

**Exploring Finnish upper secondary English teachers'
cognition and practice of teaching intercultural competence**
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ABSTRACT

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Nowadays, globalization has increased the interaction and encounters between diverse cultures, which makes intercultural competence increasingly imperative in multicultural situations. Students are the masters of the future world, as are the English teachers, who play a principle role in students' development (Polat & Ogay, 2014). It is therefore vital to consider the current situation of intercultural competence's teaching, and what are the possible ways to cultivate and promote students' intercultural competence.

The aim of the study is to explore Finnish upper secondary English teachers' cognition and practice of teaching intercultural competence. The dataset includes recordings of teacher interviews and videos of classroom teaching from four English teachers from the same Finnish senior high school have been transcribed and observed. The main focus of the analysis is concerning the questions of where intercultural issues are presented and how they are incorporated into classroom practice, with the extracts or key moments taken out for further analysis.

Using Borg's theory of teacher cognition, it is found that though teachers seek to teach intercultural competence, these attempts are quite limited due to the influence of their previous experience of learning and teaching, and the contextual factors mostly for textbooks design and matriculation exams. Moreover, teachers' practices which incorporate intercultural competence were selected and analyzed based on Byram's model of intercultural competence consisting of knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness(Byram, 1997). Accordingly, suggestions on how to teach intercultural competence are concluded and put forward which might support future teaching.

Keywords: intercultural competence, teacher cognition, teaching practice, previous experience, contextual factors

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1 INTRODUCTION

In times of accelerating globalization and frequent migration, societies are becoming more and more diverse (Alasuutari & Jokikokko, 2010), which makes communication with diverse people increasingly inevitable. In order to respond to the diversity of citizens, particularly immigrants, inclusion is greatly needed. Aiming to create a more inclusive and equal society and education system, intercultural learning, which is regarded as a lifelong learning process has become the precondition (Alasuutari & Jokikokko, 2010). In addition, intercultural competence, concerning the competence of communication in multicultural environment is also one of the most desirable capabilities for those who are likely to work or communicate in international environments (Krajewski, 2011).

It is commonly acknowledged that education plays a principal role in any process of social change (Alasuutari & Jokikokko, 2010). Therefore, current education is striving for equipping students with intercultural competence in order to help them avoid conflicts originated from differentiation and become tolerant and respectful to each other (Choi, 2016). Teachers, as the executors of education, particularly foreign language (FL) teachers are evidently expected to support the cultivation and promotion of intercultural competence, which means new professional demands are made of language teachers in recent years. They are required to adjust their teaching objectives from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence in FL education (Sercu, 2006).

Although most teachers and scholars have already realized the significance of intercultural competence, there are considerable difficulties of the integrating intercultural competence into teaching practice (Atay, Kurt, Çamlıbel, Ersin & Kaslıoğlu, 2009). As a matter of fact, there has been a large volume of research and theories regarding intercultural education and culture teaching in language education since 1990s. However, the research results show that even though many language teachers were aware of the importance of integrating intercultural competence into classroom teaching, they met challenges of finding effective teaching pedagogy of promoting students' intercultural competence (Larzén, 2005).

As Jokikokko (2005) stated in her research result, many students who have graduated from a Master of Education International Programme have found many barriers for teaching intercultural competence, due to the lack of support from colleagues and schools.

As can be seen from former researches and studies, the teacher plays a key role in promoting students' intercultural competence, while it is hard for teachers to accomplish this task. So, as a prospective English teacher, I am interested in finding out teaching practices have been effectively applied by current teachers, typically FL teachers. Hence, this study will try to better understand teachers' awareness and attitudes of integrating intercultural competence into classroom practice and how they organize activities. Furthermore, this research will try to work out possible model or considerations for the better practice of the education of intercultural competence. Hopefully, the research results would be helpful for myself as well as other prospective and current teachers' future teaching practices of improving students' intercultural competence.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section presents the theories and literature on which this thesis is based. As teachers, hold the key role in foreign language learning, the theories drawn on here focus on teachers' cognition, beliefs or understanding and the way in which previous experience influences their teaching practice. This section is then followed by intercultural framework, including definition of intercultural competence, how it develops and implemented in foreign language teaching.

2.1 Definition of Teacher cognition

No matter how excellent or poor the teaching content and context is, it is the teachers who affect the learners directly. So, teachers are at the very position where they can choose, decide and adjust the teaching content in line with different educational contexts (Choi, 2016). According to Pajares (1992), teachers' pedagogical thinking has

been studied with a long history in the field of education as well as in the field of second or foreign language learning and teaching. Also, he stated that “Beliefs are far more important than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior” (p.311), so teachers’ beliefs significantly influence their teaching practice. Borg (2003) also stated that the mainstream educational research had recognized the impact of teacher cognition on teachers’ professional lives particularly their teaching practice, indeed a substantial body of research had already been conducted and published particularly since 1990s. Crookes and Arakaki (1999), for example have found the teacher always has his or her habituated patterns of thought and action, namely routines. Gatlinton (1999) stated the teacher’s accumulated knowledge about the teaching including teaching objectives, procedures, or strategies served as the basis for his or her classroom behaviour or practices. Uncontestedly, mainstream educational research has admitted teacher cognition exerts an influence on teacher behaviors in the classroom teaching (Borg, 2003).

Borg (2003) has defined the term teacher cognition as the “unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (p.81). Borg has formulated a conceptualized schema of teaching within which teacher cognition plays an essential role in teachers’ lives and career (as Figure 1).

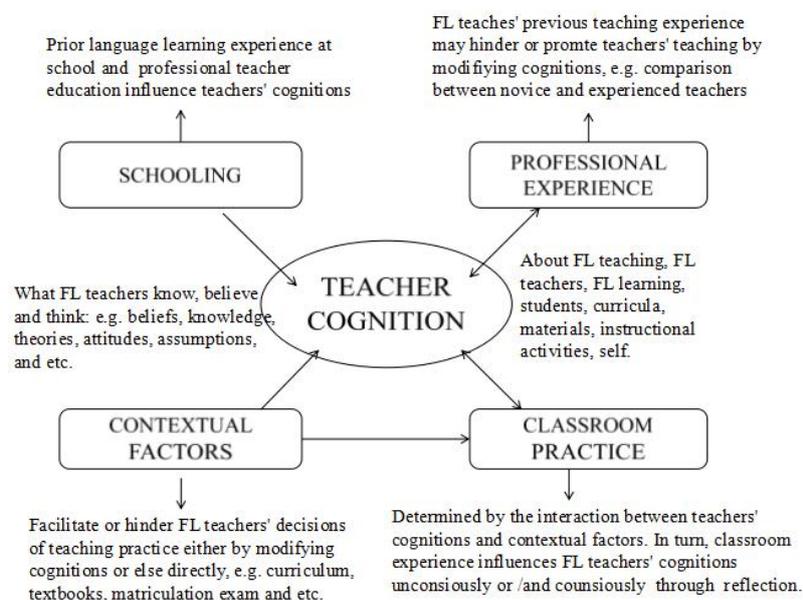


Figure 1. Factors influencing teacher cognition in FL education (Borg 2003, pp.82), modified by Huanhuan Zheng

Grounded in mainstream educational research, Figure 1 outlines relationships among teacher cognition, classroom practice and teacher learning, where the last comprises both schooling and professional education (Larzén, 2005). It indicates that teachers' previous learning experience can shape their cognitions about teaching and learning which continues to influence them throughout their career. Thus, it is important to inform teachers of updated pedagogical knowledge or educational research discoveries in order to keep the cognition of teachers in pace with the fast developing world. Borg (2015) has suggested teacher preparation programmes does shape their cognition, but programmes ignoring prior knowledge would be less effective. Moreover, when it comes to the professional experience, it is found that teachers' previous teaching experience might hinder or promote their future teaching when making comparison between novice teacher and experienced teacher (Borg, 2003).

In terms of classroom practice and teacher cognition, the figure indicates that they are influencing each other mutually, with contextual factors determining the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognitions (Larzén, 2005). Additionally, as seen in the figure, contextual factors can directly influence teachers' classroom practice including factors as curriculum, textbooks and so on (Borg, 2003). In brief, Borg (2015) further considered teacher cognition as "an inclusive term referring to complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work" (p. 321).

2.2 The development of aims within foreign language education

2.2.1 From Linguistic Competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence

Throughout the past hundred years, linguistic competence was viewed as the overall objective of FL education. It is prevailingly believed that the ultimate purpose of FL learning is to achieve the knowledge of the target language including vocabulary and grammar (Larzén, 2005).

Evolution has gradually taken place during the end of nineteenth century, when the acquisition of language knowledge was found no longer enough for FL learners (Larzén, 2005). In 1972, Hymes first proposed the concept of communicative competence, he described it as “linguists wishing to understand first language acquisition, need to pay attention to the way in which not only grammatical competence but also the ability to use language appropriately is acquired” (Byram, 1997; p.7). This concept was then used as the implicit objective of FL teaching, it assumed that the authoritative and final goal of FL teaching was to imitate native speakers in their abilities of linguistic competence, utilization of “appropriate” language, and gaining knowledge of the country and culture (Byram et al., 2002).

However, Hymes’ idea was questioned by many researchers later. Byram (1997) argued that the concept of communicative competence ignored the nexus between linguistic and sociocultural competence, with no consideration of the social identities and cultural competence of language learners. Additionally, Alptekin (2002) challenged that the native speaker-based notion of communicative competence was unrealistic and limited, because it portrayed a monolithic perception of native speakers’ language and culture, which failed to identify the multiple identities of individuals and easily induced stereotypes and prejudice. Further, it might become a process of enculturation or abandoning of one’s own social identity if only focusing on learning the language and culture of the target language. On the other hand, native speakers were actually impossible to know or introduce their culture thoroughly, because individuals had diverse cultural experiences in their social activities (Larzén, 2005). Most importantly, English has now been an international language which makes it hard to specify who is the native speaker, and thus demands for the development of communicative competence so that it reflects the lingua franca status of English (Alptekin, 2002). Therefore, “communicative competence” was expanded to “intercultural communicative competence” and became increasingly crucial part of FL education.

2.2.2 Defining intercultural competence

Intercultural communicative competence can be broadly explained as one's ability to be aware of and respect different social identities, and the ability to interact with people with multiple identities and individuality (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). In line with this new shift of the aim of FL education, FL teachers has been challenged to manage new professional skills, knowledge and attitude (Choi, 2016). Sercu (2006) suggested that FL teachers today has been required to be able to cover intercultural perspectives in their teaching to promote students' acquisition of intercultural competence, which implied FL teachers should be familiar with both their own culture and the culture of target language, they should be able to employ the teaching techniques for the promotion of intercultural competence and be willing to actively integrate intercultural competence into FL education. In other words, FL teachers are now expected to become "intercultural teachers", they are pushed to have "more critical, socially, culturally and politically aware knowledge-base than just content knowledge" (Kramsch, 2004; p.45). Evidently, intercultural competence has become one of the crucial objectives of FL teaching, therefore considerable models and conceptualizations of intercultural competence are illustrated below, particularly Byram's model which is applied for the data analysis in this thesis.

In response to new FL educational objectives of obtaining intercultural competence for students , Byram (1997) made a model of intercultural competence that indicated intercultural communicative competence consisted of "linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence" (p. 49). To be specific, model of intercultural competence is comprised of five *Savoirs* as seen in Figure 2, including interpreting/relating skills (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir faire*), knowledge (*savoir*), critical cultural awareness (*savoirs' engager*) and attitudes (*savoir-être*) (p.34). Among five components, attitudes is the precondition while critical cultural awareness is the center of the model. Most importantly, the relationship between five *Savoirs* are interdependent with each other, for instance, the acquisition of knowledge could help students to be more open and curious about other cultures

and their own culture, simultaneously, students' attitudes also influence their obtaining of knowledge.

