based within today’s consumer society and use a computer-mediated environment to the effect of encouraging the consumption of this music. The blog acted as a “commercial” for certain bands since students who had not heard of some of them professed their interest after listening to them on the blog. The act of acknowledging such interest and enthusiasm also meant that they were adding themselves to the in-group on the blog as they were using these strategies to bond.

Apart from music, another way that students identified themselves with today’s consumer society was through sports and, more specifically, football team affiliations. Although other sports were mentioned as being played by students, football was definitely “consumed”. Students did not speak about playing the game but of the teams they supported. What was surprising was the fact that both Spanish and Polish students identified themselves as fans of Real Madrid or Barcelona F.C, two of Spain’s most international teams. Football is a multi-million euro industry. But sports such as football, basketball, tennis, and Formula One motor-racing, to name but a few, also transmit transculturality. Belonging to one of these transcultural groups strengthens the link between people from a myriad of cultural backgrounds. In the case of our participants, we can clearly see that consumers are what they consume, and that this has an important effect on their identity. They are consumers of transcultural products, and this may be reflected in how they express their cultural identity, which may even be said to transcend the national to become transnational, as is the case with music.

Language also plays an essential role in the creation of this transnational identity. The students are using EIL. It is a language which both groups have an intermediate level of competence in and which has allowed the students to participate in this virtual community. Not only has this third space allowed the participants to give voice to their opinions, interests and sharing of knowledge using English as their common language, but it has provided the students with a space to make the English language their own. They have had the opportunity to use both formal and informal language. The formal language pertained to the specific projects where their use of language was important for evaluation by their teachers, but in the optional areas of the blog the students were able to express themselves in a more natural and informal mode. Since language is a fundamental resource in communication and is central to the articulation of identities, we should understand the significance of such interaction as vital to the construction of transnational identities. These identities are not only transnational due to the nature of the material being discussed by the students, but also, and more importantly, for the use of an international language, which was also used on equal terms. Thus, EIL must be seen as a crucial identifying feature of the transnational identity projected by our participants, since it was a fundamental element which worked to unite them as an on-line community.

Although language itself can be said to be one of the major unifiers of our participants, it was the homogeneity in the use of informal language features and typical CMC codes of our students which provided unmistakable evidence of the construction of a collective or transnational identity. Apart from the mutual interest in music, this was probably one of the most salient results which consolidated the members of the blog as belonging to a specific in-group. As our results show, the students used a variety of colloquial oral features such as informal use of lexis or idiomatic expressions, verbal contractions and lexical innovation, and their use of metalinguistic features such as emoticons, onomatopoeic spellings, word lengthening, bold type and profuse use of exclamations to stress emphasis was most impressive. Not only was the use of such strategies important for the overall development of WTC and bonding but their usage also highlighted the existence of their belonging to a subcultural group of “digital natives”, a term coined by Prensky (2001) to refer to those who “were born into the digital world” and “the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (2001: 1). Furthermore, language use is predicted to vary depending on a series of

variables, which include: education, the medium of communication and, the relationship between the speakers (Prieto-Arranz et al., 2013). The homogenous use of informal English on the blog by both the Spanish and the Polish groups was representative of an emotional drawing together of the group on an emotional level, and so was evidence of the changing in the level of trust between the participants (Feng et al. 2004).

CMC was seen through both verbal and non-verbal strategies. The participants appeared to be at home in their digital world and this asynchronous communication became increasingly reminiscent of face-to-face communication. The importance of non-verbal symbols adds a richness of meaning and essentially aids in the building of affinity between the blog participants. CMC, like text messaging, is considered a form of “youth communication” which is made up of primarily non-standard and rich symbolic language forms (Farina & Lyddy, 2011). The use of such CMC strategies by our students is highly representative of what has been labelled “netspeak” or “netlingo” (Farina & Lyddy, 2011: 146). The use of paralinguistic features also helps to create conversational flow and, along with the informal use of greetings and closings, is representative of a consistent language style or, in the words of Fayard and DeSanctis, is the example of a language game which gives forth to the development of a collective identity (2010: 391). Additionally, we need to emphasise the ease in which the students manage and process their dialogic exchanges using so many of these linguistic strategies in English.

Use of net-ling on the blog has shed light on the way that students have been at ease with informal English usage especially in the way that they incorporated typical CMC strategies and paralinguistic forms into their linguistic narratives. This use of net-ling could be said to be representative of Yano’s (2001) definition of a basilectal use of English (i.e. distinct from the standard variety and spoken by a specific sociocultural group of speakers for domestic use), since the way that students have used the language in an informal way reflects a variety that is being used by a specific community of speakers which is at the same time, representative of their identity as digital natives.

Barker and Galasiński use the term “narrative of unity” (2001: 124) to refer to the cultural practices that are a product of the unification of cultural diversity, as in those that constitute an ethnic or national identity. To a certain extent, we can also apply this

concept to the narrative that has been constructed between our bloggers. As in any other instance of identity, the students have resorted to “a form of identification with representations of shared experiences [...] told through popular [...] culture” (2001: 124) to create a valid transnational identity. The two salient areas that we have discussed in detail were music subcultures and digital nativeness. Through the analysis of these two themes we have attempted to demonstrate how students have weaved their narratives to create a unified group of people.

7.3.3 Conclusion

The discussion of the results has highlighted the fact that, through EIL, the participants in our research have moved out of the “safety” zone of their immediate surroundings and have crossed national boundaries via a virtual third space. As a result of this development, the analysis also suggests that there is evidence of the participants beginning the process of constructing multidimensional transnational identities that challenge the traditional notions of belonging, essentially understood in terms of nationality, age, gender, or place of residence.

Along with the overall conclusions of the empirical research which has been carried out for this PhD, the following chapter will present a pedagogical model for transcultural competence and transnational identities, which we feel will bring together all the areas that have been discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, this model will also allow us to offer a more refined framework for a transcultural approach to the teaching of ELT, based on the proposed model of transcultural competence.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This doctoral thesis opened by making reference to three quotes which encompassed the principal areas of interest behind the present research: globalisation; tertiary socialisation and the formation of an international worldview; and the use of information and communication technology. With respect to these initial concerns, three principal objectives were formulated.

First and foremost, we wanted to apply a transcultural approach to teaching EFL at secondary school level and investigate its feasibility. The approach was transcultural for two reasons. We departed from the premise that 1) the students were using EIL as the medium of communication; and 2) communication was between non-native speakers of English. In order to do this, 95 students aged between 14 and 16 from three schools, two (VPLO and TAK) in Opole, Poland, and one in Bendinat (Mallorca, Spain), worked on a series of content-based units that were devised to encourage the acquisition of transcultural competence. Their work was then posted and discussed on a specially created blog, “EIL in Poland and Spain”, where students were also encouraged to participate in its various sections. Additionally, the participants completed a semantic differential test at the beginning and end of the school year period (2010-2011), which enquired into their degree of ethnocentricity. Information was also collected from two questionnaires: 1) the Background Information Questionnaire (QT1) and 2) the Participants Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire (QT2), which sought to obtain general information such as their cultural and linguistic background, interest in FL learning, interest in learning through content (content-based instruction), the use of the Internet as a tool for developing transcultural and translingual, and the overall evaluation of the transcultural approach that was put into practice during one school year (2010-2011).

The results obtained from our first area of investigation are an essential part of the overall project since the transcultural approach implemented was intended to be motivating and motivation plays an important role in the success of any language learning approach. If learners are actively involved in the learning process then they are more likely to achieve positive results. Thus, it was important to find out whether the participants in this research were optimistic about the use of the blog as a means for

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transcultural learning since entering this virtual third space with a sense of curiosity and willingness to try something new could be the first step towards achieving and eventually acquiring transcultural competence.

Secondly, we wanted to determine whether a transcultural approach would facilitate the acquisition of transcultural competence on the part of our participants. This was done by identifying which areas of transcultural competence were salient as a result of our approach, as well as by checking the extent to which such areas were comparable to the propositions suggested in previous research (Baker, 2009; Grant, 2006; Jongewaard, 2001; Slimbach, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1999). In order to do this, the blog posts were categorised into relevant areas of transcultural competence and were analysed accordingly.

Lastly, we were interested in establishing whether any evidence could be traced of the possible development of an embryonic collective transnational identity among our participants. It was thought that development of a transnational identity would be a natural consequence of the acquisition of transcultural competence. Thus, any evidence of the development of collective identifying traits would also point towards the success of the proposed transcultural approach.

The chapter begins with a summary of the research findings (Section 8.1), which are presented in the order of our three research areas described above and which concentrate on the results obtained from our focus group, Bendinat. Section 8.2 then discusses these results in terms of the implications they may have for ELT. Taking into account the results of this research and previous research on intercultural communication, the following section (8.3) presents a framework of reference for a transcultural approach to EIL. Section 8.4 reflects the limitations of the research and points out some areas which could be looked into in further research. The chapter closes with some final conclusions in Section 8.5.

8.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Drawing on Ting-Toomey (1999), we have taken the concept of ecological adaptation to support our belief in the need for a change in the teaching approach to EFL, a change which considers the progression from an intercultural to a transcultural approach. In order to activate the latter, we have contemplated the combination of network-based language learning as the medium for providing a new learning environment for our EFL students with a collaborative, process- and culture-orientated classroom approach. The results show that this approach to EFL holds enormous promise as a way of fostering transnational identities and developing transcultural competence in today's FL learners, in this case at secondary school level. These notions are crucial for communication in today's global world and the FL classroom holds a key position for the activation of this learning process, since it provides the participants with the opportunity to operate between language and culture and to develop a critical perspective throughout the learning process. The innovative virtual third space offered learners the opportunity to meet other EIL speakers where they could converse, exchange information and acquire new cultural knowledge on equal terms.

One important conclusion is that most of the students appear to be very open to innovation when it comes to language learning. However, in order to build on this aspect within our transnational approach, we must ensure that the learning experience is adapted to the interests of the students whilst also acting as a focus for the development of transcultural competence. This was achieved in our "Music with a Message" unit, where music was the key to more serious discussions on the messages delivered in the lyrics. Cross-curricular units such as "Africa" also provided students with the opportunity to explore a continent from an alternative focus to that of their history or geography lesson. The students thoroughly enjoyed working on these assignments, and sharing their work and opinions with the other participating country proved to be highly motivational. Thus, we must stress the potential of a transcultural approach in providing the opportunity for students to study English in a content-based learning environment. Furthermore, the use of CMC technology created a valuable learning setting which was dedicated to effective transcultural communication.

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Another tentative conclusion which is worth highlighting is the move away from the traditional concept of the native speaker as the only possible model for learners. Although the participants from Spain felt that they would have learnt more by interacting with native speakers, the students from VPLO in Poland appeared to be well aware of the importance of interaction in general as a means of practising English. This group of learners were more familiar with the use of a blog for their English lessons and the additional use for transcultural communication practice was seen as beneficial. As users of a transcultural blog, the learners participated on an equal footing and were not being assessed as potential native speakers by their interlocutors. They were being given the opportunity to express their opinions, beliefs and ideas with other speakers of EIL. Even though many of the students from Spain failed to acknowledge the validity of this experience in terms of increasing their linguistic competence, they showed that they were able to participate fully in the blog and, although some participants appear to be unaware of it, it could also be claimed that this interaction has indeed been of benefit to their language skills. This can be observed in their use of English on the blog, which is highlighted by their ability to use CMC communication strategies in a natural manner and with exceptional flair.

As follows from above, at the core of this thesis was the objective of providing our participants with a novel approach to transcultural communication. Most of the studies on intercultural communication within the realm of FLT have centred on providing students with opportunities to communicate with native speakers of the target language. Our aim was to take EIL as our point of departure and approach cultural communication from a transcultural position. The use of EIL implies that communication is very often between non-native speakers of English and that, in order for communication to be successful, the speakers need to progress from being intercultural speakers (knowing about the language and cultural background of their interlocutor) to transcultural speakers (applying general cultural rules and knowledge). Thus, the introduction of an approach to language learning which was able to motivate students to expand their knowledge of languages and cultures was one of the desirable outcomes of this research. The fact that in the QT2 the Spanish students reported more interest in the Polish culture and language is therefore also an important result.

Whilst overall the virtual experience was enjoyed by the students, it also became obvious that some face-to-face communication would have made the experience even more satisfying. Communication in the informal areas of the blog became much more fluid after the short Skype session. Most of the students showed an interest in meeting their fellow virtual companions and were enthusiastic about a possible visit to Poland, as were the Polish students concerning a visit to Spain. This suggests that motivation could be increased with the inclusion of some form of synchronous communication. This could possibly be achieved with regular Skype meetings, where students could partake in collaborative work units with their foreign partners in a more direct manner.

Our second area of interest was whether a transcultural approach to ELT could facilitate the acquisition of transcultural competence. The relationship between language, culture and identity plays an important role in the process. Communication with another cultural group provided the students with the tools to begin deconstructing their own cultural identities and those of the other participants in the project. The learners have acknowledged that much of their knowledge of the “other” is based on artificial constructs which, whilst invariably playing a useful role in providing initial information, may also be harmful. Work on stereotypes has given the students a chance to explore their own cultures and those of others by looking at how they see themselves and how they are seen by others.

The realisation that certain information may be misleading is an important part of the process of acquiring transcultural competence. Recognising the persuasive ability of preconceived stereotypes leads to a more creditable understanding of the “self” and of the “other”. It is an essential step which facilitates transcultural communication by permeating the intergroup boundary, thus moving the participants towards an ethnorelative view of culture. The results of the ethnocentricity test (SDT) showed that many of the Spanish participants may still be seeing the world through ethnocentric lenses when it comes to expressing their feelings concerning the Polish as a specific cultural group. Nevertheless, despite this evidence of ethnocentric attitudes towards the Polish in general, possibly related to the fact that they believed that the Polish are very different culturally speaking, these intergroup boundaries appeared to become blurred in the virtual blog space as the students became members of a new community of speakers.

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The gradual breaking down of the intergroup boundary became obvious as the blog steadily changed from a common-identity to a common-bond space—the initial identity of the participants as EFL students, who had to work together on a blog, to a group of EIL speakers, who used the blog to set the foundations of friendship confirmed this. The fact that the students had very similar interests provided them with a sense of belonging and, although they did not have sufficient face-to-face communication, a sense of friendship was apparent in the informal messages they exchanged. This bonding, or acceptance into the in-group, was demonstrated in the content of the messages which often alluded to similar likes and dislikes, in Facebook friend requests and, moreover, in the fact that they almost invariably shared the informal CMC codes and used the colloquial oral language features that were observed in their exchanges. Nevertheless, this project has provided them with the instruments to begin to break down such cultural barriers through a valid experience of tertiary socialisation as reflected in the examples of bonding over the blog.

Evidence that the students were breaking or crossing traditional intergroup boundaries was abundant. Students showed signs of being aware that their cultural knowledge was based on a shared set of behaviours, beliefs and values derived from primary and secondary socialisation experiences and that, in order to function transculturally, they needed to be aware that all aspects of culture are provisional and, therefore, open to revision or re-evaluation. Furthermore, by accepting the validity of multiple cultural voices, they were also fostering the ability to question the source of many cultural assumptions.

