

**Acquiring Intercultural Competence from Coursebooks: Analysis  
of Learning Tasks in the Finnish Upper Secondary School  
Coursebook Series *In Touch***

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Tutkielma tarkastelee lukion englannin kielen oppikirjojen harjoitustehtävien roolia kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin välittäjinä. Aineisto koostuu *In Touch* –oppikirjasarjan kolmen pakollisen kurssin oppikirjojen tehtävistä. Tarkoituksena on selvittää minkä verran oppikirjat sisältävät kulttuurienvälisiä kompetenssia edistäviä tehtäviä ja mitä kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin osa-alueita tehtävät harjoittavat.

Työn teoriaosuudessa valotetaan kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin käsitettä Michael Byramin kehittelemään malliin nojautuen ja tutustutaan kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin viiteen eri osa-alueeseen. Lisäksi pohditaan oppikirjan roolia vieraan kielen opetuksessa ja luodaan silmäys oppikirjatyötä ja vieraan kielen opetusta sääteleviin yleisen eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen sekä uusimman lukion opetussuunnitelman linjauksiin kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin opettamisen näkökulmasta. Kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin oppisisältöjen välittämistä vieraan kielen opetuksessa tarkastellaan erilaisten opetusmetodien sekä harjoitustehtävyyppien valossa.

Oppikirjojen harjoitustehtävien analyysi perustuu Michael Byramin teorian pohjalta luotuun kriteeristöön, jossa eritellään kulttuurienvälisiä kompetenssia edistävät tehtäväkategoriat ja niiden tavoitteet. Tehtäväkategorioita on neljä: *kulttuuritietous, asenteet kulttuureja kohtaan, kulttuuristen ilmiöiden tulkitseminen ja toisiinsa suhteuttaminen* sekä *kulttuurienvälinen viestintä*. Kaikki tekstikappaleiden yhteydessä esiintyvät tehtävät sekä kielioppi- ja kertausosioissa sijaitsevat tehtävät analysoidaan.

Tutkielmasta käy ilmi, että kaikki analysoidut oppikirjat sisältävät kulttuurienvälisiä kompetenssia edistäviä tehtäviä, joskin niiden osuus muita taitoja harjoituttaviin tehtäviin nähden on marginaalinen; vain kaikkiaan 33 tehtävän 306 kirjoissa esiintyneestä tehtävästä voitiin katsoa edistävän oppijan kulttuurienvälisiä kompetenssia. Tehtävät eivät jakautuneet tasaisesti kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin eri osa-alueiden kesken; valtaosa tehtävistä oli suunnattu kulttuuritietouden edistämiseen ja harjoittamiseen, vähimmälle huomiolle jäi kulttuurienvälinen viestintä. Yllättävää kyllä, niin sanotun ”kulttuurikurssin” oppikirja *In Touch* 5 sisälsi analysoiduista oppikirjoista kaikkein vähiten kulttuurienvälisiä kompetenssia edistäviä tehtäviä.

Asiasanat: kulttuurienvälinen kompetenssi, oppikirja-analyysi, englannin kielen opetus

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Given the status of English as an international language, the difficulties of teaching culture in English language teaching (ELT) are perhaps greater than in the case of any other foreign language; defining a target culture for Italian language is fairly easy, but determining a single target-culture for a world language English is no longer possible. As McKay (2002, 7) states, promoting intercultural competence in ELT as a revised form of culture teaching is a commendable option.

The importance and advantages of teaching intercultural competence (IC) in language teaching have already been acknowledged in the documents governing Finnish foreign language teaching: both the Finnish National Curricula and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages include objectives for teaching intercultural competence. Subsequently, as the Finnish National Curricula function as guidelines for coursebook writers, the objectives of IC should be included in the contents foreign language coursebooks. Since coursebooks still play a significant role in the Finnish foreign language teaching, it is in order to cast a critical eye on the coursebooks and pin down how the objectives of intercultural competence are realised in their contents.

The goal of this study is to find out whether the Finnish upper secondary school English language coursebook series *In Touch* includes learning tasks which can be said to promote the acquisition of intercultural competence. The study is a monomodal criteria-based coursebook analysis focusing on the learning tasks of the material and it aims at investigating the following questions:

- To what extent, if at all, do the upper secondary school coursebooks *In Touch 3, 4* and *5* contain learning tasks aimed at increasing learners' intercultural competence?

- What dimensions of intercultural competence, if any, do the learning tasks found in the respective coursebooks address?

On the grounds of my own experience, the teacher training of today offers insufficient tools for foreign language teachers as regards to teaching intercultural competence. As a future ESL teacher I nonetheless feel the need to gain a deeper understanding of the notion of intercultural competence and develop skills for not only increasing the linguistic competence of the learners but also for equipping them for intercultural interaction. Thus, this study is interesting to me on a personal level. Furthermore, the results of this study will have their relevance in inviting other teachers and coursebook writers to ponder on the practical solutions for promoting IC in language teaching. Further, they will contribute to encouraging foreign language teachers to analyse existing teaching materials from the point of view of IC and, if needed, to adapt them for the purposes of promoting intercultural competence.

Chapters two and three form the theoretical background of this thesis. Chapter two will explore the definitions of the two central terms related to this study, *culture* and *intercultural communicative competence*, and cast a light on the various functions of coursebook in foreign language teaching. In addition, it will introduce different ways of conducting a coursebook research. The third chapter discusses the contents of the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* and the Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School in respect of their references to teaching intercultural competence. Furthermore, it draws the reader's attention to the teaching methods and learning task types suited for promoting IC in practice.

Chapter four will be dedicated to the analysis of the coursebook data. In the first subsection, the discussion is on the contents and themes of the three coursebooks forming the data: *In Touch 3: Get a Life*, *In Touch 4: A World of Difference* and *In Touch 5: Just Imagine*. The second subsection will elaborate on the method used for conducting the coursebook analysis. Finally, the third subsection will present the findings of the empirical study. Chapter five will summarize the results.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The terms *culture* and *intercultural communicative competence* are intimately connected with each other, for the definition of the latter is based on the definition of the first. Therefore, familiarization with the notion of culture is the first step on the way of gaining understanding for the construct definition of intercultural communicative competence and for its component *intercultural competence*. Apart from the definitions of these wide-ranging concepts this chapter will discuss the various functions a coursebook can have in foreign language teaching and introduce different perspectives on analysing coursebooks.

### 2.1 On the concept of culture

Striving for forming one catch-all definition of culture in the 1950s two anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954) examined altogether 300 various differing definitions of culture aiming at finding a common denominator of the term. The outcome of their study was that they could not isolate any precise common denominator, except for the fact that culture is a broad concept and embraces all aspects of human life. Although Kroeber and Kluckhohn painted a pessimistic picture of ever finding a catch-all definition for culture, the popularity of offering definitions for the term has not faded.

According to Fennes and Hapgood (1997, 13) the core of the problem in defining ‘culture’ lies in the fact that we are trying to define something we are a part of and fail to do this objectively. Therefore, definitions of culture are always subjective, because they are based on certain world view which in turn varies from one discipline and one researcher to another. Thus, whenever culture is used in a certain context, a definition of how culture is understood in that particular context is always needed. The following section aims at casting a light on the various ways of conceptualising culture by introducing some existing definitions of the term relevant for foreign language teaching.

### **2.1.1 On the myriad of definitions for the term**

Since culture is present in all aspects of human life, various fields of study provide their view on the notion. In linguistics, one of the most widely known and most criticized definitions of culture has become known as the Sapir–Worf hypothesis. Edward Sapir’s and Benjamin Lee Worf’s theory (Sapir 1949) rests on the claim of interdependence of language and thought, i.e. the language one uses is claimed to influence the manner in which one thinks and behaves. When the Sapir–Worf hypothesis was first formulated in the 1940s, it faced harsh criticism, for the suggestion that language would determine thought instead of the other way around was considered absurd (Kramsch 1998, 12). The criticism was justified, for such a radical way of thinking could easily have lead to racism and, after all, we are able to translate from one language to another. Thus, as a slightly weaker version and supported by the findings of cultural differences in semantic associations Sapir–Worf hypothesis has earned its place among the generally accepted theories. Language and thought and subsequently culture have a close relationship but not as a radical one as Sapir and Whorf first suggested.

A frequently used approach in operationalising the notion of culture is to divide culture into visible and invisible elements (see e.g. Hofstede and Hofstede 2005; Larcher 1993). This is often done by an analogy to an iceberg (see Figure 1). The iceberg model suggests a large part of what constitutes culture is under the surface, i.e. unconscious and subsequently obvious for members of the culture. The elements of culture primarily out of awareness are invisible and guide our daily actions and behaviour, although we are not actively aware of them. What remains above the surface as a peak of the iceberg is a group of visible and conscious elements of culture which are more easily subject to changes than the elements under the surface. For instance, dress codes can go through drastic changes in a short period of time, but attitudes, conceptions and ideals persist.

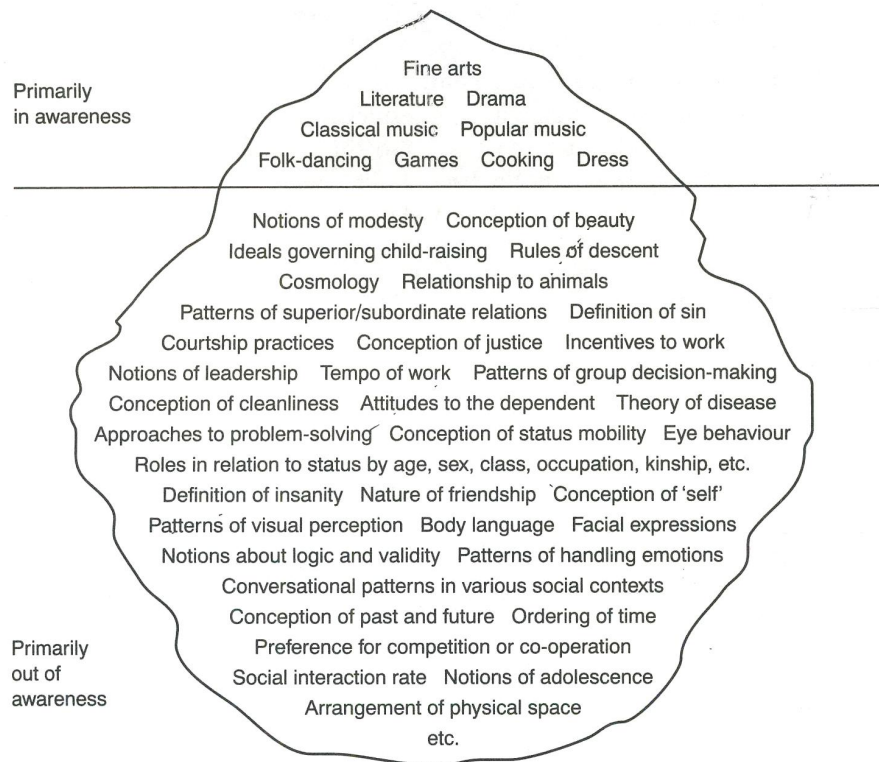


Figure 1. Iceberg model of culture (Fennes and Hapgood 1997, 14).

Resting on the assumption that culture is a product of socialization, anthropologists Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, 3) view culture as “a software of the mind” which distinguishes members of one cultural group from another. In this “mental programming”, they distinguish three levels (ibid., 4–5): *human nature*, *culture*, and *personality*. The first level, human nature, refers to an inherited “operating system” which is common to all human beings. Culture is the second level of mental programming and Hofstede and Hofstede describe it as learned and specific to a certain group. The third level, personality is partly inherited and partly learned as well as unique. Thus, according to Hofstede and Hofstede definition of culture, culture is learned in social interaction, it is subjective and unique for every individual and it is dynamic, for individuals and the society, in which “culturization” takes place, change over time.

