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Interculturalism in the EFL Classroom: the
Challenges behind implementing Intercultural
Communicative Competence (ICC)

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ABSTRACT

In 1997, Michael Byram published his theory adding the intercultural competence to the communicative approach to foreign language teaching as a means to include all the sociocultural aspects that are needed to fully comprehend a message. And, nowadays, educators are paying special attention to Intercultural Communicative Competence as a means to integrate culture and language in the classroom. Through an analysis of the communicative approach and European and Spanish framework to foreign language teaching, it is stated the benefits of intertwining culture-related activities and language for practicing effective communicative acts. Besides, it is explained the shift from an informative to a formative approach to culture in order to set the context to which Byram's proposal was addressing with his innovative theory. After introducing the two approaches and highlighting the importance of making this transition towards a formative approach, the dissertation centers on explaining the challenges a FL teacher might find when doing this shift in the teaching-learning process. These challenges concern mainly to the FL material used as a guide for the content of FL classroom and to the lack of culture-related training of FL teachers, which is better illustrated thanks to the first-hand experience in placement period.

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1. Introduction

In today's schools, classrooms have become a place where students from a great variety of cultural backgrounds gather. During my primary education at Luis Vives school, my class was already a clear example of this multiculturalism. As far as I recall, there were learners from at least nine different nationalities. This new reality in schools triggers social challenges that affect the whole education community. This issue is well illustrated, for example, in "Teaching Tolerance," a website created by a community of educators who share a commitment to diversity, equity, and justice and that is supported by the American Southern Poverty Law Center. This project claims that culture responsive pedagogy matters and that this must be reflected on the national curricula. Thus, there is a need to build culturally sensitive educators to engage students into culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate acts. In 2008 Ruth Vilà Baños carried out a research about the implementation of intercultural communicative competence in Secondary Education. In general terms, the main aim of her investigation was to implement and evaluate a didactic proposal designed to address the need of teaching certain competences for students to acquire the conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal knowledge that would guarantee truly multicultural human relationships inside and outside the classroom. Due to the nature of the Spanish Education System, the ESO stage is seen as a propaedeutic period where students are taught a great variety of disciplines. In fact, the ESO is the last stage of basic education within the educational framework in Spain, which means that students can either continue with their studies or enter the labor market. Therefore, I find important to integrate a training that includes the development of basic competencies for living and coexisting in society and will argue that it can be very beneficial for all adolescent students within this last stage of compulsory, basic education.

In this dissertation I want to further investigate the proposal made by Vilà Baños in her doctoral thesis by directing the attention to how the intercultural communicative competence can be integrated in the English classroom. Vilà Baños highlights that it is fundamental to develop intercultural competences in order to obtain intercultural communication and dialogue in Secondary Education. As it is stated in the introduction of the specific provisions for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in *Orden ECD/489/2016 de 26 de mayo*, the mastering of a foreign language has become essential in an increasingly global, intercultural, and plurilingual education. Thus, the education

system needs to adapt to the daily challenges that we face in a culturally and linguistically diverse world as a consequence of a growing globalization. In fact, it is due to these social changes that English has become a pervasive tool for communicating and having access to information and knowledge worldwide.

One cannot ignore the fact that a communicative situation is always held between more than one speaker and, English being the *Lingua Franca par excellence*, it is very likely that when two speakers from different cultural backgrounds engage in a communicative act they will resort to their shared knowledge of English. Because of these specific multicultural contexts where these communicative acts will take place, it is reasonable and feasible to try and promote the implementation of the so-called Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). Hence, we as teachers of EFL should design activities, tasks, or projects focused on carrying out communicative tasks that will function as an education for our students to develop both communicative and intercultural skills and, as a result, facilitate their ability to communicate in their future educational and professional settings with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The life-long focus of these learning outcomes is justified by the European Parliament and the European Council (2006). These political bodies recommend early education to foster in young students the development to a specific level of a number of key competences that the Reference Framework considers essential for further learning, for their working life, and for adult life in general.

As has been mentioned above, in this dissertation I want to examine how intercultural communicative competence can be introduced in the EFL classroom. Starting with the premise that there is a need for cultural-sensitive communication in the new, increasingly multicultural societies as a result of globalization, I want to explore which benefits this implementation can bring and how the learning/teaching process focused on acquiring communicative competence can be enriched by the introduction of activities designed to teach intercultural communicative competence. In order to do this, firstly, I will explain in more detail the objectives of this dissertation. Secondly, I will analyze the theoretical framework, that is, what is considered Intercultural Communicative Competence, how this relates with the communicative approach, and to what extent the Spanish legal framework and the European legal framework include or encourage the development of intercultural communication within their guidelines for the EFL classroom. Thirdly, I will discuss the tension between the prevailing teaching

practices of culture-related issues and ICC's integration or merging of the teaching of culture and communicative competence. Fourthly, I will examine the challenges a FL teacher might find when integrating ICC in his/her everyday teaching practices. Then, I include my first-hand experience in the placement period to get a more comprehensive and complex view of the situation. Finally, to conclude, I will argue that, in spite of the relevance of introducing culture in the lesson plans as claimed by FL teachers, they do not feel competent enough to merge culture and communicative competence beyond the customary focus on "tourist culture" because these teachers lack a pre-service or in-service training on the cultural issues that determine education in the current situation.

2. Objectives

The term interculturalism refers to the recognition of a dialogue across different cultures and describes one of the essential characteristics of contemporary societies and one of the most critical challenges these societies face. In these new scenarios, social values such as tolerance and open-mindedness carry added relevance for growing up as humans in the context of the various problems and hitches that this intermingle of cultures might create if citizens do not have the necessary resources to handle wisely communicative and social encounters. Learning a foreign language is closely linked with interculturality since, due to the shift brought about by the implementation of the communicative approach, learning a language involves the development of competences related to the cultural and social dimension of language use that will enable communication with a great variety of people. From this perspective, sociocultural competences are as essential as linguistic competences to effectively communicate in the target language. For that reason, this dissertation focuses on those culture-related competences that tend to be disregarded in the teaching/learning process in spite of the key role that culture plays in communication. What is more, by bringing culture-related material to the classroom, students are exposed to a set of problems, misunderstandings, and preconceptions that do not facilitate a truly understanding between cultures. Thanks to this exposure, these students are encouraged to think critically about those situations while the teacher endeavors to foster their tolerance and suspension of prejudices. As a result, the inherited set of values with which students interpret the world around them would fade away, leaving behind their

ethnocentrism and giving rise to the intercultural speaker, a figure needed in our multicultural societies.

The main purpose of the present study is, first, to investigate the treatment of cultural content in EFL classroom in the context of the communicative approach to language learning in order to identify whether Intercultural Communicative Competence — understood as the ability to comprehend how culture influences language and to use that understanding when communicating with people from a different cultural background — is already integrated in the teaching practices, as stated by European guidelines, or if culture is still regarded as the fifth element — together with comprehension and production skills — and reduced to content for practicing communication without actually intertwining the cultural content with the other skills, and, secondly, to analyze to what extent and for what purpose culture is actually integrated in the classroom. In this sense, this study proceeds by exploring how the formative approach to culture should be carried out in the classroom and whether FL textbooks and teacher training allows future teachers to introduce both surface and deep culture in the teaching/learning process.

To accomplish this goal, the following objectives are proposed: to identify the most effective approach to culture teaching according to ICC principles, to recognize the difficulties pre-service and in-service teachers face when introducing ICC in their teaching practices, and to prove how the material for EFL used in the placement period can be adapted to effectively develop students' ICC. Regarding these objectives, the following research questions are formulated: (1) how should the cultural component be addressed in the foreign language class to enrich the CLT principles? and (2) to which extent is ICC both promoted in teacher training and adopted in the classroom, for which I take the national and European normative frameworks as a point of reference? And, in line with the research questions formulated above, this dissertation starts from the following hypothesis: the EFL classroom tends to avoid the integration of deep culture in the teaching/learning process due to the lack of ICC proficiency of FL teachers and the failure of FL textbooks to deal with culture not only in relation to communicative outcomes but also as a challenge of contemporary globalized societies (for the most part textbooks take a simplistic and candid informative approach when cultural issues are addressed). Moreover, my hypothesis is founded on the grounds that ICC is an important

element in the European guidelines, but FL methodologies in pre-service and in-service trainings tend to focus on promoting more conventional CLT principles.

3. Theoretical Framework

According to the current education legislation as materialized in the Education Act *Orden ECD/489/2016 de 26 de mayo*, the specific provisions for English teaching are determined by the guidelines established by the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). In the preface of these guidelines, it is stated that a communicative approach to language and learning theory is necessary to conduct a foreign language class whose aim is to efficiently educate European citizens for the globalized world. Thus, by following a communicative approach in the foreign language classroom, students will be more focused on improving their communicative competence in the target language. As a consequence, the LOMCE Curriculum for Aragón (2016) for Secondary Education asserts that the main goal in teaching EFL is to help learners develop communicative competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence.

The Communicative Approach emerged as an innovative view of language and language teaching in Great Britain during the late sixties and early seventies at a time when the Situational Language Teaching was the dominant tendency in the field of language education. According to linguists Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson, there was a problem in the approach to language teaching because the functional and communicative potential of language was not addressed. Thus, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with its focus on communicative proficiency, was a turning point in the field of education because, in the words of Richards and Rodgers (2001: 151), CLT “marks the beginning of a major paradigm shift within language teaching in the twentieth century.” In the mid-1970s, CLT started to influence teaching procedures and methods not only in Great Britain but also in the United States with its aims to (a) set communicative competence as the goal of language teaching and (b) develop teaching practices for the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) that acknowledged the interdependence of language and communication.

The great acceptance of CLT is due to the fact that this new approach to teaching is not a fix framework or method. Following Richards and Rodgers’ schema (in Brown

2007: 16), CLT is regarded as an approach to language teaching. On the one hand, unlike previous structural approaches, the Communicative Approach rests on a theory of language that regarded language, not as a set of rules, but as an instrument of communication, and made the developing of “communicative competence” the goal of language teaching. The expression “communicative competence” had been coined by Dell H. Hymes in response to Noam Chomsky’s concept of “linguistic competence” and with it, Hymes (1972; in Richards and Rodgers 2001) made reference to the need of incorporating communication and culture in linguistic theory. In brief, Hymes maintained that a person needs to acquire both knowledge of and ability for language use in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. On the other hand, the theory of learning behind CLT is based on three principles: communication principle (i.e. real communication leads to learning), task principle (i.e. carrying out meaningful tasks in which language is used as the foundation of the learning process), and meaningfulness principle (i.e. learning is acquired when language is meaningful to the learner). Taking into account the relevance of these principles for the communicative approach, communicative activities will be those that promote meaningful and authentic language use. And, in line with this communicative language dimension, acquisition of the target language is the result of using the language for real communication. Thus, language learning in CLT puts an emphasis on practicing the target language and engaging the learner in meaningful and authentic language use as the means to develop communicative skills. Furthermore, given that it is an approach and not a rigid method, it can be interpreted and applied in various ways. As a consequence, by following CLT in the EFL classroom, the teaching/learning process can be adapted to the needs of the specific context where the students are learning the target language.