The homogeneity of the use of CMC codes and features also highlighted their status as a subgroup of “digital natives”. The projection of a transnational identity through this digital nativeness and the consumption of remarkably similar transcultural products was one of the most important findings of this research. The students constructed this transnational identity through their use of EIL and the various CMC linguistic resources available to them in such a way that they can be considered part of a larger group of digital users. Their consumption of transcultural products such as music or sport acknowledged their participation in specific brand communities of consumption and it became clear that this provided strategies for, first, discovering and, ultimately, expressing their transnational identities.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR ELT

The “EIL in Poland and Spain” blog has provided a veritable third space for communication which has proved a unique experience for transcultural communication and self-expression for our participants. The results suggest that the blog has great potential for FL and culture learning. The fact that the virtual third space is within easy reach of the students makes it an appealing alternative for tertiary socialisation experiences that are usually only achieved by a stay abroad at secondary school level. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, the option of pursuing tertiary socialisation through stay abroad experiences is only available to a minority of learners, especially whilst at secondary school level. The use of a virtual third space thus opens up a world of virtual travelling experiences for our learners. Although the virtual space used for this research was only available for students from three schools, it has the potential to be expanded to include students from a variety of different countries. If the students were to continue with similar collaborations with other users of EIL, then the possibilities for expanding their interests in different world languages and cultures could be easily optimised.

There is no doubt that the learners that participated in this project have understood the importance and usefulness of being multilingual and in developing transcultural skills in today’s global environment. A transcultural approach to ELT may be a step in the right direction to achieving transcultural competence but there still remains the problem of how to broaden our students’ knowledge of other languages. The school curriculum is already full with a variety of subjects which often, as in the case of Mallorca, leaves little room for manoeuvre when it comes to offering a varied choice of FLs for the students. As some scholars have suggested (Byram, 1997; Graddol, 2001), one possible solution lies within the framework of CLIL. Nevertheless, for practical reasons, this must be limited to the most common foreign languages (English, French and German). Since CLIL instruction requires teachers that are qualified in a content-subject and although CLIL instruction is an interesting alternative, the content material would still be limited to a specific area (i.e. history, geography, science, etc.). Throughout Europe, language learning through CLIL is becoming very popular and is achieving positive results (Pérez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2010), but it is not the solution to encouraging the learning of lesser known languages. In contrast, the transcultural approach applied to the FL class offers the study of English through cross-curricular themes which, although we

cannot claim to be the equivalent to CLIL in its method, does share some of its features, such as the use of content-based material. If learners are introduced to other EIL speakers via web.2.0 technology then they may find their curiosity about the native culture and language of their interlocutors is piqued.

Taking into account both the results of this research and previous studies in intercultural communicative competence and proposals for the components of transcultural competence, the following section will describe the proposal of a preliminary framework for a transcultural approach to EFL at secondary school level. This framework is by no means definitive but could serve as a point of departure for further development and research.

8.3 A FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR A TRANSCULTURAL APPROACH TO EIL

First of all, it should be made clear that the proposal of a framework for a transcultural approach that follows is not to be seen as independent of other approaches, but is to be understood as being compatible with other teaching practices, such as the use of the text-book for consolidating the correct use of language.

The principal aim is to extend the notion of intercultural competence to that of transcultural competence. As has been seen, in this dissertation we understand “intercultural” to refer to the communication between speakers from different cultural backgrounds but using a language which is native to one of the speakers. This is the typical scenario of FL learning which contemplates communication between the student of the target language and a native speaker of the target language and which has been the basis for most research in this area. Byram (1997) proposed a very in-depth framework for the acquisition of ICC, which he feels is compatible with communication through a lingua franca, such as English. Nevertheless, he is aware that changes will need to be made in order to adapt the ICC framework to cater for communication between NNSs of English (Byram, 1997) in a non-English-speaking environment. Our objective, thus, was to draw on Byram’s framework and include ideas put forward by Ting-Toomey (1999) Jongewaard (2001, 2012), Slimbach (2005) and Grant (2006), in

order to enhance Byram's framework by taking into consideration the use of EIL between non-native speakers and the need to foster transnational codes of conduct. Figure 11 below outlines the framework of reference which outlines the tenets of the transcultural approach that we have implemented in the research described in this PhD dissertation.

On the left of the table, we have a definition of intercultural competence, and the pedagogic approach taken based on this definition, which departs from a theoretical framework of ICC such as that suggested by Byram (1997). On the right, we have a definition of transcultural competence, along with the pedagogic principals which are derived from theoretical frameworks such as those suggested by Ting-Toomey (1999), Jongewaard, (2001, 2012), Slimbach (2005), and Grant (2006).

The two sides of the proposal are seen as being placed along two important continuums. The first is the socialisation continuum, which sees intercultural education as essentially classified as part of a secondary socialisation experience, although if learners are able to communicate with speakers of the FL under instruction tertiary socialisation might eventually arise. Transcultural competence is associated with tertiary socialisation experiences where learners are not restricted to learning about the "other" from the outside but are able to form their own views based on real experiences, usually acquired through an extended stay abroad, travel and international business. Although many of the skills required for transcultural competence coincide with Byram's ICC framework, a framework for transcultural competence includes the use of EIL between NNSs of English and also requires global skills of interpretation along with some very specific areas of development such as critical transcultural awareness, contextual and geographical awareness, translingual proficiency, and affective skills such as open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity.

The two sides are divided by a broken line. This is used to show how a breakdown in intergroup boundaries facilitates the acquisition of transcultural competence. This line is also connected to our second continuum, which relates the concepts of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism to secondary and tertiary socialisation. As speakers progress and acquire more tertiary socialisation experiences, then it is presumed that the boundary will become permeable and will eventually be broken down entirely.

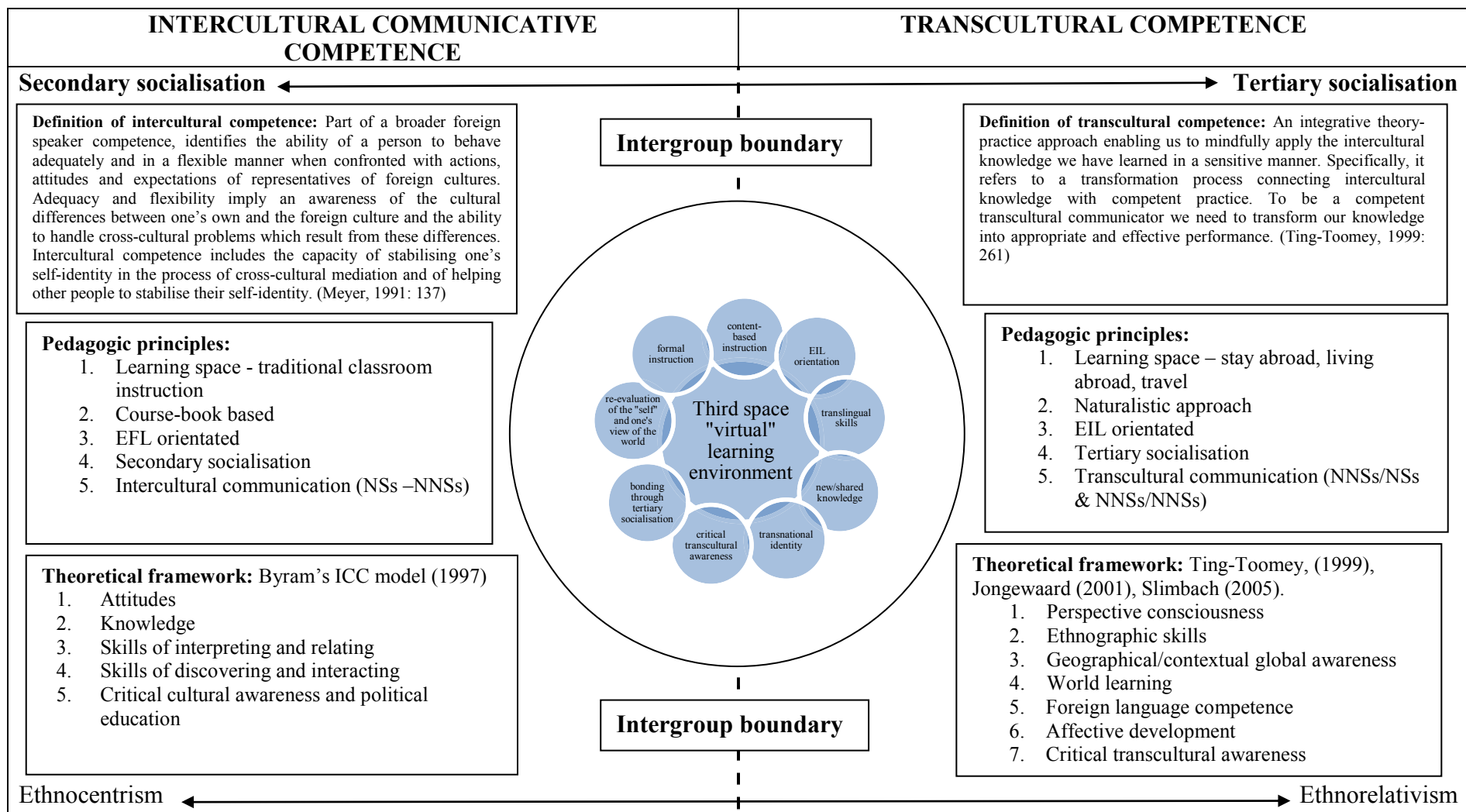


Figure 11 Framework for a transcultural approach to EIL

Sociopsychologically, this process reflects a development from an ethnocentric view of the “other” towards an ethnorelative perception.

In the centre of the diagram we have placed a circle with nine satellites, which summarises the transcultural approach to ELT that has been implemented for this PhD dissertation. This circular figure is purposely placed on the intergroup boundary since it represents the virtual learning space where speakers of EIL may communicate with other speakers of EIL and where transcultural awareness may be fostered through this tertiary socialisation experience. This virtual learning space is devoid of specific barriers (i.e. social, cultural, native-speaker competence, etc.) which may adversely affect the learning process. It is a space where users may communicate in English about their interests, their concerns for the world, exchange opinions and learn about other cultural communities without the interference of a national discourse which concentrates on English-speaking communities as is often the case with a course-book.

The nine satellites represent some of the fundamental pedagogic principles used for this research. These areas are described below:

1. Content-based instruction is a fundamental part of the transcultural approach. The choice of content should reflect areas of interest to the participants but should also strive to foster critical transcultural awareness. Students can be encouraged to look beyond their immediate surroundings by working on projects which allow them to look for their own information and to form their own opinions and conclusions. A virtual third space can then be used for the students to present their work and learn from similar work produced by others who may have approached the task from a different angle or set of principles. In the project described in this research, the participants were able to share their opinions with a group of students from a different cultural background.
2. Formal instruction, often through the use of a course-book, remains an essential element of any FL course. Although the transcultural approach is concerned with the use of EIL, the correct use of the FL should still be a major objective. We cannot forget that this project has described a learning

environment for secondary school education where students are expected to reach a specific level of linguistic competence. There is a wide choice of course-books available to the FL teacher but, in order to foster transcultural competence, teachers should opt for a book that includes diverse cultural information. It is important that a variety of cultures are represented, not only those from English-speaking countries. The course-book used by the participants in Spain (*Voices*, MacMillan, 2009) is an excellent example of a tool which combines the requirements of formal instruction with a broad cultural content. Along with extensive and varied cultural content, the course-book also includes specific cross-curricular “extras” for each unit. For example, a unit which is dedicated to the economy has additional information which connects to their mathematics lessons. In this way the course syllabus aims to create a CLIL-related learning environment.

3. EIL-orientated language practice is a main concern of this dissertation. As we have said above, the correct acquisition of the FL has to be catered for, but the virtual third space may allow the learners to use a language (in this case, EIL) to communicate with another group of NNSs. They will be able to use language in an informal manner where communication rather than linguistic competence will be the principal aim. It is also hoped that by using English as a means of learning about other cultures and their associated language(s), learners will be encouraged to take up new linguistic challenges. In the case of our participants, the results showed a rise in students who would like to learn an Eastern European language.
4. Translingual skills are also an essential area of the transcultural approach. Users of EIL need to rely on the knowledge that they have acquired of language in general in order to become efficient communicators. Our participants showed that communication was more fluid due a similar use of informal language and style on the blog, more specifically in the use of a style which emulated face-to-face interaction (e.g. exaggeration and onomatopoeic spellings) and the use of many characteristics of CMC (e.g. emoticons and abbreviations).

5. Bonding with the “other” is a fundamental element of transcultural competence. In this case, tertiary socialisation experience was acquired through the use of the virtual learning space. Successful socialisation of this kind should help to break down intergroup barriers and prepare the learner for communication between EIL speakers from a multitude of cultural backgrounds.
6. The virtual third space is a valid area for the acquisition and sharing of cultural knowledge. Due to the link between language and culture it is thought that the introduction to a new cultural reality through other speakers of EIL may encourage the learning of the language spoken by the other group.
7. The re-evaluation of “self” and the “other” is the result of reflection on how one sees the ‘other’ and how one is seen by the ‘other’. Acknowledging the damaging effect that stereotypes may have on one’s perception of people from other cultural backgrounds is an important step in acquiring transcultural awareness and developing transcultural competence.
8. Critical transcultural awareness is the conscious reflection of information concerning other cultural groups and the development of political, cultural and social awareness. This can be fostered through experiences which offer the possibility to obtain information from a variety of voices. In our approach, the learners are able to get first-hand information about life in Poland and Spain from the participants themselves.
9. The consolidation of transcultural competence skills on the part of learners in their communication with other EIL speakers, resulting from the systematic absorption and eventual use of intercultural knowledge and translingual strategies, may naturally result in the gradual development of a transnational identity. This would involve no longer thinking in purely national terms, thus making learners better equipped to identify with members of imagined communities other than their own, with relevant potential benefits to be drawn in terms of their ability to communicate through EIL in an increasingly globalised world.

8.4 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although every effort has been made to ensure that internal validation has been achieved in this dissertation, as with any research which centres on data from groups of participants that one does not have complete control over, it was very difficult to be in command of all aspects of the research context. This became evident as the research progressed, more specifically concerning time constraints between the two countries and technical problems with the use of the Internet. We feel that dealing with such limitations or setbacks is synonymous with real working conditions, hence, whilst making the teaching method even more pragmatic, it also provides the research with added authenticity.

Since, methodologically speaking, our research was designed as a case study, it is assumed that external validation is not met due to the limited number of participants and the use of only two cultural background contexts (Spanish and Polish). Nevertheless, the fact that our participants were from different areas of Europe does mean that, although we cannot overtly generalise the findings, it is worth highlighting that the analysis did find evidence of a number of common traits which appear to be universal in our sample groups, such as those which suggest the formation of a transnational identity. It would be interesting to do further research with learners of EIL with considerably different cultural backgrounds in order to fully address the viability of a transnational identity.

This thesis has attempted to provide insight into the multiple possibilities that a transcultural approach may afford for English language students. Nevertheless, issues concerning the assessment of transcultural competence have not been discussed and could possibly be interpreted as a limitation to the proposal of a transcultural approach. Assessment based on tools such as the semantic differential test, used to examine ethnocentricity, proved useful but not conclusive. The use of questionnaires to assess attitudes towards the approach was practical and provided valuable information, but questionnaires are often limiting by nature and, as seen under close inspection, students very often chose the middle-of-the-road answer, especially when Likert scales were employed. Although there are a variety of tests available which aim to assess

intercultural competence (see Section 3.2), these were discarded as it was felt that they were not particularly suitable for secondary school students.