In the recent writings on culture in ELT the concept has been viewed as “the framework of assumptions, ideas, and beliefs that are used to interpret other people’s actions, words, and patterns of thinking” (Cortazzi and Jin 1999, 197). Corbett emphasizes the dynamic nature of



culture and reciprocal relationship of different elements of culture by defining ‘culture’ of a group as consisting of “the relationship between its core beliefs and values, and the patterns of behaviour, art and communication that the group produces, bearing in mind that these beliefs and values are constantly being negotiated within the group” (Corbett 2003, 20). Due to the subjective and dynamic nature of culture Cortazzi and Jin maintain that culture is rather difficult to teach for foreign language learners. However, they point out that learners can nevertheless be made aware of differing cultural frameworks, including their own and those of others, as well as taught ways of interpreting target-language messages.

Although the above mentioned definitions of culture give insights into how culture can be defined, they remain rather abstract in terms of their operationalisation of the term; such a wide-ranging concept as culture can hardly be defined in depth in a few sentences or by simply listing the elements it consists of. Accordingly, the following chapter introduces a model of culture, which illustrates and discusses the different levels of culture and their reciprocal relationship in a more thorough way.

### ***2.1.2 Definition of culture in this study***

The way the notion of culture is perceived in this study agrees with many of the points dealt with in connection with the overview on existing definitions of culture in the previous chapter. This study builds on the assumption that individuals acquire culture in social interaction and adapt their view of culture according to their life experiences and changes in the surrounding community. Thus, culture is dynamic and ultimately perceived in a subjective way by every individual, although individuals share various common elements of culture. The focus of the definition of culture in this study lies on the reciprocal relationship the different elements of culture share, i.e. the elements on conscious and unconscious levels of culture have a great influence on each other. Therefore, culture needs to be understood as a whole.

The models of culture introduced in the previous chapter emphasized the vertical nature of culture by suggesting iceberg analogy and drawing borders between the unconscious and conscious elements and levels of culture. The model of culture that is used in this thesis also depicts the vertical dimension but in addition, it includes a horizontal dimension that has been missing so far.

*The horizontal dimension* consists of visible cultural segments manifesting themselves on the same level of culture (see Figure 2) and it functions as a surface of the underlying vertical dimension reflecting the deeper elements of culture. Thus, the segments of the horizontal level are conceptions of common identity, codes of behaviour, power among the individuals other “immediately experienced symptoms” of a culture (see 1. below).

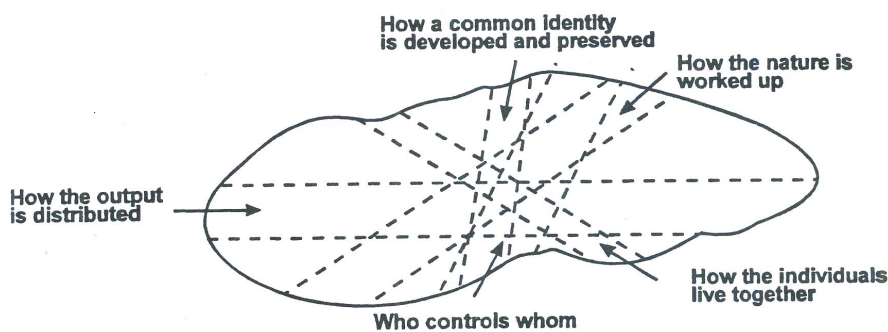


Figure 2. Horizontal dimension of culture (Gullestrup 1995, 8).

In contrast to the horizontal dimension of culture, *the vertical dimension* comprises of different invisible levels of culture (see Figure 3). Gullestrup’s (1995, 9) vertical dimension of culture distinguishes two parts; *the manifest culture* and *the core culture*. Suggesting iceberg analogy the manifest culture is referred to as a more visible part of culture and the core culture as the more hidden and fundamental part of culture. Both parts cover three levels, so the vertical dimension can be seen as consisting of six different levels of culture which are elaborated on in the following.

**1) The level of immediately experienced symptoms**

This level refers to the kind of first-hand picture of culture which is formed by visible elements of culture such as behaviour in public and in interaction with others, dress code, music, stories and spoken and written language. This is also the level at which there is most variation between different cultures. Although understanding the language, behaviour and both material and immaterial products of a culture is to a large extent a prerequisite for communication, it should be borne in mind that the immediately experienced symptoms are superficial in nature. However, they carry a deeper meaning as symptoms and visible manifestations of the invisible elements of the core culture and should therefore not be undervalued.

**2) The level of structures that are more difficult to observe**

If on the first level we could say behaviour is a symptom and observe *how* representatives of a culture behave, the explanation *why* the individuals behave the way they do is part of structures that are more difficult to observe. Gullestrup (1995, 10) argues the behaviour of individuals of a culture group is governed by a specific pattern or a skeleton of behaviour. The structure of the skeleton varies from one culture to another according to status, age, sex, ethnicity, nationality etc. Various laws and rules might also influence the structure of the skeleton of behaviour.

Similar to the level symptoms, the knowledge about the level of structure is of great importance for communication: by obtaining knowledge about patterns of behaviour governing a culture group one becomes aware of the expectations towards individual's behaviour.

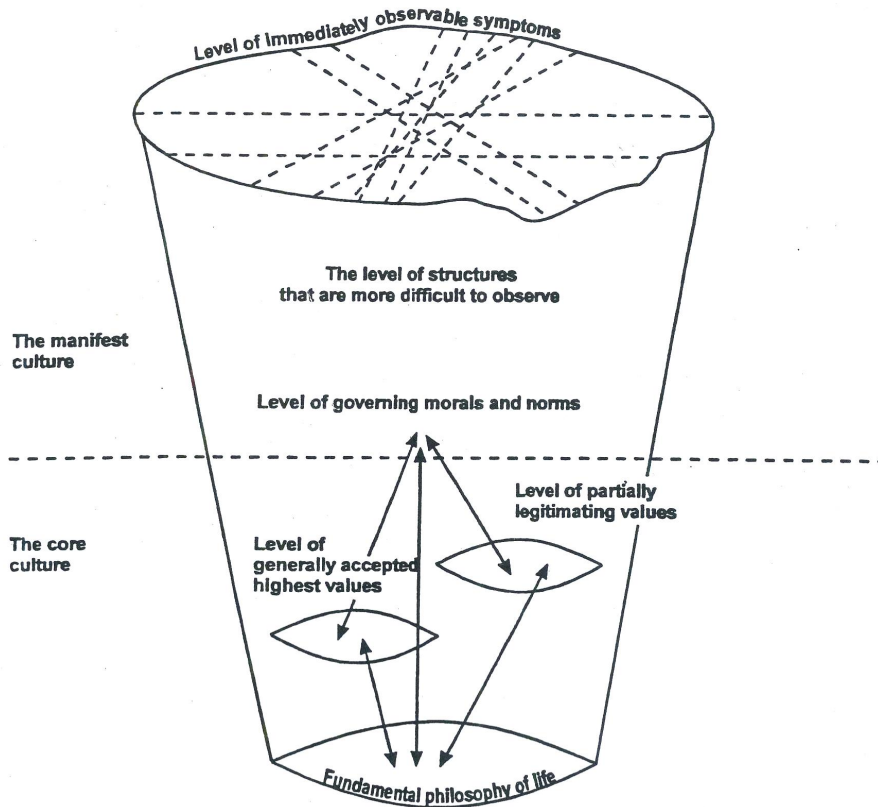


Figure 3. Vertical dimension of culture (Gullestrup 1995, 13).

### 3) The level of governing moral and norms

The third and lowest level of the manifest culture on the way to the core culture covers the practical part of moral, norms and rules of behaviour. The governing moral is a focal part of culture, for it sets rules and norms for the way individuals ought to behave in various situations such as in family relations or in business. Gullestrup (1995, 11) sees the existing moral as a practical manifestation of the deeper values and fundamental philosophy of life, but also having reciprocal relationship with the level of symptoms and the level of structures; on the level of symptoms rules and norms appear in a visible form as laws and regulations, on the level of structures they are reflected in the pattern of behaviour.

### 4) The level of partially legitimating values

On the first and second levels of the core culture (4. and 5. levels) values are understood as “those feelings and attitudes in the mental programme of the individuals which determine –

or legitimate – which kinds of behaviour, structure and moral are better than other” (Gullestrup 1995, 11). In comparison to the generally accepted values, the partially legitimating values have a lower status. These values include values concerning such matters as traffic or competition and cooperation in business and they are partially legitimate, because in principle they are binding but in practice sometimes ignored.

##### **5) The level of generally accepted highest values**

Generally accepted highest values have a higher status than partially legitimating values, for they originate in an ideology or the fundamental philosophy of life of the culture. These values, also referred to as fundamental or cultural values, have formed as a result of a long process.

##### **6) The fundamental philosophy of life**

The fundamental philosophy of life is an essential part of any culture, for every culture views its own philosophy of life as the only true and indisputable cultural foundation. The fundamental philosophy of life manifests itself in values and subsequently on the cultural levels in the manifest culture, and can so be referred to as the heartwood of culture. Because culture is not static, the fundamental philosophy of life goes through changes over time, which then reflect in values as well as on the levels of the manifest culture and vice versa. Understanding the fundamental philosophy of life of a culture is the key for deeper understanding of the culture as a whole.

(Gullestrup 1995, 9–13)

As Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954) reported, their results of searching for a common denominator for the notion of culture, culture embraces all aspects of human life. Indeed in general, culture is often defined broadly as “the way people do things” and so considered as a whole. Although this kind of definition might sound somewhat naïve, there is a pearl of wisdom in it, for in fact, achieving an understanding of a culture means striving to understand all aspects of it and so considering it as a whole. It is actually absurd to divide culture into different

segments, levels and elements, because ultimately they depend and have a strong influence on each other. However, this kind of abstract distinction is needed to function as a map along the way to the core of culture. Further, as regards teaching culture as a part of foreign language teaching, any attempts to concretise the concept of culture by dividing it into smaller better understandable units are surely welcomed by teachers.

## **2.2 On the notion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)**

Due to its interdisciplinary nature and use under various different contexts, defining the concept of ‘intercultural competence’ (IC) has proved to be a challenging task, to say the least. Similar to defining the term ‘culture’, trying to find a catch-all definition for IC has intrigued researchers worldwide. In fact, the number of definitions offered for this term and its frequent use has reached a point where we can speak of inflation. Disapproving the fanatic use of the term Edmondson and House (1998) argue the notion of IC has become a vogue word as it is used also for labelling such practises in language-and-culture teaching, which in fact do not include any intercultural approach.

In order to clarify the origins of *intercultural competence* (IC), this chapter presents the construct model of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) and starts by introducing the components of which ICC can be seen to consist: *intercultural communication* and *communicative competence*.

### **2.2.1 Intercultural communication**

The term *intercultural* is a confluence of the prefix *inter* and the noun *culture*. The particle *inter* suggests interdependence between two or more phenomena and when combined to *culture*, it carries the meanings of cooperation, interaction and mutual understanding between individuals.