The relevance of CLT is closely tied to the changing educational realities in Europe and the United States at the time. As pointed out by Sandra Savignon (2007; in Asassfeh et al. 2012), language learning is both an educational and a political issue. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the increasing interdependence of European countries triggered the need to develop new strategies for European citizens to communicate effectively with their neighbors in this new multicultural and multilingual context. In a similar vein, the turn to an increasingly humanistic view of language learning in the United States translated into a greater awareness of individuality and context. In the context of the development of the European Union, education was seen as the most

suitable field. Muhammad Farooq (2015) highlights that CLT was conceived to provide opportunities for students to learn and use the target language in L2 contexts. Thus, due to the new interpretation of the purpose behind learning a foreign language brought by the communicative approach—that is, to communicate effectively in terms of formality, feasibility, context, and appropriateness—the implementation of CLT principles in education became a priority for developing the needed ability to communicate in a foreign language. Within the broad concept of communicative competence, Hymes (in Hedge 2001: 45) wanted to include his concerns with “the social and cultural knowledge which speakers need in order to understand and use linguistic forms.” In the modern foreign language classroom, owing to the changes in the cultural reality of the classroom mentioned above, there is a tendency to take the social dimension of language use into consideration within the teaching/learning process. This shift of paradigm towards a sociocultural perspective of language teaching brought by the communicative approach had a decisive influence in the research of a competence that included communication and interculturalism: Intercultural Communicative Competence.

In 1997, Michael Byram proposed his Intercultural Communicative Competence model (henceforth ICC) based on the assumption that culture and communication should be taught as a whole since communication is rarely culture-free. As many authors affirm (Cavalheiro 2015; Gulbinskiene and Lasauskiene 2014; Reid 2014; Sanhueza Henríquez et al. 2012; Serna Dimas 2016), knowing and understanding a language is not enough to ensure understanding the speakers’ intentions. In fact, any communicative situation is influenced by cultural factors owing to the deep-rooted relationship between language, society, and culture. As Robert Politzer already stated in 1956 (100-101): “[i]f we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning.” For that reason, many scholars (Coperías 2002; Nguyen 2008; Svarstad 2016; Valls Campà 2011;) regard Byram’s proposal as a step further in Hymes’ Communicative Competence.

Byram’s model of ICC consists of five “saviors”: two preconditions (knowledge and attitude), two skills (skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction), and a subcompetency (critical cultural awareness) (see picture 1).

	<i>savoir comprendre</i> skills of interpreting and relating to Otherness	
<i>savoirs</i> knowledge of self and Other and of processes of interaction	<i>savoir s'engager</i> critical cultural awareness, education towards world citizenship	<i>savoir être</i> critical attitudes of curiosity and openness towards Otherness while relativising self
	<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i> discovering and interacting, sustaining sensitivity to the Other, acting as mediator	

Picture 1. Michael Byram's five saviors (designed by Maher 2017).

Essentially, ICC comprises a set of cognitive and affective skills necessary to accomplish appropriate and effective behaviors in a specific social and cultural context. This is due to the origins of ICC at the intersection of communicative competence and intercultural competence. On the one hand, the communicative competence involves the importance of perception during communication and the importance of context and adaptability to the communicative act. On the other hand, Aguado (in Vilà 2008) summarizes intercultural competence as the sum of the cognitive, emotional, and practical abilities needed for managing effectively in an intercultural atmosphere. As a result of this combination, ICC can be described as the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and, thanks to that, the ability to perform effectively in communicative acts. Language is closely tied to culture, and therefore being linguistically correct or competent does not ensure the speaker is going to have an effective communication with other interactants. It is the combination between linguistic and cultural elements what enables the speaker to communicate effectively in a concrete context and with specific interactants.

Within the ICC model, three components act simultaneously when a person is immersed in an intercultural act: cognitive dimension, affective dimension, and behavioral dimension. Cognitive dimension, also known as knowledge or intercultural awareness, refers to the knowledge and awareness of one's own cultural characteristics as well as other cultures' characteristics. This dimension also includes the knowledge about how one's and others' culture are reflected in communicative processes. Through this dimension, students develop both self-awareness and cultural awareness. Regarding the teaching of this dimension, in her didactic proposal, Vilà (2008) highlights the

following elements: control of uncertainty — that refers to the tolerance towards ambiguities and capacity for changes —; an alternative ability for interpreting — that prevents from inappropriate judgements based on stereotypes and prejudices —; and knowledge about similarities and differences between one's own culture and the interactives' culture. Affective dimension, also known as intercultural sensitivity, refers to the ability to project and receive positive emotional answers before, during, and after intercultural interactions. Thus, being affectively competent means, on the one hand, to have the abilities to express positive emotional answers and, on the other hand, to control those emotions that might be detrimental during the intercultural communicative process. With regard to the development of this dimension in the classroom, Vilà (2008) underlines the following elements: anxiety control; empathy — that in ICC includes discerning the mind of someone culturally different and developing thoughts and emotions during the interaction —; motivation towards intercultural communication — that is a basic element in ICC because it comprises the interest in knowing and learning from other cultures —; and non-judging attitude — that implies not evaluating others' cultures by having your own culture as point of reference —. Behavioral dimension, also referred to as skills, includes a set of verbal and non-verbal abilities that make evident a behavior adaptation to a specific situation in order to communicate effectively. This dimension is the actual manifestation of ICC, since behavioral competence is favored by cognitive and affective competences. Within this dimension, Vilà (2008) highlights the following components: behavioral flexibility — that refers to the ability to adapt the communicative style to the cultural context and situation —; verbal abilities; non-verbal abilities; and interaction control.

As explained by Lone K. Svarstad (2016), Michael Byram and the three dimensions of his proposal are very significant for the pedagogical development of culture especially after Byram and his associate Geneviève Zarate were invited by the Council of Europe to collaborate with them in the drafting of the “socio-cultural competence” of the CEFR for Language Learning and Teaching. In 1996, the Council of Europe wanted to prioritize “education for democratic citizenship” and the encompassing of Byram's ICC and intercultural citizenship was regarded as an important element for the new understanding of foreign language teaching, which can be appreciated in the European guidelines. The CEFR, for example, stresses the importance of knowing about distinctive characteristics of a European society and its culture in section 5.1. *General*

competences (in article 5. *The user/learner's competences*). Within this section, there are three subsections dedicated to the importance of including culture in the teaching/learning process of a foreign language: 5.1.1. *Declarative knowledge*, 5.1.2. *Skills and know-how (savoir-faire)*, and 5.1.3. *'Existencial' competence (savoir-être)*. As will be explained in the paragraph below, these subsections clearly reflect the structure of Byram's model and its three dimensions.

As to subsection 5.1.1., two sections merit special mention for this dissertation: section 5.1.1.2. *Sociocultural knowledge* and section 5.1.1.3. *Intercultural awareness*. In 5.1.1.2. *Sociocultural knowledge*, the following features are listed as topics to develop learners' sociocultural competence: everyday living; living conditions; interpersonal relations; values, beliefs, and attitudes; body language; social conventions; and ritual behavior (102-3). Furthermore, section 5.1.1.3. *Intercultural awareness* focuses on how to develop an appropriate intercultural competence by stressing the need to learn about (a) objective knowledge of the world of origin and the world of the target community and (b) "how each community appears from the perspective of the other in the form of national stereotypes" (103). Despite of the importance of teaching the society and culture of the community, or communities, in which the target language is spoken, this approach to culture is merely informative since the main aim revolves about "what new experience and knowledge of social life in his/her community as well as in the target community the learner will need to acquire in order to meet the requirements of L2 communication" (104). With this statement, the CEFR affirms that the focus of 5.1.1. *Declarative knowledge* is on teaching students how to acquire a new identity that resembles that of the speakers of the target language. Nevertheless, the CEFR continues in the following sections of 5.1. *General competences* making reference to the need of developing an appropriate intercultural competence by teaching awareness of the relation between home and target cultures. This idea is mainly reflected in section 5.1.2.2. *Intercultural skills and know how to* (in 5.1.2. *Skills and know-how (savoir-faire)*) which is dedicated to the importance of developing intercultural skills in the foreign language classroom in order to arise cultural sensitivity and overcome stereotyped relationships. Therefore, the European framework establishes both a conceptual and procedural approach for teaching culture and, thus, developing intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom.

Moreover, in section 5.1.3. *'Existencial' competence (savoir-être)*, it is stated the importance of individual differences in the development of an “inter-cultural personality.” This development, which involves attitudes towards and awareness of societies and cultures, is seen as an important educational goal. In fact, the following features are stated as essential to acquire this competence with regards to learners’ attitude (105):

- Openness towards, and interest in, new experiences, other persons, ideas, people, societies and cultures
- Willingness to relativise one’s own cultural viewpoint and cultural value-system
- Willingness and ability to distance oneself from conventional attitudes to cultural difference

Hence, the CEFR makes references to the three components of ICC within the section dedicated to *General competences* (5.1. in article 5. *The user/learner’s competences*): cognitive dimension in 5.1.1. *Declarative knowledge*, affective dimension in 5.1.3. *'Existencial' competence (savoir-être)*, and behavioral dimension in 5.1.2. *Skills and know-how (savoir-faire)*.