Evidence of the participants' approval of the project was found in the short essays that the Spanish students wrote as part of their final assessments for their language class. In an informal conversation with Ben T at the end of the project, important feedback concerning the students' views of the project was discussed. According to the Ben T, the students enjoyed the opportunity to provide feedback on the project and corroborated the principal results extracted from questionnaires, such as praise for the overall experience due to the experience of interacting with other EIL students and a positive interest in the blog and the use of a content-based methodology. This reflection on the learning process may prove to be a suitable method of evaluation as the students genuinely and openly discussed how the experience had made them consider the importance of EIL, and how it can be used as a key to learning about other cultures and languages.

In order to consolidate and further validate the results of this thesis, future research needs to concentrate on developing materials which can be used to foster transcultural competence within the EFL classroom setting, since our research seems to indicate that it does make sense to use the EFL classroom to this effect. An essential element of the transcultural approach would be to enhance the use of the blog by adding links to sites which provide linguistic and cultural information. It would not be practical to open the blog up to large groups of other EIL learners, but it may be possible to have "guests" from different countries that are able to participate in discussions with the learners in order to encourage participation, thus broadening the cultural scope of the learning experience.

Finally, more extensive testing and refining of the proposed transcultural framework (see Section 8.4) for establishing a transcultural approach to teaching EIL is needed with the objective of producing specific course-books which include an orientation towards the development of transcultural competence.

8.5 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Developments in technology, in international relations and the ease of international travel have had a great impact on the world at large. Along with the concept of national identity and its corresponding nuances, our increasingly globalised world also makes it increasingly easier for individuals to feel they belong to larger imagined communities. Movement between countries, whether for work or for pleasure, is becoming standard practice for many. This international movement highlights the need for translingual and transcultural competence. EIL is seen as instrumental for initial communication between these people with varying linguistic backgrounds but the essential argument for translingual competence is to potentiate not only a high level of competence in English for non-native speakers, but also to stress the importance of FL learning as an essential competence for the future. English may open the door to a new place of residence but, once there, opportunities to learn another language may be presented. Although the virtual space used for this research was only available for students from three schools, the present study also provides the essential information that could be used to expand it to include students from a variety of different countries. If the students were to continue with similar collaborations with other users of EIL, then the possibilities for widening their scope of interest in different world languages and cultures could be optimised.

Thus, ecological adaptation within the realm of FL learning needs to be concerned with such changes. This thesis has proposed a classroom approach to ELT which we believe incorporates some of these ideas and which sees the future of ELT as a combination of learning EFL or ESL and for use as an international language along with stressing the importance of general cultural knowledge and competence. This necessarily calls for innovations in the ELT classroom

This dissertation has emphasised the importance of motivating students to take an interest in language learning in general, despite the lack in variety of languages available for study at many secondary schools. Unfortunately, this is not something that can be readily remedied. The most important responsibility of general education is to encourage an interest in language learning, and especially those languages which are not always the nearest geographically or the most prestigious.

In terms of originality, the research described in this dissertation strives to go beyond the traditional approach to EFL teaching by taking the concept of transcultural competence into the FL classroom and using a virtual third place and content-based instructional approach to FL teaching in order to prepare learners for the use of EIL and to contemplate their position as future transcultural citizens.

We are confident that, as a result of such a teaching approach, awareness of other world cultures has been heightened and the seeds of curiosity towards further learning have been sown.

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APPENDICES

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: PARENTAL AUTHORISATION*Autorización para uso de datos recogidos para un estudio científico*

El estudio que pretendo llevar a cabo es una investigación de carácter experimental que forma parte del trabajo “El uso del inglés como lengua internacional”, a cargo de la Dra. Maria Juan y el Dr. José Igor Prieto, para los estudios de doctorado de “Llengües i Lingüística Aplicada” de la Universitat de les Illes Balears. El objetivo es estudiar el uso de la lengua inglesa para ampliar conocimientos culturales a nivel global.

Para llevar a cabo esta investigación algunas clases de 3º del Instituto de Bendinat van a participar en unas actividades como parte de su clase de inglés y también van a participar con un grupo de estudiantes de su misma edad en el instituto Gimnazjum TAK, de Opole, Polonia, en un blog cerrado al que solo se pueden acceder los estudiantes, sus profesores, la doctoranda y sus supervisores (*Wordpress.com*).

Estos datos y comunicaciones en el foro van a ser utilizados con un único fin científico, y se garantiza totalmente el anonimato de los hablantes que hayan participado en la investigación.

Así pues, conforme con lo expuesto anteriormente,

.....,
(Nombre y apellidos)

Con DNI,

padre / madre / tutor legal de,
(Nombre y apellidos del hijo/a)

Autorizo a Karen Lesley Jacob Abad, con NIE X0641605C, a utilizar los datos recogidos durante el año escolar 2010-2011 de mi hijo/a con una única finalidad científica.

Firma de la persona que autoriza,

Palma, a de de 2010

APPENDIX 2: DIDACTIC UNITS**2.1 Unit 1 – Cultural Stereotypes****UNIT 1 – CULTURAL STEREOTYPES**

This unit focuses on:

- (i) The views that you have of your country and the views that others have of your country.
- (ii) The views both countries have of other countries (including the two in question (i)).

Our aims are to investigate:

- (i) The extent to which our students do or do not use stereotypes to define their own and/or other cultures.
- (ii) Whether our students can provide a definition of ‘stereotypes’.
- (iii) What our students think about stereotypes, whether they are harmful.
- (iv) What our students feel should be done to break down, if at all, common cultural stereotypes.

Students will work on:

Linguistic competence

- (i) Learn vocabulary to describe people – nouns, verbs and adjectives. They will be able to discuss personal qualities and differences.
- (ii) Describe people and places.
- (iii) Practise present simple, verbs to be, have got, there is/there are.

Sociocultural competence/communicative cultural competence/transcultural competence

- (i) Discuss how they perceive other cultures and how they feel others view the Spanish/Polish.
- (ii) Work towards a greater understanding of stereotypes.
- (iii) Discuss what can be done to break down stereotypes.

UNIT 1-LESSON 1 (50 minutes)

Warm-up exercise

1. Photos taken from the front covers of the *xenophobe's guide to ...* series. Students have to try and say which country the picture depicts.
2. Brainstorm – Would students add any other cultural stereotypes to those shown?
3. Photocopy –“Portrait of a nation: common misconceptions” (Littlejohn, A. (1991). *Cambridge Skills for Fluency; Writing 3, Student's book*. Cambridge: CUP).

(i) How do people in other countries see your country? What stereotypes do they have?

Here, for example, are some typical views which other nationalities have of English people:

- A full English breakfast of bacon and eggs every morning
- Very conservative, reserved, stiff
- Live in cold houses (it rains all the time and there is always fog in London)
- The men carry umbrellas and wear bowler hats
- Drink tea all day and can't do anything without having a cup of tea first
- Eat fish and chips a lot

Some of these are false or only partly true:

e.g.

1. They eat a full English breakfast every morning

False – Most English people don't have time in the morning to eat a heavy breakfast, and they would probably not want to. A cup of tea or coffee, a bowl of cereal and a piece of toast is all that most people have. I don't know anyone who eats an 'English breakfast' every morning.

2. English people live in cold houses

Partly true – Many English houses have very bad insulation against the cold. Double glazing is still not very common, especially in older houses, and there are often a lot of draughts around doors and windows. As a result, a lot of energy is lost. Modern houses are generally much better insulated, but many visitors still find them cold in the winter.

Class discussion – Think for a moment and in small groups and note down the things that other nationalities say are typical of your country. Make a list on the blackboard about points which you feel are misconceptions.

(ii) In small groups write a short paragraph about each one.

Homework

- Students choose 5-10 elements/ideas which for them are the essence of Spain and being Spanish or Polish and being Polish (can be in native language to be given in).
- Students also obtain a similar list from a parent and/or grandparent (taking care to state approximate age).

UNIT 1 – LESSON 2 (50 minutes)

1. Homework is collected – help given to translation of items if necessary.
2. Photocopy – Speaking stereotypes

In small groups the students discuss the following questions and prepare a short report with answers:

- What do you think about this chart?
- Do you think it is true that these people think like this about other nationalities?
- Do you also have the same view about other nationalities? Can you add to the chart?
- What do you think about stereotypes? Can you provide a definition?

3. Reports are read to the class and discussed

SPEAKING STEREOTYPES: This is what people think about themselves and others. Do you agree? Can you add on any more countries or groups of people?

	The English	The Spanish	The Germans	The Polish	The Italians	The French
About the English	Law-abiding, tolerant, good sense of humour		Very nice, and harmless		Bad food	Unculture and small-minded, badly dressed
About the Spanish	Best holiday destination and too much garlic in food		Enviied for their relaxed attitudes, warm climate		Friendly, no sense of humour	Proud, noisy and produce too much wine
About the Germans	Overweight beer drinkers		Very loyal to their own nation		Unkind and too well organised	Inferior culture and politics
About the Polish						
About the Italians	Rich and addicted to sex		Loud and happy		Talented and always with a “bella figura”	Inferior nation
About the French	Great food and climate, snobby people		Inferior culture		Arrogant and too proud	Only truly civilised people in the world

UNIT 1-LESSON 3 (50 minutes)

1. Teacher presents two lists (one for students, one for adults) obtained from homework which show some of the ideas about Spain and the Spanish that both groups have. Students can guess which list belongs to which group.
2. The students then decide as a group which five-ten items from their lists they would choose to tell a foreigner about Spain and the Spanish. To this list we will add 5 of the misconceptions that the students feel that other communities have about Spain/Poland and the Spanish/Polish. We will the post these 10-15 phrases on the blog and ask our Polish/Spanish students to decide which they think are true, false, partly true, etc. In turn our students will reply to their comments and also do the same with a similar list about Poland and the Polish.
3. Students make a list of things they feel they have in common with teenagers from different cultural backgrounds worldwide/or things that they believe are very different. Can we talk of a common teenage culture? Why/why not?
4. Homework – student can be given the questions the will be working on in the blog in the following class in order to prepare answers if necessary.

UNIT 1-LESSON 4 (50 minutes)

1. Students try to answer these questions in the blog:
 - Are stereotypes good or do they cause prejudices which can be harmful?
 - Do you have any stereotypes about any group?
 - What should change in order to get rid of stereotypes?
2. Students also comment on the list of items giving information about Spain and the Spanish, and Poland and the Polish.
3. Homework – students should continue checking the blog and adding any new information or thoughts on the subject during the next few weeks. Students should also comment in their diaries about the unit and whether they feel they have learnt anything from it.

2.2 Unit 2 Africa

UNIT 2 –AFRICA

In this unit the students are going to present projects on a series of themes on Africa. Presentations will be posted on the blog. Video-presentations may also be uploaded.

Before beginning to work on the projects the students will be given an introduction to Africa. In Spain, the students will be shown a powerpoint with various images from the different countries in Africa and will then comment on what they have seen. They will also be given some photocopies from an encyclopedia with some geographical, historical and cultural information. The Polish students have access to the same material should they wish to use it.

Possible topics for projects are: Women in Africa; Children in Africa; War; Famine; South Africa; Slavery; Tribes; Positive aspects; Endangered species/environmental devastation.

Blog Exercise 1

Students are given a list of 10 blog questions. They must answer at least 2 questions from questions 1-6 and 2 questions from questions 7-11. They should look at the questions chosen by the other students and try not to always answer the same ones. It is also important to comment on the answers given by the other students. These questions should be answered before they give their presentations on the various topics about Africa.

Blog questions:

1. How much do you know about the way of life in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America? Do you feel that you know more about some than others? Why?
2. Can you name ten things that come to mind when you think of Africa (the continent as a whole)?
3. If you could choose to visit a continent other than Europe, which one would you visit? Why?
4. If you could visit Africa which country would you visit? Why? Do you think life there would be very different from Spain or Poland?
5. Which topic did you choose for your project? Why? Are there any other topics you would add to list you were given by your teacher?
6. Can you name any famous people from Africa? (Historical figures, political figures, from sports, literature or music, etc.).
7. If you had to do a similar project on Europe, which topics would you suggest? Why?
8. If you had to do a similar project on North America, which topics would you suggest? Why?
9. If you had to do a similar project on South America, which topics would you suggest? Why?
10. If you had to do a similar project on Asia, which topics would you suggest? Why?
11. If you had to do a similar project on Australasia, which topics would you suggest? Why?

2.3 Unit 3 Music with a Message

UNIT 3 - MUSIC WITH A MESSAGE

In this unit, the students have to form pairs or small groups and choose a song with a message. If possible, they have to publish the lyrics, a video of the song and they have to explain the message on the blog. The other students will then vote for their favourite song and message.

As an introduction, the students in Spain will be given two examples:

1. 'Californication' by the Red Hot Chile Peppers
2. 'Give me hope Jo'anna' by Eddy Grant.

Music – The teacher will give examples of how music has been used to protest about major problems in the world or as a way to heighten awareness about certain issues.

e.g. 'Give me hope Joanna'/'Californication', gap filling.

In small groups, students prepare a song with a video clip and a listening-gap filling exercise for the rest of the class.

Blog discussion - Students comment on why they chose a specific song and whether it concerned Spain / Poland, or whether it concerned all people worldwide. Students comment on the work of their classmates and the projects of the other groups. They should consider the following questions:

- (i) Did you know the song?
- (ii) Did you understand the message?
- (iii) Did the other groups choose similar or different types of protest/awareness songs?

2.4 Unit 4 Questions and Answers

UNIT 4 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Spanish students will be assigned a Polish partner. They will be given a theme to ask questions. The Polish students should wait for their question on the blog and then reply. The questions to be asked will be the result of a class discussion where the Spanish students decide what information they would like to know about their Polish counterparts.

Themes suggested were: sports in Poland; education; free time; festivals; holidays; use of English in Poland; legal age for leaving school, driving, drinking etc.; school subjects; use of social networks; football; job prospects; literature; important cities, monuments, people; fashion; typical food; school holidays; girlfriends, boyfriends; family; trips abroad; etc.

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaires

3.1 Background Information Questionnaire

Background Information Questionnaire
Karen Jacob – University of the Balearic Islands
PhD in language and linguistics 2008-2012

Name: _____ Age: _____ Class: _____
 Place of birth: _____ Nationality: _____
 How long have you lived in the Balearic Islands? _____
 What is your father's nationality? _____ What is your mother's nationality? _____
 Where was your father brought up? _____
 Where was your mother brought up? _____
 Which of these cultural backgrounds do you identify most with?
 Majorcan Catalan Spanish European South American
 North American African Asian International
 other (please specify) _____

Language/Educational information

1. Which language do you consider your mother tongue?
 Catalan Spanish other _____
2. Which language(s) do you speak:

to your father?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
to your mother?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
to your brothers and sisters?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
to your friends at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
to your friends at school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalan	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
3. Are any of your friends from another country or cultural background?
 YES NO
4. Apart from English are you studying any other foreign language at school this year?
 none German French other _____
5. Apart from English did you study any other foreign language at school last year?
 none German French other _____
6. Are there any other languages you would like to have the opportunity to learn?
 YES – which one(s) _____ NO
7. Do you have any foreign language lessons out of school?
 YES – which one(s) _____ NO

Appendices

8. Which language(s) do you use on the Internet ? _____
9. Do you think the Internet is a good way to practise foreign languages?
 very good quite good OK not very good bad
10. Have you ever studied any content subjects (history, geography, science, maths, music etc.) in a foreign language such as English, French or German? NO YES

If you answer 'yes' please complete the following box:

	This year (2010-2011)	Last year (2009-2010)
Which subject?		
Which language?		

