

Mirrors and Windows in Language Teacher Education

Mirrors and Windows in Language Teacher Education:

*Intercultural Competence
and Reform Pedagogy*

By

Ildikó Lázár

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FOREWORD

I have been asked several times in recent months to write a chapter or an article about the evolution of 'intercultural competence' as an aspect of language teaching. This may be a matter of my age - old people are asked to reminisce - but I think it is also a symptom of the need to review how language teaching has changed, not least in response to the major social and economic changes in the world, commonly labelled 'globalization'. In one request, I was asked to start in the year 1968, 'the year of revolutions', and stop in 2001, when the *Common European Framework of Reference* was published, marking a significant turning point in language teaching in Europe, and ultimately in other continents too. Can we identify a similar landmark date when intercultural competence appeared in language teaching? Can we relate intercultural competence to socio-political and economic change as the choice of 1968 seems to do?

The author of this book includes her research article from 2011, but she was actively involved in bringing intercultural competence to teacher education long before this, and she says, in beginning the analysis of policy documents, that 'language education policy has been influenced by the intercultural dimension of language teaching in Europe since the 1980s'. In Hungary, she traces the influence to the 1990s and the National Core Curriculum of 1996. These are indicators of changes within language teaching, not unlike the appearance of the CEFR as a landmark of change. On the other hand, Ildikó remarks that the National Core Curriculum of 2020 has attracted criticism which has been branded as 'anti-national political action serving 'foreign' interests', and here we have an indication of an important socio-political date and influence.

All teaching has political characteristics and language teaching, which inevitably turns learners' attention to the world beyond national frontiers and to alternative ways of thinking and living, is always an implicit critique of nationalist ideology. The patron of language teaching ought to be Samuel Johnson who famously said

'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel' which I take as a criticism of the chauvinism we see today in Europe and beyond. His critique is currently appropriate to his prime ministerial namesake in the UK and language teaching has a job to do in my country too to ensure that young people are not inward-looking and caught in the tangled web of nationalism.

When Ildikó introduces 'reform pedagogy', the political significance of 'reform' is not to be overlooked, even though she, inevitably and correctly, focuses on teaching methods and how teacher education can ensure change in the direction of 'reform'. For, despite tracing the influence of the intercultural competence dimension to the 1980s and 1990s, Ildikó is aware as we all are that change in education is slow, and policymakers have much less influence than they would like to believe they have.

In this book, Ildikó has drawn together past and present, and pointed to a direction for the future. She has done so in both theoretical and practical ways. This is important because, although all practice has a theoretical basis - sometimes scientific and sometimes 'common sense' theory - there is much theory which has no practice. The presence in the book of theoretical, empirical research and the analysis of 'approaches and activity types' as practised in classrooms ensures a strong link of theory to practice. Furthermore, Ildikó is very aware of the different perspectives of researchers, teacher educators and teacher trainees, as is evident from her innovative approach to posing questions for readers to consider. For this is not just a book to read. It is a book which demands response. As such, it is important not just as a documentation of the evolution of intercultural competence in language teaching in the past - in general, in Hungary and in Ildikó's own work - but also a stimulus for present and future 'language people', and I congratulate Ildikó on the well-wrought oeuvre, which is a credit to her and a stimulus for others.

Michael Byram
December 2021

INTRODUCTION

The title of this book implies that it always helps to look into the mirror, in this case at our own personal theories about teaching as well as our own everyday practice in education. At the same time it is also extremely useful to look out the window at the richness of the world out there and explore other educators' experiences and research findings in order to develop professionally and ensure that we can successfully support every language learner in classes where inclusion, joint effort and cooperation are the norm instead of competition and hostility. Secondly, looking into the mirror stresses the importance of self-knowledge and self-awareness just as much as looking out the window represents the need for openness and curiosity about people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds for successful intercultural communication in English or in any other language for that matter. Thirdly, the title *Mirrors and Windows* is a nostalgic glance at the past as the phrase is borrowed from the title of a thin little black and white intercultural communication textbook that my colleagues and I wrote nearly 20 years ago (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár & Strange, 2003) at the end of a four-year international research and training project involving teacher educators from over 20 different countries in a series of workshops on intercultural competence development in language teacher education at the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe.