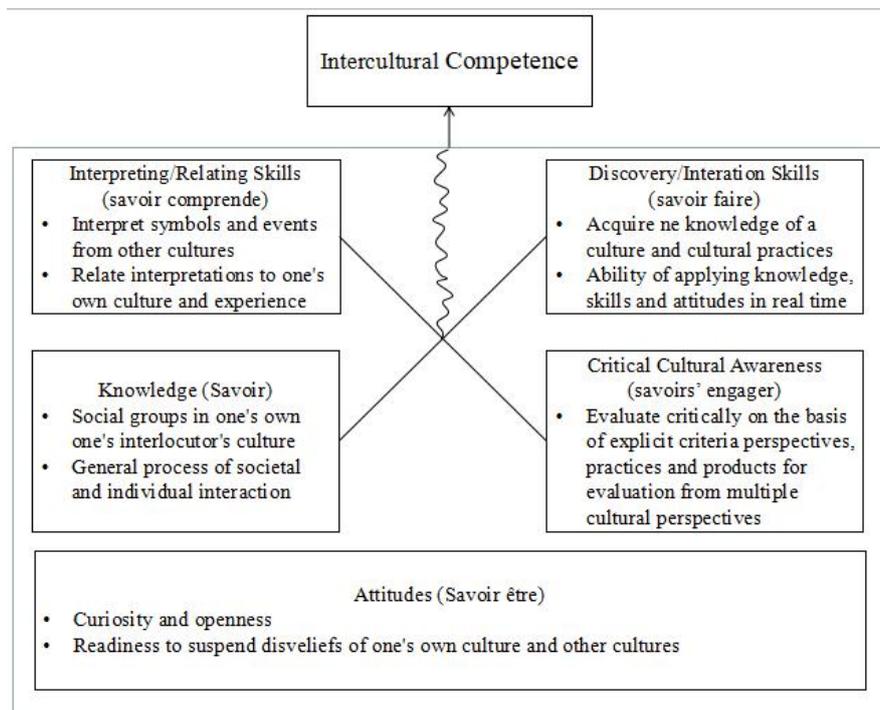


Figure 2. Intercultural competence model (Byram, 1997, pp.62), modified by Huanhuan Zheng

As the foundation of successful intercultural communication, attitudes means "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 57). A negative attitude always leads to unsuccessful intercultural communication, while simply positive attitude is also not proper, because positive prejudice can also hinder mutual understanding. And that is the reason why there is need to acquire the ability of curiosity, openness and readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviors, and the need to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviors and analyse it from others' viewpoint (Byram, 1997). In brief, this means individuals need to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviors instead of regarding them as the only possible and correct ones, and it can also be named the ability to "decentre" (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

Another crucial component, knowledge is defined as "knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's

country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (Byram, 1997, p. 58). Also, Sercu (2006) explains knowledge includes both culture-specific (of one's own and foreign cultures) and culture general knowledge, as well as the knowledge regarding the many ways in which culture affects language and communication. Moreover, it does not mean the primary knowledge about a specific culture, but rather knowledge of how social groups and identities function and what is entailed in an intercultural communication (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). No teacher can have or anticipate all knowledge of diverse social groups, and the major task of teachers is to develop students' attitudes and skills as much as knowledge, so there is no need for teachers to be the only information resource. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for teachers to master all knowledge students might need at some point, which indicates that teachers can achieve knowledge together with students. Furthermore, improving students' skills becomes more important (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

In terms of interpreting/relating skills, it is "the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 61). The key point of it is using existing knowledge to compare or interpret and relate specific behavior or document which are comparable but different with their own social group. Since there is no need to interact with interlocutor, the individuals are able to determine their own timescale for interpretation and not constrained by the social interaction (Byram, 1997). Additionally, skills of interpreting and relating are crucial in that they are beneficial for decreasing or even resolving misunderstandings by comparing two different cultures or trying to look culture from other perspectives (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

Skills of discovery and interaction involve "the 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" (p. 61). The skill of discovery comes into play when having no existing knowledge, which means building up specific knowledge together with understanding of the beliefs, meanings and behaviors inherited from certain

phenomena through documents or interaction. As for the skill of interaction, it is the ability to manage constraints entailing time, mutual perception and attitudes when communicating with interlocutors (Byram, 1997). What is more, as stated above that nobody is able to anticipate all knowledge he/she needs for intercultural interactions, so it is necessary to obtain the skill of discovering new knowledge and integrating with his/her previous knowledge and the skill of how to interact with encounters to acquire their values, beliefs and behaviors that they are often unconscious or hard to explain (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

When it comes to the core part of intercultural competence, critical cultural awareness is described as “the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p.63). No matter how open towards, curious about and tolerant of other cultures, individuals’ own beliefs, values and behaviors are deeply embedded and might lead to reaction and rejection, therefore individuals need to be aware of their own values and how these influence their opinions of other cultures (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Critical cultural awareness involves a critique of one’s own social groups and that of others, because FL learning inevitably draws attention to other countries or social communities where the language being learned is spoken. In addition, it is the center of the model because it embodies the educational dimension of language teaching, and ensures the attention is paid to learners’ education, rather than knowledge, skills and attitudes can be done anywhere by anyone if without critical awareness for instance, commercial training (Byram, 2012).

Overall, these five elements of intercultural competence in the model are interdependent with each other, for example, the increased knowledge might lead to positive attitudes; the proper attitudes makes good foundation for intercultural communication; the skill of interpreting and relating demands for the existing knowledge; the skill of discovery acquires openness and curiosity to new knowledge as well as perceptions; the skill of interaction is based on the management of proper attitude, knowledge and mutual understanding.

Most importantly, Byram's model of intercultural competence is applied in this study as the main theory for the analysis of teachers' cognitions and classroom practices, because this model presents a systematic framework of distinctive components (Larzén, 2005), which becomes the basis or echos to others' theories, for instance Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence and Larzén's classification of teachers' cognitions in intercultural dimension. Further, the five distinctive but interdependent components are greatly appropriate for being the chosen aims of teachers' classroom practices which integrate with intercultural competence. In this way, there is no doubt that Byram's model of intercultural competence is selected as the main theory for analysis.

As claimed above, on the basis of Byram's model, a pyramid model of intercultural competence as Figure 3 was established by Deardorff (2006), which clearly demonstrates the ongoing procedures of achieving intercultural competence as the internal and external outcome.

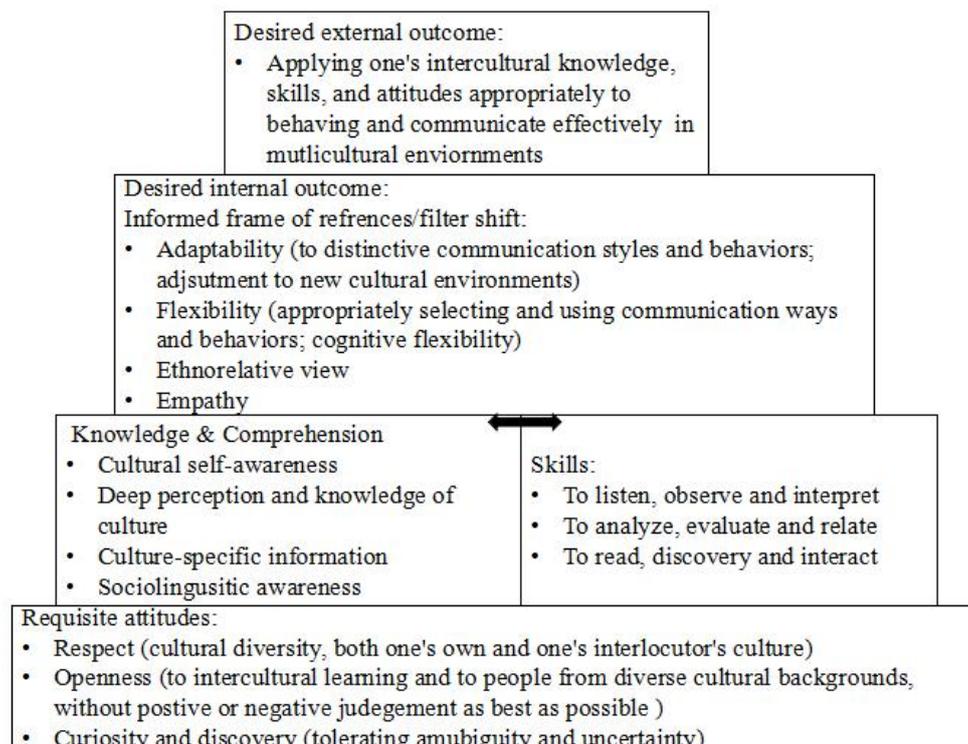


Figure 3. Pyramid model of Intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004, pp.254),
modified by Huanhuan Zheng

Note: Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes).

As seen in Figure 3, the foundation of her pyramid model is attitudes entailing respect, openness and curiosity. The upper level is knowledge and skills for interaction, while the top of the pyramid model is desired internal and external outcome. Compared with Byram’s model, in this model, attitudes are also working as the foundational part of intercultural learning, and it means the openness to different cultures and respect for other values as well as keeping in curiosity about them. Additionally, another crucial tool for reaching intercultural competence is knowledge of the self and the other, and the awareness of cultural difference along with skills involving listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and relating. With respect to the internal outcome, it is combined with an internal shift in frame of reference, and transforms into external outcome by interaction, thus enhances the external (observable) outcome of intercultural competence which can be described as essentially “behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations” (Deardorff, 2004, p. 196). Moreover, with this pyramid model, Deardorff developed a process model of how to acquire intercultural competence as Figure 4 shows.

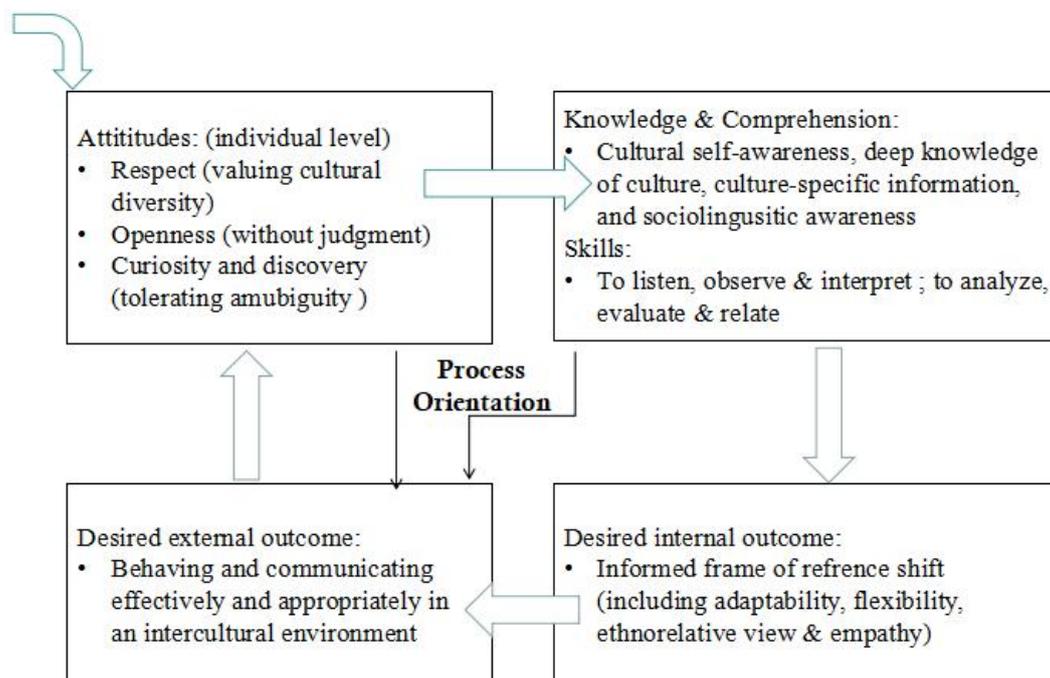


Figure 4. Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, pp.256), modified by Huanhuan Zheng

Note: Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes).

As seen in Figure 4, the same elements as pyramid model make up the processes of acquiring intercultural competence. During the processes, what should be noted is that the final outcome actually also influences people's attitudes. Overall, this model is an ongoing process of intercultural competence development, which indicates the development will never ends and the how intercultural competence teaching could be made into practice based on different moving procedures. This process model is in accordance with the five components of intercultural competence and it portrays the steps of how to acquire intercultural competence, however, in my view, five components could be developed in teaching practice at the same time independently or together due to the interdependence of them, which explains why Deardorff's process model is not selected as the main theory for data analysis.

2.2.3 Teacher cognition of intercultural dimensions

In the preceding sections teacher cognitions and intercultural competence have been introduced separately, however, Larzén (2005) categorized teachers' cognitions of intercultural dimensions into three orientations, when carrying a study about cognition of Finland-Swedish comprehensive school teachers of intercultural dimension in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, which are "cognitive orientation, action orientation and affective orientation" (p. 102). Cognitive orientation focuses on providing students with factual knowledge, background information, while action orientation emphasizes on offering students skills in order to equip them as the future intercultural encounters. As for affective orientation, it is much more related with attitudes, students are expected to be tolerant and empathetic to other cultures. Evidently, these three orientations echo Byram's model as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Besides, in that study, teachers' cognition of intercultural competence has been collected and analyzed by interviews with three research questions including teachers' conceptions of "culture", teachers' beliefs about cultural objectives and their classroom practice (Larzén, 2005), which indicates it is an applicable way to understand teachers' cognition of intercultural competence

by making interviews with certain questions. Additionally, covering teachers' classroom practice as one of three research questions implies teachers' practice reflected their cognition of intercultural competence, which further demonstrates the interplay between teacher cognition and classroom practice.

2.2.4 Practice of intercultural competence

FL teaching has a long tradition of teaching culture which is the core part of intercultural competence by introducing the national culture of native speakers of the target language. It is clearly reflected in coursebooks and curricula where diverse national cultures for instance, traditional food, festivals, music and etc. are portrayed. However, this approach actually ignores that it is actual people who make cultural communication rather than simply learning national features of other countries from textbooks, hence, it often engenders over-generalizations and stereotyping. In that way, what students received is referred to as solid interculturality (Dervin & Dirba, 2006).