11. Do you think that studying a subject such as history, geography, science, etc. in a foreign language is/would be an interesting way to learn a language?
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
12. Is it interesting to learn about the cultural aspects of the countries of the different foreign languages you are studying? (This would include their history, geography, literature, art, daily life, values and beliefs).
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
13. Do you think it is important to learn about the culture(s) associated with the language(s) you are studying?
 very important important sometimes important not very important not important

Foreign travel information

- 14 Have you ever travelled abroad? YES NO

15 If you answered 'yes' to question 14, please complete the information:

(i) Where did you go? _____

How long for? 1-15 days 15 days-1 month 1-3 months other _____

Why did you travel? on holiday to live to learn a language

to visit family or friends other _____

(ii) Where did you go? _____

How long for? 1-15 days 15 days-1 month 1-3 months other _____

Why did you travel? on holiday to live to learn a language

to visit family or friends other _____

3.2 Students' Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire

(English)

Name: _____ School: _____

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 (very often) to 5 (never)

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very often 2. Quite Often 3. Sometimes 4. Not very often 5. Never |
|--|

For example:

How often do you go to the cinema?

1 2 3 4 5

Put a circle around (1) if you go very often, around (3) if you sometimes go to the cinema and a circle around (5) if you never go to the cinema.

How often did you....?

1. visit the EIL in Poland and Spain blog?

1 2 3 4 5

2. read the different posts?

1 2 3 4 5

3. read the comments?

1 2 3 4 5

4. add a new post?

1 2 3 4 5

5. comment on someone else's post?

1 2 3 4 5

6. answer any comments on your posts and/or comments?

1 2 3 4 5

7. ask the Spanish students about things you did not understand?

1 2 3 4 5

8. ask the Spanish students about things you found interesting?

1 2 3 4 5

9. ask the Spanish students for information about Spain?

1 2 3 4 5

10. did you work on your own?

1 2 3 4 5

11. did you work with a partner or in a group?

1 2 3 4 5

12. did you discuss the project work in class?

1 2 3 4 5

Appendices

Please mark the following statements on a scale of 1 (very true) to 5 (false)

- | |
|---|
| 1. True
2. Quite true
3. Neither true nor false
4. Quite false
5. False |
|---|

For example: I like chocolate

1 2 3 4 5

If you think this is true for you statement put a circle around (1), if you think it is neither true nor false put a circle around (3) and if you think this is false for you put a circle around (5).

13. I feel more confident about writing in English since using the blog

1 2 3 4 5

14. Before using the blog I used to worry about writing in English

1 2 3 4 5

15. I worry about my level of English when I write on the blog now

1 2 3 4 5

16. I would learn more by writing to native speakers of English

1 2 3 4 5

17. The blog helped me improve my English

1 2 3 4 5

18. I have more confidence in written work in class

1 2 3 4 5

19. I think it is easier to communicate on the blog than face-to face

1 2 3 4 5

20. Writing on the blog in an informal way has given me confidence to speak more in English

1 2 3 4 5

21. I have learnt a lot of vocabulary by reading the posts and comments on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

22. I have learnt a lot of grammar by reading the post and comments on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

23. Using the blog has encouraged me to enter chats and blogs in English

1 2 3 4 5

24. If I didn't understand a word I would look it up in the dictionary

1 2 3 4 5

25. My English was more spontaneous on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

26. I would prefer to write to native English speakers

1 2 3 4 5

27. Getting the message across is more important than using perfect grammar structures

1 2 3 4 5

28. I like working on my own on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

29. My English is not very good and so I prefer to work in a group

1 2 3 4 5

30. I like working in a group on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

31. A blog is an interesting way to practice my English

1 2 3 4 5

32. I found the blog easy to use

1 2 3 4 5

33. I prefer to use Facebook

1 2 3 4 5

34. I have learnt a lot of new vocabulary about the blog page

1 2 3 4 5

35. I would like to continue using the blog for spontaneous writing

1 2 3 4 5

36. I would like to discuss things that are happening in the world on the blog

1 2 3 4 5

37. I don't like using the blog

1 2 3 4 5

38. I like using the internet for language learning

1 2 3 4 5

39. I enjoyed reading the posts made by everyone

1 2 3 4 5

40. I liked making spontaneous posts and comments

1 2 3 4 5

41. I liked the projects we did (stereotypes, Africa and music)

1 2 3 4 5

42. I enjoy using English to talk about different things

1 2 3 4 5

43. The Polish are very different from the Spanish

1 2 3 4 5

44. Spain is an interesting country

1 2 3 4 5

Appendices

45. Polish culture is similar to Spanish culture
1 2 3 4 5
46. I have similar interests to the Spanish students
1 2 3 4 5
47. I prefer Polish culture to any other culture
1 2 3 4 5
48. Working on the blog has made me interested in other cultures
1 2 3 4 5
49. A blog is an interesting way to learn about another country
1 2 3 4 5
50. A blog is an interesting way to learn about global issues
1 2 3 4 5
51. The more I know about a country the more I would like to learn the language
1 2 3 4 5
52. I would like to learn Spanish
1 2 3 4 5
53. The more I learn about other cultures the closer I feel to them
1 2 3 4 5
54. I have made some new friends using the blog
1 2 3 4 5
55. I have added Spanish students to my Facebook or twitter page
1 2 3 4 5
56. I would like to meet the students from Majorca
1 2 3 4 5
57. I could learn a lot about other cultures by speaking to people from different countries
in English on the blog
1 2 3 4 5
58. I would like to add English students from other countries to the blog
1 2 3 4 5
59. I would like to visit Spain
1 2 3 4 5
60. I would like to visit Majorca
1 2 3 4 5
61. When I use English I feel I belong to an international group of speakers
1 2 3 4 5
62. I would like to be multilingual and multicultural
1 2 3 4 5
63. I consider myself multilingual
1 2 3 4 5

64. I consider myself multicultural

1 2 3 4 5

65. If I speak good English I will be able to work/live in another country

1 2 3 4 5

66. If I speak good English I will be able to study a good career

1 2 3 4 5

67. If I speak good English I will be able to travel the world

1 2 3 4 5

68. Learning other European languages (apart from English) is important for my future

1 2 3 4 5

69. English is important for my future

1 23 4 5

70. I would like to learn Portuguese

1 2 3 4 5

71. I would like to learn Chinese

1 2 3 4 5

72. I would like to learn Polish

1 2 3 4 5

73. I would like to learn Swedish

1 2 3 4 5

74. I would like to learn Russian

1 2 3 4 5

75. I have enjoyed working on different projects in my English class

1 2 3 4 5

76. I prefer having my history and geography class in English that in Spanish

1 2 3 4 5

77. I prefer studying history and geography in my English class

1 2 3 4 5

78. I am more motivated when we don't use the book in class

1 2 3 4 5

79. I have enjoyed learning about other countries and cultures in my English class

1 2 3 4 5

80. It is easier to write about a variety of topics in my English class as I do not have to memorise everything for an exam

1 2 3 4 5

Answer the following questions:

1. Are there any other languages you would like to have the opportunity to learn?
 YES – which one(s) _____ NO
2. Which language(s) do you use on the internet?

3. Do you think the internet is a good way to practise foreign languages?
 very good quite good OK not very good bad
4. Do you think that studying a subject such as history, geography, science, etc. in a foreign language is/would be an interesting way to learn a language?
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
5. Is it interesting to learn about the cultural aspects of the countries of the different foreign languages you are studying? (This would include their history, geography, literature, art, daily life, values and beliefs).
 very interesting interesting sometimes interesting not very interesting boring
6. Do you think it is important to learn about the culture(s) associated with the language(s) you are studying?
 very important important sometimes important not very important
 not important

3.3 Students' Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire (Spanish)

Nombre: _____ IES Bendinat

Por favor, contestad las siguientes preguntas en una escala del 1 (muy frecuentemente) al 5 (nunca).

- | |
|---|
| 1. Nunca
2. Casi nunca
3. A veces
4. A menudo
5. Muy a menudo |
|---|

Por ejemplo:

¿Con qué frecuencia vas al cine?

1 2 3 4 5

Pon un círculo alrededor del número (1) si no vas nunca, alrededor del (3) si vas a veces y alrededor del (5) si vas muy a menudo.

¿Con qué frecuencia haces lo siguiente?

1. Visitar el blog EIL in Poland and Spain?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Leer los diferentes posts?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Leer los comentarios?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Añadir un nuevo post?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Comentar el post de otro?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Comentar tus posts o contestar los comentarios de otros en uno de tus posts?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Preguntar a los estudiantes polacos sobre cosas que habían escrito y no entendías?

1 2 3 4 5

8. Preguntar a los polacos sobre las cosas que encontrases interesantes?

1 2 3 4 5

9. Pedir información sobre Polonia?

1 2 3 4 5

10. Trabajar en solitario?

1 2 3 4 5

11. Trabajar en pareja o en grupo?

1 2 3 4 5

12. Comentar los trabajos/posts del blog en clase?

1 2 3 4 5

Por favor, marcad las siguientes afirmaciones en una escala del 1 (estoy muy en acuerdo-verdadero) al 5 (estoy totalmente en desacuerdo- falso)

1. Estoy muy en acuerdo (verdadero)
2. Estoy bastante en acuerdo
3. Ni estoy en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
4. Estoy bastante en desacuerdo
5. Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo (muy falso)

Por ejemplo:

Me gusta el chocolate

1 2 3 4 5

Si estas muy en acuerdo con esta afirmación marcad el (1), si no estás ni en acuerdo ni desacuerdo marcad el (3) y si estas totalmente en desacuerdo marcad el (5).

13. Tengo más confianza al escribir en inglés desde que utilizo el blog

1 2 3 4 5

14. Antes de utilizar el blog solía preocuparme cuando tenía que escribir en inglés

1 2 3 4 5

15. Ahora no me preocupa mi nivel de inglés cuando escribo en el blog

1 2 3 4 5

16. Aprenderé más escribiendo a inglés nativos

1 2 3 4 5

17. Cuando escribo en el blog me importa más hacer mi comentario que si mi inglés es perfecto gramaticalmente
1 2 3 4 5
18. El blog me ha ayudado mejorar mi nivel de inglés
1 2 3 4 5
19. En clase tengo más confianza a la hora de escribir en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
20. Creo que es más fácil comunicarse con el blog que cara a cara
1 2 3 4 5
21. Escribir en el blog de manera informal me ha dado confianza para hablar más en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
22. He aprendido mucho vocabulario leyendo los posts y comentarios en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
23. He aprendido mucha gramática leyendo los posts y comentarios en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
24. Ahora me animo a entrar en chats y blogs en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
25. Si no entendía una palabra la buscaba en el diccionario
1 2 3 4 5
26. Mi inglés era más espontáneo en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
27. Prefería escribir a ingleses nativos
1 2 3 4 5
28. El mensaje es más importante que el uso correcto de la gramática
1 2 3 4 5
29. Me gusta trabajar en solitario en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
30. Mi nivel de inglés no es muy bueno y prefiero trabajar en grupo en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
31. Me gusta trabajar en grupo en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
32. El blog era un lugar interesante para practicar mi inglés
1 2 3 4 5
33. El blog era muy fácil de usar
1 2 3 4 5
34. Me gusta más usar el Facebook
1 2 3 4 5

35. He aprendido mucho vocabulario conectado con la página del blog
1 2 3 4 5
36. Me gustaría seguir utilizando el blog para escribir comentarios espontáneos
1 2 3 4 5
37. Me gustaría utilizar el blog para comentar cosas que están pasando en el mundo
1 2 3 4 5
38. No me gusta usar el blog
1 2 3 4 5
39. No me gusta utilizar internet para aprender idiomas
1 2 3 4 5
40. Me gustaba leer los posts y comentarios
1 2 3 4 5
41. Me gustaba hacer posts y comentarios espontáneos
1 2 3 4 5
42. Me gustaban los proyectos que hacíamos en clase (stereotypes, Africa and music)
1 2 3 4 5
43. Me gusta usar el inglés para hablar de un variedad de temas
1 2 3 4 5
44. Los polacos son muy diferentes a los españoles
1 2 3 4 5
45. Polonia es un país muy interesante
1 2 3 4 5
46. La cultura de Polonia es muy parecida a la de España
1 2 3 4 5
47. Tengo intereses muy parecidos a los de los estudiantes polacos
1 2 3 4 5
48. Prefiero la cultura española a cualquier otra
1 2 3 4 5
49. Trabajar en el blog me ha hecho interesarme por otras culturas
1 2 3 4 5
50. Un blog es una manera interesante de aprender sobre otro país
1 2 3 4 5
51. Un blog es una manera interesante de aprender sobre asuntos globales
1 2 3 4 5
52. Cuanto más sé sobre un país, más interesado estoy en aprender la lengua de ese país
1 2 3 4 5
53. Cuanto más aprendo sobre una cultura más me identifico con ella
1 2 3 4 5

54. He hecho nuevos amigos con el blog
1 2 3 4 5
55. He añadido estudiantes polacos a mi Facebook/Tuenti, etc.
1 2 3 4 5
56. Me gustaría conocer en persona a los estudiantes de Opole
1 2 3 4 5
57. Podría aprender sobre muchas otras culturas hablando con gente en inglés en el blog
1 2 3 4 5
58. Me gustaría añadir estudiantes de inglés de otros países al blog
1 2 3 4 5
59. Me gustaría visitar Polonia
1 2 3 4 5
60. Me gustaría visitar Opole
1 2 3 4 5
61. Cuando utilizo el inglés siento que pertenezco a un grupo de hablantes internacionales
1 2 3 4 5
62. Me gustaría ser multicultural y multilingüe
1 2 3 4 5
63. Me considero multilingüe
1 2 3 4 5
64. Me considero multicultural
1 2 3 4 5
65. Si hablo un buen inglés podré trabajar/vivir en el extranjero
1 2 3 4 5
66. Si hablo un buen inglés podré estudiar una buena carrera
1 2 3 4 5
67. Si hablo un buen inglés podré viajar por todo el mundo
1 2 3 4 5
68. El aprendizaje de otras lenguas europeas (a parte del inglés) es muy importante para mi futuro
1 2 3 4 5
69. El inglés es muy importante para mi futuro
1 2 3 4 5
70. Me gustaría aprender portugués
1 2 3 4 5
71. Me gustaría aprender chino
1 2 3 4 5

Appendices

72. Me gustaría aprender polaco

1 2 3 4 5

73. Me gustaría aprender sueco

1 2 3 4 5

74. Me gustaría aprender ruso

1 2 3 4 5

75. He disfrutado trabajando en diversos proyectos de mi clase de inglés este año

1 2 3 4 5

76. Prefiero tener mi clases de historia y geografía en ingles que en español

1 2 3 4 5

77. Prefiero aprender cosas de historia y geografía en mi clase normal de inglés

1 2 3 4 5

78. La clase me motiva más cuando no utilizamos el libro

1 2 3 4 5

79. El hecho de aprender sobre otros países y culturas en mi clase de inglés es interesante

1 2 3 4 5

80. Es más fácil escribir sobre un amplio repertorio de temas en mi clase de inglés porque sé que no tengo que memorizar todo para un examen de historia o geografía

1 2 3 4 5

Contesta las siguientes preguntas

1. ¿Hay algún otro idioma que te gustaría aprender que no has tenido la oportunidad?
 SI – cuál(es)? _____ N
2. ¿Que idiomas utilizas en internet?