Our understanding of what the goals of foreign and second language education are and how languages can be most effectively learned has changed significantly in recent decades and this is reflected in most international and local language policy papers today. However, the methods and approaches that language teachers use have not necessarily followed these changes and studies show that many language learners still face obstacles in the way of successful intercultural communication in many parts of the world. The overall aims of this book are to synthesize and summarize the results of my own research and training activity of the past 15 years and situate these in a wider context in order to

provide researchers, teacher educators and student teachers interested in intercultural language teaching, reform pedagogy and teacher education with a review of the key concepts and important research results of these fields.

Each chapter starts with research questions recommended for researchers, suggestions for teacher educators and tasks for trainee teachers to make it easier for them to engage with the material and become inspired both to conduct further research and to incorporate new activities and approaches in their language teaching or teacher education work. In addition, each chapter ends with “exit tickets” that encourage the reader to summarize the main points and reflect on the next steps they wish to take. So research and practice are closely intertwined, which is also reflected in the structure of the volume.

Part One reviews and clarifies the key concepts used in the book ranging from culture and intercultural competence through formative assessment and teachers’ new roles to 21st century expectations in education, including pedagogical approaches and activity types that have proved to be conducive to the development and assessment of competences deemed essential in our times. The differences in terminology used in different parts of the world to describe more or less the same phenomena and concepts are often misleading. Therefore, clarity in establishing how the most important technical terms are understood in this volume is essential.

Part Two presents and reviews my own earlier and ongoing research projects and other available and relevant literature on expectations from language teaching and teacher education in policy documents from the perspectives of intercultural education and reform pedagogy as well as studies on intercultural competence development in language teacher education with special emphasis on changes in curricula and on the impact of education policy and professional development courses on teachers’ beliefs and practices. The analysis of changes in policy documents globally and locally reflects the evolution of new goals in education and the review of the wealth of research available helps us understand where we are in the process towards those goals. These chapters wish to invite readers to think about reforms and how these can be investigated and developed further.

In Part Three, some of my earlier publications are reprinted with the publishers' permission in order to provide easy access to research articles and an assessment tool that might be of interest to researchers, teacher educators and trainee teachers if they wish to analyze them in light of the constantly developing theoretical background of intercultural competence (ICC) and new studies on changes in second and foreign language teaching, especially in English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education. Attempts have been made to ensure that all essential topic areas covered in the book have at least one related study reviewed in Part Two or reprinted in full in Part Three.

Although many professionals have written excellent studies about each of the topics in this book, the present volume wishes to fill a gap by connecting the evolving intercultural dimension of language teaching and recent pedagogical reforms in online and offline language teaching contexts as well as in language teacher education. The book was written in English partly because of my context in English language teacher education and partly to reach a wider audience in the hope that the reviews, studies and activities will prove useful for researchers, teacher educators and trainee teachers of other languages, and perhaps also of other subjects in many parts of the globe. Not only does this volume intend to contribute to the body of knowledge in these fields but with the help of the questions for reflection and the proposed activities, it also aims to instigate individual reactions and encourage innovative action on the part of all readers teaching in schools, hopefully with many bright mirrors and windows around them.

PART ONE:

KEY CONCEPTS RELATED TO INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND PEDAGOGY

Part One aims to review, clarify and elaborate on the key concepts used in the present volume including culture, identity, intercultural competence, formative assessment, teachers' roles, 21st century expectations as well as pedagogical approaches and activity types that seem to be conducive to the development and assessment of intercultural competence and other essential competences that teachers are advised to develop in their learners in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Education professionals and scholars all over the world have tried to define culture, identity and intercultural competence and to highlight their relevance in language use and thus in language teaching. Quite naturally, their definitions are usually shaped by the scholars' own educational context and influenced by the field of study they work in. A recent publication entitled *Global Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (Croucher, 2017) gives a comprehensive overview of what intercultural communication means on different continents and for people with different religious, theoretical, political, economic or methodological orientations. This volume cannot provide a full review of the most important works on language, culture, identity and intercultural competence but a description of some of the most influential works and definitions of how the most important terms are understood and used in the present book are in order.

Potential research questions:

1. How do language teachers define “culture teaching”?
2. What do teachers think about their own and their students' multiple identities?
3. What do language teachers want to teach or what do they aim to develop beyond proficiency in the target language?
4. How has the definition of intercultural competence developed over the past 30 years? What is its relationship to communicative competence?
5. How do language teachers define intercultural competence and what do they do to develop it in language classes?