The notion of intercultural communication has its roots in the 1950s in the work of linguist Robert Lado and anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Lado created a first educationally

relevant theory of conjoining language and culture in his work *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), whereas Hall contributed to developing principles for intercultural communication. Hall's principles were put into action by the Peace Corps founded in the 1960s, which gave rise to using critical incidents and simulation games as training methods for increasing intercultural awareness. In the 1970s intercultural communication training was brought to corporate environments for the needs of growing international business community. It was not only until in the 1980s that the principles for intercultural communication were applied to interethnic conflicts within one country, instead of solely diplomacy and international business. (Kramsch, 2001, 201–203.)

Any definition of *intercultural* is founded on a certain definition of culture (Rathje 2007, 255). Kramsch (2001, 201) defines *intercultural communication* as “an interdisciplinary field of research that studies how people understand each other across group boundaries of various sorts: national, geographical, ethnic, occupational, class or gender”. The constricted way of defining *intercultural* communication would be to view it as a synonym to *international* communication which suggests a communication between nations and national cultures. In the broader sense intercultural communication refers to communication between representatives of cultures of any kind, instead of restricting the term solely to national cultures (see Rathje 2007, 256–258).

### **2.2.2 Communicative competence**

*Communicative competence* is commonly seen as consisting of four components: *grammatical competence*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *discourse competence* and *strategic competence* (see e.g. Savignon 1983; Alptekin 2002). The first component, *grammatical competence* refers to Chomskyan concept of linguistic competence; it is the native-speaker's knowledge of the syntactic, lexical, morphological and phonological features of the language. With the help of linguistic competence, learners are able to produce well-structured sentences.

The second component, *sociolinguistic competence* stands for knowledge of rules of language use in a social context, including understanding the roles and social status of participants as well as the information shared in a particular communicative situation.

*Discourse competence* then, is defined as the ability to deal with the extended use of language in context. It refers to culture-specific thought patterns understanding of which is sometimes crucial in avoiding serious misunderstandings.

The fourth and last component of communicative competence is *strategic competence*, which refers to the ability to handle an authentic communication episode and keep the communicative channel open. This requires knowledge of such communication strategies which one needs for compensating imperfect knowledge of the rules, or for instance in a situation where he or she cannot think of a word.

In foreign language teaching the communicative approach became popular in the mid 1970s. It has been criticised for having the focus on the language and culture of the target-language at learner's own culture's expense (e.g. Byram 1997, Alptekin 2002).

### **2.2.3 Byram's construct definition of ICC**

Michael Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence is widely known and for now the most comprehensive model for describing the principles of teaching, acquiring and assessing intercultural communicative competence in foreign language teaching. Byram's theory of acquiring ICC is also used in CEFR as a basis for describing the competencies of a foreign language learner (for CEFR, see 3.1.1).

In his theory of ICC, Byram's starts from the assumption that the notion of communicative competence and thus the principles of communicative language teaching need to be refined, for they suggest foreign language learners should imitate native speakers of the language not only in language use but also in ways of interacting. In contrast to communicative



theories, Byram wants to emphasize the significance of learner's own social identity, language and culture and their influence on intercultural interaction (Byram 1997, 3).

As part of the comprehensive model of ICC Byram (1997, 48) distinguishes linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences. In his model, these competences are understood as follows:

- *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
- *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
- *discourse competence*: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes.

Intercultural competence then, is a component of intercultural communicative competence along with the above mentioned linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. In intercultural competence Byram (1997, 57–64) distinguishes five dimensions, *savoirs*, and describes them as follows:

- I. *Savoir être (attitudes)***: *Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.* This dimension includes learners' willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products as well as interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena.
- II. *Savoirs (knowledge)***: *Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's culture, and of the general processes of interaction.* This dimension covers knowledge about daily life, institutions, non-verbal behaviour and history of a culture. It also includes knowledge of the influence cultural background has on interaction.

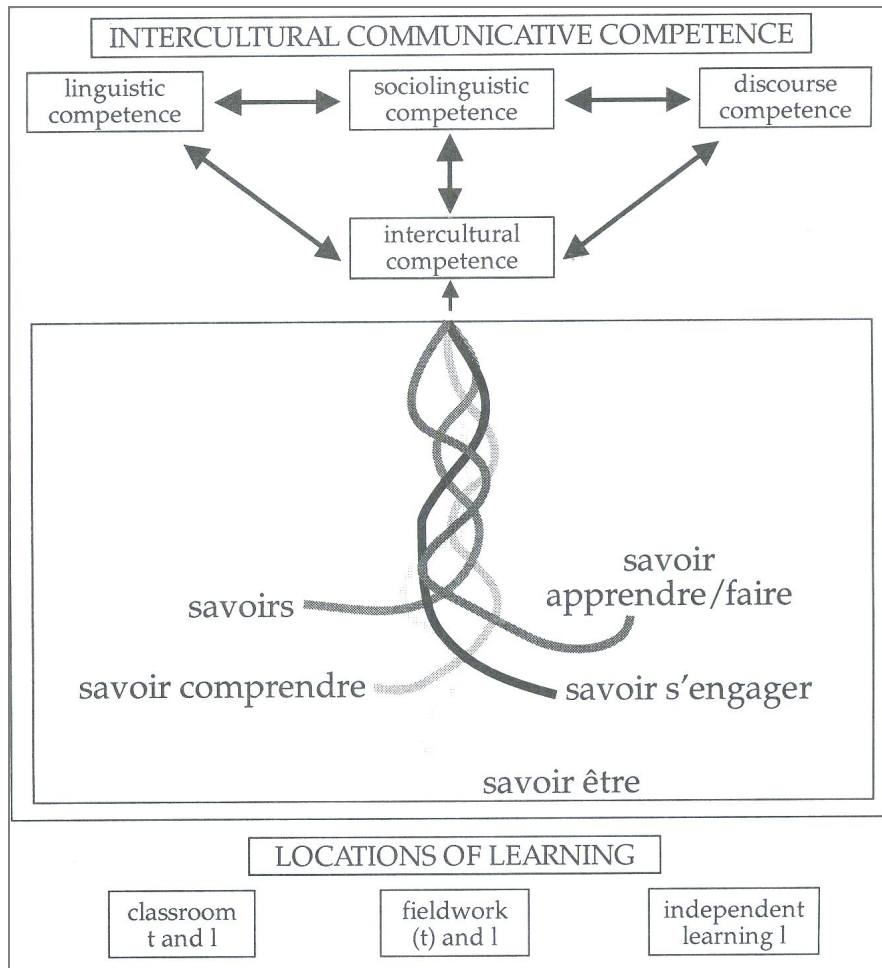


Figure 4. Model of ICC (Byram 1997, 73).

- III. *Savoir comprendre (Skills of interpreting and relating):*** Ability to interpret a document or an event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own culture. According to the objectives of this dimension, learners are expected to be able to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins, identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each cultural system present as well as mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.
- IV. *Savoir apprendre/ faire (Skills of discovery and interaction):*** 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.

This dimension refers to learners' skills which enable them quickly to establish an understanding of a new environment and the ability to interact with representatives of foreign cultures by making use of their knowledge (*savoirs*), attitudes (*savoir être*) and skills (*savoir comprendre*). It also includes learners' ability to discover information about historical and contemporary issues of foreign/ own culture by using references.

- V. ***Savoir s'engager (Critical cultural awareness):*** *Ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of the explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures.* The key message of this dimension is that learners need to be able to justify their opinions and capable to critically analyse documents or events of their own culture or those of foreign cultures.

The five *savoirs* emphasize the close relationship of the learner's existing cultural background and that of other cultures as a key factor in the process of acquiring IC and ICC. Thus, intercultural interaction does not simply involve transfer of information between cultures, but rather entails a reflection on one's own culture and that of the other.

All in all, Byram's model of ICC is a holistic one comprising of four components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence. Although considering all four components of ICC would be intriguing, within the scope of this thesis the focus will be on the component intercultural competence (IC) and its dimensions.

### **2.3 Coursebook as a resource and research subject in foreign language teaching**

The importance of coursebooks is surely acknowledged by most foreign language teachers. Instead of having to prepare all teaching material themselves, they make use of coursebooks, which provide texts, pictures, audio material, exercises, vocabulary and quite often a grammar section – all neatly in compact form. Thus, having coursebooks saves a lot of time and energy as teachers do not have to look for the material and constantly check whether they are teaching

according to the guidelines given in the curricula. Indeed, coursebook is a great tool, which has various functions in a foreign language class room. Cortazzi and Jin (1999, 199–200) distinguish seven purposes a coursebook can serve; it can function as *a teacher*, *a map*, *a resource*, *a trainer*, *an authority*, *a de-skinner* or *an ideology*.

When a coursebook has a role of *a teacher*, it substitutes the live teacher, i.e. it contains material which as such instructs learners without any need of involvement of the teacher. A coursebook can also function as *a map*, for it gives an overview of all the linguistic and cultural elements that need to be covered during the course according to the guidelines given in the curricula. Following this line of thinking, some teachers may rest their teaching solely on the contents of the coursebook, however most of foreign language teachers surely treat the coursebook as *a resource*: a useful set of materials from which they choose the appropriate items for their teaching.

Especially for inexperienced teachers, a coursebook may also function as *a trainer*, for it contains numerous ready-made activities and exercises and offers ideas, instructions and guidance. Young teachers also often see coursebooks as the embodiment of the most recent research and theory and consider coursebooks reliable, valid and containing correct information because they have been written by experts. Due to this teachers may give coursebooks the status of *an authority*. However, teachers, both experienced and newly graduated ought to cast a critical eye on the issues the coursebooks present as facts and indisputable information.

Although the teacher's profession allows teachers to be as creative as they can, teachers are in danger of becoming overdependent on coursebooks. In this case a coursebook may turn into *a de-skinner*; it suppresses teachers' creativity and critical approach to using teaching materials and takes over the whole teaching process. In order to prevent the coursebook becoming a de-skinner, teachers need to develop better skills in evaluating teaching materials and adapting them for the purposes of their teaching. As Richards (1993, 49) felicitously remarks,

instead of thinking of coursebooks as coursebooks they should rather be viewed as sourcebooks, which teachers and learners can apply to their needs but on which they do not depend.

Finally, the materials chosen as the contents of a particular coursebook always reflect a certain worldview, which may then indirectly and unrecognized be imposed on teachers and learners. This is what is meant by saying a coursebook can have a function of *an ideology*.

Even though teachers may sensor and adapt material from coursebooks, as Anne Pitkänen-Huhta's dissertation (2003) reveals, coursebooks nevertheless persist having a central role in Finnish ELT; coursebooks are still considered as the primary sources of teaching material, which makes it justified to analyse them in this study too.

As regards conducting coursebook research, Pingel (1999, 38) introduces quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Pingel (*ibid.*) quantitative methods are used to measure aspects of the coursebooks in terms of frequency and space. This may take the form of quantifying how frequently particular words or names, places appear across a sample of coursebook data. It may also involve measuring how much (or how little) space is allocated to a particular theme, event or topic. In respect of qualitative methods Pingel (1999, 39–40) describes *hermeneutic analysis* used to reveal underlying meanings and messages in coursebooks; *linguistic analysis* involving the examination of words and terminology; *cross-cultural analysis*, where all sides in a bilateral or multilateral study examine each other's coursebooks to identify bias; and *discourse analysis*, where the researcher deconstructs coursebook content to identify what information, groups and events the author values, takes for granted or regards as unimportant. Pingel (1999, 38) also refers to *contingency analysis*, a method combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyse the representation of both text and images in coursebooks.

Nicholls (2003, 14) adds further examples of qualitative approaches to analysing coursebook contents: *visual analysis*, used to evaluate the ways in which images, charts and maps are employed; *critical analysis*, used to identify and expose coursebook portrayals that

perpetuate unequal social relations in society; and *structural analysis*, used to investigate how certain learning goals are structured or ‘delivered’ across coursebooks.