3. ¿Crees que internet es una buena manera par practicar las lenguas extranjeras?
 muy buena bastante buena ni buena ni mala no muy buena mala
4. ¿Crees que estudiar una asignatura como historia, geografía o ciencias en una lengua extranjera es/será una manera interesante para aprender un idioma?
 muy interesante interesante a veces interesante no muy interesante
 aburrido
5. ¿Es interesante aprender sobre los aspectos culturales de los países de los diferentes idiomas que estés estudiando? (esto incluye su historia, geografía, literatura, arte, vida cotidiana).
 muy interesante interesante a veces interesante no muy interesante aburrido
6. ¿Crees que es importante estudiar las culturas asociadas con los idiomas que estás estudiando?
 muy importante importante a veces importante no muy importante nada importante

3.4 Students' Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire (Polish)

Imię i nazwisko: _____ Szkoła: _____

Proszę odpowiedz na pytania stosując skalę od 1 (nigdy) do 5 (bardzo często).

- | |
|-------------------|
| 1. Nigdy |
| 2. Niezbyt często |
| 3. Czasami |
| 4. Często |
| 5. Bardzo często |

Na przykład:

Jak często chodzisz do kina?

1 2 3 4 5

Zakreśl jedynekę (1) jeżeli nigdy, trójkę (3) jeżeli czasami i piątkę (5) jeżeli bardzo często.

Jak często ... ?

1. Odwiedzałeś blog 'EIL in Poland and Spain' (blog Karen)?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Czytałeś różne posty?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Czytałeś komentarze?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Dodawałeś nowy post?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Komentowałeś posty kogoś innego?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Odpowiadałeś na komentarze do twoich postów/lub komentarzy?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Pytałeś hiszpańskich studentów o rzeczy, których nie rozumiałeś?

1 2 3 4 5

8. Pytałeś hiszpańskich studentów o rzeczy, które uznałeś za interesujące?

1 2 3 4 5

9. Pytałeś hiszpańskich studentów o informacje o Hiszpanii?

1 2 3 4 5

10. Pracowałeś sam?

1 2 3 4 5

11. Pracowałeś z partnerem lub w grupie?

1 2 3 4 5

12. Rozmawiałeś o projekcie w klasie?

1 2 3 4 5

Proszę zaznaczyć następujące zdania na skali od 1 (tak) do 5 (nie).

1. Tak
2. Raczej tak
3. Ani tak ani nie
4. Raczej nie
5. Nie

Na przykład: Lubię czekoladę.

1 2 3 4 5

Jeżeli zgadzasz się z tym zdaniem zakreśl 1, jeżeli ani nie masz zdania zakreśl 3, a jeżeli się nie zgadzasz zakreśl 5.

13. Czuję się pewnie pisząc po angielsku od czasu kiedy używamy bloga

1 2 3 4 5

14. Zanim zaczęliśmy używać bloga martwiłem się o moje pisanie po angielsku

1 2 3 4 5

15. Teraz nie martwię się o mój poziom angielskiego kiedy piszę na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

16. Nauczyłem się więcej pisząc z Brytyjczykami albo Amerykanami

1 2 3 4 5

17. Blog pomógł mi poprawić mój angielski

1 2 3 4 5

18. Mam więcej pewności siebie kiedy piszę w klasie

1 2 3 4 5

19. Myślę, że łatwiej się komunikować na blogu niż twarzą w twarz

1 2 3 4 5

20. Nieformalne pisanie na blogu dało mi większą pewność siebie, żeby mówić więcej po angielsku

1 2 3 4 5

21. Nauczyłem się dużo słownictwa czytając posty i komentarze na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

22. Nauczyłem się dużo gramatyki czytając posty i komentarze na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

23. Używanie bloga zachęciło mnie do wchodzenia na czaty i blogi po angielsku

1 2 3 4 5

24. Jeżeli nie rozumiałem słowa mogłem je sprawdzić w słowniku

1 2 3 4 5

25. Mój angielski był bardziej spontaniczny na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

26. Wolałbym pisać do Brytyjczyków lub Amerykanów

1 2 3 4 5

27. Porozumienie jest ważniejsze niż użycie doskonałych struktur gramatycznych

1 2 3 4 5

28. Lubię pracować na blogu samodzielnie

1 2 3 4 5

29. Mój angielski nie jest zbyt dobry więc wolę pracować w grupie

1 2 3 4 5

30. Lubię pracować na blogu w grupie

1 2 3 4 5

31. Blog jest interesującym sposobem na ćwiczenie angielskiego

1 2 3 4 5

32. Uważam, że blog jest łatwy w użyciu

1 2 3 4 5

33. Wolę używać Facebook'a

1 2 3 4 5

34. Nauczyłem się dużo nowego słownictwa związanego z obsługą bloga

1 2 3 4 5

35. Chciałbym dalej używać bloga do spontanicznego pisania

1 2 3 4 5

36. Chciałbym dyskutować o rzeczach, które dzieją się na świecie na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

37. Nie lubię używać bloga

1 2 3 4 5

38. Lubię używać Internetu do uczenia się języków
1 2 3 4 5
39. Podobało mi się czytanie postów napisanych przez kogoś innego
1 2 3 4 5
40. Podobało mi się wpisywanie spontanicznych postów i komentarzy
1 2 3 4 5
41. Podobały mi się projekty, które robiliśmy (o stereotypach, Afryce i muzyce)
1 2 3 4 5
42. Lubię używać angielskiego, żeby rozmawiać o różnych rzeczach
1 2 3 4 5
43. Polacy są bardzo różni od Hiszpanów.
1 2 3 4 5
44. Hiszpania to interesujący kraj
1 2 3 4 5
45. Polska kultura jest podobna do hiszpańskiej kultury
1 2 3 4 5
46. Mam podobne zainteresowania jak hiszpańscy studenci
1 2 3 4 5
47. Wolę polską kulturę od innych.
1 2 3 4 5
48. Praca na blogu spowodowała, że zainteresowałem się innymi kulturami.
1 2 3 4 5
49. Blog jest interesującym sposobem na dowiedzenie się czego o innym kraju
1 2 3 4 5
50. Blog jest interesującym sposobem, żeby uczyć się o kwestiach globalnych
1 2 3 4 5
51. Im więcej wiem o danym kraju tym bardziej chciałbym nauczyć się jego języka
1 2 3 4 5
52. Chciałbym nauczyć się hiszpańskiego
1 2 3 4 5
53. Im więcej uczę się o innych kulturach tym bliższy się im czuję
1 2 3 4 5
54. Zdobyłem nowych przyjaciół używając bloga
1 2 3 4 5
55. Dodałem hiszpańskich studentów do mojego Facebook'a albo Twittera
1 2 3 4 5
56. Chciałbym spotkać studentów z Majorki
1 2 3 4 5

57. Mógłbym dowiedzieć się dużo o innych kulturach rozmawiając po angielsku z ludźmi z różnych krajów na blogu

1 2 3 4 5

58. Chciałbym dodać studentów z innych krajów, którzy uczą się angielskiego do bloga

1 2 3 4 5

59. Chciałbym odwiedzić Hiszpanię

1 2 3 4 5

60. Chciałbym odwiedzić Majorkę

1 2 3 4 5

61. Kiedy używam angielskiego czuję, że należę do międzynarodowej grupy użytkowników angielskiego.

1 2 3 4 5

62. Chciałbym mówić wieloma językami i należeć do wielu kultur

1 2 3 4 5

63. Uważam się za osobę wielojęzyczną (mówiącą wieloma językami)

1 2 3 4 5

64. Uważam się za osobę wielokulturową

1 2 3 4 5

65. Jeżeli będę dobrze mówić po angielsku będę mógł pracować/mieszkać w innym kraju

1 2 3 4 5

66. Jeżeli będę mówić dobrze po angielsku będę mógł studiować i mieć dobrą pracę

1 2 3 4 5

67. Jeżeli będę dobrze mówić po angielsku będę mógł podróżować po świecie

1 2 3 4 5

68. Uczenie się innych języków europejskich (oprócz angielskiego) jest ważne dla mojej przyszłości

1 2 3 4 5

69. Angielski jest ważny dla mojej przyszłości

1 2 3 4 5

70. Chciałbym nauczyć się portugalskiego

1 2 3 4 5

71. Chciałbym nauczyć się chińskiego

1 2 3 4 5

72. Chciałbym nauczyć się szwedzkiego

1 2 3 4 5

73. Chciałbym nauczyć się rosyjskiego

1 2 3 4 5

Odpowiedz na następujące pytania:

Answer the following questions

1. Czy chciałbyś się uczyć innych języków?

 Tak – jakiego/jakich _____ NIE

2. Jakiego języka używasz w Internecie?

3. Czy uważasz, że Internet to dobry sposób ćwiczenia języków obcych?

 very good (bardzo dobry) quite good (raczej dobry) OK

 not very good (nie za dobry) bad (zły)

4. Czy uważasz, że uczenie się przedmiotów takich jak geografia, historia, fizyka, chemia itd. w obcym języku byłoby interesującym sposobem uczenia się języka?

 very interesting (bardzo interesującym) interesting (interesującym) sometimes interesting (czasami interesującym) not very interesting (niezbyt interesującym)

 boring (nudnym)

5. Czy jest interesujące uczyć się o kulturze kraju, którego języka się uczysz?

 very interesting (bardzo interesujące) interesting (interesujące) sometimes interesting (czasami interesujące) not very interesting (niezbyt interesujące) boring (nudne)

6. Czy uważasz, że to ważne uczyć się o kulturze związanej z językiem, którego się uczysz?

 very important (bardzo ważne) important (ważne) sometimes important (czasami ważne) not very important (niezbyt ważne) not important (nieważne)

Appendices

APPENDIX 4**4.1 Semantic Differential Test Booklet****Instructions (practice)**

NAME: _____

SCHOOL/CLASS: _____

PRACTICE**(i) Watching TV is**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

(ii) Surfing the Internet is

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

(iii) James Bond/Luisma/ _____ is

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious		--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud		--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude		--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive		--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind		--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing

Semantic Differential Test – Part 1

1. Studying languages in general is								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful
2. Studying French or German is/was/would be								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful
3. Studying English is								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful
4. Studying languages like Italian, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish or Dutch, etc. would be								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful
5. Studying languages like Bulgarian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian or Czech, etc. would be								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful
6. Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

7. Studying my own culture is

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

8. Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

9. Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

10. Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France, Germany, Italy, Portugal or Denmark, etc. is/would be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

11. Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

12. Learning about 'World' cultures is/would be

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Boring	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Interesting
Not useful	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Useful

Appendices

Semantic Differential Test – Part 2

1. I am								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
2. My friends are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
3. The Majorcans are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing

4. The Spanish are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
5. The British are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
6. The Germans are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
7. The French are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing

Appendices

8. The Polish are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
9. The North Americans are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing
10. The South Americans are								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Unfriendly
Traditional	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not traditional
Not religious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Religious
Patriotic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not patriotic
Loud	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Quiet
Rude	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Polite
Honest	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Dishonest
Competitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Not competitive
Kind	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Cruel
Hard-working	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Lazy
Well-educated	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Poorly-educated
Shy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	Outgoing

4.2 Adjective Classification Test

NAME:

Would you say that the following words describe positive or negative qualities? Place them in the positive or negative column:

SAD RICH DISHONEST FRIENDLY SHY INTELLIGENT OUTGOING
 HAPPY HONEST COMPETITIVE QUIET TRADITIONAL WARM
 POLITE HARDWORKING LAZY COLD RELIGIOUS RUDE KIND
 NOT RELIGIOUS UNFRIENDLY PATRIOTIC CRUEL LOUD
 NOT COMPETITIVE BORING WELL-EDUCATED

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

Appendices

4.2.1 Results of the adjective classification test

ADJECTIVE	SPAIN						POLAND					
	POSITIVE		MIDDLE		NEGATIVE		POSITIVE		MIDDLE		NEGATIVE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Friendly	40	100	0	0%	0	0%	17	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Unfriendly	1	2.4	0	0	40	97.6	0	0	0	0	17	100
Traditional	9	22.5	25	62.5	6	15	14	82.4	1	5.8	2	11.8
Religious	1	2.6	33	84.6	5	12.8	13	76.4	2	11.8	2	11.8
Not religious	5	12.5	33	82.5	2	5	4	23.4	2	11.8	10	58.8
Patriotic	12	30	23	57.5	5	12.5	16	94	1	6	0	0
Loud	2	5.1	7	17.9	30	77	8	47	1	6	8	47
Quiet	6	15.4	20	51.3	13	33.3	7	41	0	0	10	59
Polite	35	89.8	4	1.2	0	0	16	94	0	0	1	6
Rude	0	0	1	2.5	39	97.5	1	6	0	0	16	94
Honest	37	94.8	1	2.6	1	2.6	16	100	0	0	0	0
Dishonest	0	0	0	0	39	100	0	0	0	0	17	100
Competitive	10	25	19	47.5	11	27.5	13	72.2	0	0	5	27.8
Not competitive	10	25.6	18	46.2	11	28.2	3	17.6	1	14.2	13	76.4
Kind	39	100	0	0	0	0	17	100	0	0	0	0
Cruel	0	0	0	0	40	100	1	6	0	0	16	94
Hardworking	38	95	2	5	0	0	14	77.7	0	0	4	22.3
Lazy	1	2.5	4	10	35	87.5	2	11.8	0	0	15	88.2
Well educated	37	94.8	1	2.6	1	2.6	16	94	0	0	1	6
Shy	4	10	21	52.5	15	37.5	6	33.3	1	5.6	11	61.1
Outgoing	26	68.5	8	21	4	10.5	15	88.2	0	0	2	11.8
Sad	0	0	1	2.5	39	97.5	0	0	0	0	17	100
Happy	40	100	0	0	0	0	17	100	0	0	0	0
Warm	34	87.2	5	12.8	0	0	15	93.8	0	0	1	6.2
Cold	3	7.5	7	17.5	30	75	1	6	0	0	16	94
Rich	20	50	20	50	0	0	15	8.3	0	0	3	16.7
Intelligent	40	100	0	0	0	0	17	100	0	0	0	0

4.3 Cultural Proximity Test

Name:	Class:
<p>1. How do you feel about the people from the following countries? Give (1) to the nation you more closely associate yourself with culturally speaking and (10) to the culture you feel is furthest away/most different from you.</p>	
Spain	—
North America	—
Germany	—
Poland	—
South America	—
France	—
Great Britain	—
Portugal	—
Russia	—
Japan	—
<p>2. Below you will find a list of nationalities. Circle the one you prefer.</p>	
POLISH/BRITISH	PORTUGUESE/FRENCH
BRITISH/NORTH AMERICAN	NORTH AMERICAN/GERMAN
SPANISH/FRENCH	FRENCH/GERMAN
BRITISH/GERMAN	POLISH/NORTH AMERICAN
GERMAN/SPANISH	BRITISH/AUSTRALIAN
NORTH AMERICAN/FRENCH	BRITISH/SPANISH
POLISH/SPANISH	SPANISH/NORTH AMERICAN
FRENCH/GERMAN	GERMAN/POLISH
BRITISH/FRENCH	FRENCH/POLISH

Appendices

4.3.1 Results - Cultural Preference Test

Part 1

		Spain	Portugal	France	Germany	UK	Poland	Russia	South Am	North Am	Japan
N	Valid	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
	Lost values	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1,03	5,14	4,41	5,28	3,41	7,72	8,17	6,03	4,66	9,03
Standard deviation		,186	1,885	1,722	2,218	1,524	1,162	1,853	2,096	1,857	2,353