Suggestions for teacher educators:

1. As an icebreaker, ask your trainee teachers to draw an identity card for themselves. They should write down at least five important things about themselves (qualities, roles, hobbies, languages spoken, beliefs or world view, cultures they feel attached to, places they love, etc.) and then mingle to learn more about each other. In the debriefing discussion, ask trainees how many cultures have impacted their identity and how their ID card would have been different 5 or 10 years earlier. You can also discuss how they would adapt this activity to their own language classes and what learning outcomes they would hope for.
2. Use a think-pair-share activity to talk about films that show cultural clashes. First, ask your group of trainee teachers to think about such films individually for a few minutes and take notes. Then have them compare the titles they collected in pairs or groups of three. Ask the pairs or trios to discuss the types of cultural clashes they collected and the possible underlying reasons. The pairs or groups could prepare posters summarizing their findings, which they can then put on the wall (or share online) and present to the other pairs or groups. If you teach literature, history or linguistics to trainee teachers, you can use the same think-pair-share activity and have them recall short stories or novels, historical conflicts or differences in forms of politeness, for example. Think-pair-share is a very simple cooperative activity that develops many of the components of intercultural, democratic and global competence (see also Chapter 3.1 on cooperative learning and Chapter 6 for empirical research on cooperative learning for intercultural competence).
3. For more ideas on icebreakers and other practical training room activities that aim to raise awareness of the meaning of culture and the importance of being aware of our own and others' multiple identities as well as to develop intercultural competence in language teaching or teacher education, see for example Lázár (2015c) or Holló (2019) in Hungarian, or Lázár and her colleagues (2007), Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange (2003) or Mompoin-Gaillard and Lázár (2015) in English.

Questions and activities for trainee teachers:

1. Can you think of words or phrases in your own language that do not translate easily into the target language (or ones that simply do not have an equivalent at all) and long explanations are essential when you wish to convey their meaning to speakers of other languages?
2. Think about intercultural encounters you have had either in your own country or when traveling or studying abroad. Try to recall cultural differences you have observed. Can you think of one such difference that pleasantly surprised you? One that you found embarrassing? Another one that made you feel uncomfortable or insecure? If you have a chance to compare experiences with fellow trainees, share your story with a partner and try to find the roots and reasons for the behavior that you found pleasantly surprising, embarrassing or uncomfortable.
3. What dos and don'ts would you teach to a friend of your age visiting your country for the first time? Would these be different for a colleague or an elderly person visiting? What steps would you take if you wanted to prepare your learners for a study trip or an online collaboration project with a class abroad?

1.1 Language and culture

When language teachers are asked about what culture means to them in language teaching, they most frequently answer by talking about the literature, history, geography, sights, music and arts of the target language country or countries. This is easily understandable if we consider that language course books used to present snippets from the target language culture(s) and many still do. In the case of English language teaching in Europe, traditionally this meant, for example, the history of some of the sights in London, a poem by Robert Burns or *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and perhaps a song by the Beatles. More recently, however, facts about well-known sights, natural wonders and famous people from other English-speaking countries also feature in many teaching materials. In addition to the question about whose culture should be included in language course books especially in the case of a lingua franca like English (Kimmel, 2020), it is also worth reflecting about what exactly we mean by culture in the language teaching-

learning context. Although in the traditional sense of the word described above, culture obviously has countless interesting and important elements, it seems that there are other, perhaps even more essential components for language learners that should find their way into second and foreign language classrooms.

School subjects like literature, geography, history and arts are often placed under the umbrella term “civilization” or “big ‘C’ culture” as opposed to the category of “little ‘c’ culture” (Halverson, 1985). The latter includes elements that are perhaps less visible and less tangible and have no traditional school subjects assigned to them but without knowledge about beliefs, behaviors and social practices, speakers of a foreign language might become “fluent fools” (Brembeck, 1977). To quote Bennett (1997) “to avoid becoming a fluent fool, we need to understand more completely the cultural dimension of language. Language does serve as a tool for communication, but in addition it is a ‘system of representation’ for perception and thinking” (p.16). In other words, language and culture are interwoven and culture rightfully claims an important place in foreign language classrooms if we intend to prevent our learners from looking foolish despite their fluent and accurate language use.