This chapter introduced the cornerstones of this study. The following chapter highlights the objectives for teaching intercultural competence found in CEFR and in the Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School, since they have a direct impact on the contents of coursebooks in Finland. In addition, it introduces methods and task types suited for conveying IC in foreign language class room.

### **3 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE (IC) AS AN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Incorporation of culture into foreign language teaching is not a recent discovery. In fact, culture pedagogy is said to have emerged already in the 1880s and developed as an autonomous field in the 1960s (Risager 2007, 26). Indeed, teaching culture as a part of foreign language teaching has been the focus of many researchers (e.g. Lado 1957; Seelye 1987; Byram 1991; 1997; 2001; Kramersch 1993; Cortazzi and Jin 1999; Corbett 2003; Sowden 2007). Active work in developing models and objectives for intercultural competence in the field of foreign language teaching has been done especially by Byram (1991; 1997; 2001), Bredella and Delanoy (1999), Corbett (2003), Volkman et al. (2002), Guilherme (2002) and Sercu (2000, 2004). Kaikkonen (2004) in turn has focused on paving the way for intercultural approach in Finnish foreign language teaching.

The following chapters aim at casting light on the objectives of IC presented in the guidelines for Finnish foreign language teaching and on the practical ways of bringing intercultural approach into the foreign language class room.

### **3.1 Objectives of IC in the guidelines for foreign language teaching on European and national level**

This section discusses the representation of IC in the documents which contain the guidelines for foreign language teaching in Finland. There are separate national curricula for all school forms; since this study concentrates on upper secondary school it takes a closer look into the Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School. As far as foreign language education is concerned, the national curricula in Finland have their roots in CEFR. The contents of CEFR and its references to IC will therefore be elaborated on first.

#### ***3.1.1 IC in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)***

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was published in 2001.

Its aims are described as follows:

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, coursebooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

(CEFR 2001, 1)

The purpose of CEFR is to unify language teaching and assessing practices across Europe by functioning as a common reference work for educators. Accordingly, language learning objectives and levels of proficiency determined in CEFR form a basis for the Finnish National Curricula.

In CEFR (2001, 1) the process of learning to communicate in foreign language(s) is seen as inseparable from the development of the whole human personality. It regards language learners and users as social agents who engage in interaction with representatives of various social groups and develop their identity as a synthesis of these relationships. Hence, CEFR recommends an intercultural approach for language teaching in which central objective is “to

promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture" (CEFR 2001, 1.). The description of language learner's general competences (CEFR 2001, 101–108) beyond the communicative competences, i.e. linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (CEFR 2001, 108–130), rests on the objectives of Byram's *savoirs* introduced in his model of IC (see 2.2.3).

In an intercultural approach, language learners are said to develop *interculturality*; that is learners do not acquire a new distinct way of communicating with every foreign language they learn. Instead, the linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language (mother tongue and foreign language) are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. (See CEFR 2001, 43.) Thus the learners' linguistic and cultural background is regarded as a basis on which the acquiring of IC builds.

As an outcome of intercultural approach learners develop "an enriched personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences" (CEFR 2001, 43). Through interpretation and translation the intercultural individual, or in Byram's terms intercultural speaker, is also able to act as a linguistic and cultural mediator between two interlocutors who cannot communicate directly.

All in all, although CEFR strongly advises educators to adopt an intercultural approach in foreign language teaching, it only defines levels of proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking – excluding levels of proficiency in intercultural competence. For instance, the foreign language learner is expected to develop "the capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations" (CEFR 2001, 104), but there are no instructions on how to assess whether or not the competence in question has been acquired. Hence educators are given tools for teaching and assessing the four "traditional" skills in a foreign language, but are not provided a framework for assessing intercultural competence. Lack of proper description



concerning intercultural competence in CEFR may manifest itself Europe-wide as insufficient objectives on IC in the national curricula.

### **3.1.2 IC in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools**

This chapter will take a closer look into the most recent version of Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School (LOPS 2003) and focus on what kind of instructions on teaching intercultural competence it contains.

#### **IC in the general part of the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools**

The Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School contains general instructions concerning all subjects and a subject-specific part, where the aims, goals and contents of courses for all subjects are described in more detail. The general part applies to all subjects and determines the basic values to be conveyed during the upper secondary education. IC is present in the general part, for according to the curriculum (LOPS 2003, 24) the students are to be trained up for being tolerant and capable of cooperation on an international level. Development of co-operative skills is said to include willingness and ability to operate in heterogeneous groups and networks, ability to express oneself also in foreign languages, ability to take other individuals into account as well as readiness to evaluate and change one's own conceptions and actions.

The general part also includes descriptions of six different cross-curricular themes that are meant to be covered in all subjects taught in upper secondary schools. Cross-curricular themes reflect current socially relevant challenges and issues; themes touching upon sustainable development, welfare, security, technology, media, entrepreneurship and cultural identity. (LOPS 2003, 25). From the perspective of IC the most interesting cross-curricular theme is evidently the one called "Cultural identity and cultural knowledge", although societal themes as well as themes relating to media as well as seeking and processing information are also of relevance.

According to the cross-curricular theme “Cultural identity and cultural knowledge” (LOPS 2003, 27–28), upper secondary education should focus on developing and reinforcing the students’ own cultural identity by conveying them knowledge of the emergence of Finnish cultural heritage the students’ role as bearers and reformers of this heritage. Cultural identity is seen as comprising of native language, history, religion, art and nature among other issues of importance to the students. In addition to the Finnish cultural heritage, students should also be made aware of common human as well as Scandinavian and European values.

The cross-curricular theme, “Cultural identity and cultural knowledge” underlines the importance of students’ own cultural identity in the process of developing intercultural competence:

Upper secondary schools must reinforce students’ positive cultural identity and knowledge of cultures, which form the basis of attaining the ability for intercultural activities and of succeeding in international co-operation.

(LOPS 2003, 29)

The ultimate objectives for students to reach in terms of “Cultural identity and knowledge of cultures” by the end of upper secondary school are summarized in the curriculum as follows:

- be familiar with different interpretations of the concept of culture and be able to describe the special characteristics of different cultures;
- be familiar with immaterial and material cultural heritage;
- be aware of their own cultural identity, be clear about the cultural group to which they wish to belong and know how to act as interpreters of their own culture;
- appreciate cultural diversity as part of the richness of life and as a source of creativity and be able to reflect on the alternatives of cultural development in the future;
- be able to communicate diversely with people from different cultural backgrounds, even in foreign languages;
- endeavour to contribute actively to the construction of a multicultural society based on mutual respect.

(LOPS 2003, 29–30)

## **IC in the subject-specific part of the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools**

The subject-specific part for foreign languages is common for all foreign languages taught in Finnish upper secondary schools, excluding Lappish and Swedish which are dealt with in separate sections. The common goal for foreign language teaching is formulated in the subject-specific part of the curriculum as follows:

Instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills: it will provide them with skills and knowledge related to language and its use and will offer them the opportunity to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language is spoken.

(LOPS 2003, 102)

As discussed earlier, the notion of target-culture mentioned in the excerpt above is problematic especially when used in reference to English. Therefore, also one of the general objectives set for foreign language learners, “know how to communicate in a manner characteristic of the target language and its culture” (LOPS 2003, 102) has to be adapted in ELT. Hopefully, the next curriculum contains an up-to-date version of this excerpt in the sense that it takes English's special status as an international language into consideration (on English as an international language see e.g. McKay 2002; Crystal 2003; Holliday 2005; Rubdy and Sacareni (eds.) 2006; Kirkpatrick 2007).

Further, the subject-specific part for foreign languages requires that the practices used for discussing and covering the themes in courses ought to enable the comparison between own language and culture and those of others, for instance through literature or other authentic material (LOPS 2003, 103.). The subject-specific part (ibid, 101) also mentions the development of cultural sensitivity and the recognition of culture-bound values; that is the students should become aware of how their own actions and way of thinking are influenced by their culture and learn to apply this knowledge in intercultural interactions.

As regards to the course descriptions, one of the courses, the fifth course, is called “Culture”. The contents of the course in syllabus A<sup>1</sup> are summarized in the curriculum as follows:

The course will deal with culture in a broad sense. The cross-curricular themes ‘cultural identity and knowledge of cultures’ and ‘communication and media competence’ offer perspectives for dealing with the course topics. Students will prepare a relatively extensive project on their chosen topic and make a presentation about it.

(LOPS 2003, 104)

In the case of syllabus B<sup>2</sup>, the contents of the course “Culture” are:

The course may include themes such as the visual arts, literature, music, cinema, theatre or sports in the target culture. On the course, students will practise all areas of language proficiency.

(LOPS 2003, 107)

On the grounds of the course descriptions, it seems culture is dealt with in a more in-depth way on the course of syllabus A than syllabus B.

All in all, the instructions the curriculum gives on teaching and acquiring of IC are crucial, for the national curricula eventually dictate the contents of teaching and coursebook material. However, the operationalisation of objectives of IC remains rather vague, especially in the Finnish National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School, due to which it is up to individual schools and ultimately teachers how and to what extent they specify the objectives of IC in their school-specific curricula.

### **3.2 Developing IC in foreign language teaching**

As regards to teaching intercultural competence in foreign language class room Kaikkonen (2004, 150–156) distinguishes three methods: *information pedagogy*, *encounter pedagogy* and *conflict- and intervention pedagogy*. The salient point in *the information pedagogy* is to convey factual information about foreign nations and cultures and it is, according to Kaikkonen (2004, 151), the most widely used method for teaching intercultural issues in today’s foreign language

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<sup>1</sup> Syllabus started in grades 1-6 of the Finnish basic education.

<sup>2</sup> Syllabus started in grades 7-9 of the Finnish basic education.

teaching. The aim of the information pedagogy is to equip learners with cultural knowledge by providing them with lists of dos and don'ts, e.g. "Don't look an Asian person in the eye" and information of cultural conventions and the differences between own and foreign cultures. Thus, the intercultural competence of an individual is seen as comprising of tools for avoiding and managing intercultural conflicts with the help of cultural knowledge. However, as a number of researchers (e.g. Kordes 1999, 297; Bredella and Delanoy 1999; 7,) claim, cultural knowledge alone is neither the key to successful intercultural communication nor enough to prevent misunderstandings or cultural clashes from occurring.

*The encounter pedagogy* then, emphasizes the importance of intercultural encounters and their reflection. It aims at directing the learner's attention to his own feelings, attitudes, abilities and cultural behaviour by providing him opportunities to encounter representatives of foreign cultures and subject himself to situations where he can develop his skills of managing with uncertainty and ambiguity. Various study trips to abroad, exchange programs and visitors serve this purpose. However, the intercultural encounters as such are not enough; Kaikkonen (2004, 154) points out that without reflection on the experiences the encounters may even reinforce stereotypes.

The focus of the third method, *conflict- and intervention pedagogy* lies on simulating different conflict situations and inviting learners to ponder on solutions to them. Conflict- and intervention pedagogy lends itself well for dealing with problematic and touchy subjects such as racism and for illustrating how big of a part the emotions of learners play in intercultural learning.

There are various ways of implementing the above mentioned teaching methods in foreign language classroom. Intercultural competence can be taught through literature and culture related images, with the help of media (TV shows, broadcasts, newspapers), by taking advantage of the possibilities provided by information and communication technology or by engaging the

learners into different international projects– to name but a few (see Corbett 2003; Byram et al. (eds.) 2001).