Part 2

OPTIONS*	COUNTRY A	N° OF STUDENTS	%	COUNTRY B	N° OF STUDENTS	%	N° OF STUDENTS N/A
POL/BR	Poland	0	0%	UK	28	100%	0
PORT/FR	Portugal	9	32.1%	France	19	67.9%	0
BR/NAM	UK	13	46.4%	North America	14	50%	1 (3.6%)
NAM/GER	North America	16	57.1%	Germany	12	42.9%	0
SP/FR	Spain	25	89.3%	France	2	7.1%	1 (3.6%)
FR/GER	France	12	42.9%	Germany	16	57.1%	0
BR/GER	UK	22	78.6%	Germany	6	21.4%	0
POL/NAM	Poland	2	7.1%	North America	26	92.9%	0
SP/GER	Spain	25	89.3%	Germany	3	10.7%	0
BR/AUST	UK	21	75%	Australia	7	25%	0
NAM/FR	North America	17	60.7%	France	11	39.3%	0
SP/BR	Spain	23	82.1%	UK	4	14.3%	1 (3.6%)
SP/POL	Spain	27	96.4%	Poland	1	3.6%	0
SP/NAM	Spain	24	85.7%	North America	4	14.3%	0
FR/GER	France	13	46.4%	Germany	15	53.6%	0
POL/GER	Poland	6	21.4%	Germany	21	75%	1 (3.6%)
BR/FR	UK	22	78.6%	France	6	21.4%	0
FR/POL	France	24	85.7%	Poland	4	14.3%	0

* **Key:** POL-Polish; BR-British; PORT-Portuguese; NAM- North American; GER-German; SP-Spanish; FR-French; AUST – Australia

APPENDIX 5: Student background information**5.1 Students with one or both parents from a European country other than Spain**

CODE	MOTHER TONGUE	NATIONALITY	FATHER'S NATIONALITY	MOTHER'S NATIONALITY	FL IN SCHOOL	FL OUT OF SCHOOL
BE1AILA	English	Spanish	Spanish/	English	German	No
BE1ALBE	German	W.European	German	German	French	No
BE1ALHO	Dutch	W.European	Dutch	Dutch	German	N/A
BE1EDCA	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Dutch	No	No
BE1LUOR	German	Spanish	Spanish	German	French	No
BE2ASCA	Spanish & English	Spanish	Spanish	English	No	No
BE2DAGA	Spanish	Spanish & W. European	Spanish/	Danish	German	No
BE2GITI	German	W. European	German	German	No	English
BE2JOKI	Mallorcan	Spanish	English	Spanish	No	English
BE2KAHO	English	W. European	English	Scottish	No	No
BE2KISH	English	W. European	English	English	No	English
BE2KILO	Flemish	W. European	Belgian	Belgian	German	No
BE2LUMA	Dutch	Spanish	Spanish	Dutch	N/A	No
BE2MASA	Spanish	W. European	Italian	Spanish	No	No
BE2SOJI	English	Spanish	Spanish	English	No	No
BE2VIAP	Swedish	W. European	Swedish	Swedish	German	Swedish

Appendices

APPENDIX 6: Breakdown of participants and research instruments

6.1 Bendinat 1 (focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA						
		QT1	QT2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG*		PRE-BLOG OPINION	POST-BLOG OPINION	OPINION ON DIDACTIC UNITS/PROJECTS	NOTE BOOK	ESSAY AFRICA
						P	C					
BE1ADCO	M	√	√	√	√	0	0	X	X	X	X	X
BE1AILA	F	√	√	√	√	5	9	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	√
BE1AIBA	F	√	√	√	√	5	0	X	√ – NEG	X	X	√
BE1ALNA	M	√	√	√	√	2	0	X	√ – NEG	√ – POS	X	X
BE1ALBE	M	√	√	√	√	4	1	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	X
BE1ALHO	M	√	√	√	X	2	3	X	√ – NEG	√ – NEG	X	√
BE1BIBE	M	√	√	√	√	3	0	X	√ – POS	X	√	√
BE1CABO	F	√	√	√	√	1	0	X	X	√ – NEG	X	X
BE1CLMO	F	√	√	√	X	5	3	X	X	√ – POS	√	√
BE1EDCA	M	√	√	√	√	6	18	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	√
BE1FEAL	M	√	√	√	√	2	1	X	X	X	X	√
BE1JOMU	M	√	√	X	X	2	0	X	X	X	X	X
BE1JUSA	M	√	√	√	√	8	23	√ – POS	√ – POS	X	√	√
BE1KION	M	√	√	√	√	2	3	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	X	√
BE1LUOR	M	√	√	√	√	3	2	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	X	X
BE1LUFA	F	√	√	√	√	0	0	X	√ – NEG	√ – POS	X	√
BE1MASA	M	√	√	√	√	3	2	X	X	X	√	√S
BE1MARI	F	√	√	√	√	5	0	√ – POS	X	X	√	√
BE1MATH	F	√	√	√	√	2	0	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	√
BE1NEJA	M	√	√	√	√	1	0	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	√
BE1PAAR	F	√	X	√	√	6	1	X	√ – POS/NEG	√ – POS	X	√
BE1SAGO	F	√	√	√	√	2	2	X	√ – POS	√ – POS	√	√
BE1VAHU	F	√	√	√	√	5	5	√ – POS	√ – POS/NEG	√ – POS	√	√

*Number of posts and comments for all tables in Appendix 6 will not coincide with the overall calculations in Tables 30 or 31 since in this table group posts have been counted as a post for each person in the group.

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, pos – positive opinion / neg – negative opinion, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire, SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

6.2 Bendinat 2 (focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA						
		QT1	QT2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG		PRE-BLOG OPINION	POST-BLOG OPINION	OPINION ON DIDACTIC UNITS/PROJECTS	NOTE BOOK	ESSAY AFRICA
						P	C					
BE2ANMO	F	√	√	√	√	5	2	√-POS	√-POS/NEG	√-POS/NEG	√	X
BE2ASCA	F	√	X	√	X	4	1	X	X	X	√	√
BE2CABA	F	√	X	√	X	6	4	√-POS	√-POS	√-POS	X	√
BE2DAGA	F	√	√	√	√	3	1	X	√-POS	X	√	√
BE2EDRO	M	√	√	√	√	3	3	X	X	√-POS	X	√
BE2ESME	F	√	√	√	√	3	2	X	X	X	X	X
BE2GITI	F	√	√	√	√	6	19	√-POS	√-POS/NEG	√-POS	√	√
BE2JOKI	F	√	√	√	√	4	0	√-POS	√-POS	√-POS/NEG	√	X
BE2KAHO	F	√	√	√	√	5	2	X	√-NEG	√-POS	√	X
BE2KISH	M	√	√	√	√	4	1	X	√-POS	√-POS	X	X
BE2KILO	F	√	√	√	√	2	1	X	√-POS	√-POS	X	X
BE2LAMU	F	√	√	√	√	8	40	√-POS	√-POS	X	√	√
BE2LEBA	F	√	√	√	√	4	2	√-POS	√-POS	√-POS	√	√
BE2LUMA	F	√	√	√	√	3	0	X	√-POS/NEG	√-POS	√	√
BE2MASA	F	√	√	√	√	3	7	X	√-POS	√-POS	X	√
BE2RUOL	F	√	√	√	√	5	2	X	X	X	X	√
BE2SAIZ	F	√	√	√	√	3	8	√-NEG	√-NEG	X	√	X
BE2SOJI	F	√	√	√	√	3	2	X	√-NEG	√-POS	X	X
BE2VIAP	M	√	√	√	X	2	6	X	√-NEG	X	√	X

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, pos – positive opinion / neg – negative opinion, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire , SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

6.3 TAK 1 (semi-focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA	
		QT1	QT2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG	
						P	C
TA1MIAT	F	√	√	√	√	4	1
TA1PACZ	F	√	X	√	X	3	6
TA1JADU	M	√	√	√	√	2	0
TA1ALFI	F	√	√	√	√	3	8
TA1ZOFI	F	√	√	√	√	2	0
TA1DEGR	M	√	√	√	√	3	3
TA1KRKA	M	√	√	√	√	1	3
TA1JAMI	M	√	X	√	X	0	0
TA1WOPO	M	√	√	√	√	0	0
TA1MISA	M	√	√	√	√	2	2
TA1LUTR	M	√	√	√	√	1	1
TA1KAWI	F	√	√	√	√	3	1
TA1KAWI	F	√	√	√	√	2	0

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire , SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

6.4 TAK 2 (semi-focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA	
		QT1	QT2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG	
						P	C
TA2 MAIZ	M	√	√	√	√	3	0
TA2JAKO	M	√	√	√	√	2	4
TA2MALA	F	√	√	√	√	7	1
TA2JANO	M	√	√	√	√	0	0
TA2MAPI	F	√	√	√	√	3	3
TA2MORO	F	√	√	√	√	0	0
TA2PASI	F	√	√	√	√	4	2

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, pos – positive opinion / neg – negative opinion, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire, SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

6.5 VPLO 1 (semi-focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA	
		Q T1	Q T2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG	
						P	C
VP1ALBU	F	√	√	√	√	7	8
VP1ALPA	F	√	√	√	√	4	0
VP1ANOW	F	√	√	√	√	1	2
VP1IWCH	F	√	√	√	√	9	0
VP1KARA	M	√	√	√	√	4	2
VP1KAKO	F	√	√	√	√	2	8
VP1KIPO	F	√	√	√	√	1	0
VP1MAMA	M	√	√	√	√	5	3
VP1MAKA	F	√	√	√	√	11	0
VP1MIGR	F	√	√	√	√	3	4
VP1MODU	F	√	√	√	X	5	0
VP1RECM	F	√	X	√	X	6	3
VP1PACA	F	√	√	√	√	10	1
VP1ZOPI	F	X	√	X	√	3	0
VP1ZANE	F	X	√	X	√	3	0
VP1MALI	F	√	√	√	√	1	0

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire, SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

6.6 VPLO2 (semi-focus group)

SPSS CODE	SEX	QUANTITATIVE DATA				QUALITATIVE DATA	
		Q T1	Q T2	SDT T1	SDT T2	BLOG	
						P	C
VP1AGRO	F	√	√	√	√	4	0
VP2AGPE	F	√	X	√	X	4	0
VP2ANKO	F	√	√	√	√	3	4
VP2ANGI	F	√	√	√	√	4	0
VP2ANGR	F	√	√	√	√	4	3
VP2DAKL	F	√	√	√	√	2	5
VP2EDMA	F	√	X	√	X	4	0
VP2MAGI	M	√	√	√	√	4	1
VP2JUWA	F	√	√	√	√	3	0
VP2KRPA	F	√	√	√	√	3	1
VP2LUWI	M	√	√	√	√	4	10
VP2MAPA	M	√	√	√	√	2	2
VP2DAMI	F	√	√	√	√	3	1
VP2NIBR	F	√	√	√	√	2	3
VP2ALTA	F	√	X	√	X	6	2
VP2JUTA	F	√	√	√	√	3	0
VP2MART	F	√	√	√	√	6	1

Key: M – male / F – female, √ – yes / X – no, P – posts / C – comments, QT1 – Background Information Questionnaire / QT2 Participants Attitudes towards a Transcultural Approach to EIL Questionnaire , SDT T1 – semantic differential booklet Oct 2010 / SDT T2 – semantic differential booklet Nov 2011.

APPENDIX 7: Students' Attitudes towards a transcultural approach to EIL**Questionnaire (results)****7.1 Frequency of blog use**

Descriptive Analysis								
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Higher Bound		
Bendinat	12	2.1892	.47971	.13848	1.8844	2.4940	1.50	3.32
TAK	12	2.2475	.72284	.20867	1.7882	2.7068	1.06	3.17
VPLO	12	2.7675	.80358	.23197	2.2569	3.2781	1.32	3.93
Total	36	2.4014	.71344	.11891	2.1600	2.6428	1.06	3.93

Test of homogeneity of variances			
Levene Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
2.952	2	33	.066

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	gl	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	2.433	2	1.217	2.610	.089
Within groups	15.382	33	.466		
Total	17.815	35			

7.2 Students' perceptions of language competence and use of EIL on the blog

Descriptive Analysis								
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Higher Bound		
Bendinat	17	3.4371	.41039	.09953	3.2261	3.6481	2.71	4.03
TAK	17	3.3824	.91432	.22176	2.9123	3.8525	1.89	4.72
VPLO	17	2.5959	.43764	.10614	2.3709	2.8209	1.86	3.36
Total	51	3.1384	.73029	.10226	2.9330	3.3438	1.86	4.72

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Levene Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
9.861	2	48	.000

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	gl	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	7.532	2	3.766	9.447	.000
Within groups	19.135	48	.399		
Total	26.666	50			

Appendices

Multiple Comparison							
Dependent variable: Student perception of language competence and use of EIL							
	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower bound	Higher bound
Games Howell	Bendinat	TAK	.05471	.24307	.972	-.5555	.6649
		VPLO	.84118*	.14551	.000	.4835	1.1988
	TAK	Bendinat	-.05471	.24307	.972	-.6649	.5555
		VPLO	.78647*	.24585	.011	.1707	1.4022
	VPLO	Bendinat	-.84118*	.14551	.000	-1.1988	-.4835
		TAK	-.78647*	.24585	.011	-1.4022	-.1707

*. The difference between measures is significant at 0.05.

7.3 Blog use – technical issues

Descriptive Analysis								
	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower bound	Higher bound		
Bendinat	10	3.3160	.63246	.20000	2.8636	3.7684	2.37	3.97
TAK	10	3.1230	.75723	.23946	2.5813	3.6647	1.89	3.83
VPLO	10	2.5600	.72888	.23049	2.0386	3.0814	1.82	4.21
Total	30	2.9997	.75722	.13825	2.7169	3.2824	1.82	4.21

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Levene statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
.151	2	27	.861

ANOVA					
	Sum of squares	gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	3.086	2	1.543	3.076	.063
Within groups	13.542	27	.502		
Total	16.628	29			

Multiple comparisons							
Dependent variable: Blog use - technical issues							
	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower bound	Higher bound
Tukey	Bendinat	TAK	.19300	.31672	.816	-.5923	.9783
		VPLO	.75600	.31672	.061	-.0293	1.5413
	TAK	Bendinat	-.19300	.31672	.816	-.9783	.5923
		VPLO	.56300	.31672	.196	-.2223	1.3483
	VPLO	Bendinat	-.75600	.31672	.061	-1.5413	.0293
		TAK	-.56300	.31672	.196	-1.3483	.2223

*. The difference between measures is significant at 0.05.