Similar to solid interculturality, banal nationalism which was found by Piller (2017) also mentioned the phenomenon that most people considered people's national identity was equal to one's cultural identity which led to stereotypes and misunderstanding. And she found that this point has rarely been acknowledged by scholars in the field of intercultural communication, where national identity tended to be regarded as a given. Hence, in order to avoid banal nationalism or solid interculturality, teachers should reconsider their understanding of culture and the method. Dervin and Dirba (2006) clarified that "culture is always created when individuals encounter one another, intra-culturally or interculturally, and cannot be reduced to solid descriptions that supposedly help people to communicate" (p.260). In other words, what FL teachers should consider to teach is liquid interculturality, or regarding any encounter to be based on liquid individuals rather than solid representatives of cultures. To be more specific, liquid interculturality suggests that FL teachers should be aware that culture is liquid, the encounter is also liquid individual instead of solid representative of a certain culture, which indicates that FL teachers should help students to become intercultural intermediaries or speakers so

that students are able to become confident, effective and liquid “border crossers” and promote their intercultural competence (Dervin & Dirba, 2006).

Looking at previous research, most studies are concerning about teachers’ cognition or understanding of intercultural competence, only few focus on how teachers try to promote students’ intercultural competence. Further, the results show that even though teachers have realized the importance of integrating intercultural competence in their classroom practice, they were often not able to find the effective ways of cultivating learners’ intercultural competence (Larzén, 2005). Research also manifested that even recently graduated teachers who have attended an Intercultural Teacher Education Program (ITE) were also shocked when they started their teaching career. Some expressed that they were entering a cruel reality with little or no support after leaving the “bird’s nest” (Alasuutari & Jokikokko, 2010). And that is the most important reason why this thesis endeavors to explore possible ways of integrating intercultural competence into classroom practice.

3 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research aims to investigate Finnish high school English teachers’ cognition of intercultural competence and what practices they conduct to promote students’ intercultural competence. It wants to explore possible practices for implementing intercultural competence, and gives some suggestions on how to integrate it into classroom practice, so the research questions are formulated below:

- (1) How do Finnish upper secondary school English teacher understand the teaching of intercultural competence?
- (2) What activities do Finnish upper secondary school English teachers apply in the classroom in order for the promotion of students’ intercultural competence?

The first research question focuses on teachers’ cognition of intercultural competence teaching based on collected data from different perspectives of Byram’s model of intercultural competence. Besides, the factors which influence teachers’ cognition of their teaching are also analyzed on the basis of Borg’s theory of teacher cognition. As

for the second research question, it attempts to find out teachers' actual practice of promoting students' intercultural competence, which is comprised of five elements as Byram(1997) stated. After solving the first and second research questions, it also aims to come up with some considerations or suggestions for integrating intercultural competence into classroom teaching in the discussion part.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The context of the study

This study is conducted in Finland, whose education policies emphasis on steady development of learning and teaching. Unlike many other education systems, Finnish education system encourages schools to create optimal learning environment and implement educational content that best help their students to achieve their general goals of schooling (Sahlberg, 2007). In that way, it is not unreasonable to find Finnish students have achieved outstanding success in PISA test during the last decade, which also demonstrates the success of Finnish comprehensive schools to obtain equality and equity of education (Reinikainen, 2012). Additionally, I am now studying in Finland, therefore it makes sense to choose Finland as an example of exploring the research questions. The Finnish educational context is delineated mainly by the Finnish national curriculum from 2003 which was the curriculum applied when the data for this study was collected though in 2016, a reformed curriculum was introduced in the first year of Finnish upper secondary education.

Reading through the Finnish national curriculum made in 2003, intercultural competence is evidently included when referring to the abilities upper secondary school students should obtain. Intercultural competence is first mentioned in the part of the general objectives of education which states that students are required to be clear of their own beliefs, behaviors and culture by stating as "the ability to take other people into account and the ability to revise one's beliefs and actions as required" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p.23), which is an essential foundation of successful intercultural communication. Further, achieving

intercultural competence is regarded as more specific parts in the description of the cross-curricular theme: cultural identity and knowledge cultures. On the one hand, upper secondary school students are demanded to be aware of their own cultural identity and knowledge of cultures, as stated "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 cooperation" (p.29) and "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" (p.30).

On the other hand, students are needed to be aware of the cultural diversity and acquire the knowledge of other cultures, this point is illustrated as "be familiar with different interpretations of the concept of culture and be able to describe the special characteristics of different cultures" (p.29) and "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" (p.30). Accordingly, students with rich knowledge and proper awareness and skills, they are able to have successful intercultural communication with people from other cultures, which means they have obtained intercultural competence, and this is demonstrated still in this part as "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", and "students must be encouraged to engage in intercultural interaction and international cooperation" (p.30).

Compared with curriculum made in 2003, the new version of Finnish national curriculum has developed the cross-curricular themes related with intercultural competence into the theme: Knowledge of cultures and internationality. In spite of getting knowledge of both Finnish culture and other cultures, students are provided materials and opportunities to explore "the components of participation and functional capacity in a culturally diversifying society, the increasingly international world of work as well as the interdependencies that shape the world, lending themselves to multiple interpretations" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016,

p.38). The curriculum encourages upper secondary school students actively engage in international activities and teachers should try to create environment where “different identities, languages, religions, and worldviews coexist and interact” (p.38). In brief, the modified curriculum adds that teachers should also develop students’ skills and provide chances for them to practice their intercultural competence besides the acquisition of knowledge (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016).

In addition to the Finnish national curriculum, textbooks bring about the overall image of Finnish educational context. By reading through the Finnish upper secondary English textbooks and interviewing Finnish English teacher, it is easily got the conclusion that the textbooks are divided into different themes. For example, Course five is the textbook which focuses on culture, while other textbooks have other themes including economy, environment and so on.

4.2 Data collection

The data was collected by my dissertation supervisor and an international colleague from four Finnish English teacher who were working in the same upper secondary school and coincidentally we have a shared topic of interest which is intercultural competence. As my main interest for my Master’s thesis is to better understand intercultural competence within Finnish context, this data was shared with me as the basis for my case study. Case study is understood as follows:

The detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984, p. 34).

This description indicates that case study is used in this study since the data and results attained from my research participants, the four Finnish upper secondary English teachers from the the same school could be seen as a single example of Finnish secondary English teachers’ cognition and practice of intercultural competence. Though case study is always misunderstood as a research method which cannot provide reliable information about the broader class or generalize the

research findings, it is actually of great benefit in the preliminary stages of an investigation, hypotheses generating and theory building. Because of that reason, it is not difficult to understand why case study is utilized in this study as my first step to explore the current situation of intercultural competence teaching and possible practices for it, though it is so context-dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In detail, to gather the data, interview in English and video recording were used, which means this research is using qualitative methods comprised of interviewing and classroom observation by videos. Though absent from data collecting, I got the idea of how it was gathered by the description of my supervisor and the organization of data. First of all, the interview was semi-structured which means the certain themes and questions were prepared beforehand to guide the general route of interview. For instance, themes concerning intercultural competence teaching, matriculation exam, Finnish national curriculum, and questions were designed as “How do you understand the intercultural dimension in course teaching?” or “ Does intercultural dimension included in the matriculation exam?” and so on. Nevertheless, it also allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions to explore viewpoint, to open up explanations and reply to questions that unexpected or needed (Newby, 2014). Then besides making interviews, video recordings of English classes in Finnish school were also collected with the permission from the students, teachers and schools. It is evident that making interviews is always the good method to directly know what participants think, while classroom observation is combined to check and increase the validity of participants’ response. Further, as the commonly utilized method of educational research, it helps to uncover the take-for-granted and unexpected things (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields, 2014). As a consequence, with the recordings of interviews and class videos, I can hear and observe teachers’ understanding of intercultural competence and their classroom practices from teachers’ statements in their interviews and video records of their classroom performances. Concretely, teachers’ cognition of intercultural competence will be shown by cognition will also be analyzed according to Borg’s theory. As for the teaching practices, their aims will be explored based on five elements of intercultural competence of Byram’s model.

Although not gathering data in person might lead to the miss of some useful or interesting information, being the third party to the data, on the other hand requires I have to listen carefully and check several times to get the accurate transcription of interviews which might be helpful for me to accurately follow what teachers hope to express and behave.

4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data often includes a great amount of interesting information but not everything is closely connected with research questions, therefore it is essential to make decisions, outline and take valuable extracts from a database (Långström & Stigzelius, 2016). The average time for each interview was about 22 minutes, and three of the teachers were interviewed twice or three times, though only five interviews were finally transcribed partly as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Process model of dataset dealing, edited by Huanhuan Zheng

Steps	recordings of teacher interviews	videos of classroom practices
Step 1: familiarizing with data	8 interviews in total: Teacher 1: 3 interviews Teacher 2: 2 interviews Teacher 3: 3 interviews Teacher 4: 0 interview	15 videos in total: Teacher 1: 5 videos Teacher 2: 4 videos Teacher 3: 4 videos Teacher 4: 2 videos
Step 2: familiarizing with data	listening to the 8 interviews and be clear of the content of each interviews	watching the 15 videos and observing the teaching activities
Step 3: dealing with data based on intercultural competence (IC)	transcribing the parts in interviews which are related to IC (5 interviews are partly transcribed with 28 pages)	write down all activities taken in the videos (classroom practice of 10 videos are written down)

Step 4: selecting extracts based on intercultural competence (IC)	taking out extracts showing teachers' cognitions and practices of IC from the transcription of interviews (as shown in Appendix 1)	taking out extracts of teachers' classroom activities integrating IC from the written recordings of activities (as shown in Appendix 2)
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This table is organized to help clearly present the processes of how to deal with the dataset for the preparation of data analysis. As seen in Table 1, among five interviews, only the parts dealing with teachers' understanding of intercultural competence were transcribed, and the five interviews comprised three interviews from Teacher 1, while other two interviews were from Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 respectively. The total amount of time for the interviews transcribed was 60 minutes resulting in 28 pages of transcribed text. As for the video recordings, the lessons were about 90 minutes in length and five videos came from teacher 1, two videos from both teacher 2 and teacher 3, and only one video came from the lesson of teacher 4.

As Table 1 shows, the data collected are in forms of recording and video, so I made transcription of interviews and recorded teaching activities of videos to familiarize myself with the data and to get an overview of how the four English teachers in Finland make their sense of intercultural competence and their practice of it. In order to analyse the data, two questions were raised to help organize the data, which are : 1. *Where* is intercultural competence presented? 2. *How* is intercultural competence presented? With the two questions in mind, I then took extracts closely related with intercultural competence from the transcription to get further viewpoint of these teachers' cognition of intercultural competence mainly based on Borg's teacher cognition theory and Byram's model of intercultural competence. This approach focuses on "key moments" or "key extracts" which indicates "a significant unit of meaning, different from the sentence or the line and is defined by its readiness for a reply/reaction" (Sullivan 2012, p. 72). For instance, the section below is connected with how teacher 1 deals with the textbook and organizes activities to improve students' capabilities related with intercultural competence.

00:04 T: *Yeah, I would say that because you know what with them, No.4, one for instance, we talked about young people's lives in general, and then we couple?, we tend to talk about what lives like in the, you know, in Africa for instance, they don't have same possibilities as we do here, and you know, things like that, or, or course 3, for instance, going to school, the vocabulary of, you know, high school and er upper secondary school so on. So, when we are learning the vocabulary, then we usually talk about the different school systems and lives of young people in different countries as well and so on. (Teacher 1, interview2)*

Teacher 1 referred that she used different ways to initiate students to compare same issues between Finnish culture and other cultures so that they can find out the differences and similarities. In that way, students' cultural knowledge is increased, and their skills of relating and discovering are also developed. More importantly, it supports the development of students' critical cultural awareness as well. As a consequence, the teacher tries to develop students' knowledge and skills which are three elements included in Byram's model of intercultural competence at the same time using this activity. However, from the words of Teacher 1 concerning Africa, it seems that the cognition of Teacher 1 on intercultural competence is solid, which means she limits her views on African only with negative impressions, while ignoring that there are actually different situations when it comes to individuals or different areas.

When it comes to the analysis of videos, I wrote down the classroom activities which the teacher used for teaching after watching them, and then took out the classroom performances which were the implementation of intercultural competence based on Byram' model. Still take teacher 4 for instance, she set different situations and asked students to consider how to deal with them.