In respect of learning tasks suitable for teaching IC Sercu (2004, 81) distinguishes five categories: *cognitive tasks*, *cognitive-attitudinal tasks*, *exploration tasks*, *production of materials* and *enactment tasks*. *Cognitive tasks* can be completed either individually or co-operatively in pairs or groups. Typically the task instructions of cognitive tasks contain verbs such as to analyse, compare, describe, give examples of, identify, list, name, reflect on etc. Sercu's examples of cognitive tasks include: reflect on differences in non-verbal behaviour between *x* and *y*; interpret the text with respect to the possible causes of misunderstandings. *Cognitive-attitudinal tasks* address the affective side of intercultural contact situations and ask learners to seek understanding of other perspectives on an issue, or ponder on how their own attitudes and stereotypes may affect intercultural interaction. *Exploration tasks* then, include exploring or researching a particular cultural aspect, e.g. the foreign culture's norms and expectations with respect to a particular topic. In *production tasks* learners can be required to write an essay on a topic, report their research results or produce a short video-film on a topic. Finally, *enactment tasks* typically invite learners to take part in a simulation game or a role-play, enact a cultural mini-drama or mediate between cultures in an intercultural situation.

The purpose of this section was to shed light on the teaching methods, materials and learning tasks suitable for promoting intercultural competence in foreign language teaching. A wide selection of intercultural learning tasks with clear instructions on how to implement them in practice can, for instance, be found in Fennes and Hapgood (1997, 169–271).

## 4 COURSEBOOKS AS PROMOTERS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Most of the previous research on cultural issues and language teaching materials has had its focus on critical analysis the different cultural aspects in coursebooks (e.g. Risager 1991; Byram 1991; Maijala 2006). Although culture has been the focus of many coursebook analyses, intercultural competence and its representation in coursebooks has not attracted similar kind of attention.

Some recent research focusing on intercultural competence and its features in coursebooks has been conducted Sercu (2000) and Maijala (2008). Both studies analysed German coursebooks. Sercu (2000) examined six German coursebooks of different series and made questionnaires for Flemish adolescent pupils learning German and using the coursebooks in question. Her aim was to find out whether the coursebooks promoted the acquiring of intercultural communicative competence or not. Maijala's (2008) study in turn had its focus on Finnish and Swedish upper secondary school German language coursebooks and their intercultural contents. Maijala conducted a multimodal analysis including all dialogs, texts and pictures and in terms of their intercultural references. Both Sercu and Maijala came to a similar conclusion – issues relating to intercultural interaction should be better represented in coursebooks in order to increase learner's knowledge and skills in this field.

The goal of this study is to find out whether the learning tasks of Finnish upper secondary school English language coursebook series *In Touch* include tasks aimed at promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence. Since the notion of *intercultural communicative competence* is a construct model, a holistic analysis of all its dimensions cannot be pursued within this thesis. Therefore, the focus of the analysis will be on the core of the model, *intercultural competence* (see 2.2.3). The study is a monomodal criteria-based coursebook analysis focusing on the learning tasks of the material and it aims at investigating

the following main question: Do the learning tasks in the coursebook series *In Touch* lend themselves for promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence? The main question can be broken down into the following subquestions:

- To what extent, if at all, do the upper secondary school coursebooks *In Touch 3, 4* and *5* contain learning tasks aimed at increasing learners' intercultural competence?
- What dimensions of intercultural competence, if any, do the learning tasks of the respective coursebooks address?

The next chapter introduces the data of this study, three coursebooks of series *In Touch: In Touch 3: Get a Life!*, *In Touch 4: A World of Difference* and *In Touch 5: Just Imagine*.

#### **4.1 Description of the coursebook data**

*In Touch* is an upper secondary school coursebook series advertised as a series which carefully takes the principles of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools and of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages into consideration. Out of the seven cross-curricular themes described in the national curriculum, each coursebook is said to cover the themes of “Cultural identity and knowledge of cultures” and “Communication and media”. The focus of the material is on learning tasks on communication strategies and situation based communication, which are said to increase the learner's cultural knowledge and develop strategies for intercultural communication (see WSOYa, WSOYb).

There are eight coursebooks in the series and they have been published in 2001–2004. Each coursebook comes with a student–CD which contains recordings of all texts and some of the learning tasks. Coursebooks 1–6 are for compulsory courses and books 7 and 8 for the obligatory specification courses. This study will concentrate on analysing the learning tasks in three coursebooks of the series: *In Touch: In Touch 3: Get a Life!*, *In Touch 4: A World of Difference* and *In Touch 5: Just imagine*. The only criterion why I chose these particular



coursebooks is that they are used on compulsory courses; otherwise the selecting was totally random.

In general, the coursebooks contain three to four units. Each unit comprises of six components and has a similar structure: *Get going*, *Intro and Key Text*, *Intro and Key Listening*, and *Read on*. *Get going* works as a tuning in section at the beginning of each unit. It is followed by *Key Text*, the main text of the unit which includes various learning tasks related to it: understanding the text, talking about the text, practicing vocabulary and idioms. Up next is *Key Listening*, a listening comprehension section which also activates learners to practice pronunciation. Both *Key Text* and *Key Listening* have their own *Intro*-sections preceding them. At the end of each unit there is at least one *Read on* –text with related learning tasks for practicing reading comprehension.

Within the units there are small information boxes called *Toolbox* and *Culture tip*. *Toolboxes* give study tips e.g. instructions on how to use a dictionary, or how to guess a meaning of an unfamiliar word in the text without having to use the vocabulary list. The *Culture tip* –boxes then, provide information on cultural conventions that affect the written and spoken communication in English, e.g. tips for active listening or information on how ticks and crosses are used in schools in the UK and the US. The *By the way* –boxes serve for giving additional information related to the topic at hand, whereas *Word perfect* –boxes aim at clarifying differences in word meanings, e.g. difference between the meanings of ‘short story’ and ‘novel’.

Further, some learning tasks are labelled according to their function. Tasks carrying a label *Function Junction* improve the learners’ communication skills, for instance exercises on hesitating, persuading and forming polite requests belong to this category. *Quick fix* –tasks bring up problems that Finnish speakers usually face when learning English, e.g. how to make a choice between *make* and *do* since there is only one verb *tehdä* for making and doing in Finnish. *Practise your pronunciation* –tasks then concentrate on improving the learners’ pronunciation

skills, there are exercises on word stress and tongue-twisters. The *Write on* –tasks then, include instructions on writing different types of texts, for instance an informal letter or an argumentative essay. Finally, at the end of each coursebook there is a *Grammar* –section with instructions and exercises and a *Refresh* –section for revising grammar and the vocabulary dealt with in all units. Unit-specific vocabulary lists and an alphabetical vocabulary list are also provided at the end of the coursebook.

The coursebooks *In Touch 3: Get a life!* and *In Touch 4: A World of Difference* appeared in 2002 and *In Touch 5: Just imagine* in 2003. *In Touch 3* and *4* have been authored by the same group of writers: Mikael Davies, Eero Lehtonen, Anna-Mari Mäkelä, Lynn Nikkanen, Tuula Sutela, Leena Säteri and Petri Vuorinen. *In Touch 5* has the same authors, Eero Lehtonen excepted. *In Touch 3* comprises of three units and the governing themes of the book are dreams, education and working life. Both *In Touch 4* and *5* have four units. *In Touch 4* touches upon topics related to societies, communities, different lifestyles and relationships. *In Touch 5* has its focus on the spectrum of culture covering themes such as art, music, literature and sports.

The analysis includes all learning tasks found in the three coursebooks in connection with the coursebook units, in the *Grammar* –section and in the *Refresh* –section. The teacher's guides are excluded from the analysis, for the reason that learners do not have access to them; the choice whether or not the material of the teacher's guides is used in class depends on individual teachers. The material of coursebooks in turn is available for learners for certain, despite the fact that all texts and learning tasks are not necessarily dealt with in class. Also the fact that this study is a second subject thesis poses its own restrictions on the amount of data.

## 4.2 The method

This study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative method is applied in order to find out the ratio of learning tasks aimed at increasing intercultural competence to total amount of learning tasks in each coursebook. Qualitative methods then are used to determine whether or not a particular learning task contributes to increasing the intercultural competence of the learner and which dimension(s) of intercultural competence the task addresses.

Although the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools functions as framework for upper secondary education coursebook writers, it contained surprisingly vague descriptions of the objectives of IC (see 3.1.2). Therefore, eliciting the criteria for analysing the learning tasks solely on the basis of objectives described in the national curriculum would have been insufficient. As the objectives of IC listed in CEFR (see 3.1.1) – which has been used as a guideline for drafting the subject specific part of foreign languages in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools – have their roots in Byram's (1997) theory of ICC (see 2.2.3), the criteria applied for the learning task analysis in this study (see Table 1) rest to a large degree on Byram's dimensions of IC.

However, Byram's model of IC had to be modified for the purposes of this study. One dimension *savoir s'engager* overlapped with other dimensions of IC, for it included references to all other dimensions and in a way summed up all the objectives of them. Thus *savoir s'engager* will be omitted in this study. Since the dimension *savoir apprendre/faire* included two competencies not clearly related to each other, the aspect of collecting new information (*savoir apprendre*) has been added to *savoirs*, and *savoir faire* has been made into its own dimension in the modified model. Modified version of dimensions of intercultural competence is as follows:

- ***Savoirs (knowledge):*** *Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's culture, and of the general processes of interaction. Includes*
  - knowledge about aspects of foreign/own culture, e.g. daily life, institutions, non-verbal behaviour and history
  - learners' ability to discover new information about historical and contemporary issues of foreign/ own culture by using references
  - knowledge of the influence cultural background has on interaction
- ***Savoir être (attitudes):*** *Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. This dimension includes learners abilities to*
  - question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products
  - discover other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena.
- ***Savoir comprendre (Skills of interpreting and relating):*** *Ability to interpret a document or an event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own culture. Includes abilities to*
  - identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and critically analyse their origins
  - identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explaining them in terms of each cultural system present
  - relate cultural aspects of own culture to those of foreign cultures

- ***Savoir faire (Skills of intercultural interaction):*** Ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. Includes abilities to
  - interact with representatives of foreign cultures by making use of their knowledge (*savoirs*), attitudes (*savoir être*) and skills (*savoir comprendre*).
  - mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.

After modifying Byram's model of IC four categories of learning tasks aimed at increasing IC were formed: *Knowledge of Cultures*, *Attitudes towards cultures*, *Interpreting and relating cultural elements* and *Intercultural interaction*. Each dimension of intercultural competence, its objectives and their description are presented in Table 1 (below). In order to operationalise the objectives of each dimension I have invented examples of IC learning tasks and added them into the Table 1. The origin of each objective in terms of Byram's *savoirs* is also made visible.

Table 1. Criteria for identifying and analysing learning tasks aiming at promoting intercultural competence.