The well-known **iceberg analogy of culture** in Levine and Adelman’s cross-cultural communication textbook (1993) based on Ruhly (1976) compares the notion of culture to an iceberg only the tip of which is visible (language, food, sights, appearance, etc.) whereas a very large part of it is difficult or impossible to see or grasp (beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, etc.). The items in the invisible body of the iceberg could include an endless list of notions from definitions of beauty or respect to patterns of group decision-making, ideals governing child-raising, as well as values relating to leadership, authority, prestige, respect, health, love, death, and so on.

In a useful resource book for language teachers on cultural awareness, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) refer to Robinson’s (1985) model when they present **culture** as a notion consisting of three elements: products, behavior and ideas. The category called “products” includes literature, folklore, music and artifacts. The second element, “behavior” refers to customs, habits, dress, foods and leisure. The third element called “ideas” includes beliefs, values

and institutions. Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2010) point out that culture is learned, transmissible, dynamic, selective and ethnocentric and that the facets of culture are interrelated (pp. 12-13). Alptekin's (1993) definition also reinforces the idea that culture consists of more than just civilization. He claims that our socially acquired knowledge is "organized in culture-specific ways which normally frame our perception of reality such that we largely define the world through the filter of our world view" (p.136). Similarly, Kramsch (1998) defines culture as "membership in a discourse community" and a worldview, i.e. "a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" (p.10).

In a Council of Europe publication, Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard and Philippou (2014) attempt to define **culture** by dividing it into material culture such as tools, goods, foods or clothing; social culture consisting of language, religion, laws, rules of social conduct and folklore; and subjective culture including "beliefs, norms, collective memories, attitudes, values, discourses and practices which group members commonly use as a frame of reference for thinking about, making sense of and relating to the world" (Barrett et al., 2014, pp.13-14).

In contrast to the above division, Holló (2019) describes **culture** as falling into three different main categories: civilization, speech and behavior patterns and text/discourse structures and skills. In her model, civilization includes history, literature, sights, institutions, values, humor, etc. The category called speech and behavior patterns contains elements such as behavior, etiquette, language functions, pragmatic and socio-linguistic features, body language and cultural dimensions among other things. Finally, the category named "text/discourse structures and skills" includes discourse features (such as text/topic structure, figures of speech, coherence, logic, cohesion, public speeches, mediation, etc.), and discourse processes and skills (such as researching a topic, focusing on issues, outlining, developing and structuring ideas, drafting, etc.)

As opposed to earlier descriptions of (national) cultures, many professionals now seem to agree that "cultural identity includes our social identities based on cultural group memberships" because we are members of several groups (Croucher, 2017, p.101) and that "cultural groups are always internally **heterogeneous** groups that embrace a range of diverse practices and norms that are often

contested, change over time and are enacted by individuals in personalised ways" (Barrett et al., 2014, p.13). This also entails that

all cultures are dynamic and constantly change over time as a result of political, economic and historical events and developments, and as a result of interactions with and influences from other cultures and [...] their members' internal contestation of the meanings, norms, values and practices of the group. (Barrett et al., 2014, p.15)

Nevertheless, the wish to write and teach about **general cultural traits and behaviors** typical in other countries has long been with us especially in language education. Although there are often no visible and tangible boundaries between universal, cultural and personal human characteristics, language use and behaviors, Edward T. Hall went a long way to map out culture more than six decades ago. Hall's book *The Silent Language* (1959) treats culture in its entirety as a form of communication. It sketches "the biological roots from which most if not all of culture grew and outlines the ten basic foci of activity that combine to produce culture" (p. 28). With Hall's map of culture we can systematically examine one hundred examples of human activity, and compare them across cultures. The comparisons generated by this map become an effective tool for sensitizing language students and trainees to their own cultures, for it helps them discern specific learned behaviors that they have internalized, now take for granted, and often assume to be universal.

Hofstede (1994) sees **culture as "the collective programming of the mind** which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p.5). In his pyramid model, he differentiates three levels of "the software of the mind": universal, cultural and personal. He admits that trying to establish where exactly the borders lie between human nature and culture and between culture and personality is a challenge. His cultural dimensions that generalize about people depending on where they are from have often been criticized as they lend themselves to stereotyping. Nevertheless, Hall and Hofstede among others underscored the importance of learning about culture in ways other than it had been traditionally established in education systems.