The teacher tries to act out some situations, makes good examples of how to deal with such situations, so she tells the true situation of a Finnish boy experienced in UK with her. (He was too focusing on photographing the Big Ben that he bumped into a 12-year-old girl, who was quite angry about that, she helps to apologize for him, and the parent of the girl was angry for the boy was not apologizing, and then the teacher said he did, but in Finnish; experience in France: only after saying "Bonjour"(good afternoon) then, she was allowed to ask directions from the policeman)

Ps. the teacher gives opportunities for students to use English in different situations which is funny, and she stresses politeness and cultural difference. (Teacher 4, video2)

Using this activity, students were helped to improve their skill of interacting though it is not in an actual intercultural environment as well as being motivated to be more open and tolerant to other cultures, which are concerning two important elements of Byram's model of intercultural competence.

4.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are crucial and commonly tested in quantitative researches, but now they are also more frequently considered in qualitative research paradigms (Golafshani, 2003). Patton (2001) also states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. To be more specific, validity of a research means how true it is, and whether the results or data answering the research question, while reliability, a similar term, indicates the consistence and stableness of the research data (Alasuutari, Bickman, & Brannen, 2008).

Careful examination and explanation of all the steps is considered as a vital part for the reliability of this qualitative study (Långström & Stigzelius, 2016), which indicates that the reliability of this study is enhanced by the accurate description and explanation of the research processes in the methodology section along with the justifications of each selection or decision made in each phrase of research. With respect to the validity, as Fulong and Oancea (2005) has stated in their framework, there are four dimensions of criteria for testing validity of research entailing epistemic, technological, economic, and practical aspects. Epistemic dimension focuses on the acquirement of knowledge, technological dimension emphasizes the value for use, actual impact or the potential value of the research, economic dimension is about the value for money or the cost-effectiveness, while practical dimension is rooted in ethical concerns and is regarded as "practical wisdom". Evidently, in this study Borg's theory of teacher cognition and Byram's model of intercultural competence are used as the main theoretical basis for data analysis and discussions, which is in line with epistemic dimension. As for technological and practical perspectives, it is illustrated that this study might be helpful for whether

novice or experienced FL teachers' future teaching when making efforts to integrate intercultural competence into classroom teaching practices.

Moreover, triangulation is typically a strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings. Patton (2001) advocates the use of triangulation by stating "triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (p. 247). In this study, triangulation is well applied by utilizing the data consisting of both interviews and video recordings, which supports each other to show teachers' cognitions and classroom practices in two different ways.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

In any research, it is essential to consider the ethical issues before conducting it. In general, protecting participants' identities as well as gaining the informed consent from participants and related people or organizations are seriously required to solve this problem. On the one hand, anonymity and confidentiality are necessary for keeping participants' information secret (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields, 2014). To be concrete, anonymity is one form of confidentiality, which makes great efforts to make the participants will not be traceable from the data presented or published, though it is hard to be perfectly done in qualitative research. The most frequently used way of anonymity is to change six key areas entailing people's names, places, religious or cultural background, occupation, family relationships and other potentially identifying information. Though it is virtually impossible to perfectly conceal all the information, researchers are seriously demanded to maximize protect participants' identities and maintain the value and integrity of the data (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015). Hence, in this thesis, the names of the four interviewees are concealed and substituted by Teacher 1,2,3 or 4 when introduced in data analysis. In addition, the name of the school and city where it locates are also anonymous to make it harder to trace the participants' identities. With regard to confidentiality, it implies that researchers should not disclose information that was

given by data collection (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields, 2014). As for this point, I got the permission from my supervisor for entailing my work as part of their ongoing project investigating the intercultural dimension of FL education.

On the other hand, informed consent ensures that participants make their decisions freely with complete understanding of what factors may affect them even including possible harm. Additionally, it is an ongoing process, which means participants are freely to give up during and after the data is gathered (Curtis, Murphy, & Shields, 2014). Therefore, if the participants are not willing to support the project, nobody will be able to use the data for this project. Moreover, before interviewing or videoing, my supervisor and her colleague were required to obtain the permission from the school, participating teachers, students, and the school.

Considering the process of dealing with the data, transcribing is also a vital procedure which shows my respect to the participants. With the aim of getting accurate response from teachers, I had to listen to the records again and again in order to avoid misunderstandings as much as possible. Thanks to my supervisor, my transcription was modified to be closer to teachers' original words though there are still some words cannot be written down correctly. As for that part, "?" was used to signify the uncertainty and inquiry in that place. Making transcription as faithful as possible to the original words, in my views, shows the respect and protection to the participants for making effort to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, it should be a part of ethical considerations as well.

5 FINDINGS

Pajares (1992) mentioned that one's beliefs had much more power in determining their actual behaviors than their knowledge, which evidently demonstrates that teachers' cognition definitely plays an essential role in students' promotion of intercultural competence. Additionally, it is further illustrated in Borg's model of teacher cognition in theoretical part, so in this part, teachers' understanding and attitudes toward intercultural competence teaching as well as the influencing factors

will be illustrated first and then the practices of integrating intercultural competence in class will also be presented in detail.

5.1 Participants' cognition of teaching intercultural competence

From the interviews, it is clearly found that all teachers participated are open to other cultures. Take Teacher 1 for instance, she has an exchange student in her class, which provides a good opportunity for her to make students observe and experience intercultural communication. As a matter of fact, it was not the first time for having an exchange student in her class, so she is quite experienced and good at dealing with such situation. What she insists in dealing with exchange students is to respect them, try to understand their culture and increase chances for the communication between Finnish students and the exchange students so that they can understand more and improve their intercultural competence.

Another point commonly agreed between the teachers is that they all encourage students to learn other cultures when it comes to the related themes. More importantly, Teacher 1 stressed that acquiring an individual's own country and culture is the precondition of other cultures as "If you don't know anything about your own country and your history, what can you talk about with foreigners or visitors. You have to be able to tell them about, you know, your home, your own town, city in Finland" (Teacher1, interview2), which complies with the perception that knowledge should include both individual's own social group and other social groups (Byram, 1997).

From the videos observation, it is found that Teacher 4 also designed activities to help students get to know the American culture of school system, including uniforms, school lunch and so on. Besides, Teacher 4 organized students to search for school systems in other countries which they were interested as a group and then compared Finnish school system with school systems in other cultures to get further understanding of cultural knowledge and differences as well as be aware of their values and how these influence their views of values in other social groups (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

Consequently, I got the conclusion that all teachers participate are open to diverse cultures, and make some effort to help students achieve knowledge of both own culture and culture from different cultures. In addition, actions are also taken to cultivate students' skills of discovery, interpreting, relating, and interacting as well as their awareness of critical thinking by activities including role play, situation setting, and etc, which will be precisely introduced in the following section. In other words, it is seen that teachers are in good understanding of intercultural competence, and also have tried to integrate it into classroom teaching. However, with good understanding of intercultural competence and some efforts of teaching intercultural competence, teachers actually are challenged of promoting students' intercultural competence in teaching practice for mainly two factors: experience as learners and contextual factors.

Borg (2003) stated that teachers' previous experience as learners can continuously influence teachers' way of teaching and learning throughout the whole professional life. Specifically, Teacher 1 referred to her experience as a learner to demonstrate that her teaching style is following her English teacher, or the traditional way of teaching, which focuses more on grammar and vocabulary instead of cultural things. The original words are listed below:

"That's what I will say, even thinking back to the days when I went to school, when I was ten years old, we already started talking about the, these things [cultural issues] with my teacher, when I was ten or 8 or so, so It is nothing new to me when I went to upper secondary school. In fact, quite opposite, at that time, teacher would only taught to us grammar and "now this is what you have to know in the matriculation exam." (Teacher 1, Interview 2)

So, that is why she spends a large amount of time in vocabulary and grammar for the preparation of the matriculation exam instead of thinking highly of promoting students' intercultural competence.

In spite of previous experience as learners, classroom practice and teachers' cognition are shaped along with the way through a lot of interacting and conflicting factors (Borg, 2003), which can be met in their career life. Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 clarified that there was too much knowledge to be learned by students or required skills to be tested, accordingly they had to make choices. Obviously, intercultural

competence has been regarded as something good but not necessary as Teacher 2 has concluded in the extract below:

12:20 T: *em, but in general, I think that culture is something that, er, I try to leave out of formal assessment [matriculation exam] and somehow immersed in the action, what we do all the time that it's self-evident that it's there, er, through projects have working on, stuff like that. ah, I don't know, it's kind of hard, it's always kind of hard, because there's so many things you should be doing, somebody says you should, ah, like there's a research study, says that you should be, ah, working more pronunciation and minor details, intonation should be taught more*

13:12 T: *ok, yer, I'm not going to say it's not important, you got, that's one of thing*

13:15 J: *en*

13:16 T: *but just minor detail prepare to, like all of things we should be doing here and with if you don't have time for that, and as I told you, I'm not intelligent enough, (start laughing)*

13:27 J: *but you are intelligent... (both saying and laughing)*

13:33 T: *yer, yer, this so much like the ideal world, world is, er I think different to what we actually do. (Teacher 2, interview 1)*

As stated by Teacher 2, it was only an ideal dream that everything could be included, such as cultural issues, regarding as an essential part of intercultural competence, which indicated that she had to make choices, and actually in her words referred, her choice was to put grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and such minor details on the first place. So, in her view, teachers have to make decisions on what to be taught, what could be neglected or spent less time. Teacher 1 also argued the same idea that teachers were in the situation where they had to make decisions of what to be taught and how to teach.

"So, still I think It is very much up to the teacher, what you choose, do with the material, how you, how you do it. The same thing with pronunciation for instance, It is very often in separate section in the book, or in the one page, you can skip it". (Teacher 1, interview 3)

Therefore, it can be seen that though Finnish educational system provides much freedom to teachers comparing with that in other countries, it is still hard for teachers to do whatever they hope. Despite being pushed to make choices, another interesting phenomenon found is that teachers are teaching culture which they are not familiar or understand. As teacher 1 stated:

"There's a separate section about the UK, for instance, and then about the U.S.A., and er, only now, that I've talked for a few years, and and I actually travel to places, has some money traveling there, have I realized that, 'ok, now this can be connected to traveling'". (Teacher 1, interview3)

Without truly experiencing the target culture, it would be hard for teachers themselves to understand it, even though they could still teach with the knowledge from the textbook or other materials. Therefore, both lack of personal experience of other cultures and the limited time for teaching can be barriers for intercultural competence teaching.

As for teachers' experience, it can be either a hinder or promotion for the education of intercultural competence (Borg, 2003). As the example mentioned, Teacher 1 are experienced at dealing with exchange students, which encourages her and her students to be more open and curious about other cultures. In that case, teachers' experience is supportive for their cognition of intercultural competence teaching. Nevertheless, the examples listed below concerning contextual factors also demonstrate that being constrained of matriculation exam and textbooks design for long time makes teachers easily accustomed to the current situation and discourages teachers' cognitions of intercultural competence teaching. Take teacher 2 for example, she stated that:

12:20 T: em, but in general, I think that culture is something that, er, I try to leave out of formal assessment and somehow immersed in the action, what we do all the time that it's self-evident that it's there, er, through projects have working on, stuff like that. ah, I don't know, it's kind of hard, it's always kind of hard, because there's so many things you should be doing, somebody says you should, ah, like there's a research study, says that you should be, ah, working more pronunciation and minor details, intonation should be taught more. (Teacher 2, interview 1)

Getting hard experience of finding time and the stress of examination, Teacher 2 expressed her disappointment of being able to teach as ideal as she imagined, thus, the current situation is that she gives up to insist on paying much attention to intercultural competence. Hence, it indicates that teacher's experience can be an obstacle for their cognitions of intercultural competence.

Contextual factors can exert influence on teachers' cognition which consisting of curriculum, school policies, classroom environment, textbooks and so on (Borg, 2003). Textbook and matriculation exam are certainly the most influential factors

which are agreed by all the participants. Because of the matriculation exam, teachers have to concentrate on language knowledge rather than attempting to help students acquire the intercultural competence which are greatly needed in multicultural environment nowadays. As a matter of fact, intercultural competence is also part of the required skill of Finnish national core curriculum, but it is also neglected for the difficulty and lack of assessments, which means teachers consider intercultural competence as something needed but not necessary.

Teacher 1:

12:56 J: *But then what point does it come in the exam or where, I was wondering maybe in the conversation, did they have to express some kind of intercultural understanding or does it really not matter that they couldn't.*

13:10 T: *Well, not necessarily. You mean, I mean you have four or five different topics that you can choose from, and one of them can be 12, so you don't really have to, well, about anything cultural related. Em, the reading comprehension exercises there the texts, er, well, they are from those different topics and listening comprehension texts. While, er, mostly, I think based on the different courses, and their, er contents, so there might be something about technology, interesting bees, for instance or woth? for difference between them, and then about applying for a job somewhere, or, you know, er, and of course, they are from authentic sources, so very often, they are some, some texts from, you know, well, for instance, er, the difference between, between, er, Finnish people and Italian people, Americans, and their (laughing), the way they speak or behave, or the physical distance is that you have or things like that? but you don't necessarily need that in the exam, you can survive without(start laughing)...*

(Teacher 1, interview 3)

Teacher 2:

12:20 T: *em, but in general, I think that culture is something that, er, I try to leave out of formal assessment and somehow immersed in the action, what we do all the time that It is self-evident that It is there, er, through projects have working on, stuff like that. ah, I don't know, It is kind of hard, It is always kind of hard, because there's so many things you should be doing, somebody says you should, ah, like there's a research study, says that you should be, ah, working more pronunciation and minor details, intonation should be taught more... (Teacher 2, interview 1)*

The extracts of two teachers' words has demonstrated that teachers are aware of the importance of intercultural competence, but they are hard to teach it mainly for the matriculation exam. In detail, teachers make choices to teach vocabulary and grammar which would certainly be tested in the exam, rather than paying too much

attention to intercultural issues which are hard to be assessed. Also, the lack of enough time and too much knowledge make it ideal for teachers to spend much time in the education of intercultural competence.