Since the specific provisions for teaching English as a Foreign Language in *Orden ECD/489/2016 de 26 de mayo* are inspired by the guidelines established by the CEFR, there should be a focus on not only communicative competence but also on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. In the Aragonese Curriculum for EFL, the term “culture” appears for the first time in the introduction of the specific provisions where the sociolinguistic element of communicative competence is explained. It illustrates that the sociocultural conditions of language use affect considerably the linguistic communication between people from different origins and cultures. This idea is further explained within the section dedicated to the contribution of EFL to the acquisition of the key competences described in the general provisions — especially in linguistic communicative competence (a single competence where LOMCE includes two key competences developed by the European Council: communication in the mother tongue and communication in a foreign language), social and civic competences, and cultural awareness and expressions —

LOMCE states that EFL is a subject that contributes directly to the development of communicative competence through the acquisition of literacy skills. For this contribution to take place, the target language needs to be used by the learners in a specific

situation (as stated by the task principle of CLT learning theory) and for a concrete function (as it is argued by the communication principle). The European Council recommendations on key competences highlight the connection between communication and certain intercultural skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. Moreover, this document explicitly confirms the influence that the individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs, and interests have in the effective communication in a foreign language. Nevertheless, these recommendations are not reflected in the LOMCE document. If we as teachers unpack this linguistic communicative competence in our class design, we can interpret the contextualization referred to in the LOMCE as a situation where learners need to have intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity in order to perform intercultural skills while effectively communicating.

In the section devoted to social and civic competences, there is a much more explicit reference to the importance of including interculturalism in the EFL classroom. In direct reference to European Council, the LOMCE states the above-mentioned skills (mediation and intercultural understanding) as requirements to communicate in a foreign language. Then, there is a focus on efficiency in communicating in foreign languages — rather than accuracy and fluency, common goals when talking about the teaching/learning process of a foreign language —. For achieving an effective use of EFL, it is stated that having an open and positive view is essential because this attitude will foster relationships based on dialogue and cooperation with other persons. According to the LOMCE, this ability can be observed when learners have an attitude of respect and value towards other languages and cultures, and towards other people whose values and beliefs differ from their own. Thus, EFL can work as a tool for the development of social and cultural competences (e.g. personal and interpersonal codes of conduct through interaction in the classroom or a comprehension of the reality different people experience through specific designed activities), which can be unpacked having the affective and behavioral dimensions of ICC in mind.

In regard to cultural awareness and expressions, the LOMCE states that the English language helps learners to develop their cultural and artistic competence because English-speaking communities have a wide range of cultural manifestations — literature, music, cinema, art, — that are essential sources for the teaching and learning of English. Despite the importance of using cultural manifestations to illustrate topics, this statement

is highly ethnocentric because it does not consider the variety of cultures within English-speaking countries and disregards the nature of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), that is, the increasing number of non-native speakers who use English for international communication. The LOMCE highlights that this competence implies the acquisition of a basic knowledge about those manifestations, being able to value and enjoy them, and the development of a critical attitude towards them. Among its recommendations, the European Council includes the importance of acquiring a solid understanding of one's own culture and sense of identity as a basis for an open attitude towards and respect for the diversity of cultural expression. This idea can be unpacked by linking it with the first step in the development of ICC: a learner first needs to know his/her culture in order to reflect upon it by distancing himself/herself. This will help him/her to understand the similarities and differences between one's own culture and others' culture that can appear while communicating.

Hence, despite the influence of Byram's model in CEFR and in the specific provisions of the Aragonese Curriculum, only Hymes' communicative approach appears as a theoretical foundation for the teaching of English, leaving Byram's ICC model out of the frame. Nevertheless, due to the nature of the LOMCE Curriculum for Aragón, teachers can unpack the specific provisions of the legislative framework to include ICC in the EFL classroom. Thus, to conclude this analysis, I think I have demonstrated that because the ideas behind ICC are — explicitly or implicitly — endorsed in the European and the Spanish Education Legislation, EFL teachers have academic freedom to introduce ICC in their lessons.

4. The Development of Culture Pedagogy in the Teaching of EFL: from an Informative to a Formative approach

Professor Brian Street (1993: 25) defines culture as “an active process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own definition.” If this definition of culture as a social phenomenon is transferred to education, the definition of culture in education is as active as Street suggests. Many researchers (Barletta Manjarrés 2009; Gulbinskiene and Lasauskiene 2014; Svarstad 2016; Bickley et al 2014) whose investigations about intercultural competence were based on interviewing language teachers or researching their behavior conclude that there are two categories to define culture within the

classroom: Big C and small c. Edward T. Hall developed the Cultural Iceberg Model for better illustrating the difference between Big C culture and small c culture. Like icebergs, he claimed, culture can be said to have a clearly visible tip whereas the larger portion of cultural artifacts and forces remain below water level. The teaching of big C culture mainly consists of cultural products (literary classics and works of art), geography, and history. These components can be described as observable features and, thus, they will be in the tip of the iceberg in Hall's analogy. By contrast, the teaching of small c culture mainly consists of those subjective features that are less visible or tangible (norms, values, attitudes, perceptions). These hidden elements below the water level of awareness in the iceberg are the foundations of culture and govern people's behavior and influences their values and thought patterns.

According to Ildiko Lázár (2007), both components need to be present in the foreign language classroom. For that reason, in his guide for language teachers and teacher educators *Developing and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, Lázár explains that the term culture is used as (8) “[a] collective noun referring to both facts about civilisation and information about beliefs, customs, social practices, values and behaviours.” If these ideas of culture are transferred to the reality of the communicative classroom, cultural knowledge and cultural skills can be an essential element to prepare students for using the target language in the different communicative situations of daily life. Nevertheless, the role of the cultural component in the foreign language classroom has been redefined to coherently adjust to the learning objectives of the teaching foundations suggested by the different frameworks. And, added to this constant redefinition, culture as an integral aspect of language learning sometimes has faded — and even today still continues fading — into the background of the teaching/learning process, which complicates an effective treatment of both components: big C and small c.

Traditionally, the introduction of culture in foreign language teaching was based on learning about the cultural aspects and the society of native speakers. By contrast, Lili Cavalheiro (2015) claims that today's reality has shifted towards a greater socio-political and intercultural awareness. As to this transition, Elisabet Areizaga (2001) also affirms that there has been a shift from the more traditional informative approach — that regards culture as information — to a formative approach, which is based on the assumption that culture can contribute to the training of intercultural communicative competence. A more

detailed description of the transition claimed by Cavalheiro and Areizaga can be found in Lluís Valls Campà's "Enseñanza/Aprendizaje de la competencia comunicativa intercultural y análisis de actitudes" (2001). Valls Campà distinguishes three periods in culture pedagogy within the foreign language class. The first period spans until the 1970s when the learning objective was to accurately use the target language and, thus, culture was seen as an independent element, decontextualized and disconnected from the learning objectives. The second period starts in the 1970s, at the same time that the communicative approach was changing the theoretical foundations for foreign languages, and finishes in the 1990s. During this period, culture started to be regarded as an essential factor for carrying out efficient communication and, as a result, for being communicatively competent. The third and last period goes from the 1990s to the present. This period is the most relevant for my dissertation because it started when the intercultural approach was incorporated into the communicative approach. This took place due to the influence of Byram's ICC and his critique to the insufficient attention given to the teaching/learning process of intercultural knowledge and interaction.

All these researchers (Areizaga, Cavalheiro, and Valls Campà) point to the communicative approach as the main influence for the questioning and final shift from the informative to the formative approach to culture. The critique of the more-traditional approaches is based on the fact that the teaching of culture as a sum of facts gives a false view of reality since it pretends to describe objectively the cultural reality of the speakers of the target language. This illusion of a timeless reality does not resemble the cultural complexity of society, which is the result of a long process of intercultural exchange between cultures. Thus, if culture is transmitted as information, it is most likely that foreign language students will learn mainly generalizations and stereotypes that only oversimplify groups of people into categories transforming intuitive assumptions into realities, perpetuating inequalities, and justifying the position of those in power. This learning outcome is divergent from the educative outcomes promoted by European guideline aimed at training citizens for a multicultural and multilingual society. Due to the pragmatism of the communicative framework, the proficiency in the target language relies not only on the mastery of its linguistic system but also on the mastery of how to be communicatively competent in a specific context. Under this approach resides the inseparable nature of language and culture, two elements that need to be integrated in the foreign language teaching. As explained by Valls Campà when referring to the second

period, CLT triggered a transition from the partial, biased teaching of isolated cultural elements to a formative approach to culture, whose aim was to produce a change in the learners' attitude towards new cultural realities and a better comprehension and awareness of them. Since the cultural component is given much more attention than in previous frameworks, sociocultural aspects of the language and the sociocultural reality of the speakers where the target language is used started to be part of the syllabus.

Despite the essential role of the communicative approach for the development of culture pedagogy, for my dissertation, it was the third period as explained by Valls Campà that produced a more relevant change. The shift to this last period was produced by the influence of Byram's ICC. According to Areizaga (2001), during the 1980s there was an attempt to introduce culture as the fifth language skill in order to conceptualize the teaching of culture as the teaching of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. By introducing culture as a fifth element, students are expected to first perceive, recognize, and comprehend cultural differences, and then remember these differences when communicating with people from certain cultural backgrounds. However, culture is not a shared knowledge but rather a set of shared rules for interpretation. Thus, the idea of including cultural elements within communicative competence needed the improvement brought by intercultural communicative competence. In the foreign language classroom, notes Byram et al. (2001), the teacher's task is not to provide comprehensive information and bring the foreign culture for learners to merely observe but rather to facilitate the interaction between learners and another society's culture for them to understand their own cultural values and explore and respect otherness. Thus, the focus of the teaching of culture should be to train learners with the necessary skills and attitudes to comprehend and reflect about other cultures, that is, with conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal aspects. Byram and his role of foreign language teachers with regard to the inclusion of culture matches the formative shift defended by Areizaga. According to Areizaga, the development of ICC within the classroom is essential to overcome the prevailing superficial and merely external view of the target culture based on learning a series of behaviors and assumptions and on borrowing a foreigner-like identity, stated as learning strategies in previous approaches to culture. Thus, it is necessary to change the orientation of culture teaching by emphasizing the capacity to comprehend and communicate with others instead of knowing about them or adopt their supposed behaviors and values.

5. Integrating ICC in the Teaching/Learning Process: A Challenge to Overcome

Despite of the strong theoretical foundations of ICC, the guidelines and references published by Council of Europe to encourage teachers to include ICC in their teaching practice, and the importance of including culture to develop an efficient communicative approach, there is still a lack of implementation in the everyday reality of the foreign language classroom. The reasons behind why ICC is not gaining the adequate relevance can be found in the teaching materials marketed in Spain for EFL — which provide little opportunity to develop and acquire intercultural competence — and in the lack of specific cultural training for foreign language teachers either during their pre-service or in-service years.