Dimension of intercultural competence	Objectives	Description of the objectives	Examples of learning tasks
<b>Knowledge of cultures</b>	<p><b>Factual knowledge of cultures</b> (<i>savoirs</i>)</p> <p><b>Understanding the concept of culture</b> (<i>savoirs</i>)</p> <p><b>Collecting information on cultures</b> (<i>savoir apprendre</i>)</p>	<p>Tasks in this category contribute to increasing learners' knowledge of culture specific (own/foreign culture) events, products, significant individuals and emblems, conventions of communication and interaction, private and public institutions and national memory.</p> <p>This category includes tasks which contribute to increasing learners' knowledge of the various ways of defining culture and the ways in which culture affects language and communication</p> <p>This category includes tasks which invite learners to collect information and increase their knowledge of own and/or foreign cultures by using sources outside the coursebook material (e.g. reference books, media, internet).</p>	<p><i>Canada Quiz!</i> How much do you know about Canada and Canadian culture? Try to choose the correct alternative in each question.</p> <p><i>In your opinion, what does culture mean? Do you think you can be part of more than one culture? What cultural group(s) do you identify yourself with? Discuss with your partner.</i></p> <p><i>A Japanese exchange student wants to know about sauna before his arrival in Finland. Write him an e-mail including a short history of sauna, description of sauna customs etc. Make use of relevant reference books or websites.</i></p>
<b>Attitudes towards cultures</b>	<p><b>Identifying generalisations of cultures</b> (<i>savoir être</i>)</p> <p><b>Changing perspectives</b> (<i>savoir être</i>)</p>	<p>The tasks of this subcategory invite learners to express their impressions, opinions, presuppositions and/or attitudes concerning own and/or foreign cultures and to ponder on their origins.</p> <p>Tasks belonging to this subcategory invite learners to change perspective, empathise with foreign points of view and relativise one's own cultural viewpoint and cultural value-system. Tasks of this kind may include arguing for/against certain issue in debates, playing a certain role in a simulation game or finding multiple perspectives on an issue in discussions.</p>	<p><i>What kind of features come into your mind when you think about the Americans? Write down some points with your partner and think where your impressions might have come from.</i></p> <p><i>Money can't buy happiness? Get ready for a debate with your partner! In A's opinion, the more money you have the happier you are. B claims money can't buy happiness. So which way is it? Take a few minutes and write down some good arguments before starting the debate.</i></p>

(Table 1 continued.)

<p><b>Interpreting and relating cultural elements</b></p>	<p><b>Identifying ethnocentric perspectives</b> (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)</p> <p><b>Relating cultures and cultural phenomena</b> (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)</p> <p><b>Identifying and explaining causes of misunderstandings</b> (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)</p>	<p>This subcategory includes tasks which ask the learners to identify ethnocentric perspectives of products (e.g. texts, paintings, films), practices or events of own/foreign culture.</p> <p>The idea of these tasks is to invite learners to relate features of foreign cultures to one's own or vice versa. For instance, tasks can ask learners to ponder on similarities and differences of cultures or to report and/or to reflect their personal encounters with representatives of own/ foreign cultures (e.g. conflicts in interaction, cases of misjudgement, positive observations, ways of overcoming presuppositions etc.).</p> <p>Tasks of this subcategory instruct learners to identify areas of (potential) misunderstanding and dysfunction in interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present.</p>	<p>Read the poem written by Jamie Anderson. Why does the white man in the poem think himself as superior to the black man? How does his attitude show in the poem?</p> <p>Now that you have read about the American Dream, is there such a thing as the Finnish Dream? Is it similar to the American Dream or is it something completely different? How would you describe it and what does it mean to you? Discuss with your partner.</p> <p>Reetta is an exchange student in the US and is at the soccer game with her host family. During the game Reetta starts to talk with a girl sitting next to her, whom she has never met before. The girls talk throughout the game and Rachel, the girl, seems really interested in Reetta's experiences in the US. Reetta starts to think she has found a really nice friend. As the game ends, Rachel says she has enjoyed their conversation and that if Reetta ever needs anything she'd love to help. As they part in the crowd Rachel shouts at Reetta: "Call me anytime!". Only then does Reetta realize that they haven't exchanged their phone numbers. Reetta brings up the issue with her host family, but they consider Rachel's behaviour totally normal. Reetta is confused. What do you think is the reason for the misunderstanding here?</p>
<p><b>Intercultural interaction</b></p>	<p><b>Functioning as a mediator between cultures and dealing with conflict situations</b> (<i>savoir faire</i>)</p> <p><b>Applying one's abilities in interaction</b> (<i>savoir faire</i>)</p>	<p>This subcategory includes tasks which invite the learners to function as mediators between conflicting interpretations of phenomena, e.g. pondering on solutions to conflicting issues and on means for finding common ground.</p> <p>Tasks of this category invite learners to interact with representatives of foreign cultures by making use of their knowledge (savoirs), attitudes (savoir être) and skills (savoir comprendre) in simulated interaction.</p>	<p>One of you is Craig and the other Craig's girlfriend Brittany. Brittany and Craig are arguing about whether or not to let their friend Danny know that they have seen his girlfriend on a date with another guy. Craig thinks it's none of their business, but Brittany insists Danny has the right to know. Act the situation out with your partner. Develop the situation until you find a solution.</p> <p>Imagine the following situation.... How would you react and what would you do? Act out the situation in groups of three.</p>

Each learning task of the coursebooks is examined and if it can be categorised into at least one of the dimensions of IC *Knowledge of cultures, Attitudes towards cultures, Interpreting and relating cultural elements* or *Intercultural interaction* it is qualified as an IC learning task. One learning task can thus be classified into more than one dimension.

Due to the definition of culture in this study, in order to be classified as an IC learning task, the task does not have to address different national cultures, tasks which address individual cultures, e.g. invite learners to empathise with differing opinions in arguments between family members or friends, are regarded as contributing to increasing IC of the learners according to the criteria of different dimensions of IC. Finally, all tasks filling the criteria of IC learning task are documented according to the information presented in Figure 5 (below).

I	Location	1.1 Name of the coursebook
		1.2 Unit of the coursebook
		1.3 Number/ letter of the task (if given)
		1.4 Page number
		1.5 Short description of the task
II	Dimension(s) of IC addressed	
		2.1 Dimension
		2.2 Objective

Figure 5. Documentation of the coursebook data.



### 4.3 Results

The learning tasks in the three coursebooks of the upper secondary English language coursebook series *In Touch* were analysed in terms of whether or not the tasks were aimed at increasing learner's intercultural competence. All in all, the three coursebook contained 306 learning tasks, out of which 33 could be classified as IC learning tasks according to the criteria illustrated in Table 1. Since two tasks fitted into two and one task into four learning objective categories of IC, the total number of IC learning tasks in the case when the tasks are listed according to the objectives is 38. The list of all documented IC learning tasks can be found in Appendix.

Out of the three coursebooks, *In Touch 4* had the highest ratio (15 %) of IC learning tasks to the total amount of learning tasks analysed (see Figure 6). Interestingly and contrary to my assumption, the coursebook for the so-called "Culture course", *In Touch 5*, was the one containing the least (9 %) IC learning tasks in proportion to the total amount of learning tasks.

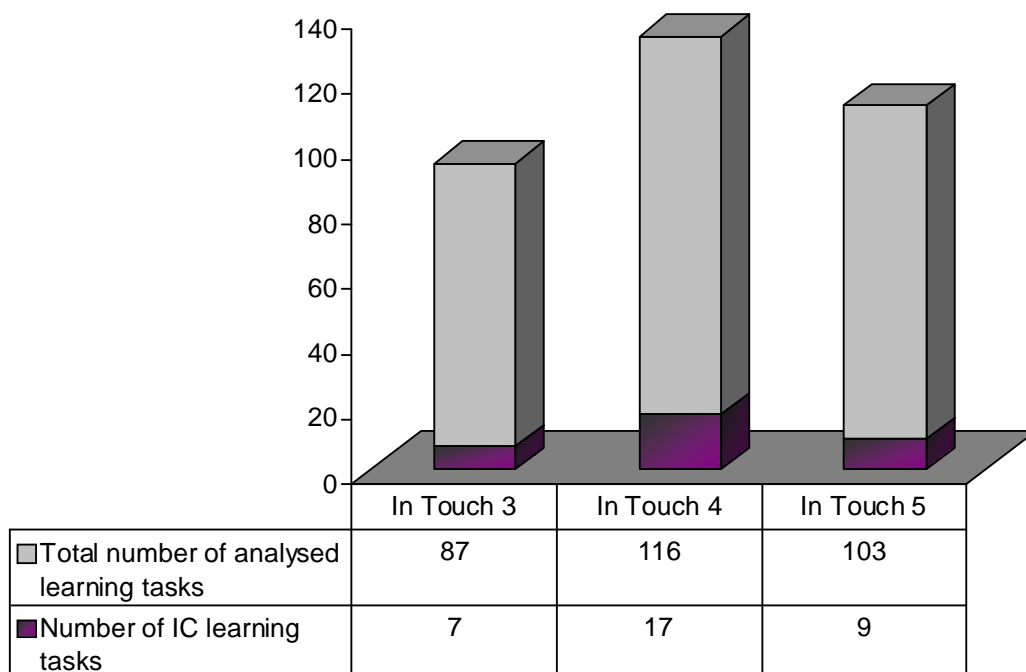


Figure 6. Ratio of learning tasks aimed at increasing IC to total amount of learning tasks in the three coursebooks. Learning tasks addressing more than one objective counted as one.

The majority of the IC learning tasks, altogether 32/33 (91 %), was found within the units, whereas there was only one IC learning task in the *Grammar* -section (IT3;1;P103). None of the *Refresh* –sections contained any IC learning tasks. This kind of distribution of the tasks was expected, for as in general, the *Grammar* -sections included a set of grammar rules followed by mechanical gap-fill or translation exercises aimed at practising the linguistic skills and the *Refresh* -sections comprised of vocabulary and grammar exercises meant for revising the issues dealt within the units and in the grammar section during the course. In fact, the one IC learning task found in the *Grammar* –section was aimed at practising reported speech, but since it invited the learner to write sentences describing what an exchange student would tell her friends about her experiences in Finland, it was also classified as IC learning task according to the objectives *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena* and *Changing perspective*; it invited the learner to look at his own culture from the perspective of a foreigner and to think what features of Finnish culture might have felt foreign to someone new to Finnish culture.

In most cases the IC learning tasks were used for extending the theme of the unit or the coursebook, hence they occurred most frequently in task categories *Understanding the text*, *Talking about the text*, *Write on* and *Freehand*. For instance, the learners were asked to reflect on the issues dealt within the *Key Text*, as in IT3;U1;15;P27, where they were asked to relate their life with the life of a school girl living in Belfast described in the text. Further, the learners were invited to seek more information on the topic of the text, as in IT5;U2;9;P35, where they were asked to find some interesting facts or trivia about the artists mentioned in the text, e.g. Picasso, Michelangelo or J.R.R. Tolkien.

In addition, the IC learning tasks functioned as tuning in -tasks for the theme of the unit or the whole coursebook (e.g. IT4;P8-9, IT5;U1;A;P10) and occurred thus frequently in *Get going*, *Intro to key text* and *Intro to read on* –task categories. In general, different types of writing tasks and conversational exercises were most common types of IC learning tasks, but there were some action oriented tasks and listening comprehensions as well.

All the dimensions of IC, *Knowledge of cultures*, *Attitudes towards cultures*, *Interpreting and relating cultural elements* and *Intercultural interaction*, were addressed in the learning tasks of the analysed coursebooks. The vast majority of the IC learning tasks (55 %) was aimed at increasing learner's *Knowledge of cultures*, the second largest amount of tasks could be classified into the dimension *Attitudes towards cultures* (22 %). One of two remaining dimensions of IC, *Interpreting and relating cultural elements*, was also addressed quite frequently, but only 5 % of the learning tasks could be categorised into *Intercultural interaction*.