Regarding with Finnish English textbooks, there is an interesting phenomenon that all teachers expressed their application of textbooks were in line with its design. To be concrete, each textbook has different theme, for instance, textbook five is specifically about culture. That situation makes teachers concentrate on cultural issues which involves promotion of intercultural competence when teaching textbook 5, while other topics and skills are emphasized in terms of other textbooks teaching, or as teacher has mentioned as pieces learning for students. In that case, I would consider teachers might only view cultural issues as part of teaching content without deeper considerations, such as why it is included and important.

Teacher 1:

00:04 T: *Yeah, I would say that because you know what with them, No.4, one for instance, we talked about young people's lives in general, and then we couple, we tend to talk about what lives like in the, you know, in Africa for instance, you don't have same possibilities as we do here, and you know, things like that, or or course 3, for instance, going to school, the vocabulary of, you know, high school and er upper secondary school so on. So, when we are learning the vocabulary, then we usually talk about the different school systems and lives of young people in different countries as well and so on.*

00:49 J: *Yeah.*

00:50 T: *So No.4 as well, the debates and discussions there, the topics are often about different cultures as well. So maybe this is not the best course for you to follow now. we are really concentrating on animals (laughing), and the environment and natural disasters and things like that, so don't , not that much on cultural differences. Or then, er, lower secondary school lessons as well, because then you can to, you know, always makes cultural aspects more than in secondary school courses I guess. (Teacher 1, interview 2)*

Teacher 2:

00:29 J: *I was curious about the cultural dimension, is there cultural dimension of this course, how do you see the cultural dimension?*

00:38 T: *Em, yer, yesterday when I introduced the course, we talked about culture in general and, er, like, er, the previous course, course 5 is all about culture.*

00:53 J: *right.*

00:54 T: *We only talked about culture, and different aspects of it, and yesterday we discussed culture, which decides that of course everything is culture, and these are aspects of culture, and of course anything that we do here, and anything we learn, for example, the basics of the texts,*

01:13 J: *yer.*

01:14 T: *they are all about culture, in very many different ways.*

01:18 J: *en.*

01:20 T: *but I mean I haven't put that much emphasis on that aspect, on this course, except that of course, I take it as a given that everything is culture, and culture is very close related to our teaching all the time. (Teacher 2, interview 1)*

Though each textbook has different focused theme, it is actually not too difficult to improve students' intercultural competence at the same time, take Coursebook six for example, the first theme is economy, and text one is : A British Pound Coin. During the course, the teacher was doing activities to help students understand what was a good seller and initiated their idea on entrepreneurship and basic knowledge of economy, while culture was not involved. The teacher was following the activities in the textbook, however, in my opinion, it is also a good text for intercultural teaching, because the text tells the story of an immigrant girl's life as she imagines what it would be like to be a coin and held in people's hands. The text is related with immigration issues concerning discrimination and human's rights. So, on the one hand, the text can be properly utilized to design activities which are connected with British culture and Finnish culture. In that way, knowledge of both Finnish culture and British culture can be learned or related as well as discovering something new for students. On the other hand, as one of the objectives mentioned in the edited curriculum, students are asked to be "familiar with human rights and able to reflect on the promotion of human rights in culturally and philosophically diverse communities" (National Board of Education, 2016, p. 38), students can also be motivated to consider their attitudes towards the equality between people in different social groups and motivated to be more open and tolerant to people from other cultures.

In short, previous experience as learners and teachers as well as contextual factors including matriculation exam and textbooks appear to decrease teachers'

willingness to integrate intercultural competence into classroom teaching practice. As a matter of fact, even without adjusting their cognitions, teachers are still facing challenges of integrating intercultural competence into classroom practice due to the contextual factors. Nevertheless, it also needs to be noticing that those factors can be beneficial as well, for example, with the social development, information are more easily being collected which is good for the knowledge achievements as Teacher 1's words below:

21:40 T: I, I never heard anything about that area in my school days. So, It is not just UK, or London, New York, we are talking about we do have South Africa, and India, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean.

21:59 J: Much broader. (Teacher 1, interview 3)

The fast development of technology and spread of information at present offer both teachers and students many ways to get information quickly which might enrich teachers' knowledge which is the precondition part of intercultural competence in Byram's model (Byram, 1997). More importantly, it leads to the situation that teachers are no longer the major information resource where students learn knowledge of both their own culture and other cultures. That means, knowledge is crucial part of intercultural competence, but it can be obtained by students together with teachers or independently (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002), due to the convenience of information searching and receiving. What is more, as introduced in context part, Finnish national curriculum also supports the teaching aim of promoting students' intercultural competence in both editions.

In sum, based on the interviews and videos, it is found that as Figure 5 shows, teachers have a good understanding of intercultural competence and are making some attempts to integrating intercultural competence into practice. However, their motivation and practice of the education of intercultural competence are limited due to their previous experience whether as learners or teachers as well as contextual factors mainly focusing on national matriculation exam and textbooks, though teaching experience, social development and Finnish curriculum are beneficial contextual factors for improving the intercultural competence teaching. Additionally, contextual factors can also have direct influence on teachers' classroom practices.

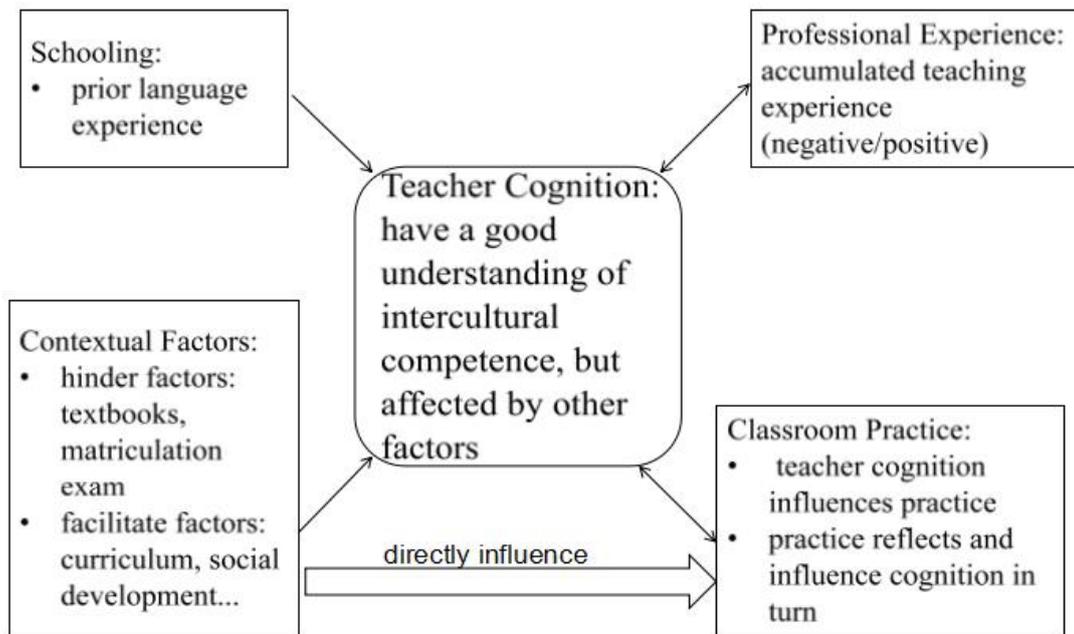


Figure 5: The findings of teachers' cognitions, edited by Huanhuan Zheng

Teachers' conceptions shape their instructional behavior to a considerable degree and there is a direct relationship between their cognition and the way they teach (Atay, Kurt, Çamlıbel, Ersin, & Kaslıoğlu, 2009). As seen in Figure 5, it is easily found that teacher cognition greatly influences their teaching behaviors, nevertheless, teachers' practice can also reflect and influence their cognition of the education of intercultural competence as illustrated in the following section.

5.2 Teachers' practice of teaching intercultural competence

Although in the teacher interviews, intercultural competence was framed as an optional part of FL education, nevertheless in the lessons observed from the classroom videos, some activities are found as ways of promoting students' intercultural competence, which are role playing, situations setting, double translating, comparing, and material selecting, and they are described in detail below. After these practical examples are presented, the way in which they relate to Byram's model for intercultural competence is outlined in more detail.

5.2.1 Role playing

Role playing is an attractive activity for students and commonly used in normal teaching. It is used by Teacher 4 to help students understand the cultural differences between America and Finland. It is designed as such which is also shown in Appendix 2: student A performs as an American journalist, and makes interview to Finnish student B with questions like school life, school lunch, school uniforms, school dress coat and etc. During the process, both students are required to use English phrases as much as possible. In addition, student A is asked to end the interview in American polite way as a journalist, while student B replies with Finnish polite way.

The content of the text is about Finnish educational system, so as the warming up game based on the textbook, the teacher asked students to imagine themselves as an American journalist or a Finnish student being interviewed. Actually in the textbook, there are four different cultural backgrounds, including an American senior high school student, a student in Hogwarts School, a student in Irish Catholic school for girls and a student in British public school. Possibly the teacher adjusted this activity for students were lacking the knowledge of such schools, and it would be a good choice to start with an interview of Finnish students' life by an American journalist.

According to Byram (1997), in this activity, students are able to learn knowledge of American culture like their greeting ways as well as being aware of Finnish culture firstly. In that way, both knowledge of own culture and other cultures is obtained as a foundation for Byram's model of intercultural competence. Also, in this activity, student A, when imaged as an American journalist, he/she then needs to be open and curious about Finnish school life and education system, which is concerning with the attitudes as one of the elements of Byram's model. What is more, when imaged oneself as an American, student A is able to develop ethnorelative view and empathy to American people who is curious about Finnish school system (Deardorff, 2004). Furthermore, gaining the experience of looking Finnish culture in a different perspective, as an American person, it is definitely

beneficial for the student to develop his/her critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2012).

Since the content of interview is about Finnish school, the development of the abilities below referred actually is constraint without any changing. Specifically, as an American journalist, he/she is required to interpret what Finnish student's responses of Finnish culture and relate it to American school system and school life, while Finnish student tries to understand American way of communication at the same time. In this activity, they cannot develop his/her skill of interpreting and relating too much, but if the content is changed into American school life, it would offer a good opportunity for the promotion of students' skills of interpreting and relating. Similarly, if the content is changed, this activity would help students to improve their skills of interaction and discovery, which means they need to discover new cultural knowledge from the interviewee, and try to better use the skill of interaction so that unconscious beliefs and values of interviewee can also be found and replied (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

5.2.2 Situations setting

Setting situations is also a good way for students to imagine certain situations and imagine what could be done or proper solutions, and this activity is used by Teacher 4 as seen in Appendix 2. In order to help students get to know the cultural diversity and how to deal with cultural shocks, the teacher told two stories which she experienced. The first story took place in UK. At that time, the teacher was leading a group of Finnish kids travelling in London, one Finnish boy was too focusing on photographing the Big Ben that he bumped into a 12-year-old girl by accident. At first, the girl and her parents were quite angry with that though she apologized immediately, they said they were angry because the boy did not apology by himself which was really impolite. Getting to know the reason, the teacher explained that the boy actually apologized once bumped into the girl, but it was in Finnish, which caused the misunderstanding. Another case happened in France, the teacher was traveling in Paris, however she lost her way there. Finding a policeman, she came to him and asked him about the directions. Nonetheless, she did not get help at first,

but getting the response of “Bonjour” instead of the answer. Only after she greeted to the policeman with “ Bonjour” that she was allowed to ask questions. With these two interesting stories, students were then asked to use English to deal with different situation designed by the teacher especially situations of cultural shocks.

With this activity, the teacher gives opportunities for students to use English in different situations while experiencing the cultural differences at the same time, which means students are motivated to practice their skill of interaction when communicate with people in different cultural background, and discovery new knowledge like the teacher had to find the rule of starting conversations with “Bonjour” in France. In spite of skills of interaction and discovery, to solve problems happened in intercultural communication situations, students need to be able to interpret the target culture, for instance, the British parents changed their mind once they got to know that the Finnish kid had already apologized in Finnish way (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). In other words, it also means that students are required to develop ability of adapatablity, which indicates that one need to adapt a new cultural environment quickly and find the proper communicative ways and behaviors (Deardorff, 2004). Further, students are also initiated to relate such cultural differences to their own cultural beliefs, meanings and behaviors. Simultaneously, knowledge of diverse cultures is accumulated during that process. Lastly, an open attitude towards other cultures is always functioned as the basis for successful interaction (Byram, 1997). In general, using diverse intercultural situations aims to make students behave and communicate appropriately in multicultural situations on the basis of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Deardorff, 2004).