Due to the prevailing position of textbooks as the backbone of education in Spain, there is a widespread use of this kind of material as a guide for the teaching/learning process. This situation can be observed inside the EFL classroom, where foreign language teachers tend to rely mainly on FL textbooks and, as a result, their lessons depend on the information gathered in the different units or sections of those materials. Nevertheless, it is essential to have a critical position towards the material and examine to which extent the content is appropriate and conducive to the specifications of interculturalism and communication promoted by the CEFR and to which extent we need to adapt it. In order to get this done properly, it is important to analyze the treatment of cultural content in the teaching materials. This issue has had worldwide attention and several investigations have been carried out to analyze EFL textbooks (e.g. Raigón Rodríguez and Larrea Espinar 2015; and Méndez García 2000/2005 in Spain; Gómez Rodríguez 2015 in Colombia; Reimann 2009 in Japan; Sehibi and Mellouk 2015 in Algeria). The aim behind these analyses is mainly to examine if the textbooks offer a rich cultural content and to which extent this content might prepare students to become both communicatively and interculturally competent. For achieving this, these studies focus on discussing firstly, the percentage of culture displayed in the textbook, secondly, which kind of cultural aspects are included (big C culture or small c culture), and finally, for which learning outcomes students must be acquainted with those aspects (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic or/and intercultural communicative competence).

These researchers discuss that EFL textbooks tend to display merely superficial information and, as a consequence, omit complex cultural understandings. In fact, many

textbooks limit their cultural content to “tourist culture” offering facts that students might need when communicating in the target language during a trip (Reimann 2009; Gómez Rodríguez 2015; Raigón Rodríguez and Larrea Espinar 2015). During my placement period, I observed at first-hand the “tourist culture” phenomenon while working with the textbook *Living English 1: Bachillerato* by Burlington Books used in Pedro de Luna Secondary School for advanced students of the first year of Bachillerato. As a student teacher, I was in charge of introducing the unit dedicated to technology. Despite being a unit with a focus on social media, the reading section lent itself to the sort of cultural analysis mentioned above. This section consisted of two pages with a text titled “Travel Blog” and follow-up activities centered on understanding the literal content of the blog (i.e. activities with comprehension questions and gap-fill activities) and on presenting vocabulary related to technology (in this case videogames). Even though this text could be analyzed from a cultural perspective, this was not exploited but rather omitted. The narrator of the blog entry was a British adolescent who was writing about her experience while travelling in South Korea. This blog entry was dedicated to explaining how shocking was for her to observe the phenomenon around video games in this country, specially about how gamers are worshipped by adolescents and how people spend most of their time playing video games in around-the-clock cafés specialized exclusively in offering computers for playing and in streaming. In the introductory paragraph of the blog entry, she makes an analogy comparing this videogame phenomenon with the football phenomenon in United Kingdom. Therefore, the text explicitly points to the fact that the narrator is comparing the foreign reality to her own. Although all this information is quite interesting to build up intercultural communicative competence, the textbook displays a set of comprehension questions that do not analyze cultural content but rather linguistic content. This approach to culture gives the view of an intercultural harmonious understanding by portraying cheerful tourists in a neutral celebratory nature with no attention focused on the information the British narrator is offering about South Koreans biased by her British reality without decentering herself from her set of values. Therefore, this fixed, superficial, oversimplified cultural content (i.e. Big C culture) is accompanied by activities that do not encourage learners to address deeper cultural aspects (i.e. small c culture). By displaying homogeneous information to be stored, possible deviations from the rule are not explained and, thus, learners are not asked to critically think about the differences between their reality and the target culture.

As a result, it can be concluded that EFL textbooks have not achieved yet the learning outcome of preparing EFL learners to acquire ICC because (1) interculturality might be displayed but not fostered through activities about cultural content instead of linguistic content; (2) multiplicity and possible deviations are not discussed; (3) analysis about why there are cultural norms and why there are deviations from them are not carried out; and, therefore, (4) students are not acquiring tools to manage cultural differences wisely and critically. Hence, it is important for foreign language teachers to examine their teaching material and reflect upon which content is included and how it is treated, as I did during my placement period. This task is part of our role as mediators of content because we are responsible for introducing, explaining, and interpreting not only linguistic content but also cultural content. Culture must be included in program design and teaching and, therefore, it cannot be disregarded in the design of EFL textbooks. Only then, it can be ensured that the enhancement of ICC will be promoted in almost every EFL classroom and that most of the students will be aware of the cultural differences that can be found in the world. Therefore, if nowadays FL textbooks do not display activities to foster knowledge (about other cultures and the own), attitude (interest and openness to learn and discover other cultures), skills of interpreting and relating (to examine and compare different cultures with the own), and skills of discovery and interaction (to practice the previous savors in real communication) so that students acquire critical cultural awareness, we as teachers must promote the learning of those conceptual, attitudinal, and procedural aspects necessary for the acquisition of ICC.

In order to carry out this essential task, we face the other side of the challenge: most pre-service and in-service teachers are not trained to design activities for explaining culture in the EFL classroom following a formative approach. As an immediate consequence of this lack of training, FL teachers rely heavily on the cultural content gathered within the units or in the culture section of the textbooks — provided the textbook has a section dedicated exclusively to culture as *Living English 1: Bachillerato* has —. Added to this dependence on the content of textbooks, if there is not a training program to get teachers accustomed to focus on the subtle details that can be the basis of tasks centered on cultural content, it will be more challenging for FL teachers to adapt or even design from scratch cultural activities in line with the content of the textbooks used in class.

Thanks to being immersed in this investigation, I had a greater sensitivity to the details within the reading section explained above. As already mentioned before, the content of the blog entry was overtly biased by the position of the narrator as a citizen of the Western world. Therefore, first year Bachillerato students, all of them citizens of a European country (Spain, Romania, and France) and residents of Spain, shared a similar western set of values with the British narrator. Thus, this reading section could act as a pre-task to a main task, where the focus was to decenter students from their inherited set of values through the preparation of a written production. This unit of the textbook was designed for students to practice the blog format. Thus, in the reading section, they were able to read a travel diary in a blog entry and, then, in the writing section they were asked to choose a destination and describe their trip in a blog entry and they were expected to demonstrate they were able to follow the conventions of blogs. Since travel blogs are so common nowadays as a means to communicate personal information, these reading and writing sections are great for students to practice real-life communication. Nevertheless, by asking students to imagine a trip and describe which monuments they visited, which typical food they ate, how they travelled there, and where they stayed, the task artificially homogenizes all the students and is not open for them to portray their individuality describing what motivates them to travel and in which conditions they usually do it. As I had the opportunity to design and implement three lessons with these students, my unit plan (see Appendix I) was an attempt to practice the fostering of ICC having the textbook as a guide for the pre-task (reading) and as a source of inspiration for the main task (writing). Thus, I used the reading section for my first lesson and, instead of asking my students to describe a country or city in a travel blog for giving information and tips that would mainly come from touristic websites or wikipedia, I borrowed the travel idea and asked my students to write a post in a padlet about the city they are living in (Zaragoza) for giving local tips to tourists. By asking students to write about their own culture in a travel blog format, students do not have to look for information but rather talk about their own experiences and thoughts in a way that must be understood by the target readers. Due to the exchanges carried out by the secondary school with students from Netherlands, United Kingdom, or Sweden, it is highly probable that the students had found themselves in the situation of explaining the city to a foreigner. Therefore, trying to foster students' intercultural communicative competence by means of explaining the city of Zaragoza can be seen as something useful by the students.

For the first session, the main learning outcomes were (a) to describe the content and form of the travel blog entry about South Korea by enumerating its characteristics; (b) to compare Simon Sinek's speech about millennials with the content of the travel blog by pointing out the common keywords; and (c) to interpret the connection between the speech and the post in order to develop a critical position towards the content of the blog. In order to accomplish these learning outcomes, we first introduce the new subject matter with a 10 minutes discussion about technology. Through this activity, I could get to know better the technological background of my students and observe if some of them mentioned blog so that to include his/her ideas when introducing the reading section. After this introduction, we listened to a recorded transcription of the text from the reading section. By listening first, students were already acquainted with the main idea of the travel blog and, while reading aloud, they could focus more on inferring the implicit content behind the narrator's oversimplified descriptions and explanations of South Korean youth. Through answering to the wh-words what and why, students' critical thinking was meant to be activated. I monitored the participation towards a discussion more related to the cultural content of the blog by asking them specific questions such as "Where was the narrator from?"; "Where is she on holidays?"; "Is this information relevant or not? Why?"; "If the narrator was from South Korea writing about her travel to UK, do you think we will be reading a blog entry focused on another phenomenon?"; and "Can you predict any situation in Spain that might be shocking for a British teenager? And for a South Korean?" With these questions, students are being guided towards questioning if the content of travel blogs — despite being based on personal opinions — is mainly based on a set of similar facts and generalizations about a culture, in this case Asian and South Korean culture. At this point, students had taken on a critical attitude towards the information bloggers post in their entries, which is an important step for carrying out the following two lessons of my unit plan. Because the draft of the written production was going to be corrected by their peers in the third session, they needed to analyze the content of the padlet blogs in a similar way as we did in this first lesson.

To conclude this first session, I played the first 7 minutes of Simon Sinek's interview. In this interview, Simon Sinek gives a speech to explain the mobile phone obsession the millennial generation suffers from and the negative consequences brought about by this improper use of technology. Through this speech, I could strengthen the idea that the texts' cultural shock is due to the narrator's evaluation of the South Korean

reality from their British point of view. For that reason, the aim behind this post-task is to make students aware of the similarities between the shocking online gaming obsession in South Korea with the mobile phone overuse in Western countries. Therefore, if students compare the similarities between both problems caused by technology, they can realize how everything we perceive and see is interpreted through our personal perspective. The narrator is stressing how shocking online gaming obsession is because there is not such obsession in her homeland. This learning outcome is essential for fostering students' ICC: when we decenter, we can emphasize the relative role of one's cultural assumption when making sense of the world. A vital stage in the appreciation and understanding of otherness is precisely to know oneself and one's own culture, which is the learning outcome behind the whole unit plan.