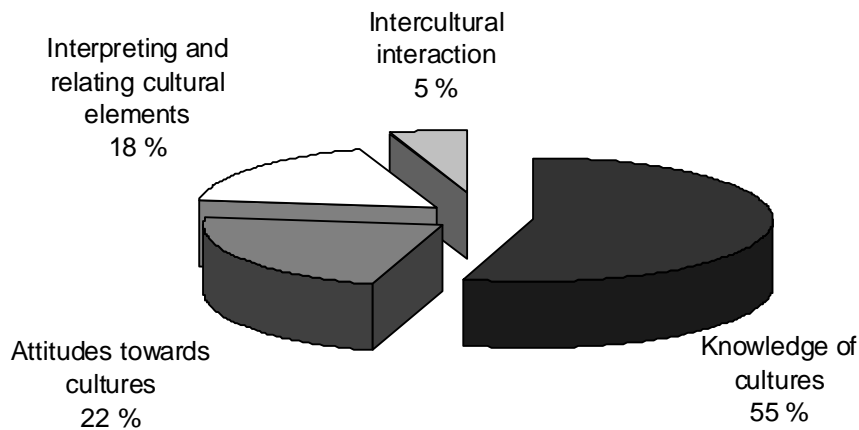


Figure 7. Distribution of dimensions of IC addressed in the learning tasks of the coursebook data.

The dimension *Knowledge of cultures* was addressed in the form of the objectives *Factual knowledge of cultures* and *Collecting information on cultures*, there were no learning tasks increasing learner's knowledge of the various ways of defining the term culture (*Understanding the concept of culture*). One example of the tasks categorised under *Factual knowledge of cultures* is presented in Figure 8 (below). It is a quiz-type of exercise on school systems in the UK and the US, where the learner needs to identify the key word(s) or clues (e.g. prom,

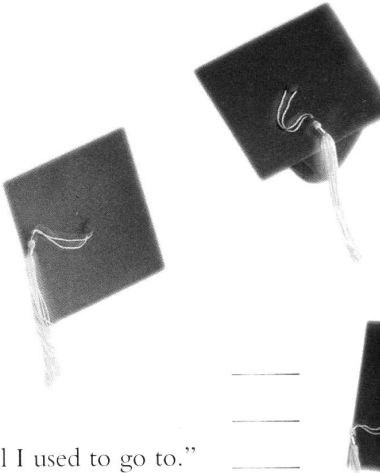
homecoming queen, A-levels) in every statement and decide which system, American or British, is being referred to. For instance, the learner needs to know that homecoming is an annual tradition of the United States and Homecoming Queens and Kings are respectively crowned in American schools.

Further themes addressed within the dimension *Knowledge of cultures* were learner's knowledge of famous authors (e.g. Shakespeare, Jane Austen), cities and communities in Britain and Ireland, history of Britain (Norman Conquest) as well as different religions, concepts of marriage, housing styles and means of decorating one's body in cultures around the world. Also some contrasts between Finnish and British culture were highlighted; the learners acquired knowledge of differences in buying a house and moving between Finns and British people and learned things they should consider when staying as a guest in a UK home.

**Unit 2** A class of your own

**B** **INTRO** TO KEY TEXT

How good is your general knowledge of the British and American school systems? The following statements give you a clue about which system is being referred to each time. Work with a partner and try to figure out which statements apply to the American (Am) and which to the British (Br) school system.




- 1** "The prom definitely is the highlight of our senior year." \_\_\_\_\_
- 2** "How many A-levels are you planning to do?" \_\_\_\_\_
- 3** "My sixth form is in the same grounds as the comprehensive school I used to go to." \_\_\_\_\_
- 4** "Who do you reckon will be this year's homecoming queen?" \_\_\_\_\_
- 5** "What was your freshman year like?" \_\_\_\_\_
- 6** "We have a lot of students whose parents are from Bangladesh or Pakistan." \_\_\_\_\_
- 7** "We won the inter-school cricket tournament this year." \_\_\_\_\_
- 8** "A lot of people find it confusing that our public schools are private." \_\_\_\_\_
- 9** "I hope my grade point average is high enough for Emerson College." \_\_\_\_\_
- 10** "I go to an all-girls Catholic high school." \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 8. Example of an IC learning task addressing the objective *Factual knowledge of cultures* IT3;U2;B;P36.

Majority of the tasks addressing the dimension *Attitudes towards cultures* could be classified into the objective *Changing perspective*, in fact only two tasks out of the eight tasks addressing this dimension belonged under the objective *Identifying generalisations of cultures*. The two tasks aimed at increasing learner's ability to identify stereotypes and generalisations of cultures dealt with generalisations of males and females, i.e. their typical features, habits and behavioural patterns.

The tasks belonging to the objective *Changing perspective* invited the learner to imagine himself into someone else's shoes or to look at an issue from a given perspective. The learner was asked to play the role of a British exchange student in an American school, imagine what foreigners would tell to their families about their experiences in Finland and what cultural peculiarities they might have encountered. The learner was also asked to take multiple perspectives on an issue in a debate on pros and cons of vegetarianism and when writing an argumentative essay on the topics *It's still a man's world- true or not?* and *Finland – a have for foreigners?*. In addition, the learner was invited to write a story from the point of view of a son as a follow-up task to the *Key Text*, which had described the feelings and thoughts of the boy's father. An example of a task belonging to the objective *Changing perspective* is illustrated in Figure 9 (below). In this task the learner needs to ponder on the (unique) characteristics of his own culture and think how they may appear to someone foreign to the customs and values of his culture.

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Imagine that you are a researcher who comes to Finland / your own community to study something. Write a passage describing an unusual cultural encounter that you had.

Figure 9. Example of an IC learning task addressing the objective *Changing perspective* IT4;U3;24;P80.

All in all, the tasks addressing the dimension *Attitudes towards cultures* contributed to increasing learner's ability to recognise generalisations of cultures, to put him into someone else's shoes and take multiple perspectives on an issue.

The learning tasks addressing the dimension *Interpreting and relating cultural elements* included tasks which invited the learner to interpret a novel/film (*Forrest Gump*) in terms of its references to American society and values, relate the life of a school girl living in Belfast to his life in Finland, identify conflicts in interaction between a father and a son and to reflect on his own experiences on national differences in people's attitudes to nudity. Figure 10 (below) illustrates an example of a task belonging to the objective *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena*, a follow-up task of a *Key Listening* –exercise on an American photographer who takes photos of large numbers of naked people in public places. In this task the learner is invited to reflect his own experiences of how people's attitudes of nudity vary according to the culture and nationality. The task asks the learner to summon up any encounters with differing views on nudity and reflect on them. Hearing the experiences of others helps those learners who have no personal experiences on the topic to gain insight into the fact that not all things are equally accepted or natural in all cultures.

Talk through the following points in groups of three.

- 1** Would you consider taking part in one of these shoots? If so, who would you go with?
- 2** What kind of national differences have you experienced in people's attitudes to nudity?
- 3** What do you think of this kind of art?

Spencer Tunick keeps his eye on the bare essentials.

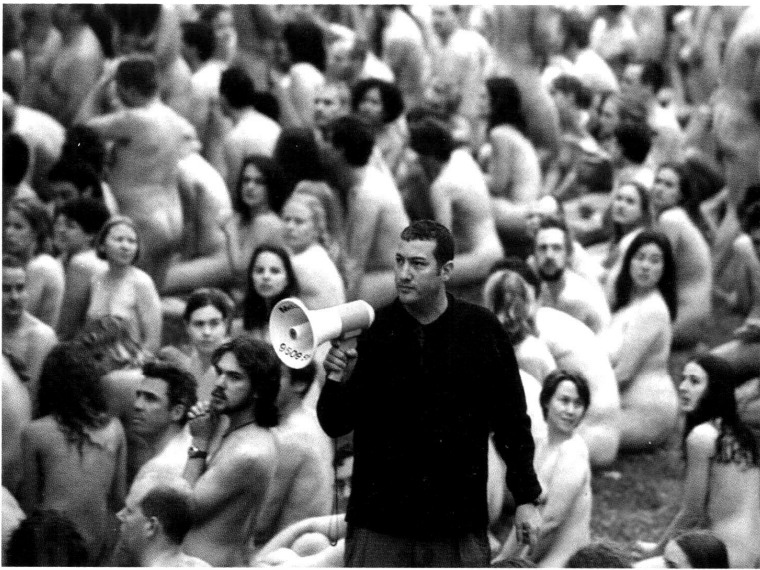


Figure 10. Example of an IC learning task addressing the objective *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena* IT5;U4;1;P79.

Another example of a learning task addressing the dimension *Interpreting and relating cultural elements* is a task inviting the learner to analyse the film *Forrest Gump* in terms of its references to American society and values (see Figure 11, question 4 in the task). This task passes for a task for *Identifying ethnocentric perspectives*, for the learner is invited to interpret the cultural references of a product. The task helps the learner to become aware of how culture is reflected in all aspects of life, even in films and novels.

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TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T SEEN THE FILM

- ❶ Do you think you can judge how good a novel will be by its opening page or pages?
- ❷ Would you be inspired to read the rest of *Forrest Gump* on the basis of what you have read so far? Why? / Why not?
- ❸ Have you read any other novels which have unusual characters? Give examples.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THE MOVIE

- ❶ Was the film well cast? Why? / Why not?
- ❷ What were the memorable scenes?
- ❸ Was it believable? Why? / Why not?
- ❹ What did it reveal about American society and values?
- ❺ Was it a worthy Oscar winner? Why? / Why not?

Figure 11. Example of an IC learning task addressing the objective *Identifying ethnocentric perspectives* IT5;U3;16;P68.

In the case of the dimension *Intercultural interaction* only two tasks addressing the dimension in question were found in the coursebook data. One was classified under the objective *Functioning as a mediator between cultures and dealing with conflicting situations*, for it invited the learner to find solutions to problems occurring in the local neighbourhood, such as damaging property and fights between ethnic groups. The other was categorised as a task addressing the objective *Applying one's abilities in interaction*, but also as a task belonging to the objectives *Changing perspective*, *Factual knowledge of cultures* and *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena*, since

the task not only invited the learner to play a role in a simulated interaction situation, but it also contributed to increasing his knowledge of features of American and British school systems and in addition, it asked him to imagine himself into the British exchange student's shoes and relate British, American and Finnish cultures (see Figure 12).

## 4 ACTING IT OUT

Work in pairs. Choose one of the situations below and act it out with your partner. Read only your own role card (Student A or Student B), not both.

### Situation 1

**Student A**  
You are a Hartwell student spending a year as an exchange student at Saint Cecilia's Academy, New York. Having seen quite a few films set in American high schools, you were really looking forward to your stay there. However, the new school environment is not quite what you expected. You meet up with your tutor, a senior at the school, and bring up things that have shocked you so far: the school uniform, the fact that there are no boys, the work load, the way students are obsessed with the prom and sports etc.

**Student B**  
You are a senior at Saint Cecilia's Academy, New York, tutoring a British exchange student at your school. You want her year at Saint Cecilia's to be both mentally and physically challenging and have a busy schedule planned for her. You meet up with the student to explain what courses she should be taking. You also want to encourage her to take part in the extra-curricular activities the school has to offer.

### Situation 2

**Student A**  
You are a student at Hartwell School. When you arrive at school on Friday morning, you are immediately summoned to the head's office. You are not quite sure what the reason is and wonder if it has something to do with the fact that you came to school two hours late that morning. Still, you're quite happy to get the chance to express your views on the school system, this particular sixth form and society as a whole.

**Student B**  
You're the head of Hartwell School in Britain. It's Friday morning and you have a headache. What is more, one of the students has showed up at school wearing pink Doc Martens and a kilt. You want to have a word with him and have called him to your office. During the discussion you mention things like 'respect', 'setting an example', 'skirts', and, finally, 'suspension'.