5.2.3 Double translation

Double translation is the name I give, which means in this activity students need to translate two times. It works like this as presented in Appendix 2 of Teacher 1: students are divided into groups of four, and each group has a handout from the teacher. Then one student is asking English questions from the handout which is in Finnish, others need to find answers from their handouts which is in Finnish, but

answer it in English. In other words, the handout with questions and answers is in Finnish, but the students are demanded to ask and answer questions in English. Such activity is beneficial for improving students skill of language using.

This activity is an interesting way of practising English instead of boring translating from Finnish to English or from English to Finnish and it can also support students' intercultural competence development by adding cultural knowledge as the content of translation or simply when considering the translation between English and Finnish, there must be cultural barriers for it. On account of the linguistic and cultural difference, it is evidently that direct translation always leads to misunderstanding, thus it is essential to know the rules of translation so that the information can be accurately expressed when translated into another language. In that case, double translation requires students acquire enough knowledge of culture-specific information and sociolinguistic awareness (Deardorff, 2004), and it demands for students' capabilities of interpreting and relating so that students are able to understand the content correctly and relate it to the culture of target language to make sure that it could be understood precisely, particularly when a new word or phenomenon is introduced and translated. During that process, the students are actually also viewing their culture from another different perspective which is related with the promotion of critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

5.2.4 Comparing

Comparing activity is the activity directly used to compare the similarities and differences between students' own culture and cultures from other countries as seen in Appendix 2 of Teacher 4. When learning about the text of Finnish school system, the teacher asked students to work in pairs to find out the school systems in English-speaking countries which interest them most. They were inspired to find pictures, charts or others to justify their argumentation and try to answer the differences and similarities between Finnish school system and that in other countries they choose. With the iPad using and cooperation with partners, students were very eager to explore and relate Finnish school system with school systems in other countries. After that, students formed groups on the basis of their exploring countries, and then

made presentations of the country, finally, the biggest three or four or five differences between Finnish school system and school systems were concluded by students and would be sent to the teacher by email as a group work.

Evidently, the purpose of this activity is to make students better understand their own culture and acquire knowledge of other cultures, which is in accordance with knowledge part of Byram's model of intercultural competence. With open and curious attitudes, students are interested in searching out knowledge of school systems in other countries selected by themselves. After getting the knowledge of both Finnish school system and school systems in other countries, they are then able to discover new information and to relate their culture to others by comparing Finnish school system with school system in other countries (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). What is more, the teacher actually also asks students to read the text and find out five surprising points written by the American writer, and then consider whether they agree on that description of Finnish school system, which is helpful for students to have critical awareness of knowledge they got, and be able to evaluate issues from multiple perspectives (Byram, 2012).

5.2.5 Material selecting

During the English course I observed, there is one activity which gives students lots of freedom of choosing learning materials. Students are even allowed to make Kahoot quiz according to the materials they found, and there is always time for them to read and discuss the materials chosen by themselves with topics they are curious, the topics can be anything, even connected to global issues. In that situation, it is then linked to the intercultural competence promoting as mentions below by Teacher 3.

04:45 J: *Do you have in your, in your course are there any news of cooperated or discussions on*

04:52 T: *news*

04:53 J: *news or current events, and other ...(the teacher started to talk)*

04:56 T: *yes, we tried to do that in English courses, and probably in other subjects as well. ah, we most do it so that the students, for instance, they, they choose an item of news at home that interest them related to a specific topic, like nature, they read the item, news, they summarize it, next time when they*

come to school, to their friends within small groups, that we, we kind of try to integrate news into teaching, but since time is always so limited, there isn't very much time to actually watch news or read news. We sometimes watch one-minute BBC news here in the class, we can give links to useful sites.
(Teacher 3, interview 1)

As a consequence, the teacher offers students some freedom to choose what they want to learn on the basis of learning objectives, and this example of using global news is actually useful for accumulating students' knowledge of the world and discovery new information, as well as being open and curious about the world which is an important part of intercultural competence based on Byram's model of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997). Moreover, this activity is a good example of developing students' liquid interculturality, because materials found in different resources will provide students with ideas in diverse perspectives and it is helpful for students to understand that individual is liquid, individual's view is liquid, therefore never having the solid thoughts like British men are gentlemen, African people are poor or Japanese people like to bow as a greeting way and etc. (Derwin & Dirba, 2006).

6 DISCUSSION

There is a wide variety of theories concerning intercultural competence, and what I applied for data analysis is Byram's model of intercultural competence, which is commonly acknowledged as claimed, while other models linked with intercultural competence are presented in theoretical part to support the better perception including Deardorff's model of procedures of getting intercultural competence and Larzén's three categories of teacher cognition on teaching in intercultural dimension. Together with Borg's theory of teacher cognition, the discussion is concentrating on the teacher cognition and practice of the education of intercultural competence in FL teaching.

This research focuses on answering the questions of (1) How Finnish upper secondary school English teacher understand the teaching of intercultural competence? (2) What activities Finnish upper secondary school English teacher

applied in classroom in order for the promotion of students' intercultural competence? For the first question, it is found that in this case study, Finnish upper secondary English teachers have good understanding of intercultural competence, they are open to other cultures and encourage students to acquire knowledge of both own and other cultures as well as developing other skills needed for intercultural communication, though they are facing challenges due to previous experience as learners and teachers, and contextual factors focusing on curriculum and textbooks. As for the second question, activities integrating intercultural competence are role playing, situations setting, double translation, comparing and material selecting. Based on Byram's model of intercultural competence, these activities are analyzed of the components (knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness) that can be developed.

Combined with the findings of these research questions, the model of how teacher cognition and classroom practice of intercultural competence are related with each other is made as Figure 6.

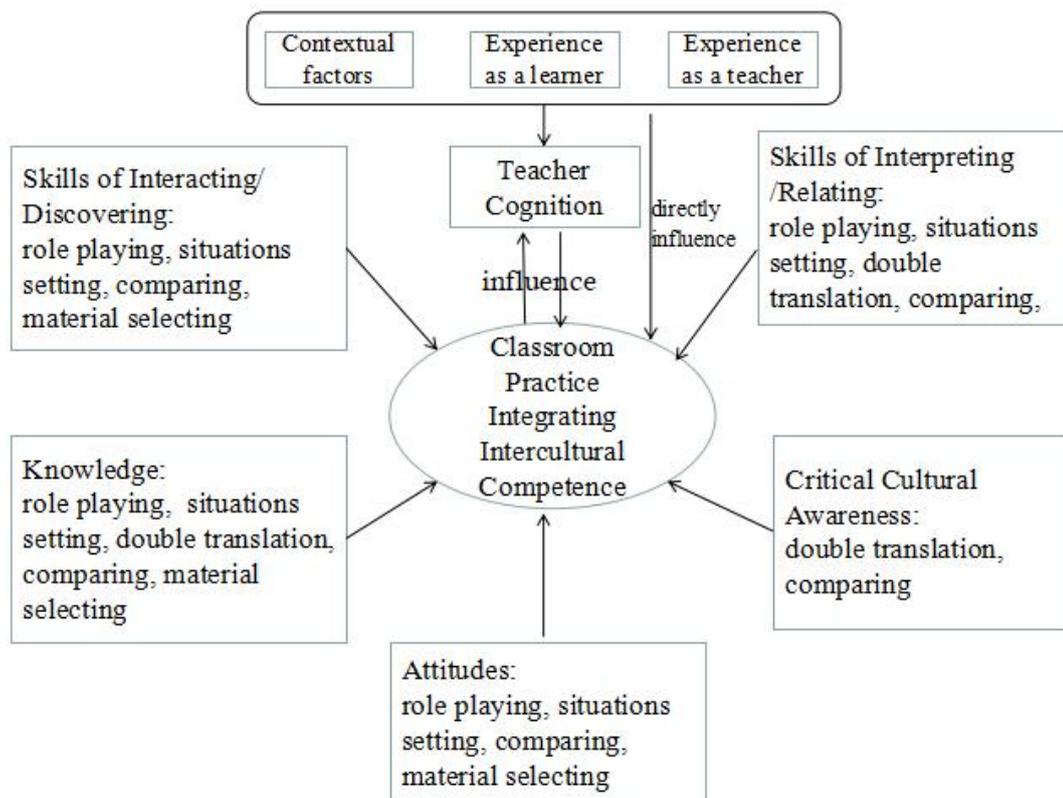


Figure 6: A model connecting teacher cognition and classroom practice based on Byram's model of intercultural competence, edited by Huanhuan Zheng

As shown in Figure 6, teacher cognition greatly influences their teaching practice, which corresponds to Borg's theory that the teacher with good cognition of intercultural competence support him/her to design and organize activities of developing students' intercultural competence (Borg, 2003). For example, teacher 1, as introduced above is open and encourage students to learn cultures of both own and other social groups, so the role playing is organized in her class for students to learn and experience diverse cultures. However, not finding teaching practice integrating intercultural competence of Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 indicates teacher cognition can also be an obstacle for teaching intercultural competence, for instance, Teacher 2 chose to follow the textbook activity of introducing economic issues through the text "A British Pound", which is also very suitable for integrating intercultural competence teaching. In this case, Teacher 2 has a good understanding of intercultural competence, but she was influenced by the textbook design, and then she made such a decision. Furthermore, classroom practice can also in turn affect teacher cognition (Borg, 2003). To be concrete, successful classroom practice will encourage teachers to continue this activity, like Teacher 3 who has encouraged students to select materials for long time, while the failed ones might frustrate teachers, like the hard experience of integrating intercultural competence into teaching discourages their future attempts. Moreover, the cognition of Teacher 4, though without recordings of interviews collected, is well reflected by her classroom practices of situations setting, comparing and so on, which manifests that classroom practice reflects and helps to understand teacher cognition.

With these two research questions being answered, suggestions on how to overcome challenges faced are put forward, it is then followed by the considerations on how to integrate intercultural competence into classroom teaching. Finally, this thesis ends with the limitations and suggestions for the future study in the discussion part.

6.1 Overcoming challenges of teaching intercultural competence

As can be seen from the research results, teachers are challenged with their previous experience and contextual factors, which needs to be solved urgently. Consequently, some solutions are recommended to increase teachers' intercultural communication experience and balance the aim of developing intercultural competence with other educational objectives, along with the way of utilizing of textbooks.

It is found that teachers' attitudes of incorporating intercultural competence into their teaching practice is greatly influenced by their previous experience. For example, as explained above, due to the previous experience of lacking intercultural competence teaching, Teacher 1 does not regard intercultural competence teaching as essential and necessary part of her teaching. In my view, previous experience cannot be changed, but current experience could be increased. Further, I suppose that the increasing of intercultural communication competence will motivate teachers to be more positive of teaching intercultural competence for realizing the significance of it in person. To increase such experience, there are many possible methods. For instance, teachers could try to catch opportunities of going abroad to truly be exposed to a different culture, which are supported by the school or themselves. If not, with the fast development of technology, it is no longer a problem to have a chance to get in touch with people from other cultures including Facebook, Skype and etc. Even it should be encouraged to have cooperation with teachers from other schools in other countries if possible, and this kind of collaboration is actually happening more frequently. In that case, both students and teachers can have opportunities to be closely in touch with other cultures even without getting out of their own country. Moreover, face-to-face communication with people in multicultural background is not difficult any more because of the globalization, it is really easy to find a foreigner in the street or other public places.

Nevertheless, one thing should be kept in mind is that it is not necessary that FL teachers must have experienced other cultures. Without such abroad experiences, teachers still can conduct experiential learning like role playing and comparing other cultures with own culture and so on to help students imagine and emerge out of

these experiences which better prepare students to communicate with other intercultural interlocutors ((Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002).

In terms of the matriculation exam, the predominant point is to balance the development of intercultural competence with other teaching objectives. Intercultural competence is definitely part of developing aim of Finnish national core curriculum, but it is not tested precisely which indicates acquiring this capability helps little for the passing of matriculation exam. Though emphasizing on quality-oriented education, Finnish teachers are also confronted with pressure of matriculation exam, so it is not strange to find that they would take grammar and vocabulary things in the first place. Nonetheless, my suggestion is to use some techniques to make students aware the implicit values and meanings in the materials using.

Finnish textbook is designed based on different themes and grammatical structures, and it is “presented in a way that suggests the material is authoritative and definitive or in an intercultural and critical perspective” (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p.16). Hence, when facing the challenge of having to teach certain materials or textbooks, it is a good choice for teachers to ask further questions based on the theme and content in the textbook and then make comparisons, which will lead to students’ promotion in an intercultural and critical perspective, the key point is to make students compare the theme in a familiar situation with examples from an unfamiliar context (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Take music for instance, gender, age, and region and so on are all factors can be compared, including questions as what kind of music do young people like? What kind of music do American girls like, and etc. Also, further activities can be made starting from activities in the textbook, for instance, using a broader range of context and examples for the grammatical exercises.