For the second session, the main learning outcomes were (a) to identify the particular characteristics of some maps' legends in small groups to predict the city they belong to and (b) to decide how to tailor a map's legend of Zaragoza by comparing and contrasting the local tips from other cities. In order to accomplish these learning outcomes, the whole lesson was focused on showing students the USE-IT EUROPE project because, by the next lesson, students were expected to write posts describing Zaragoza following the ethos of USE-IT maps. USE-IT EUROPE is an online platform dedicated to designing maps of European cities thanks to the volunteer participation of young people who send their opinions, comments, and suggestions about interesting places in the city, about the history of the town, about thematic walks around the town, or about useful tips for the section "Act like a local." From travel guides to travel blogs and travel vlogs, students were asked about different platforms from where travelers can get information for their adventures to make a visible link between the previous lesson and this second one. After this brief introduction to the different means a person can have access to information for travelling, I emphasized the main element needed when exploring a place: a map. By bringing the copies of use-it maps I have at home, each pair of students were able to manipulate and observe the idea behind these maps at their own pace and center on the aspects they were more curious about. In order to foster their thinking, students were grouped to discuss a map's legend, which was completely tailored to suit a specific city. Thus, through reading the legend, student could apply their knowledge about different cultures to guess which city was describing each legend. As a result, they could realize the similarities and differences between those cities – adding

Zaragoza to the comparison in order to get closer to the reality of students –, which can be guessed through just a simple map’s legend. For instance, two legends belong to two Dutch towns (Utrecht and Nijmegen) and the bike culture of the Netherlands can be observed in the legends; the legend from Brussels includes the famous frites stands of the city and the Comic Strip Wall that can be found throughout its streets; and the legend from Lisbon illustrates the great variety of public transport of the city (metro, bus, tram, funicular, and cable car). The aim behind this first activity was to make students aware of the need to tailor a content, such a map description, according to the specific context. Then, students could start to reflect about the idiosyncrasies of Zaragoza and how this can be represented in a use-it map.

After this activity, I projected on the whiteboard a sample of posts that illustrate the maps of Augsburg, Brno, Bruges, and Córdoba for students to read about and discuss the relevance and appropriateness of including that information in a map for young travelers. Through these samples, I tried to show students the typical structure of a use-it map (e.g. “Act like a local” section; “5 minutes of history” with a timeline gathering the most relevant episodes of the city history; “Practical Information” section with public transport, museum schedules, or tourist office location; and “thematic walk” section) and posts including descriptive info such as the LGTB+ friendliness of the city or the availability of restaurants for vegetarians, vegans, or people who have a food intolerance. In this way, this sample could be regarded as model for students to do the homework for the long weekend. I also included examples from the Córdoba use-it map in order to introduce the use of English for communicative purposes to describe this Spanish city for tourists. By bringing the reality of this European project to the classroom, I tried to give students a specific purpose for their written production. Thus, they will be motivated to carry out a real-word task. Moreover, as explained above, I decided to create a use-it map for Zaragoza to force students to speak about their own culture. To become communicatively competent from an intercultural perspective, people need to first know about other cultures and about their own and then explain their own culture through the position of a third. Therefore, through this first draft, I could diagnose if students were already able to put themselves in the position of “the intercultural speaker” or of a third when describing their own reality or if they were still quite ethnocentric omitting necessary information for an outsider to understand the cultural content of their post.

For the third and last session, the emphasis was entirely put on the phenomenon of the intercultural speaker. For that reason, the main learning outcomes were (a) to assess their peers' posts about Zaragoza following the structure of a compass point and adopting a foreigner role and (b) to make sense of the comments and suggestions made by their peers in order to improve the draft of their post into a final version much more intercultural. After this last lesson, each student would read the feedback given by their classmates to edit the first draft, a common step in the FL class when working with written productions. Nevertheless, there was an added element for correcting this post: the entry must be not only communicative but also intercultural communicative. In order to achieve this, I started this third lesson including the foreigner figure. By highlighting the target readers of a use-it map, students are expected to reflect upon the effectiveness of the content of their posts. If it is grammatically correct with richness in vocabulary but not enough explanations are given, there will be not an effective communication between the writer and the reader. To help students assess the appropriateness of their classmates' posts, students were grouped to discuss and build knowledge collaboratively and a compass point was given as a feedback tool for better evaluating the positive and negative elements of the padlet posts. This compass point consisted of four questions that were aimed at enabling students to assess the post easier by answering the following questions: "What else do you need to know?," which was meant to be answered with the missing information a foreigner will need to comprehend and follow the suggestion given by the writer in the post. "What excites you about this post? What's the upside?," which was meant to be answered highlighting the positive elements of the entry. "Do you have any suggestion for moving forward?," which was meant to be answered with comments for improving the content of the post. "What do you find worrisome about this idea or proposition? What's the downside?," which was meant to be answered highlighting the negative elements of the entry. Through this peer feedback, students could reflect on the content of their classmates' posts and, afterwards, reflect on their own posts when editing the draft.

As has been described above, it does not require a great amount of workload for teachers to adapt a communicative task (writing a travel blog) into a more intercultural communicative task (writing a blog about a certain place with a subjective point of view but having the reality and knowledge of the target readers in mind). With this adaptation, the written production is not only communicative in the sense that it is well-written in

English but also intercultural communicative because the content of the writing can be understood across cultures. Despite of the benefits these adaptations can bring, the reality of the activities carried out in the foreign language classroom is quite different: teachers lack the knowledge, the tools, the resources, and the security to introduce the ICC in their teaching practices. This is reflected in the study carried out by Marta Garrote Salazar and María Fernández Agüero (2016), professors at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, which was meant to investigate the intercultural profile of European student teachers, whose level of IC was measured as intermediate. Their study served to highlight the necessity of improving the pre-service teachers' behavioral flexibility and communicative awareness by means of addressing the treatment of IC in teacher training.

Many European syllabi and guidelines give importance to cultural learning and intercultural competence in the education of prospective teachers. In line with this idea, in 2001 Mary Williams defended including cultural awareness activities in the training of TESOL teachers through a rationale that highlights the positive contributions brought by enabling "social perspective taking": inclusion, affiliation, student cooperation and group cohesion, and questions of assumptions and its consequent attitude change. In spite of these achievable benefits, Byram et al. (2001) and Lázár (2007) lay emphasis on the insufficient attention given to the cultural/intercultural dimension within teacher education. As a result, foreign language teachers are likely to be trained in institutions that do not include intercultural communication training in their curriculum. Consequently, foreign language classes tend to dedicate few time to teach language-and-culture or culture through language, which would be necessary to develop learners' ICC.

Furthermore, there are teachers who totally avoid introducing culture in their classes even though they believe that culture is important in a foreign language class. For instance, Sehibi and Mellouk (2015) gathered information about in-service EFL teachers in the Algerian context. Through a questionnaire, they could compare how the majority of the teachers claimed that culture was an important element in the foreign language class but half of them rarely included cultural content in their lessons due to knowledge limitations, lack of confidence and familiarity with the content, and time constraints. Similar results were recorded in the investigation carried out by Lies Sercu, María del Carmen Méndez García, and Paloma Castro Prieto (2004) into EFL secondary school teachers from Spain centered on their perceptions of their culture teaching practice; in Young and Sachdev (2011 in Bickley et al. 2014) study of American, British, and French

ESL instructors; and in Celeste Bickley et al. research about teachers' ICC in the Canadian context. Therefore, ICC must be included not only in pre-service training but also in in-service training. Thus, all foreign language teachers, either trainees or in-service, would have the necessary knowledge and tools to feel competent, informed, and familiar with teaching culture following a formative approach in line with the communicate approach to foreign languages. As Andrew Reimann (2009: 85) remarked in his analysis of EFL material, "it is quite difficult to break the cycle and create materials with broader objectives and cultural content" because teachers are not trained to be aware of the necessity of introducing interculturality and cultural content in a formative way and of adapting the cultural content of most marketed materials that, on the whole, follow the informative approach. As a result, the publishing houses do not receive feedback regarding the approach to cultural content in their textbooks. Therefore, if teachers' willingness to include interculturalized content increases with IC training, intercultural textbooks will be demanded for improving students' ICC.

According to these authors' and my experience, it can be concluded that, to be willing to teach cultural content, FL teachers need to feel competent, equipped, and informed. For achieving this, there should be an effort in teachers' education and training. The same idea also appears at the end of the papers analyzing FL material, which suggest the need to train both pre-service and in-service teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop their ICC. This training will prepare foreign language teacher to be critical with their own interpretation of the written information and images that appear in a textbook in order to design a lesson with cultural content in a way that fosters students' critical thinking. In this way, the potential for cultural learning can be fully exploited with relevant follow-up activities or tasks. Furthermore, teachers will be able to address those cultural aspects that are not included in the textbook but need to be included in the foreign language lessons to broaden students' understanding and increase their cultural awareness and sensitivity. This step is important since teachers should not regard the culture presented in textbooks as the only source for activities but rather seek, adapt, and design culture-based materials. Therefore, professional development in the area of ICC can facilitate not only materials development but also syllabus design, greater accessibility to ICC teaching resources, and goal setting suitable to the acquisition of ICC.

The European Centre for Modern Languages responded to this need by publishing several documents throughout these years: *Mirrors and Windows: An Intercultural*

Communication Book in 2003, *Incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teacher Education* in 2003, and *Developing and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: A guide for language teachers and educators* in 2007. With these documents specifically focused on Intercultural Communicative Competence, the Council of Europe and Ildikó Lázár (editor of these three texts) seek to inform about the importance of including the cultural dimension in foreign language teaching. In spite of the great work done by Ildikó Lázár editing the textbook *Mirrors and Windows: An Intercultural Communication Book* aimed at helping FL teachers by having a source of reference for adapting and designing activities to foster and develop students' ICC, publishing houses are still focusing merely on CLT principles when designing their teaching material disregarding ICC principles and the richness produced by including interculturalism in the communicative act. If students do not put themselves in front of their *mirror* to observe their own set of values and, thus, realize the importance of the perspective they occupy or, as Lázár says, the *window* through which they make sense of reality, communication in any language will just be a set of persons talking without accurately responding to the specific needs brought by the specific context and the other people involved in the communication. Furthermore, in 2007, a guide was published to help language teachers and educators with the assessment of the different savors of ICC by means of including assessment methods and indicating which steps can be followed, which was meant to facilitate teachers' role when assessing ICC and, as a result, motivate FL teachers to include this competence in the classroom. As can be observed, this emphasis on enabling learners to communicate with people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds dates back to one decade ago. Nevertheless, the increasing need to deal effectively and appropriately with the cultural diversity through the FL classroom is still not adequately addressed in practice.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this dissertation examines to which extent the understanding of culture in relation to learning foreign languages has changed from an informative approach based on learning by heart a sum of facts about the target speakers to a formative approach focused on equipping students, for life, with the resources needed to communicate in a multicultural society where communication across borders requires interactants to excel in both linguistic and cultural elements. This holistic view of all the elements within the

teaching/learning process of foreign languages is essential for communication in multicultural societies to flourish. Through this investigation, I have realized the importance of adopting an active role as teacher in the EFL classroom in order to provide learners with opportunities for developing both culture and language awareness. We as teachers are the mediators between our students and the target language. If our students need to feel competent for the interpretation of images or situations, integrating contextual sources, questioning their preconceptions, and developing an understanding of different cultures, it is our responsibility to foster their personal and professional growth as sensitive and considerate humans in multicultural societies that constantly demand Intercultural Communicative Competence.