7.4 Transnational boundaries

Descriptive Analysis								
	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower bound	Higher bound		
Bendinat	18	3.2817	.47605	.11221	3.0449	3.5184	2.61	4.37
TAK	18	3.0800	.77264	.18211	2.6958	3.4642	1.78	4.33
VPLO	18	2.4744	.83219	.19615	2.0606	2.8883	1.36	4.48
Total	54	2.9454	.77858	.10595	2.7329	3.1579	1.36	4.48

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Levene Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
2.697	2	51	.077

ANOVA					
	Sum of squares	Gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	6.354	2	3.177	6.286	.004
Within groups	25.774	51	.505		
Total	32.128	53			

Multiple Comparisons							
Dependent Variable: Transnational boundaries							
	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lowet bound	Upper bound
Tukey	Bendinat	TAK	.20167	.23697	.673	-.3704	.7737
		VPLO	.80722*	.23697	.004	.2352	1.3793
	TAK	Bendinat	-.20167	.23697	.673	-.7737	.3704
		VPLO	.60556*	.23697	.036	.0335	1.1776
	VPLO	Bendinat	-.80722*	.23697	.004	-1.3793	-.2352
		TAK	-.60556*	.23697	.036	-1.1776	-.0335

* The difference between measures is significant at 0.05

7.5 Translingual Aspects

Descriptive analysis								
	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower bound	Higher bound		
Bendinat	12	2.7358	.89404	.25809	2.1678	3.3039	1.58	3.87
TAK	12	2.3000	.72777	.21009	1.8376	2.7624	1.44	3.61
VPLO	12	2.4800	.91665	.26462	1.8976	3.0624	1.43	3.79
Total	36	2.5053	.84537	.14089	2.2192	2.7913	1.43	3.87

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Levene Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
1.358	2	33	.271

ANOVA					
	Sum of squares	gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1.151	2	.576	.796	.460
Within groups	23.861	33	.723		
Total	25.012	35			

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APPENDIX 8: Semantic differential test booklet (Results)

8.1 SDT test Part 1

8.1.1 Simple paired t-test Bendinat (33 returns)

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A Studying languages in general is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	5.06	1.60	-.636	32	.529
	2	5.27	1.86			
1B Studying languages in general is <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	6.55	.71	.213	32	.833
	2	6.48	1.40			
2A Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>boring - interesting</i>	1	3.88	2.07	-2.541	32	.016
	2	4.67	1.86			
2B Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1	5.30	2.04	-1.498	32	.144
	2	5.88	1.56			
3A Studying English is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	4.97	1.69	.325	32	.747
	2	4.88	1.78			
3B Studying English is <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	6.70	.92	.423	32	.675
	2	6.61	1.20			
4A Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	4.79	1.98	-.770	32	.447
	2	5.06	1.99			
4B Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	4.76	1.94	-1.990	32	.055
	2	5.55	1.54			
5A Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	3.45	2.11	-2.302	32	.028
	2	4.36	1.99			
5B Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	3.94	1.95	-2.522	32	.017
	2	4.94	1.73			
6A Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	4.33	1.85	-1.372	32	.180
	2	4.91	1.88			
6B Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1	4.67	1.83	-.980	32	.335
	2	5.09	1.96			

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
7A Studying my own culture is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	4.39	2.18	-1.112	32	.275
	2	4.94	2.03			
7B Studying my own culture is <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	5.25	1.32	.336	31	.739
	2	5.13	1.77			
8A Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	5.15	1.56	1.952	32	.060
	2	4.42	1.80			
8B Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	4.97	1.77	.453	31	.654
	2	4.81	1.47			
9A Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	5.18	1.63	1.504	32	.142
	2	4.76	1.58			
9B Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	4.78	1.66	.205	32	.839
	2	4.72	1.51			
10A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	5.15	1.50	2.196	32	.035
	2	4.48	1.77			
10B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	4.88	1.68	.267	32	.792
	2	4.78	1.68			
11A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	4.45	1.99	1.060	32	.297
	2	4.00	1.87			
11B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1	4.13	1.74	-1.283	32	.209
	2	4.66	1.77			
12A Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1	5.36	1.48	1.220	32	.231
	2	4.85	1.92			
12B Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1	5.53	1.90	1.955	32	.060
	2	4.78	1.77			

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8.1.2 Simple paired t-test TAK (18 returns)

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A Studying languages in general is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.00 5.39	1.88 1.29	-.876	17	.393
1B Studying languages in general is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	6.56 6.67	.98 .69	-.697	17	.495
2A Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>boring - interesting</i>	1 2	3.78 3.67	2.18 2.11	.308	17	.762
2B Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.17 5.28	2.12 1.81	-.416	17	.682
3A Studying English is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.94 5.89	1.21 1.83	.164	17	.871
3B Studying English is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	6.83 6.67	.71 .77	.644	17	.528
4A Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.72 5.11	2.05 1.84	-.862	17	.401
4B Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.00 4.67	1.85 2.06	.601	17	.555
5A Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.39 4.39	1.88 1.75	.000	17	1.000
5B Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.33 3.89	1.88 1.78	.800	17	.435
6A Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.94 4.89	1.89 1.41	.164	17	.871
6B Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.78 5.06	2.32 1.98	-.664	17	.516

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
7A Studying my own culture is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.56 4.89	1.95 1.78	-1.144	17	.269
7B Studying my own culture is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.06 5.39	1.16 1.15	-1.065	17	.302
8A Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.00 5.11	1.53 1.88	-.399	17	.695
8B Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.94 5.00	1.35 1.72	-.119	17	.907
9A Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.83 5.00	1.54 1.61	-.496	17	.626
9B Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.06 5.06	1.80 1.63	-1.715	17	.104
10A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.44 4.67	1.54 1.68	-.747	17	.466
10B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.22 4.78	1.63 1.77	-1.426	17	.172
11A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.22 4.56	1.63 2.12	-.793	17	.438
11B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.39 4.44	1.91 2.15	-.101	17	.921
12A Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.83 4.61	1.65 1.58	.579	17	.570
12B Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.56 5.06	1.95 1.70	-1.106	17	.284

8.1.3 Simple paired t-test VPLO (26 returns)

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
1A Studying languages in general is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.77 5.69	.86 .88	.402	25	.691
1B Studying languages in general is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	6.54 6.46	.91 .95	.420	25	.678
2A Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>boring - interesting</i>	1 2	4.48 3.92	1.80 1.90	1.046	25	.305
2B Studying French or German is/was/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.19 4.92	1.72 1.96	.651	25	.521
3A Studying English is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	6.31 5.96	.79 .82	1.735	25	.095
3B Studying English is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	6.69 6.81	.84 .40	-.721	25	.478
4A Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.15 5.04	1.43 1.18	.422	25	.677
4B Studying languages like Italian. Portuguese. Danish. Swedish or Dutch. etc. would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.96 4.96	1.37 1.25	.000	25	1.00
5A Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	4.73 4.42	1.69 1.65	1.248	25	.224
5B Studying languages like Bulgarian. Russian. Hungarian or Czech etc. would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.35 4.54	1.41 1.66	-.795	25	.434
6A Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.04 5.23	1.59 1.58	.624	25	.632
6B Studying other ‘world’ languages is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	4.85 5.08	1.71 1.62	-.507	25	.617

STATEMENT	TIME	MEAN	SD	t	df	Sig.
7A Studying my own culture is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.88 5.62	.91 1.24	1.158	25	.258
7B Studying my own culture is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.54 5.38	1.03 1.02	.642	25	.527
8A Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.73 5.62	.96 1.24	.473	25	.640
8B Learning about the cultural aspects of the UK and the USA is <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.62 5.42	.94 1.14	.775	25	.446
9A Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.58 5.31	.86 1.12	1.193	25	.244
9B Learning about the cultural aspects of other English-speaking countries is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.42 5.0	.99 1.13	1.698	25	.102
10A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.50 4.96	1.27 1.34	1.443	25	.161
10B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like France. Germany. Italy. Portugal or Denmark. etc. is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1 2	4.81 4.77	1.23 1.21	.118	25	.907
11A Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.42 4.77	1.21 1.68	1.914	25	.067
11B Learning about the cultural aspects of countries like Russia. Bulgaria. Poland. Hungary or the Czech Republic is/would be <i>not useful – useful</i>	1 2	4.58 4.58	1.30 1.45	.000	25	1.00
12A Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>boring – interesting</i>	1 2	5.96 5.50	.82 1.39	1.566	25	.130
12B Learning about ‘World’ cultures is/would be <i>not useful - useful</i>	1 2	5.23 4.81	.99 1.47	1.110	25	.216

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8.2 One-way ANOVA (Intra and inter group variance for semantic differential test part 1)

Levine's Test of Equal Variance (mean scores for SDT Part 1 – all groups)

STATEMENTS	TIME	Significance
1A – 6A (Language is <i>boring-interesting</i>)	1	.015
1A – 6A	2	.031
1B – 6B (Language is <i>not useful-useful</i>)	1	.587
1B – 6B	2	.106
7A – 12A (Culture is <i>boring-interesting</i>)	1	.007
7A – 12A	2	.344
7B – 12B (culture is <i>not useful – useful</i>)	1	.252
7B – 12B	2	.169

		ANOVA				
		Sum of squares	gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
Mean scores for language learning is <i>boring-interesting</i> A1-6T1	Between groups	9.586	2	4.793	2.969	.057
	Within groups	121.055	75	1.614		
	Total	130.640	77			
Mean scores for language learning is <i>boring-interesting</i> A1-6T2	Between groups	.560	2	.280	.157	.855
	Within groups	133.547	75	1.781		
	Total	134.107	77			
Mean scores for language learning is <i>not useful-useful</i> B1-6T1	Between groups	.604	2	.302	.252	.778
	Within groups	89.709	75	1.196		
	Total	90.312	77			
Mean score for language learning is <i>not useful-useful</i> B1-6T2	Between groups	1.680	2	.840	.786	.459
	Within groups	80.124	75	1.068		
	Total	81.804	77			
Mean score for culture is <i>boring-interesting</i> A7-12 T1	Between groups	13.632	2	6.816	5.705	.005
	Within groups	89.601	75	1.195		
	Total	103.234	77			
Mean score for culture is <i>boring-interesting</i> A7-12 T2	Between groups	7.575	2	3.788	2.002	.142
	Within groups	141.897	75	1.892		
	Total	149.472	77			
Mean score for culture is <i>not useful-useful</i> B7-12 T1	Between groups	3.550	2	1.775	1.303	.278
	Within groups	100.828	74	1.363		
	Total	104.378	76			
Mean score for culture is <i>not useful-useful</i> B7-12 T2	Between groups	.664	2	.332	.227	.798
	Within groups	109.865	75	1.465		
	Total	110.529	77			

Summary of ANOVA for those statements which met the test of equal variances

STATEMENTS	TIME	Significance
1A – 6A (Language is <i>boring-interesting</i>)	1	.N/A
1A – 6A	2	N/A
1B – 6B (Language is <i>not useful-useful</i>)	1	F(2.75) = .252. p = .778
1B – 6B	2	F(2.75) = .786. p = .459
7A – 12A (Culture is <i>boring interesting</i>)	1	N/A
7A – 12A	2	F(2.75) = 2.002. p = .142
7B – 12B (culture is <i>not useful – useful</i>)	1	F(2.75) = 1.303. p = .278
7B – 12B	2	F(2.75) = .227. p = .798

8.3 Semantic Differential Test Part 2

8.3.1 Bendinat: mean scores and SD (22 returns)

	T	FRIENDLY - UNFRIENDLY		POLITE-RUDE		HONEST-DISHONEST		KIND-CRUEL		HARDWORKING -LAZY		WELL-EDUCATED- POORLY EDUCATED		OVERALL MEAN	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am	T1	1.67	.97	2.86	1.61	2.27	1.32	2.27	1.52	3.41	1.92	1.41	.67	2.32	.77
	T2	2	1.38	2.82	1.30	1.91	1.02	1.95	1.17	2.82	1.71	1.95	.90	2.25	.79
My friends are	T1	1.50	1.10	3.18	1.18	2.36	1.40	2.14	1.40	3.59	1.84	2.14	1.28	2.50	.93
	T2	1.95	1.50	3.27	1.4	2.45	1.10	2.27	1.20	3.19	1.37	2.50	1.10	2.61	.74
The Spanish are	T1	2.32	1.52	3.95	1.21	3.14	1.32	2.95	1.30	4	1.35	3.41	1.14	3.28	.70
	T2	2.45	1.30	3.23	1.02	3.09	1.31	3.23	1.11	4.23	1.60	3.82	1.26	3.34	.97
The Germans are	T1	3	1.60	4.05	1.84	3.18	1.26	3.32	1.43	3.45	1.97	3	1.51	3.34	1.22
	T2	3.59	1.62	3.41	1.71	3.05	1.65	3.77	1.67	3.59	1.89	3.41	1.53	3.47	1.35
The French are	T1	3.41	1.76	3.23	1.72	3.32	1.32	2.91	1.51	3.05	1.33	2.77	1.77	3.16	1.08
	T2	3.73	1.45	3.50	1.26	3.18	1.33	3.41	1.30	3.41	1.44	3.18	1.33	3.44	1.11
The British are	T1	2.86	1.50	3	1.70	3.09	1.27	2.77	1.19	3	1.45	2.64	1.29	2.93	.87
	T2	2.77	1.38	2.55	1.37	2.55	1.23	3.27	1.24	2.95	1.25	2.86	1.64	2.82	1.02
The North Americans are	T1	2.64	1.50	4.24	1.52	2.86	1.50	3.18	1.40	3.55	1.77	3.45	1.41	3.32	.87
	T2	2.91	1.38	3.71	1.23	3.18	1.40	3.52	1.72	3	1.23	3.67	1.16	3.36	1.14
The Polish are	T1	3.14	1.58	3.77	.97	3.18	1.44	3.18	1.44	2.91	1.27	3.41	1.59	3.27	1.11
	T2	3.32	1.29	3.50	1.23	3.64	1.43	3.81	1.44	3.77	1.48	3.43	1.63	3.57	1.16

Bendinat: cronbach alpha for overall mean scores

Estadísticos de fiabilidad		
Cronbachs Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items	Nº of elements
.898	.895	16

Item total statistics					
	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item – total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Alpha if item deleted
SD T1 I am - MEAN	46.632	97.597	.262	.835	.900
SD T2 I am - MEAN	46.703	99.465	.134	.914	.904
SD T1 My friends - MEAN	46.457	93.930	.412	.898	.897
SD T2 My friends - MEAN	46.344	92.103	.671	.806	.890
SD T1 The Spanish - MEAN	45.666	94.636	.520	.692	.894
SD T2 The Spanish - MEAN	45.612	90.994	.556	.695	.892
SD T1 The British - MEAN	46.016	90.323	.675	.926	.889
SD T2 The British - MEAN	46.130	91.628	.488	.932	.895
SD T1 The Germans - MEAN	45.612	85.851	.656	.877	.888
SD T2 The Germans - MEAN	45.480	82.320	.738	.968	.885
SD T1 The French - MEAN	45.789	89.860	.547	.837	.892
SD T2 The French - MEAN	45.512	86.445	.704	.906	.886
SD T1 The Polish - MEAN	45.675	85.111	.774	.927	.883
SD T2 The Polish - MEAN	45.375	89.103	.534	.772	.893
SD T1 North Am - MEAN	45.625	90.548	.653	.910	.889
SD T2 North Am - MEAN	45.594	86.781	.661	.928	.888

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8.3.2 TAK: mean scores and SD (18 returns)

		FRIENDLY - UNFRIENDLY		POLITE-RUDE		HONEST-DISHONEST		KIND-CRUEL		HARDWORKING-LAZY		WELL-EDUCATED-POORLY EDUCATED		OVERALL MEAN	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	ST	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am	T1	2.22	1.17	2.72	1.60	2.33	.84	2.28	.83	3.22	1.56	2.78	1.17	2.61	.72
	T2	2.39	1.30	3.50	1.58	2.56	1.04	2.22	1.00	3.67	2.09	2.56	1.25	2.82	.68
My friends are	T1	1.78	.88	3.22	1.22	2.17	1.04	2.56	1.15	3.44	1.89	2.83	1.34	2.67	.92
	T2	2.11	1.37	4	1.82	2.33	1.03	2.39	1.29	3.61	1.58	2.56	1.20	2.83	.74
The Spanish are	T1	2.28	1.49	3.50	1.20	2.94	1.35	2.56	1.15	3.72	1.45	3.50	1.15	3.12	.82
	T2	2.28	.96	3.28	1.41	3.06	1.25	3.17	1.25	3.44	1.50	3.33	1.09	3.13	.67
The Germans are	T1	4	1.41	5	1.19	3.78	1.44	3.56	1.38	2.78	1.22	3.11	1.23	2.69	.90
	T2	4.44	1.95	4	1.78	3.78	1.83	4.28	1.78	3.50	2.07	3.94	1.73	3.99	1.30
The French are	T1	2.89	.83	4.33	1.37	3.61	1.54	3.78	1.35	4.33	1.03	3.44	.92	3.73	.74
	T2	3	1.57	3.59	1.54	3.72	1.36	3.11	1.23	3.72	1.71	3.50	1.51	3.44	.94
The British are	T1	2.56	1.34	3.56	1.69	3.22	1.11	3	1.28	3.50	1.72	3.78	1.59	3.34	.94
	T2	2.83	1.51	3.89	1.69	3.50	1.54	2.94	1.39	3.28	1.41	3.61	1.50	4	1.41
The North Americans are	T1	2.28	1.41	3.78	1.35	3.22	1.63	3.22	1.73	3.83	1.86	4.17	1.89	3.51	1.14
	T2	2.39	1.42	3.88	1.09	2.89	1.32	2.33	1.14	2.78	1.40	3.94	1.83	3.02	.71
The Polish are	T1	3.61	1.50	4.72	.96	4	1.28	4	1.24	3.56	1.79	3.17	1.04	3.81	.86
	T1	3	1.75	4.50	1.30	4.17	1.65	3.17	1.43	2.44	1.29	2.67	1.28	3.33	.98