As a matter of fact, the texts in each textbooks are not absolutely only linked with the theme of that textbook, which means there are possibilities to incorporate intercultural competence into teaching practice. Take the text “A British Coin Pound” for example, it is the first text in Textbook six with economy as the theme, so in the course videotaped, the teacher did several activities to help students

understand the economic issues. This text tells the story of a sixteen-year-old Nigerian girl's tough experience of waiting for the acceptance of asylum in the UK, it reveals the a lot of cultural issues including prejudice, immigration and so on, which are all good resources for students to increase their knowledge and feel empathy for people with similar situations as the girl and promote their intercultural competence at final. Even if time permits, it is also a good idea if students are offered or permitted to search more related materials, like the lives in Africa, or people's views on those immigration people and etc. In this way, students are not only encouraged to foster their intercultural competence in class, but also initiated to increase knowledge and develop competence out of class.

Ignoring the textbook, it might also be applicable to find ways to incorporate cultural things in daily life and teaching, for example, only 5 or 10 minutes used once a week, during that time, students are doing some cultural learning, it might be a small presentation by a group of students, or a Kahoot quiz on foreign cultures, or a small discussion on a special cultural phenomenon, or even a small drama with intercultural background and so on. In a word, teachers should make good plans of how much time could be used for such activities or simply integrating intercultural competence development in normal teaching when the teaching content is linked to cultural issues.

6.2 Considerations of designing intercultural competence teaching

As stated in the theoretical part, to develop intercultural competence, students are required to be open and curious, to accept but also suspend beliefs, meanings and behaviors of both own culture and other cultures. With accumulating knowledge of both their own social group and other cultures, they are inspired to train skills of interpreting diverse cultures and relating them with their own culture, skills of discovery new knowledge and interaction with people in multicultural environment. Most importantly, it is vital to have critical cultural awareness so that students are able to evaluate issues from diverse perspectives (Byram, 1997). Based on this

definition of intercultural competence, there are some considerations when designing the teaching of intercultural competence in FL education.

Attitudes are the prerequisite of intercultural competence (Byram, 2012), so it is vital to keep in mind of the cultivation of students' curiosity, openness and readiness to diverse cultures throughout the whole class. Then material should be carefully chosen or at least carefully thought, it could be an article in the textbook or materials found by the teacher themselves as adding materials. Only one thing should be kept in mind, that is the material should be related with culture, and proper to design activities for the promotion of intercultural competence. At this point, knowledge related with culture is at least gained by the students. After selecting the proper material, activities should be designed to prepare students' diverse skills. For instance, to develop skill of interpreting, the teacher can ask students to discuss in group, act it out when doing role playing or solving problems in situations designed; as for skill of relating, the teacher can make students compare their own culture with other cultures on the basis of the teaching material; for skill of discovery, the teacher can simply ask students to find out things surprised them or different from their own culture; for the skill of interacting, the teacher should provide opportunities to students to speak and communicate using what they have learned by group discussion, role playing or other communicative activities. Finally, regarding the critical cultural awareness, the teacher can inspire students always consider cultural issues from diverse perspectives to avoid solid interculturality and prejudice.

Focusing on the possibilities of failed classroom practice, it is crucial that the teacher should realize that individual is liquid, which suggests encounters are independent people, so the culture they experienced and demonstrated is liquid. There is no possibility to find two completely same leaves, the same thing happens to different people and cultures. Therefore, to avoid solid interculturality and prejudices, teachers should make students become confident, effective and liquid "border crossers" to meet with the liquid people and culture (Dervin & Dirba, 2006).

6.3 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future study

As every research, this study also comes with limitations for various reasons. Primarily, the data was collected by my supervisor and her international colleague, which means I did not participate in the data original collecting session, and it might lead to the information missed. Specifically, I would have much deeper feelings and might initiate interesting ideas if I was able to observe those courses and interview teachers in person. Besides that, It is also good idea if more teachers participated so that teachers' cognitions and more activities could be collected and analyzed. In that way, this research can be developed from case study which helps teachers reflect themselves to a study which indicates the whole picture of Finnish teachers' cognition and practice of intercultural competence teaching, for example, at least teacher education might also be mentioned as an important factor influencing teacher cognition.

For future study, it would be a good idea to collect more cases of the practical activities used to develop students' intercultural competence to come up with a possible model for the teacher who tries to integrate intercultural competence into classroom teaching. In addition, it might also a good point to check whether these activities used in classroom practice are effectively improving students' intercultural competence. In other words, to explore the relationship between teacher cognition, classroom practice and students' outcomes might be helpful to directly reflect, find and promote effective ways of promoting students' intercultural competence. Finally, as a Chinese English teacher, I am quite interested in exploring the key principles of designing classroom practice to improve students' intercultural competence. With such finding, it might be of great help when integrating intercultural competence into classroom practice in China.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Extract of the transcription of teachers' interview

"J" refers to the interviewer, "T" refers to teacher, teacher 1, 2, 3, 4 represent 4 different Finnish teachers

Teacher 1:

Interview 1: background: the reason for being an English teacher: her father gets ill which means he cannot speak when he's old; her English did really good in school

00:27 J: It was very interesting with this Japanese student

00:29 T: Yeah.

00:30 J: We have brought her thoughts, she's usually so silent.

00:34 T: Yes, she's a bit shy, although I think her English is quite good, she's not much into talking though.

00:45 J: Probably cultural thing as well. (the teacher speaks at same time)

00:47 T: Yeah, that's true. (speaks at same time)

00:49 J: The boy's commented interestingly with that, it was that makes culture real what you have done to they.

...

Interview 2:

00:04 T: Yeah, I would say that because you know what with them, No.4, one for instance, we talked about young people's lives in general, and then we couple, we tend to talk about what lives like in the, you know, in Africa for instance, you don't have same possibilities as we do here, and you know, things like that, or or course 3, for instance, going to school, the vocabulary of, you know, high school and er upper secondary school so on. So, when we are learning the vocabulary, then we usually talk about the different school systems and lives of young people in different countries as well and so on.

00:49 J: Yeah.

00:50 T: So No.4 as well, the debates and discussions there, the topics are often about different cultures as well. So maybe this is not the best course for you to follow now. we are really concentrating on animals (laughing), and the environment and natural disasters and things like that, so don't , not that much on cultural differences. Or then, er, lower secondary school lessons as well, because then you can to, you know, always makes cultural aspects more than in secondary school courses I guess.

01:34 J: Because It is close to the exam.

05:19 T: That's what I would say, yes, well, first, when they come to upper secondary school, the first two or three courses again you have to kind of not to make assumptions about what they have done before, because you never known.(laughing) But then again many of them have already, I know, done the same thing. So, I can kind of rely that they have some, some knowledge of that, when you talk someone like [student name] for instance or my goddess, you know so much about the world and different cultures.

06:01 J: That's really interesting, because it goes again to this idea about socialization that somehow built into

06:08 T: En, yeah.

06:09 J: I think that Finnish educational system, so whether it's like with certain study skills or with certain kind of understanding and then you can, yeah, give great space to focus on other things, for example, become priority, like vocabulary and grammar maybe now.

...

06:45 T: That's what I will say, even thinking back to the days when I went to school, when I was ten years old, we already started talking about the, these things with my teacher, when I was ten or 8 or so, so It is nothing new to me when I went to upper secondary school. In fact, quite opposite, at that time, teacher would only taught to us grammar and "now this is what you have to know in the matriculation exam" (laughing)

07:17 J: So, yes, It is not the kind of you need the language first, then you do the cultural stuff.

...

07:43 T: You know, we make those posts about Finland as well, I think that's the first thing. If you don't know anything about your own country and your history, what can you talk about with foreigners or visitors. You have to be able to tell them about, you know, your home, your own town, city in Finland.

...

Interview 3:

00:09 J: Well, I know you may have a couple of questions too, but I was kind of curious because of the Japanese girl in the class.

00:15 T: Enheng, yes.

00:16 J: I know there are many exchange students, how do they participate?

00:20 T: Well, I had a couple of them, last year from en, from Italy and another girl from Japan and, well, I talked to them before the course

00:33 J: Yeah.

00:34 T: And this girl, for instance, she said that she don't really taking course No 5, she said it was really too difficult for her, and not only because the words translate in Finnish all the time, and grammar especially, ah, all in all, all the things were in the texts in the book, were a bit too maybe struggle for her.

...

02:26 T: So, I was able to give him, you know, more exercises, and probably practice those skills while the others were practising vocabulary and he of course knew all the more difficult words, because he can related to Latin and Italian so on. So, I'll try (laughing) do things like that, but the Japanese girl, I think is quite shy as well, so let's see how it goes that.

...

12:56 J: But then what point does it come in the exam or where, I was wondering maybe in the conversation, did they there? have to express some kind of intercultural understanding or does it really not matter that they could?

13:10 T: Well, not necessarily. You mean, I mean you have four or five different topics that you can choose from, and one of them can be 12, so you don't really have to, well, about anything cultural related. Em, the reading comprehension exercises there the texts, er, well, they are from those different topics and listening comprehension texts. While, er, mostly, I think based on the different courses, and their, er contents, so there might be something about technology, interesting bees, for instance or woth? for difference between them, and then about applying for a job somewhere, or, you know, er, and the course, they are from authentic sources, so very often, they are some, some texts from, you know, well, for instance, er, the difference between, between, er, Finnish people and Italian people, Americans, and their (laughing), the way they speak or behave, or the physical distance is that you have or things like that? but you don't necessarily need that in the exam, you can survive without(laughing)

...

14:54 T: Well, er, I would say that I personally have to develop a lot in the sense, because, er, when I studied teaching in English, we used to have several sections in the books, in the primary books, and in the lower secondary school books. And it was very very easy for me to just, you know, do the chapters first, "ok, now this is a nice chapter about the way going to, er, you know, a restaurant..." and you didn't really think about ok, is this in the UK, now in Finnish restaurant, you just practice that," Hello, I'd like to buy..."

15:35 J: Yeah.

15:36 T: And then there's a separate section about the UK, for instance, and then about the U.S.A., and er, only now, that I've talked for a few years, and and I actually travel to places (laughing), has some money traveling there, have I realized that, "ok, now, this can be connected to, to traveling." So, er, still I think It is very much up to the teacher, what you choose, do with the material, how you, how you do it. The same thing with pronunciation for instance, It is very often in separate section in the book, or in the one page, you can skip it

...

17:17 J: culture. So, you can't really avoid this, so, must, so must be the Finnish EFL curriculum, It is just the teacher's choice, more or less.

17:30 T: Well, everything is a must, everything is up to you as well. (laughing)
Because nobody really, er, check it with us. We can

17:39 J: It is more flexible

17:41 T: And the exam.

...

21:19 T: Em, we do think about matriculation exam a little bit too much, if you go and see the primary school lessons and lower secondary school lessons, I think you notice that we, we find out lots of items, you know, we talk about Caribbean for instance with the 8th graders like now.

21:39 J: Nice. Yes.

21:40 T: I, I never heard anything about that area in my school days. So, It is not just UK, or London, New York, we are talking about we do have South Africa, and India, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean.

21:59 J: Much borden.

22:00 T: Yeah, right. So that's a lot of thing. (laughing)

22:06 J: Yeah.

22:07 T: So many bees know? we kind of suppose that they have already heard about those countries and places and different accents as well, and oh, that's another thing, or er, what do? you think of texts and books and so on? They are, very often church? and recorded so that's the actors there speak different or have different accents as well, so depending on where the texts from, you have a Scottish accent, (laughing) or Indian accent, or Pakistan, or he telling us about his kinds.

Teacher 2:

Interview 1:

00:29 J: I was curious about the cultural dimension, is there cultural dimension of this course, how do you see the cultural dimension?

00:38 T: Em, yer, yesterday when I introduced the course, we talked about culture in general and, er, like, er, the previous course, course 5 is all about culture

00:53 J: right.

00:54 T: We only talked about culture, and different aspects of it, and yesterday we discussed culture, tridic san? that of course everything is culture, and these are aspects of culture, and of course anything that we do here, and anything we learn, for example, the basics of the texts,

01:13 J: yer

01:14 T: they are all about culture, in very many different ways

01:18 J: en

01:20 T: but I mean I haven't put that much emphasis on that aspect, on this course, except that of course, I take it as a given that everything is culture, and culture is very close related to our teaching all the time

05:50 J: just wondering about the matriculation exams, does cultural dimension commented in the matriculation exams at all?

05:57 T: em, it between the lines, not really know, now that's the problem

06:05 J: em, yes.