The study of cultures has been assisted by cross-cultural studies focusing on classifications of etic perspectives, i.e. an outsider's views on the form of values, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions.

These classifications called **cultural dimensions** by Hofstede (1980) and **value orientations** by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1960) are used by anthropologists and other researchers to provide frameworks to better enable us to describe cultures in order to analyze and understand them from the outside.

Some of the most fundamental cultural dimensions or value orientations along which cultures differ are the degree of individualism versus collectivism (Hofstede, 1994), high immediacy versus low expressiveness (Andersen, 1985), masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede, 1994), high versus low power distance (Hofstede, 1994) high versus low context (Hall, 1984), good versus evil humankind (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1960), past versus future orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1960), universalism versus particularism (Trompenaars, 1994), monochronic versus polychronic (Hall & Hall, 1990), and specific versus diffuse (Trompenaars, 1995).

The above categories and continuums were established on the basis of empirical research carried out on large samples of people in many countries. In what follows, a brief summary of these cultural dimensions is presented because they might prove useful material in language classes for a starting point on discussions about cultural and linguistic similarities and differences. **Individualism** versus **collectivism** refers to how people define themselves and how they value their relationships with others. In individualist cultures, people usually do not take into consideration groups of people other than their closest family members when they make decisions or set their goals. At the other end of the continuum, collectivist cultures pay a lot of attention to other groups of people when making decisions. **Immediacy** is the degree of perceived physical closeness between people. Behaviors in immediacy-centered cultures abound in smiling, touching, and eye contact, and are usually characterized by close physical distance between interlocutors. **Masculinity** describes cultures that try to achieve maximum distinction between what roles men and women should play in society, and think very highly of masculine traits like self-confidence, competition and material achievement. **Feminine cultures** allow more overlapping roles for the two genders. **High power distance** cultures are described as authoritarian where power is usually in the hands of a few people, whereas **low power distance** cultures tend to distribute power through the population more democratically. In **high context** cultures very little is explicitly

stated in messages because everything is assumed to be clear from the context. However, in **low context** cultures messages are elaborate and highly detailed because verbal abilities and clarity are highly valued. There are cultures that tend to believe that **humankind is good by nature**, and there are others that start from the assumption that **humankind is evil**. Some cultures are preoccupied by their **past** whereas others focus primarily on the **future**. Finally, in **universalist** cultures, truth is fixed and people believe in absolute rules. At the other end of this continuum, truth is relative so rules can be bent to suit the circumstances. The latter are labeled **particularist** cultures. In **monochronic** cultures, people usually like to do one thing at a time whereas in **polychronic** cultures, people tend to be involved in multiple actions at the same time. Finally, language use in **specific** cultures is more direct, clear and descriptive while communication in **diffuse** cultures is indirect and people usually use carefully selected contextual clues to convey their meaning.

For obvious reasons the above cultural dimensions can be very helpful when the goals of culture learning in the language classroom include both an awareness raising of the characteristics of one's own culture and familiarization with typical culture-specific social practices of other cultures. However, it has to be noted that these cultural dimensions should not lead to forcing nationalities into boxes because **stereotyping and prejudice** can be major barriers in the way of successful intercultural communication. "Stereotypes are stumbling blocks" for people who want to communicate with people from other cultures because they are usually firmly established, prove to be difficult to overcome or correct and often endanger objectivity (Barna, 1994, p.341). The aim of analyzing cultures with the help of the cultural dimensions described above is to find general trends in order to reach a better understanding of specific differences between countries, as this was pointed out a few years after the first publication by Hofstede himself in *Cultures and Organizations* (1994).

Damen (1987) described **culture learning** as "a natural process in which human beings internalize the knowledge needed to function in a societal group", which may occur "in the native context as **enculturation** or in a non-native or secondary context as **acculturation**" (p.140). As we grow up, we build our cultural identity and way of life with our own cultural beliefs and values,

which we instinctively and naturally believe to be right and powerful. “Acculturation, on the other hand, involves the process of pulling out of the world view or ethos of the first culture, learning new ways of meeting old problems, and shedding ethnocentric evaluations” (pp.140-141). When we learn second or foreign languages, we inevitably learn about the cultures associated with those languages, and especially when we are learning a lingua franca, we often encounter and learn about other cultures, too. All of these experiences and encounters shape and enrich our identity. Damen (1987) highlights that “Culture is learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism” (p.367). It is widely accepted that speakers of second or foreign languages are especially in need of **adaptive mechanisms** in intercultural interactions.