To encourage our students to learn, question, research, debate and discuss their ideas, and formulate structured and substantiated arguments is at the center of every communicative syllabus. However, we need to comprehend that, in order to acquire the ability to carry out these tasks, culture must be included in conjunction with linguistic matters. We are social animals whose primary socialization drive has imposed certain *windows* through which we understand the reality around us. Nevertheless, it is the secondary socialization, which takes place in the classroom, the one in charge of expanding those horizons by encouraging students to question familiar notions so deeply embedded in their practices. This serves as a starting point for the development of self-awareness, which I tried to accomplish in my placement period. From that first step, a teacher can diagnose and start working with his/her students towards executing communicative acts that are both linguistic and cultural effective.

In spite of being our responsibility as educators of these students to provide them with all these tools, we are not being trained to accomplish this essential role in the classroom. Education programs should include in their syllabi the treatment of cultural content in order to make prospective teachers aware of the relevance of introducing culture and that culture is more than just received information and tourist's perspectives (i.e. the big C culture). Only then will teachers be competent intercultural educators, familiar with the saviors needed to acquire ICC and how they present themselves in communicative acts. Once FL teachers are prepared to include ICC in their teaching practices and get used to seeking, adapting, and designing culture-related material, they will be better qualified for interpreting, describing, and explaining cultural content to their students.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Lesson plans

Lesson 1

Name of Lesson: *Travel blogs: how to describe your experience through generalizations and stereotypes about the citizens of a foreign country* (Lesson 1)

Target Grade Level: first year of Bachillerato: Advanced group

Teacher: Izarbe Martín Gracia

Expected Learning Outcomes	At the end of this lesson students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Describe the content and form of a blog entry about South Korea by enumerating its characteristics.- Compare Simon Sinek’s speech about millennials with the content of the travel blog by pointing out the common keywords.- Interpret the connection between the speech and the post in order to develop a critical position towards the content of the blog.
Objectives	<u>Skills:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reading to develop critical thinking skills: sharpen how to recognize explicit and implicit meaning, and how to identify biased information and lack of argument supporting the information.- Listening to identify speakers’ purpose and tone: comprehend relationship between the blog entry and the speech and discuss the content.- Speaking to participate in class discussion using communication strategies: take notes, select, synthesize, and organize ideas from the travel blog and Simon Sinek’s speech. <u>Teaching aims:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To diagnose students’ capacity to be critical with the cultural content of a blog entry about South Korea’s online gaming obsession in order to adjust the following lessons to the specific necessities of the class group.- To build students’ knowledge about the blog format to enable them to carry out the main task of the unit plan (homework after lesson two).

Teacher Guide	Description of Activities	Timing
<p>Pre-Task activities and critical input</p>	<p>1) The title of the unit, “Technology”, is projected in the whiteboard to introduce the subject matter we are going to be working with the following days (see Appendix II.1).</p> <p>2) Students are asked to define technology with their own words and name a device, tool, or platform they relate to technology.</p>	<p><u>8-10 minutes</u></p> <p>Class debate</p>
<p>Learning Task</p>	<p>1) The reading section is shown in the whiteboard with the app of Burlington books.</p> <p>2) A volunteer is asked to read the title of the text, “Travel Blog”, and students are expected to predict the content of the blog.</p> <p>3) Before listening the recorded transcription of the text, the teacher writes in the blackboard the wh-words <i>what</i>, <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> so that students know that they need to answer those questions while transcription is played (see Appendix II.2).</p> <p>4) After listening to the transcription, students are invited to share the ideas they have written down for each wh-word.</p> <p>5) In turns, volunteers read the travel blog aloud while the teacher explains some new vocabulary (e.g. round-the-clock café, worship,) and asks questions to foster their critical thinking (e.g. Why is she talking about videogames? Is it really an obsession? Can you find a similar phenomenon in Spain?)</p> <p>6) Teacher invites students to share the new ideas they might have written down after reading and interpreting the text and writes some key ideas on the blackboard (see Appendix II.2).</p>	<p><u>25 minutes</u></p> <p>5 min for enabling the task</p> <p>+</p> <p>8-10 min for listening and discussing</p> <p>+</p> <p>10 min for reading and prompting criticism towards the text</p>

<p>Post-Task Activities and Understanding Performances</p>	<p>1) After the previous discussion about why the author sees the gaming obsession so shocking, students are asked to watch a speech delivered by Simon Sinek during an interview and write down at least 3 common keywords between the video and the blog entry.</p> <p>2) The first seven minutes of the interview are played.</p> <p>3) Students are asked about the keywords they have written down.</p> <p>4) Teacher asks about why the travel blog and the speech have those words and what relation can be behind both contexts. Students are expected to give reasons and create a discussion.</p>	<p><u>15 minutes</u></p> <p>7 min watching Simon Sinek's speech + 13 min group discussion</p>
<p>Verification and Policy on Error Correction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After instructions, teacher checks for comprehension of instructions (using TPR). - Writing students' ideas on the blackboard. - Recasting students ideas while answering the wh-words of the blog entry, sharing the common keywords, and connecting the video to the text. - Guiding the final discussion through adding comments and questions to the reasons given by students. 	

<p>Materials Needed (For details, see Appendix II.1, II.2, II.3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PPT slides - <i>Living English 1: Bachillerato</i> textbook 	<p>Other Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simon Sinek's Speech on Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As8XkJNaHbs&t=26s
<p>Homework:</p> <p>If there is not enough time for the final group discussion, students can be asked to write down the possible relationship between the speech and the blog entry for homework.</p>	<p>Notes on lesson:</p> <p>As an introductory lesson, cultural input should be adjusted to the needs of the students so that cultural reflections and discussions would be carried out as an achievable challenge.</p>

Lesson 2

<p>Name of Lesson: <i>USE-IT EUROPE: maps for tourists written by locals</i> (Lesson 2)</p> <p>Target Grade Level: first year of Bachillerato: Advanced group</p> <p>Teacher: Izarbe Martín Gracia</p>

<p>Expected Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>At the end of this lesson students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the particular characteristics of some maps' legends in small groups to predict the city they belong to. - Decide how to tailor a map' legend of Zaragoza by comparing and contrasting the local tips from other cities.
<p>Objectives</p>	<p><u>Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading to make use of contextual clues to infer meanings from context and to make predictions thanks to the comprehension of the maps' legends. - Speaking to participate in group and class discussion using communication strategies: locate and select relevant information from the legends and posts for discussing their own ideas. - Writing to use blog format conventions and produce a well-organized post with an effective introduction and conclusion (as homework). <p><u>Teaching aims:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide students with challenging input so that they need to use tools to interpret and identify the communicative aim behind that input. - To ensure that all students have understood what they are expected to focus on for homework because the next lesson will depend entirely on that written production.

Teacher Guide	Description of Activities	Timing
<p>Pre-Task activities and critical input</p>	<p>1) Some volunteers are asked for refreshing what we did the previous day and, in that way, absent students can catch up on the travel blog idea and on the importance of identifying biased information.</p>	<p><u>5-7 minutes</u></p> <p>Class debate</p>

	<p>2) Teacher asks students about their habits while travelling: “Do you inform yourselves before travelling to a place?”, “Are you keen readers of travel blogs?”, “What about travel guides? Do you have travel guides at home? Have you ever borrowed a travel guide?”</p> <p>3) Travel guides from Germany and London are distributed among students for them to have real objects in order to engage them for the lesson.</p> <p>4) While students are leafing through the travel guides, teacher mentions that most of the travel guides start with an important element: maps. In this way, the learning task is introduced.</p>	
<p>Learning Task</p>	<p>1) Teacher explains that real maps rather than Google Maps are still used today. Teacher asks students if they have heard about USE-IT EUROPE project or used the <i>use-it maps</i> tailored by young locals during a trip. Depending on the comments made by students, teacher shows the website, introduces the idea behind these maps, and distributes one map per pair (see Appendix II.4).</p> <p>2) Students are asked to group with the classmates sitting next to them and each group is given a number from one to six.</p> <p>3) Six maps’ legends are shown on the whiteboard and each legend is given to one of the groups (see Appendix II.5). Students are asked to read the given legends in order to identify which information will be common and which will be uncommon on a regular map’s legend. After highlighting the particular characteristics of that legend, students are asked to guess which city that legend can describe.</p> <p>4) When students have finished identifying, each group describes their legend and names a possible city or country that can fit with those particular aspects. After each group intervention, teacher asks the whole class if any aspect could be included in a legend for Zaragoza (e.g. sightseeing, art space, laundry,).</p> <p>5) After every group has described their legends, the teacher first highlights the particular style of these maps and then explains how this tailoring constitutes the strongest characteristic of this European project. To better illustrate the project, different posts are shown as samples</p>	<p><u>30 minutes</u></p> <p>5 min for enabling the task</p> <p>+</p> <p>10 min for reading and identifying in groups</p> <p>+</p> <p>15 min for reading and discussing all together</p>

	<p>of the local tips gathered in these maps (see Appendix II.6).</p> <p>6) Volunteers are asked to intervene for commenting if a similar post will be interesting to appear in a map about Zaragoza.</p>	
<p>Post-Task Activities and Understanding Performances</p>	<p>1) Teacher shows a padlet designed to look like the use-it maps layout shown before.</p> <p>2) Students are encouraged to borrow ideas from the lesson to write individually a post about Zaragoza as a homework. As exemplified through the sample of posts, a map targeted to young people can include from restaurants and going-out places to a “history walk” and “language tips.”</p>	<p><u>10-13 minutes</u></p> <p>homework explanation</p>
<p>Verification and Policy on Error Correction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After instructions, teacher checks for comprehension of instructions (using TPR). - Recasting students ideas while describing the maps’ legends and commenting the local tips. - Modelling the homework by offering examples and suggestions for students 	