### Culture TIP

**WHERE AM I?**  
The easiest translation for *lukio* is **high school**. Thanks to American movies most people will understand what it is. However you will also see:

- senior high school** (US)
- sixth form college** (UK)
- upper secondary school** (official translation in Finland)

Other common translations are **senior school** and **senior secondary school**. Check out your school home page or brochure to see how your school's name has been translated.




Figure 12. Example of an IC learning task addressing the objectives *Applying one's abilities in interaction*, *Factual knowledge of cultures* and *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena* IT3;U2;4;P4.



Table 2. Dimensions and objectives of IC addressed in the learning tasks of the three coursebooks. Learning tasks addressing more than one objective counted separately.

Dimension of IC	Objective	<i>In Touch 3</i>	<i>In Touch 4</i>	<i>In Touch 5</i>	Total amount of IC learning tasks in coursebooks
Knowledge of cultures	Factual knowledge of cultures ( <i>savoirs</i> )	3	11	5	19
	Understanding the concept of culture ( <i>savoirs</i> )	-	-	-	-
	Collecting information on cultures ( <i>savoir apprendre</i> )	-	-	2	2
	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>3 (27 %)</b>	<b>11 (61 %)</b>	<b>7 (78 %)</b>	<b>21 (55 %)</b>
Attitudes towards cultures	Identifying generalisations of cultures ( <i>savoir être</i> )	-	2	-	2
	Changing perspective ( <i>savoir être</i> )	3	3	-	6
	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>3 (27 %)</b>	<b>5 (27 %)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8 (22 %)</b>
Interpreting and relating cultural elements	Identifying ethnocentric perspectives ( <i>savoir comprendre</i> )	-	-	1	1
	Relating cultures and cultural phenomena ( <i>savoir comprendre</i> )	3	1	1	5
	Identifying and explaining causes of misunderstandings ( <i>savoir comprendre</i> )	1	-	-	1
	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>4 (36 %)</b>	<b>1 (6 %)</b>	<b>2 (22 %)</b>	<b>7 (18 %)</b>
Intercultural interaction	Functioning as a mediator between cultures and dealing with conflicting situations ( <i>savoir comprendre</i> )	-	1	-	1
	Applying one's abilities in interaction ( <i>savoir faire</i> )	1	-	-	1
	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>1 (9 %)</b>	<b>1 (6 %)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2 (5 %)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>11 (100 %)</b>	<b>18 (100 %)</b>	<b>9 (100 %)</b>	<b>38 (100 %)</b>

As can be seen in the Table 2 (above), there was some variation between the coursebooks in terms of the objectives addressed in the learning tasks. Although all the dimensions of IC were addressed in all coursebooks, there were differences on the level of objectives: only two objectives, *Factual knowledge of cultures* and *Relating cultures and cultural phenomena* were addressed in every coursebook and none of the coursebooks contained any learning tasks in the objective *Understanding the concept of culture*. Both *In Touch 3* and *In Touch 4* contained learning tasks addressing altogether five objectives, whereas the tasks in *In Touch 5* addressed only four objectives. However, *In Touch 5* was the only coursebook containing learning tasks in objective categories *Collecting information on cultures* and *Identifying ethnocentric perspectives*. Further, the vast majority of IC learning tasks in *In Touch 4* and *In Touch 5* dealt with *Knowledge of cultures*, whereas in *In Touch 3* the amount of IC learning tasks was more evenly distributed among the objectives.

As regards the criteria for identifying and analysing the learning tasks in the coursebook data (see Table 1), one objective proved to be insufficiently operationalised. The objective *Applying one's abilities in interaction* lacked a more detailed explication, for it did not define what counts as 'interaction' nor did it clarify whether a task needs to address all the other dimensions of IC (*Knowledge of cultures*, *Attitudes towards cultures* and *Interpreting and relating cultural elements*) before it can be classified as a learning task addressing the objective *Applying one's abilities in interaction*, or whether it is enough if only one other dimension of IC is addressed. If addressing all the other dimensions would be demanded, the objective *Applying one's abilities in interaction* would actually be equivalent to the notion of *intercultural competence*.

Another problem in operationalising all of the dimensions of IC was the fine or non-existent line between social competence and intercultural competence. This was predominantly due to the fact that in this study, 'culture' and 'intercultural' were seen as concepts referring not solely to national cultures (e.g. Finns, Americans), but also to ethnic groups, sexes and even to

individual cultures. Had the learning tasks in the coursebooks been analysed by using criteria based on the view of that ‘culture’ refers strictly to national cultures, the number of learning tasks qualifying as IC learning tasks would have been 23 instead of 33, but then, the 10 tasks clearly addressing the objectives of intercultural competence but referring to individual cultures would have been excluded. Either way, the question remains whether it is even possible to draw the line between the social and intercultural competence without defining ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural’ solely on the grounds of national cultures.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study aimed at casting light on how intercultural competence is promoted in the learning tasks of upper secondary school English language coursebooks. The analysis of the learning tasks in the three coursebooks of the series *In Touch* showed that all the coursebooks contained learning tasks addressing the dimensions of IC *Knowledge of cultures, Attitudes towards cultures, Interpreting and relating cultural elements* and *Intercultural interaction*. All in all 33 IC learning tasks could be identified in the coursebook data, which encompassed altogether 306 learning tasks.

The vast majority of the IC learning tasks was aimed at increasing learner’s *Knowledge of cultures*; they addressed the learner’s knowledge of school systems in Britain, America and Finland, famous authors (e.g. Shakespeare, Jane Austen), cities and communities in Britain and Ireland, history of Britain (Norman Conquest) as well as different religions, concepts of marriage, housing styles and means of decorating one’s body in cultures around the world. Further, the learners acquired knowledge of differences in Finnish and British conventions and were invited to seek additional information on significant individuals of different cultures (e.g. Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and Picasso).

The tasks aimed at making the learner aware of his *Attitudes towards cultures* included learning tasks, which addressed learner's ability to recognise generalisations of cultures, put himself into someone else's shoes and take multiple perspectives on an issue. For instance, the learner was invited to ponder on male and female stereotypes, write a story from another person's perspective and argue for and against vegetarianism.

The learning tasks addressing the dimension *Interpreting and relating cultural elements* then, invited the learner to interpret cultural products, i.e. the novel/film (Forrest Gump) in terms of its references to American society and values, relate cultures, i.e. the life of a school girl living in Belfast to his life in Finland, identify conflicts in interaction between a father and a son and to reflect on his own experiences on national differences in people's attitudes to nudity.

Finally, only two learning tasks could be categorised into the dimension *Intercultural interaction*. The tasks invited the learner to find solutions to problems occurring in the local neighbourhood, such as damaging property and fights between ethnic groups and to play a role in a fictive simulated interaction taking place in British and American schools. Although the dimensions of IC overlap with each other to some extent and could easily be present in one learning task at the same time, surprisingly, there were only 3 tasks which fitted into more than one learning objective category.

Even if 10 % (33 tasks) of all the analysed learning tasks could be classified as IC learning tasks, it does not change the fact that the rest of the tasks in the coursebook material were predominantly aimed at building and practising vocabulary and learning grammatical structures. When put into this perspective, the results of this study suggest that intercultural competence has not got as important a status as an educational objective in the English language teaching as linguistic competence.

Since the occurrence of IC learning tasks seemed not to be bound with the theme of the coursebook, the results of this study allude that also the remaining parts of the series *In Touch* could contain learning tasks aimed at increasing the intercultural competence of the learner. In

fact, in order to get an overall picture of the ways of promoting IC in English language teaching, it would be of great interest to conduct a multimodal analysis on all coursebooks of the series, include the material of teacher's guides and, in addition, to observe how the material of coursebooks and teacher's guides is used in class. In this respect, this study served as an impetus for further research.

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## APPENDIX

### IC LEARNING TASKS IN THE COURSEBOOK DATA

#### KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURES

##### Factual knowledge of cultures

IT3;U2;B;P36	Quiz on British and American school systems
IT3;U2;4;P41	Simulation exercise, experiences in American and British schools from the point of view of an exchange student (e.g. school uniforms, the American society)
IT3;U2;6;P43	Comparing Finnish, British and American school systems
IT4;P8-9	City of Bradford and British accents
IT4;U1;P14	Quiz on homes around the world
IT4;U1;P18	Differences in buying a house and moving between Finns and British people
IT4;U1;P28	Tips for Finnish guests staying in UK homes
IT4;U2;P43	Information on Bradford festival Mela
IT4;U2;21;P53	Different ways of greeting people around the world
IT4;U2;22;P53	Trying out different ways of greeting people
IT4;U2;23;P54	Norman Conquest of England, influence of French on English
IT4;U3;3;P60	Marriage in different cultures
IT4;U3;11;P66	Different religions
IT4;U3;13;P69	Buddhism in Scotland
IT5;U1;A;P10	Quiz on famous writers, books, movies and other literature related topics
IT5;U1;2;P14	Questions on Shakespeare and Eminem
IT5;U1;8;P18	Shakespeare's life and works
IT5;U2;23;P49	Life in Limerick, Ireland
IT5;U4;P78	Body arts and their meanings in different cultures

##### Understanding the concept of culture

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##### Collecting information on cultures

IT5;U1;B;P11	Finding biographical information on one of the writers mentioned in the task A (e.g. Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Stephen King)
IT5;U2;9;P35	Finding some interesting facts or trivia about artists, e.g. Picasso, Michelangelo, J.R.R. Tolkien

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS CULTURES

##### Identifying generalisations of cultures

IT4;U3;18;P74	Generalisations of males and females
IT4;U3;20;P77	Generalisations of males and females

**Changing perspective**

IT3;U2;4;P41	Simulation exercise, experiences in American and British schools from the point of view of an exchange student (e.g. school uniforms, the American society)
IT3;U2;18;P54	Writing a description of the situation described in the text from the point of view of another person
IT3;1;P103	Imagining what an exchange student would tell her friends about her experiences in Finland
IT4;U2;14;P47	Argumenting for and against vegetarianism
IT4;U3;24;P80	Describing Finland from the perspective of foreign researcher
IT4;U3;25;P81	Writing an argumentative essay, for instance on the topic Finland – haven for foreigners?

**INTERPRETING AND RELATING CULTURAL ELEMENTS****Identifying ethnocentric perspectives**

IT5;U3;16;P68	Interpreting what the extract of <i>Forrest Gump</i> revealed about American society and values
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**Relating cultures and cultural phenomena**

IT3;U1;15;P27	Relating life of a school girl in Belfast to the life of one in Finland
IT3;U2;4;P41	Simulation exercise, experiences in American and British schools from the point of view of an exchange student (e.g. school uniforms, the American society)
IT3;1;P103	Imagining what an exchange student would tell her friends about her experiences in Finland
IT4;U3;24;P80	Imagining what kind of Finnish customs or practices could be seen as unusual from the perspective of a foreigner
IT5;U4;1;P79	Reflecting on own experiences on national differences in people's attitudes to nudity

**Identifying and explaining causes of misunderstandings**

IT3;U1;8;P21	Identifying conflicts between Gary and his father
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**INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION****Functioning as a mediator between cultures and dealing with conflicting situations**

IT4;U4;9;P93	Finding out ways to deal with different kinds of problems, e.g. fights between ethnic groups
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**Applying one's abilities in interaction**

IT3;U2;4;P41	Simulation exercise, experiences in American and British schools from the point of view of an exchange student (e.g. school uniforms, the American society)
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