To help justify the rightful place of cultural content in English language teaching in Hungary, and in an attempt to raise awareness of cultural differences that may be responsible for misunderstandings in intercultural communication, Holló (2015) examines narratives of foreigners living in Hungary and Hungarians who have lived abroad with regard to their experiences of the cultural differences between Hungarians and people of other nationalities. As few works on cultural dimensions include an analysis of Hungarians, her study clearly fills a gap and identifies a few characteristic patterns. The main conclusion that Holló's study (2015) highlights is that foreign language teaching should incorporate cultural content and intercultural competence development as core elements.

Attempts at making sense of culture in different ways resulted in **conflicting discourses**, which made the discussion about the ingredients of culture only richer. As mentioned above, critics of the use of cultural dimensions in teaching worry about reinforcing stereotypes and claim that such generalizations build walls instead of bridges and might also lead to ethical concerns because they restrict people's agency for choice and identity. At the end of the 20th century, Adrian Holliday (1999) introduced the terms ‘large’ and ‘small’ culture, where ‘large’ culture refers to ethnic, national or international culture and ‘small’ culture “signifies any social grouping” (p.237). Holliday does not only speak up against cultural

dimensions in cross-cultural management based on Hofstede's work, but also against linguistic and cultural imperialism in general, claiming that even "the learning of culture in language education [...] has been placed around 'large' ethnic, national and international differences" (p.237). He argues that "this 'large' culture approach results in reductionist overgeneralization and otherization of 'foreign' educators, students and societies" (p.238). Since then, the word essentializing (reducing people and cultures to the essentials or basics) has entered the educational jargon and Holliday's (2016) **non-essentialist approach to culture** has been very influential in the language teaching world. Other educators at a recent panel discussion of the International Association of Intercultural Education went even further and claimed that speaking about cultures by discussing different holidays, traditions and social practices at school will only divide people instead of uniting them. They blame what in their country is called 'multicultural education' for focusing on superficial differences instead of bringing people together to solve problems and thus perpetuating divides, creating new problems and fueling further tension in societies where transformative political education and conflict management skills should be taught to teachers instead (Bekerman, 2021). However, based on the analysis of two case studies, Van Maele and Messelink (2019) point out that it is also possible to mobilize essentialist frameworks in non-essentialist intercultural training if trainers also consider and emphasize factors other than culture and if they articulate and examine personal intercultural experiences instead of only focusing on differences and on the "other" in intercultural situations.

In conclusion, it seems that **all social groups**, large or small, from the family or school to the country and even the continent, **have shared cultures**. Furthermore, the larger the group, the more complex the culture is and we will find fewer traits that are shared by all. **Affiliation with a culture also varies for people within any group**: some live by it and others live by parts of it and do not identify with the rest. Some people are, or choose to be, central to the group and others are – often by their own choice – on the periphery.

1.2 Multiple identities, plurilingual speakers, multicultural classrooms and intercultural encounters

There are many different approaches to and branches of the study of language and culture. In addition, the adjectives describing aspects of this field of study are not always used consistently (see also Dooly and Vallejo, 2018). For clarity's sake, in this book, some of the key terms are understood as Jandt (2009) suggested. Namely, **cross-cultural** refers to a comparison of linguistic and behavioral phenomena in two or more specific cultures. Therefore, a cross-cultural study of women's roles in society would compare what roles women typically play in society in two or more cultures (Jandt, 2009, p.30). **Multicultural** usually refers to groups composed of people coming from various different cultural backgrounds. It is also used of societies in which multiple ethnic groups live side by side. A multicultural classroom, for example, would consist of students who do not share the same cultural affiliations. It is important to point out here that in the 21st century very few classrooms can be considered mono-cultural as even in the remotest and most isolated village schools, students are likely to have at least slightly different cultural affiliations. Finally, **intercultural**, one of the most often used terms in this book, generally refers to face-to-face meetings and interaction involving people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds (Jandt, 2009, p.30), which especially in times of global lockdowns can also take place online. In addition to the above adjectives, the Council of Europe has recently introduced the terms **plurilingual** and **pluricultural** to describe individuals who speak several languages and identify themselves as members of more than one culture.