<p>Materials Needed (For details, see Appendix II.4, II.5, II.6, II.7):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maps’ legends and posts screenshots from different maps in a PPT 	<p>Other Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USE-IT EUROPE website https://use-it.travel/home - Padlet https://padlet.com/Izarbe/akhj8e654jy5
<p>Homework:</p> <p>Write a post on the padlet recommending, explaining or describing a place, event, or historical site about Zaragoza and comment one post wrote by a classmate.</p>	<p>Notes on lesson:</p> <p>Guiding role letting students reflect on the information shown and providing hints when necessary.</p>

Lesson 3

<p>Name of Lesson: <i>Who needs local tips?</i> (Lesson 3)</p> <p>Target Grade Level: first year of Bachillerato: Advanced group</p> <p>Teacher: Izarbe Martín Gracia</p>
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<p>Expected Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>At the end of this lesson students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Asses their peers posts about Zaragoza following the structure of a compass point and adopting a foreigner role.- Make sense of the comments and suggestions made by their peers in order to improve the draft of their post into a final version much more intercultural.
<p>Objectives</p>	<p><u>Skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reading to distinguish main ideas from specific details and to reflect on the author's purpose and tone in order to assess the piece of written production.- Speaking to participate in group and class discussion using communication strategies: select relevant information from the posts for commenting their ideas and suggesting how it can be improved during the assessment.- Writing to give critical peer feedback that will enable the author to use peer feedback to edit writing. <p><u>Teaching aims:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To promote a collaborative, nurturing environment so that students understand how essential is to be critical towards the work of others because it allows the authors to improve their writing.- To highlight the importance of having in mind the target readers when communicating any written or oral message in order to make students reflect upon the misunderstanding or gaps of knowledge of their posts.

Teacher Guide	Description of Activities	Timing
Pre-Task activities and critical input	<p>1) Teacher shows the padlet on the whiteboard for every student to see it. Students' posts are praised.</p> <p>2) Teacher asks students to move the tables to work better in groups of four-three students.</p> <p>3) Teacher shows an illustration with several people from different countries (see Appendix II.8) and starts a discussion about how we can assure ourselves that all these people can understand our post describing Zaragoza.</p>	<u>5-7 minutes</u> Class debate
Learning Task	<p>1) Teacher explains students that each group is going to have as many posts as members of the group (see Appendix II.9). First, the whole group will have to read the three or four posts given to them. Then, thanks to a compass point (see Appendix II.10), the group is asked to assess those posts one by one. Since they have read all the posts before discussing each post, students can contrast and compare the content delivery of all of them for better assessing each post.</p> <p>2) Teacher invites students to ask doubts while handing in a handout of compass point and three-four posts per group.</p> <p>3) Teacher monitors the activity by asking questions and helping groups when necessary.</p>	<u>35 minutes</u> 5 min for handing in the handouts for the task + 30 minutes for assessing
Post-Task Activities and Understanding Performances	<p>1) Teacher asks each group of students to decide who is the representative of the group.</p> <p>2) Each representative has to give back each post to its author.</p> <p>3) Teacher explains that students must read the comments written by their classmates at home and rewrite their posts following those recommendations to adjust the content of their post for target readers to understand better the information of Zaragoza (i.e. adopting an intercultural speaker attitude).</p>	<u>7 minutes</u> Instruction and doubts solving

Verification and Policy on Error Correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After instructions, teacher checks for comprehension of instructions (using TPR). - Monitoring while students are working in teams. 	
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<p>Materials Needed (For details, see Appendix II.8, II.9, II.10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handouts with screenshots of the different posts wrote by the students - One handout with compass point per group 	<p>Other Resources</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Homework:</p> <p>Rewrite the post about Zaragoza following the comments and suggestions.</p>	<p>Notes on lesson:</p> <p>First, each group of students will have 4 posts and, as soon as they finish, teacher will exchange posts with other groups. So that, fast finishers can continue assessing and reflecting on their peers' posts and slower groups can continue at their own pace.</p>

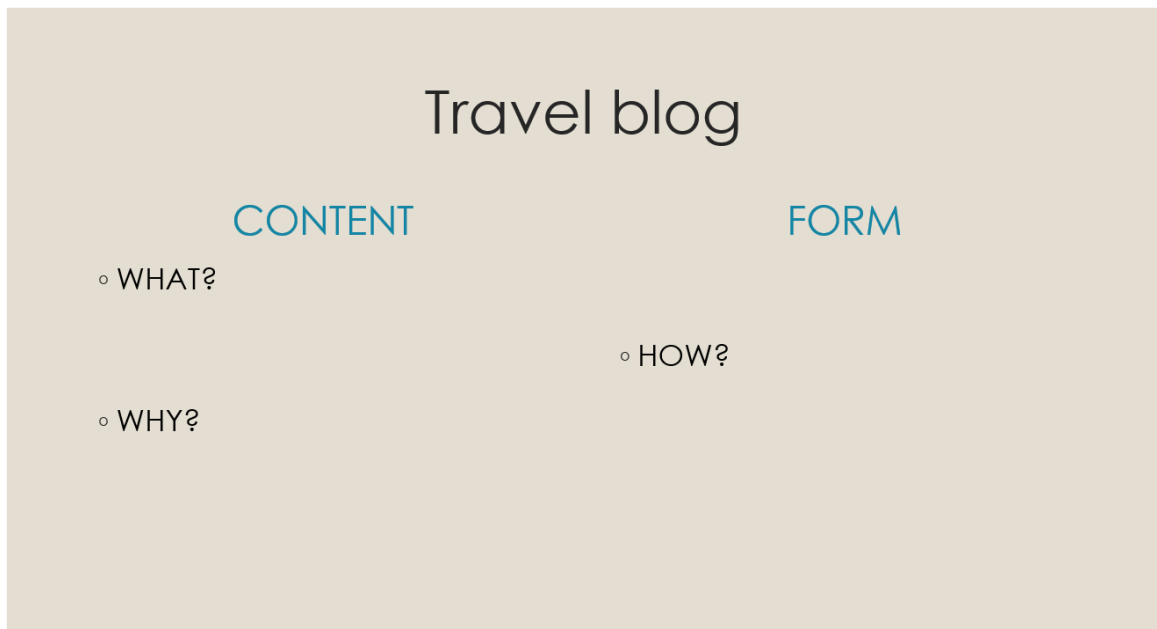
Appendix II. Materials used during implementation

Lesson 1

1. Definition of Technology:



2. Travel blog: unfilled slide and slide with essential information



Travel blog

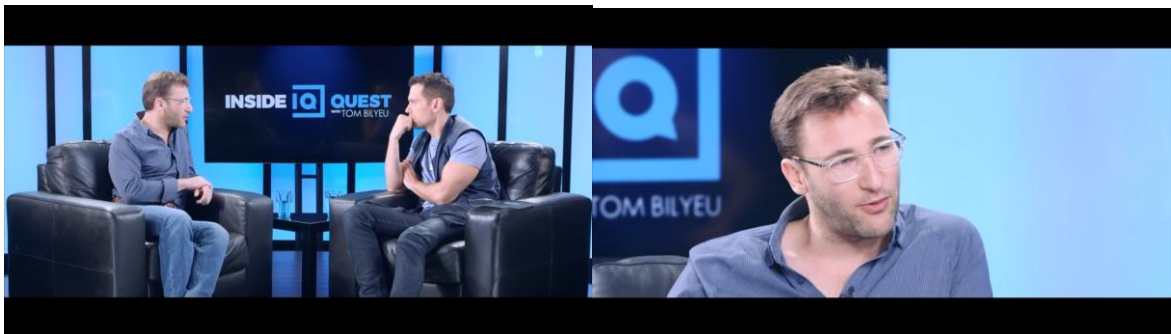
CONTENT

- WHAT?
Online gaming obsession
- WHY?
Cultural clash?

FORM

- HOW?
Personal and informal
Conversational style

3. Simon Sinek's Speech about Millennials: screenshots



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As8XkJNaHbs&t=68s>

Lesson 2

4. USE-IT EUROPE

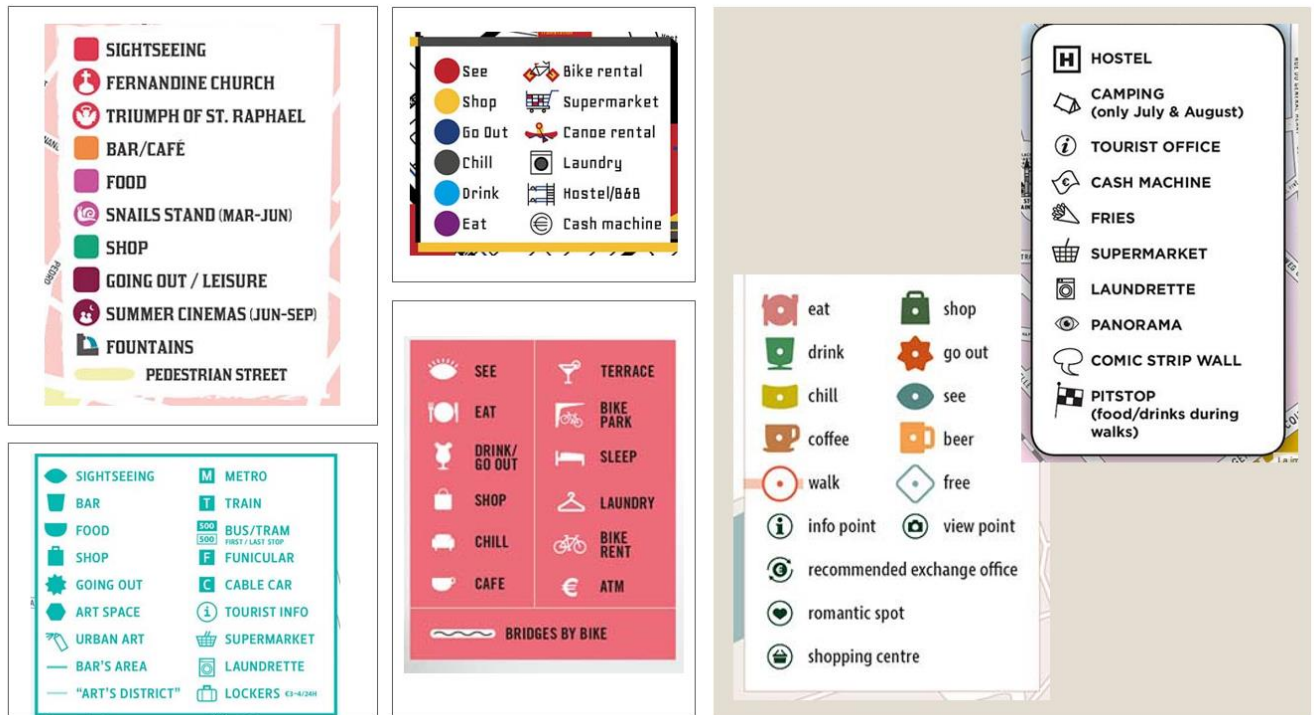


USE-IT stands for no-nonsense tourist info for young people. USE-IT maps and websites are made by young locals, are not commercial, free, and up-to-date. Some also have a visitors desk, mostly run by volunteers. Every USE-IT publishes a Map for Young Travellers that will guide you through the city in a no-nonsense way. Click on the city to get a free printable version.