Cronbach Alpha

Reliability Statistic		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items	N° of elements
.223	.363	16

TAK: Chronbach Alpha for overall mean scores (18 returns)

Item Total Statistics					
	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item – total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Alpha if item deleted
SD T1 I am – MEAN	49.647	13.436	.321	.945	.125
SD T2 I am – MEAN	49.436	13.500	.337	.933	.126
SD T1 My friends - MEAN	49.586	15.482	-.092	.968	.273
SD T2 My friends - MEAN	49.424	14.335	.137	.976	.187
SD T1 The Spanish – MEAN	49.136	11.783	.565	.954	.007
SD T2 The Spanish – MEAN	49.124	14.980	.044	.986	.218
SD T1 The British - MEAN	49.030	14.112	.172	.950	.174
SD T2 The British - MEAN	48.908	17.718	-.371	.993	.376
SD T1 The Germans – MEAN	48.567	13.647	.183	.962	.162
SD T2 The Germans – MEAN	48.258	15.253	-.126	.992	.320
SD T1 The French - MEAN	48.519	13.271	.341	.983	.116
SD T2 The French - MEAN	48.813	15.323	-.073	.988	.267
SD T1 The Polish - MEAN	48.441	14.061	.132	.995	.184
SD T2 The Polish - MEAN	48.919	14.429	.038	.972	.222
SD T1 North Am - MEAN	48.747	15.603	-.138	.981	.310
SD T2 North Am - MEAN	49.230	14.694	.084	.834	.205

8.3.3 VPLO: mean scores and SD (24 returns)

		FRIENDLY – UNFRIENDLY		POLITE-RUDE		HONEST-DISHONEST		KIND-CRUEL		HARDWORKING -LAZY		WELL-EDUCATED-POORLY EDUCATED		OVERALL MEAN	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	ST	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am	T1	1.96	1.40	2.83	1.15	2.65	1.72	2.43	1.20	3.61	1.90	2.74	1.18	2.68	1.03
	T2	1.70	.56	2.78	1.41	2.09	1.04	2.41	.91	3.52	1.24	2.91	.73	2.55	.55
My friends are	T1	1.74	1.18	3.78	1.68	2.65	1.27	3	1.24	3.61	1.59	3.39	1.53	3.03	.87
	T2	1.70	.82	3.57	1.65	2.30	1.02	2.48	1.28	3.70	1.02	3	1.24	2.80	.67
The Spanish are	T1	1.87	1.01	3.36	1.33	3.13	1.06	3.09	1.08	3.26	1.14	3.22	.80	3.03	.60
	T2	2.57	1.24	3.57	1.27	3.13	.82	2.96	1.11	3.35	1.40	3.13	1.10	3.12	.75
The Germans are	T1	3.70	1.87	3.78	1.24	3.65	1.50	3.43	1.41	3.09	1.56	3.35	1.27	3.51	1.07
	T2	3.83	1.53	3.87	1.25	3.30	1.15	3.61	.94	3.09	1.54	3.22	1.20	3.48	.85
The French are	T1	3.35	1.50	4.09	1.41	3.45	1.14	3.61	1.20	3.39	1.16	3.35	1.23	3.54	1.02
	T2	3.43	1.41	3.74	.86	3.52	.95	3.26	1.101	3.65	.94	3.48	1.24	3.51	.56
The British are	T1	2.35	1.03	3	1.31	3	1.00	2.83	.94	2.86	1.04	2.61	1.16	2.78	.75
	T2	2.35	1.03	2.91	1.24	3.39	1.08	2.74	1.18	3.22	.90	2.87	1.10	2.90	.71
The North Am are	T1	2.96	1.69	4.61	1.59	3.57	1.50	3.52	1.47	3.43	1.78	3.30	1.77	3.57	1.34
	T2	2.91	1.65	4.32	1.29	3.78	1.09	3.65	1.15	4.09	1.70	3.96	1.67	3.80	1.11
The Polish are	T1	2.52	1.62	4.26	1.10	3.70	1.36	3.52	.95	3.61	1.62	3.65	.98	3.54	.78
	T1	3.04	.93	4.39	1.47	3.61	.99	3.26	.86	2.87	1.66	3.52	1.24	3.45	.69

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Cronbach alpha

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items	N° of elements
.797	.821	16

VPLO: Chronbach alpha for overall mean scores

Item Total Statistics					
	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item – total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Alpha if item deleted
SD T1 I am – MEAN	48.600	39.169	.539	.941	.774
SD T2 I am – MEAN	48.730	42.594	.593	.948	.779
SD T1 My friends – MEAN	48.252	42.337	.356	.885	.789
SD T2 My friends – MEAN	48.483	42.748	.449	.865	.784
SD T1 The Spanish – MEAN	48.252	43.479	.421	.740	.787
SD T2 The Spanish – MEAN	48.161	40.631	.621	.886	.772
SD T1 The British – MEAN	48.500	42.586	.409	.591	.786
SD T2 The British – MEAN	48.374	42.089	.494	.897	.781
SD T1 The Germans – MEAN	47.770	39.536	.479	.554	.780
SD T2 The Germans – MEAN	47.800	39.231	.673	.930	.766
SD T1 The French – MEAN	47.743	51.579	-.373	.767	.846
SD T2 The French – MEAN	47.765	42.621	.574	.874	.780
SD T1 The Polish – MEAN	47.735	41.373	.515	.869	.779
SD T2 The Polish – MEAN	47.826	45.307	.148	.742	.801
SD T1 North Am- MEAN	47.709	35.849	.590	.962	.769
SD T2 North Am – MEAN	47.474	40.882	.356	.934	.791

APPENDIX 9: Blog Codes – Analysis

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL
Language use and style	Ellipsis	28	14	2	6	2	7	3	64
	Emphasis	9	6	1	1	5	1	4	27
	Exaggeration	16	9	1	2	4	1	2	35
	Codemixing/switching	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	11
	Informal lexis	14	8	0	0	0	0	1	23
	Onomatopoeic spellings	34	16	2	1	6	3	5	67
CMC	Emoticons	58	47	3	8	9	10	6	141
	Graphic abbreviations	22	18	5	1	0	0	2	48
Transcultural competence	Critical transcultural awareness	0	0	5	4	21	0	0	30
	Bonding	13	8	0	2	0	0	0	23
	New/shared knowledge	1	20	1	14	5	6	7	53
	Re-evaluation of one's view of the world	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	8
Transnational Identifying features	Humour	11	2	1	0	0	0	0	13
	Music	37	25	0	0	64*	0	3	65
	Sport/hobbies	63	1	0	0	0	0	0	64
	Social networking	9	3	0	0	0	7	0	19
	On-line games	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Key: A – “Do you want to know something about me?”, B – Cultural Snippets, C – Cultural stereotypes, D – Africa, E – Music with a Message, F – Q & A, G – Mallorca & Opole

*Not included in total

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APPENDIX 10: SUMMARY OF PhD IN SPANISH (CASTILIAN)

Resumen de la tesis doctoral para el título de Doctor en Lengua y Lingüística aplicada,
Universidad de las Islas Baleares

Titulo: La enseñanza del inglés como lengua internacional desde un enfoque transcultural: un estudio de caso.

El uso de la lengua inglesa es cada vez más importante como herramienta de comunicación a nivel europeo y mundial para muchas personas que aprenden la lengua inglesa. Esto implica que los conocimientos culturales de los países de habla inglesa no son el factor más importante para muchos, y que se debe dar mayor importancia al uso del inglés como lengua internacional en un contexto cultural donde ninguno de los interlocutores es hablante nativo.

Este trabajo de doctorado tiene en cuenta este fenómeno y propone investigar cómo, a través de una metodología transcultural específica, podemos animar a nuestros estudiantes de inglés de secundaria a dar importancia a las diferencias culturales y a las varias maneras de entender el mundo, algo muy importante para lograr una comunicación eficaz con personas que proceden de diversas culturas. Además, el hecho de que el inglés sea un idioma internacional significa que los estudiantes requieren cada vez más herramientas que ayuden en la comunicación entre hablantes no-nativos del inglés, dado que una gran mayoría de conversaciones o interacciones serán de este tipo.

Por esta razón la tesis está encaminada hacia la exploración de la competencia “transcultural”, una competencia más completa que tiene en consideración la comunicación entre personas de diferentes trasfondos culturales. En su informe de 2007, la MLA (Modern Language Association) anima a sus docentes y estudiantes a explorar la dimensión cultural de los idiomas para desarrollar “effective translingual and transcultural competence” (una competencia translingual y transcultural efectiva) (MLA, 2007: 4). Este nuevo contexto subraya “a sense of multidirectional movement, flow and mixing” (un tipo de movimiento, corriente y mezcla multidireccional) (Thompson, 2011: 207). A la vez, esta competencia transcultural implica el conocimiento de otras culturas e idiomas de primera mano, a través de lo que Byram y Doyé denominan “tertiary socialisation” (Byram, 2008).

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Normalmente, para conseguir conocimientos socioculturales de otras culturas un estudiante se plantea la posibilidad de pasar una estancia fuera. Sin embargo, ante la imposibilidad para muchos estudiantes de secundaria de realizar este tipo de experiencia, les propusimos el uso de la tecnología. Recurrimos a un espacio virtual (Bretag, 2006) en el que creamos un blog titulado “English as an International Language in Poland and Spain”. Este espacio virtual es el instrumento principal de la tesis. Para el enfoque transcultural en la clase diseñamos unas unidades didácticas con la cultura como tema principal (“estereotipos culturales”, “África”, y “Música con un mensaje”). Los participantes eran 53 estudiantes de entre 14 y 16 años repartidos en dos institutos en Opole (Polonia) y 42 estudiantes de un instituto en Calvià (Islas Baleares). Los participantes de ambos países trabajaron los contenidos culturales en clase y colgaron sus trabajos en el blog donde también tenían la oportunidad de exponer sus opiniones a los demás participantes.

Los resultados fueron analizados cualitativa y cuantitativamente con el fin de dar respuestas a tres preguntas de investigación:

RQ1. What are our participants’ attitudes towards a transcultural approach to ELT?

(¿Cuáles son las actitudes de nuestros participantes acerca de la aproximación transcultural a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera?)

RQ2. How, if at all, does a transcultural approach to ELT foster transcultural competence?

(¿Cómo una metodología transcultural a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera fomenta la competencia transcultural?)

RQ3. Is there any evidence of the emergence of a transnational identity in our participants?

(¿Hay alguna evidencia que nos permita apuntar a la emergencia de una identidad transnacional en nuestros participantes?)

Los resultados muestran que el innovador enfoque en el aula ha sido muy positivo para los alumnos como manera de desarrollar una identidad transnacional y la competencia transcultural. Los alumnos han conocido otros usuarios de inglés y han podido comunicarse,

intercambiar información y adquirir conocimientos de otra cultura. Han aprendido que el inglés también les da la llave al mundo y no solo a los países de habla inglesa.

Las conclusiones más relevantes son las siguientes:

1. La mayoría de participantes se mostraron muy abiertos a la hora de probar un nuevo enfoque de aprendizaje, mostrándose positivos ante las unidades didácticas y el uso del blog. Aunque los estudiantes de España ya tenían experiencia de CLIL (Secciones Europeas) este enfoque transcultural permitía que todos los estudiantes pudiesen participar en clases de inglés que tenían un enfoque de contenidos culturales. Sin embargo, el hecho de que la conexión a internet fallara mucho en el instituto significó que mucha parte del trabajo tuviera que realizarse como deberes y este factor fue determinante en el número de entradas al blog de los estudiantes.
2. Los participantes se mostraron abiertos a conocer nuevos compañeros a través del blog. Aunque tenían la impresión de que los polacos eran muy distintos a los españoles, se dieron cuenta de que tenían muchos intereses en común, como la música o el deporte. Los dos grupos también disfrutaron poniendo información sobre sus distintos pueblos en el blog, lo cual les animó a interesarse por viajar a Opole y a Mallorca. Esto significaba que el interés por conocer otro país había sido iniciado.
3. Un gran resultado fue ver cómo algunos participantes cambiaron sus percepciones de su yo/auto-concepto y el de los otros ('Self' and the 'Other'). Había suficientes pruebas para sugerir que a través del blog los participantes cruzaron las líneas tradicionales de los inter-grupos. Ellos asumieron que sus conocimientos culturales estaban basados en sus experiencias de socialización primaria y secundaria y que para funcionar desde un punto de vista transcultural tenían que entender que todos los aspectos culturales son provisionales y abiertos a una re-evaluación. Además, al aceptar que hay múltiples voces culturales también estaban desarrollando la habilidad de cuestionar las raíces de muchas ideas preconcebidas.
4. A pesar de que al principio del proyecto los estudiantes pensaban que los polacos y los españoles eran bastante diferentes culturalmente, estas diferencias parecían difuminarse, volverse borrosas en el espacio virtual del blog cuando los participantes

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de Polonia y España se comportaban como miembros de otra comunidad de hablantes. La creciente amistad o sentimiento de vinculación afectiva ('bonding') entre los participantes era obvio. Aunque había una falta de comunicación cara a cara entre los participantes, los mensajes de apariencia informal y el uso de un lenguaje predominantemente coloquial ponían de manifiesto su estatus de grupo propio de los nativos digitales. Podemos hablar de una identidad transcultural para estos participantes a través de su uso del inglés como lengua internacional y del consumo de productos transculturales como la música o el deporte.

Finalmente, los resultados de esta tesis doctoral muestran que el hecho de trabajar en un espacio virtual sobre asuntos culturales ha proporcionado una experiencia única y válida a los participantes, y que a la hora de planificar currículos para el aprendizaje del inglés debemos tomar en consideración la posibilidad de incorporar experiencias parecidas para todos los estudiantes. Un enfoque transcultural no solo trabaja unas competencias normalmente asociadas con experiencias de socialización terciaria, sino que abre las puertas a otros idiomas y culturas.

La última parte de esta tesis pretende aportar un marco teórico y operativo para facilitar la incorporación de los resultados de esta investigación a la enseñanza del inglés en la escuela secundaria. Se basa en aportaciones previas por Byram (1997, 2008), Grant (2006), Jongewaard (2001), Slimbach (2005) y Ting-Toomey (1999). Esperamos que este marco teórico pueda servir como punto de partida para el desarrollo de un verdadero enfoque transcultural en la enseñanza de idiomas.