06:06 T: or one of the problems, (both start laughing)

06:07 J: yer, yer

06:09 T: I don't like the matriculation exams at all, but, er, It is just, It is really comprehensioned, It is comprehensioned vocabulary structures, and then they got right conversation

12:20 T: em, but in general, I think that culture is something that, er, I try to leave out of formal assessment and somehow immersed in the action, what we do all the time that It is self-evident that It is there, er, through projects have working on, stuff like that. ah, I don't know, It is kind of hard, It is always kind of hard, because there's so many things you should be doing, somebody says you should, ah, like there's a research study, says that you should be, ah, working more pronunciation and minor details, intonation should be taught more

13:11 J: en,en

13:12 T: ok, yer, I am not going to say It is not important, you got, that's one of thing

13:15 J: en

13:16 T: but just minor detail prepare to, like all of things we should be doing here and with if you don't have time for that, and as I told you, I am not intelligent enough,(start laughing)

13:27 J: but you are intelligent... (both saying and laughing)

13:33 T: yer, yer, this so much like the ideal world, world is,er I think different to what we actually do.

...

(Background: 1994 studied in Jyväskylä university, master degree of drama course. Since child, she likes language, and hopes to be a language teacher. She first studied German, then she felt she did not like to learn it, so change her major to drama in foreign language. She has tried to use drama as a teaching method, but she realized It is not working so well in Finland, because the pressure of so many things to teach. And they are very busy and tired, even if they want to develop themselves or try something new, they do not have extra time. Having a week off to develop new skills is hard to achieve, so only personal time could be used to develop themselves.)

...

27:59 J: how was the textbook this intercultural dimensions, sorry, we are gonna to talk about some cultural aspects, but was it one of you potential points to bring this bit of intercultural aspects, or it was as you said, just belonging for, you think at school, was it part of your agenda to bring this cultural context?

28:24 T: er, you mean

28:25 J: in the textbook (both saying)

28:26T: (in the textbook) when I was writing yer, em. let me try to remember, em, it was 8 or 9 years ago, it was such much going on that time, ah, it was, it was very new thing for me, even fact I was going to co-writer of the book. it was very hard for me to remember what was going on, what we talked about, ah, we really worked as a team, as a group, they are not writers, we worked as a group, and of course, we tried to integrate culture, ah, in the texts, ah, it was we did. but it was somehow, it was very hard to say, none of us was responsible for cultural, vocabulary, structure,

we did everything, like everybody did everything, and we really worked as a team, neither I think about, I am not, I am not very happy about the textbook now, today when I read it again, It is, it seems a bit old-fashioned to me, now I looked at it, a lot has happened after that, so it wasn't my ideal textbook back then, It is not ideal textbook right now. So It is, of course we try to have some cultural aspect, we have some cultural corners where we ask students do think their cultural experiences or some places where they've re see, what they can remember, what Canada, for example, stuff like that, but I still think It is very service level culture, er, if you put that way, so It is, It is not taking you anywhere, like in you place culturally, if you know what I mean. I know, I am (the teacher laughs) ...You know, It is more geography, or It is more like something else, It is not, like for example, I know what you mean by taking this little bee, er, a little further and talking about the text, that's where I'd like to be in if I talked about culture, but It is, It is some pieces, like some pages, It is some pieces about culture, you know, very small details actually, and I think, because the textbook is mainly for comprehensive schools, students needs, supposed to be quite, you know not that demanding yet, cause there's lot of, lot of kids who can't deal with that kind of topics in a foreign language, It is far too difficult for them. em, yes, of course It is very important, if think about the language itself, It is supposed to be there, so we can understand each other better, so we can communicate, so we are gonna to understand other cultures better world. em, yer. (laughing)

Teacher 3:

Interview 1:

01:05 J: how we one of our focuses on the how intercultural knowledge incorporated. I know that, with the str Finnish curriculum, knowledge of different cultures is important

01:19 T1: enheng

01:20 J: You know in Australia really compulsory.

01:22 T1: Yes, I think so, too. In Finland, It is completely different aspect how it is well done naturally. But it is there, within the curriculum. And it is something that

should be there, It is like politically correct thing to have there, but It is also very useful thing to have there.

...

01:56 T: How do you understand intercultural in this context, what defines like, any topic that deals with intercultural issues or ...

02:05 J: It is a good thing, good questions, so I think it can be very broad,very

02:09 T: yep

02:10 J: narrow. you have something right, but the fact that probably they have to try to know, or just inspired to find out more about the American or English-speaking grown cultures.

02:24 T: yes

02:25 J: But when they come to the exam,

02:26 T: enheng

02:27 J: does it help, or is it tested any way in writing or reading

02:32 T: probably helps, but in the matriculation exam,, the texts are usually chosen from various, like journals, newspapers, blogs, online sources, and they can be about anything basically, any country, any culture,any kind of things, so I think it does help in, especially in the junior students' textbooks, they usually divide the areas, like this is about New Zealand and Australia, this texts are about the United States, this is about the Great Britain, this is something else South Africa maybe, this have traditionally being the four large areas of interest. er, I think It is integrated there, even in more depths, and they want to embrace the topic even more. And in the way that is not any more like Britain, South Africa, everyone who is anglophone in any country, so I think they want to get rid of these strict,you know areas, America, Britain, South Africa, Australia. And I think they want students to learn to deal with intercultural issues whether It is India or France, people who speak English in France or whatever, Russia, Sweden. But about if there's a link to,oh, between students' learning this intercultural things, and there are success rate in matriculation exam. I am not so sure about that. I wouldn't necessarily know the answer to that question. I say that if the students read a lot, if they, they listen to the music a lot, I think that helps even more.

...

04:43 T: If they are aware of what goes on in the world.

04:45 J: Do you have in your, in your course are there any news of cooperated or discussions on

04:52 T: news

04:53 J: news or current events, and other ...(the teacher started to talk)

04:56 T: yes, we tried to do that in English courses, and probably in other subjects as well. ah, we most do it so that the students, for instance, they, they choose an item of news at home that interest them related to a specific topic, like nature, they read the item, news, they summarize it, next time when they come to school, to their friends within small groups, that we, we kind of try to integrate news into teaching, but since time is always so limited, there isn't very much time to actually watch news or read news. We sometimes watch one-minute BBC news here in the class, we can give links to useful sites.

05:45 J: but there are not really, there's no time for them to analysis it more deeply...(the teacher speaks again)

05:52 T: not really, since we have these, er, textbook and course material that we use, so basically, that provides us with a lot of materials already. If we didn't use what we have to use, or we don't have to go through the texts in the textbook, but still we want to prior to use the textbooks, because the students have to buy them, so there isn't much time. Well, we might have a course where there is no actual course book, there the teacher is more a liberal teacher to choose other sources, other materials like newspapers. I think Course 9 in English is like applied course, you can do that there. I think It is done there.

08:01 T: globally, I think, but in Finland as well.

08:04 J: very interesting. So that they try to link it with big, big pictures.

08:12 T: I say so. I say so. And of course I say that not all of them are so interested, like you probably saw from the answers that some said, " Well, I haven't thought about this so much. I, I am not that aware." I think that represents the average Finnish person, because these things are also depressing things, they don't have the strength to talk about it all the time.

08:33 J: True.

...

09:21 J: Finnish context, which is so slow cultural (keeps saying)

09:25 T: Yes

09:25 J: probably culture

09:26 T: If you follow, if any of Fin followed the Finnish discussion for us, there's a lot of discussions about climate change, and er, the right to wear fur, like commercially, like what do they have this, foxes and cages, you know, that, they have business, they do business what they do. You know, ah, that's debated animal rights, wolves' rights. In Finland, It is much discussed in the moment.

10:00 J: That's very interesting, so their English responses are actually sort of, er, the reflections of questions that are there.

10:10 T: And I have, actually I chose questions pretty carefully, I didn't want to give my opinions to any of those questions, because I know they divide people, like do you have the right to wear fur, or is it right to eat meat. I know that they are very sensitive questions to some people.

10:44 T: yes, yes. The same girls with religion and stuff like that, you can just ask questions, but you can't , ah, like give answers to them. You just have to listen to what they have to say.

10:57 J: Can I ask you about, er, your, er, your perception of the demands of er, language, er, language's curricula, and do you think It is very, er, currently as you think, more and more demanding course because of the global issues, because there are so many sensitive issues involved.

11:17 T: So, er, do you want me to think about whether these sensitive issues make it more difficult to teach?

11:23 J: if(the teacher continues)

11:24 T: (breathing) Not necessarily, just have to formulate the questions so that everyone can answer them, and I think It is very durable. You can see that I, I can say my opinions. For instance, I can say this is way I think, you may think differently. But I cannot push my opinions, or I can't say this is right or wrong. That's what life goes, I think. And sometimes, the students, they can disagree more strongly, but I

cannot take a stand. I can try and solve there, there is a disagreement, sometimes they do disagree, like they debate in the class sometimes about certain things.

...

12:36 T: Yes, sometimes, and they seem to have strong opinions, some of the students. Some have very strong religious beliefs, and some don't. And some have more, like moral and ethical standpoints while others don't seem to think that much. What I like to have is just if I'd like to provide people to just express their opinion whatever it is.

...

25:49 J: Yes, interesting, It is fascinating. Can I ask,er in your family, why did you become a language teacher just, if It is not a personal question.

25:59 T: It is not,er, I don't have a reason, I was kind of drifting a bit when I studied and I didn't know what to do, so I kind of drifted into being a teacher. I was never dedicated it, like I was, I never had this idea that I would be a teacher. Well, my both parents were teachers, so it kind of probably affected.

26:20 J: Do the language as well...(the teacher starts)

26:22 T: Yes, Finnish and er, Swedish

26:25 J: Swedish?

26:27 T: Yes

26:27 J: So, it was...(the teacher starts)

26:28 T: It runs in the family.

26:29 J: So it was bilingual from the beginning.

26:31 T: Probably yes, although my mum always said," Don't become a teacher."
(laughing)

26:37 J: That's what my mother told me.(both laughing)

26:40 T: Well, I've seen it when I was a kid, she had a lot of work, so I knew what it was like. Otherwise, I don't know why I became a teacher. It seems it is a steady choice in the 90s, now I am not so sure anymore.

Appendix 2 Activities help to develop intercultural competence

Teacher 1:

1. Pair work: A choose at least 12 keywords, then B tell the story using the keywords and consider how these keywords related to the text. (ps. Translation of the text and important expressions are offered in the student resources online)

--- during the activity, the teacher says it's okay to use fewer words than 12 keywords, if they find it really hard.

A surprise, many students have keywords of "fuck" and "shit", the teacher jokes: how could they have such words in English book? (13mins)

2. Group work: Ask English questions from the handout which is in Finnish, while others(B,C,D) try to find answers from their handouts which is in Finnish, the questions are questions about tips of how to survive in the world from mother or grandma, like how to save money and etc. (double translation) (ps. After 20mins later, the teacher offers another option to write the poem in P7, if they have finished, but actually students love the exercise, they need more time and the teacher gives more time.

3. Read the vocabulary after native speaker again (for native speaker)(these vocabulary will be explained later, not this course, because the wrong handout) (18mins)

4. ps. There's a Japanese visitor, so she's asked to introduce the nuclear disaster, while at first she's too shy to tell, then the teacher asks some questions to start. (3mins)

Teacher 4:

Video 1:

text: Finnish Whizz Kids P19, coursebook 3

1. Role playing: A is a journalist, and makes interview to student B about questions, like school life, school lunch, school uniforms, school dress coat and etc, and try to use the phrases as much as possible.

(ps. Try to end the interview in American polite way as a journalist, and B ends with Finnish polite way)

2. Change the role, but asks questions in P23 which are in Finnish, but translate them into English. (16mins)

3. Ipad using (original longer version of the text): read the article and find at least 5 things that surprised you, or you don't agree with. (16mins)

Video 2:

Theme: different school systems

1. Situations:

She tries to act out some situations, make a good example of how to deal with such situations, and also telling the true situation of a Finnish boy experienced in UK with her. (He was too focusing on photographing the Big Ben that he bumped into a 12-year-old girl, who's quite angry about that, she helps to apologize for him, and the parent of the girl was angry for the boy was not apologizing, and then the teacher said he did, but in Finnish; experience in France: only after saying "Bonjour" (good afternoon) then, she was allowed to ask directions from the policeman)

Ps. the teacher gives opportunities for students to use English in different situations which is funny, and she stresses politeness and cultural difference. (19mins)

2. School systems in different countries: work in pairs to find the school systems in English-speaking countries which interest you most, if you are interested in different countries, then try to find both. Try to find pictures, charts help to explain and try to answer questions shown in the PowerPoint, including the comparison between the Finnish school system and the one student chooses. (the teacher gives out the permission paper during the activity) (the teacher also provides useful resources before ending the activity, but after they have tried themselves) (24mins)

3. Group work: make groups of three or four, each group has different countries chosen and then make presentations of your country, then discuss which are the

biggest three or four or five differences between Finnish school system and others.
(17mins)