What exactly is identity? The evolution of the study of **identity** development is traced from Freud's early writings to Erikson's theoretical expositions (1950, 1968), Marcia's operationalization of the identity status model (1993), Schwartz's synthesis (2001) and many other more recent alternative theories. Our identity is clearly shaped in a wide social environment that is made up of family, schools, work, hobbies, and all the communities with whom we spend time. We do have multiple selves and engage with multiple others, meeting them both locally and globally. Understanding our

own identity and what influences shape it makes us more open when we encounter people who seem to be culturally different.

From the perspective of intercultural competence development in language learning, Kramsch (1993) argues for the language learner's rights to have a voice, to be able to use the foreign language for their own purposes. She claims that **native speaker competence as a target is a fallacy** because on the one hand, it is an impossible goal and leads to inevitable failure. On the other hand, even if it were possible, it would create the wrong type of competence, would lead to "linguistic schizophrenia" where the speaker would come and go between languages and cultures always adapting to others and **losing their own identity** (Kramsch, 1993). Instead, it is certainly more desirable to support language learners who can then see and manage the relationships, cultural beliefs, behaviors and meanings between their own and the target culture communities (Kramsch, 1993).

Barrett and his colleagues (2014) claim that "the term **identity** denotes a person's sense of who they are and the **self-descriptions** to which they attribute significance and value. Most people use a range of different identities to describe themselves, including both personal and social identities" (p.13). Personal identities include attributes (such as caring, patient or introverted) and are as important as our personal relationships and roles (such as mother, friend, colleague) and our own autobiographical narratives (where we were born, raised or educated). Our social identities are based on memberships in a variety of social groups, for example, a national, ethnic, religious, occupational or generational group, an educational institution, a choir or a sports club. "These multiple identifications with different attributes, relationships, roles, narratives and social groups help people to define their own individuality and to position and orientate themselves in the world relative to other people" (Barrett et al., 2014, p.13). We often regard ourselves as belonging to several social and cultural groups and draw on different personal and social identities depending on the context or situation we are in. This range of different identities is often referred to as **multiple identities**, and being aware of the different layers and components of our own identity promotes acceptance, enhances social cohesion and prevents us from making hasty judgments about others.

In a study conducted among pre-service English teachers in Israel, Baum (2014) found that all of her 19 interviewees, who had practically no social connections with English speakers and English-speaking countries, ascribed a central and surprisingly emotional role to English in their lives. Her findings showed that the students' love of English made them acquire various facets of the English language and culture for the **enrichment of their personal identity** and did not lead them in any way to a rejection of their original identity. Many education professionals who speak several languages can probably relate to this.

According to Barrett and his colleagues (2014), “**cultural affiliations are fluid and dynamic**, with the subjective salience of cultural identities fluctuating as individuals move from one situation to another, with [...] different clusters of intersecting affiliations – being high-lighted depending on the particular social context encountered” (p.14). Changes in how important we consider some of our cultural affiliations and some of the facets of our identity are also linked to the changes which take place in our interests, needs, goals and expectations as we move across situations and through time. Cultures also change over time as a result of political, economic and historical events, and as a result of encounters and communication with people from other cultures. Cultures also change because of their members' internal reinterpretation of norms, values and practices of their own group. Fashionable or attractive new constructions often become internalized by many and change the culture itself in the process (Barrett et al., 2014). An example for this might be rooted in materialism and business gains: Valentine's day and Halloween did not use to be celebrated in many European countries and today they are not only cherished by Eastern European vendors of chocolate hearts and jack-o-lanterns but also by many other people in the region. Members of the younger generations might not even realize that these holidays and celebrations have only recently been imported.

It follows from the fluid and dynamic nature of culture that “an **intercultural encounter** is an encounter with another person (or group of people) who is perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself” (Barrett et al., 2014, p.16) and any interpersonal encounter can be regarded as an intercultural encounter when cultural differences are perceived and made salient either by the situation or by the participating individuals' own