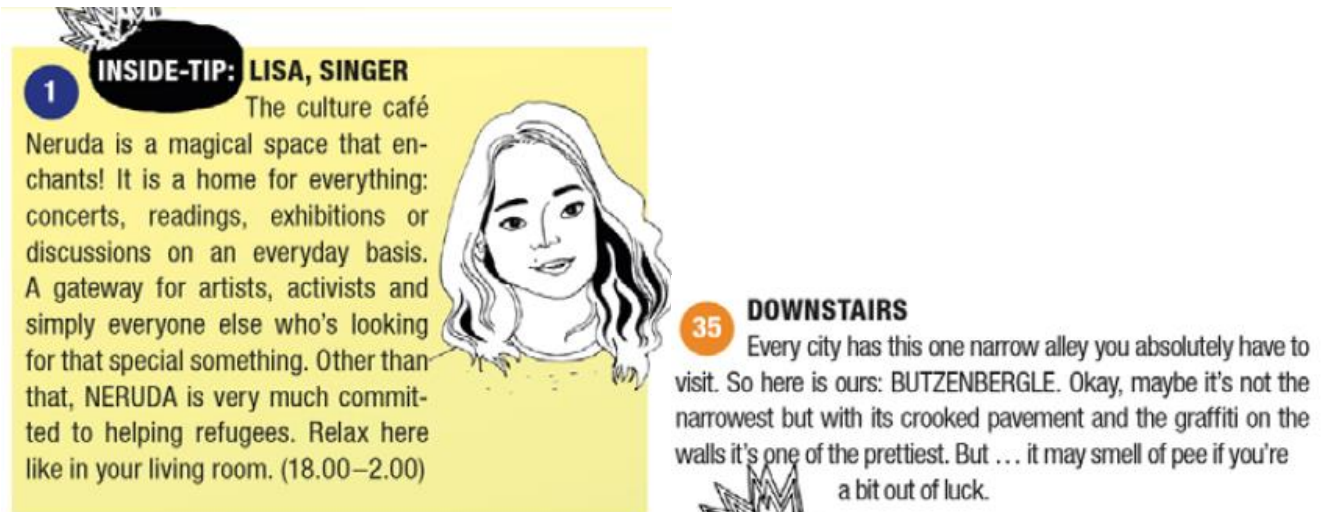
Source: <https://use-it.travel/home>

5. The sample of maps' legends from use-it maps



Source: <https://use-it.travel/home> (Cordoba, Lisbon, Utrecht, Nijmegen, Brussels, and Prague maps)

6. Sample of local tips for modelling the homework



WALK OF THE WARRIOR

70IES ARCHITECTURE, HALF A CHURCH, AND A BOMB. 2H

In order to destroy German industry like MAN (that provided submarine motors) and Messerschmitt (airplanes), WWII allies bombed Augsburg in 1944. This marked a visible turning point in the city architecture!

A LUDWIGSSTRASSE

This street was badly destroyed during the war. Repairs were done cheap and quickly; note how the 1700 architecture contrasts the 1970 buildings. On the bright side, however, the independent cafe and club scene profited from the low-brow street reputation. We recommend visiting the street at night!

 7 Lamm Café und Bar

B RATHAUSPLATZ

Augsburg's "living room" used to be much smaller: during the 1944 nights of bombing, a big building complex south to the town hall square was destroyed. Later rebuilding plans were prevented by Augsburg citizens, and their love for this square remains unbroken!

C PERLACHTURM

Not only is the view from the top worth paying the one Euro fee: climbing up the staircase of the tower, you can take breaks watching the before/after photo exhibition of the bombing impacts.

D BARFÜSSERKIRCHE

This 600 years old Protestant church ("to the Barefoots") was almost completely destroyed during WWII. It once has had two towers and a nave. But in rebuilding the church, the architects decided to just "close" the remaining east choir once used by monks for prayer, which gives the old church an interesting and unusual shape. Have a look!

E PILGERHAUSSTRASSE

It was only possible to build this massive traffic axe in 1954 after clearing up the mess of destroyed houses. Many Turkish locals live here and there's no other place in the center that offers you this quality when buying vegetables at such low prices!

F FUGGEREI

Built by the rich Jakob Fugger, this social settlement is the oldest one in the world. It also provides access to its old war bunker and a small but impressive exhibition.

 49 Tafeldecker – café and restaurant Fuggerei

G 1400 KG BOMB SITE

On December 20th 2016, a bomb with the stunning weight of 1,4 tons was found during construction works. A total of 50.000 Augsburg citizens had to be

(Source: Augsburg map)



QUEER NIGHT LIFE

If you are looking for places where the LGTB community meets, visit one of the places at Pekařská or Husova Street. Start at the **But** bar  where you can try various drinks and quality wine; notice also their original bar. Then continue to Pekařská where you will find **Metro-bar**  which is designed as an underground stop; you'll sign your ticket and your bar ride can start. If you feel like dancing, go to **Lemon Music Club**  a newly-opened and cozy club where the DJ will play really anything you ask for.



But, Husova 8a/ Mon to Thur 16:00 - 02:00; Fri to Sat 16:00 - 3:00; Sun 16:00 - 01:00


Metro-bar, Pekařská 24/ Tue to Thu 19:00 - 24:00; Fri to Sat 19:00 - 01:00

Lemon Music Club, Pekařská 7/ Tue to Thu 20:00 - 03:00; Fri to Sat 20:00 - 05:00



ŠPILAS



The castle built in the middle of the 13th century, was initially made to protect the city, but under the Habsburgs (in the 1830s) **Spilberk** (or Špilas as we call it) was turned into a prison. Today it serves as a museum and is worth a look chiefly thanks to its dungeons and torture exhibition. Booring! Take a walk around the castle instead and find the hidden pagoda where can get a whiff of . Have a game of boules and sit back with a bottle of wine on the brick walls (good for long conversations over a long drop!).

PRACTICAL INFO

BRNO TOURIST INFO



at Radnická 8

April to September

-> Mon to Fri 08:30 - 18:00; Sat and Sun 09:00 to 18:00

October to March


-> Mon to Fri 09:00 to 18:00; Sat and Sun 09:00 to 17:00



+  at Panenská 1

Daily 09:00 - 18:00



+  at Hlavní nádraží

Daily 09:00 - 17:00



at Špilberk

Tue to Sun 09:00 - 16:30

MEETING POINTS

marked with  - around 19:00 or 20:00 these places are quite crowded (especially at weekends) -> can be difficult to spot people

- > the train station -> main tram (and night buses) hub
- > Česká ("Čára")

BRNO CELEBS


THE LÖW-BEER DYNASTY

an important family of businessmen who turned Brno between the 18th and 20th century into "Moravian Manchester" thanks to the textile industry. Most of their offspring had to flee the country because of the Nazis.

GREGOR JOHANN MENDEL /1822 - 1884/

an Augustinian friar and abbot of St. Thomas' Abbey in Brno who was much into growing peas. As he was well-educated in statistics and combinatorial analysis, he noticed that a baby pea is similar both to Mummy pea and Daddy pea. He is a founder of the basic rules of heredity and is known as the "Father of genetics".

LEOŠ JANÁČEK /1854 - 1928/

an original composer who was inspired by Moravian folk music so much that he invented his own genre. For example his impressionist fairy opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* includes the sound of a creaking door as well as the last words of his dying daughter. He lived in the garden house  of the former Organ School, where he was teaching. There, you'll find a small showroom with Leoš's original piano. Along with Dvorak and Smetana, he is one of the most important Czech composers.

GEORG PLACZEK /1905 - 1955/

a genius of physics who was a leading figure in the project of the atomic bomb (Manhattan Project).

MILAN KUNDERA /1929 - /

an everlasting candidate of the Nobel Prize in Literature and the author of the novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is Brno born and raised. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he became a banned author and emigrated to France. Since the revolution in 1989 he has been visiting his homeland only incognito.



(Source: Brno map)

5 MINUTES OF HISTORY

- 1277** Arrival of the first trade fleet from Genova (Italy), making the harbour of Bruges the most important link with the Mediterranean Sea.
- 1292** First mention of the Stock Exchange in Bruges, one of the most sophisticated early capitalist businesses in Western Europe. Yes, we helped invent capitalism. You're welcome.
- 1302** Big fight with France. A whole regiment of French soldiers gets murdered in their sleep. (When you're used to being rich and peaceful, you have to be smart.)
- 1482** Mary of Burgundy falls with her horse and dies a few weeks later. She is buried in **66**.
- 1489** Hans Memling paints the shrine of Saint Ursula. By now, Flemish painters have set the standard for European painters with their impressive eye for realism.
- +/- 1500** The combination of too much sand in between the sea and the harbour, combined with political troubles is bad for business. The Antwerp harbour takes over.
- 1600** and 1700 and 1800: Bruges falls asleep.
- 1892** Bruges wakes up. The popular book 'Bruges-la-Morte' describes the city as a dark, poor and ugly place. Locals are not too happy with this, but tourists see some romance in it, and start visiting Bruges more and more.
- 1896** Bruges builds a new harbour a bit further, called Zeebrugge. During World War I, the Germans try out the first generation of submarines there.
- 1975** First independent hostel in Bruges, run by a few hippies with a documentation center. There is no way to stop young travellers anymore.
- 2002** Bruges is cultural capital of Europe.
- 2013** A tree falls over in the canal! One day without tourist boats. Drama!
- 2016** Club Brugge wins the Belgian soccer championship for the first time in a decade. That was about time...
- 2017** For the first time in 20 years Belgium's most famous cycling race - Tour of Flanders - doesn't start in Bruges. Boo Antwerp!

(Source: Bruges map)

3 THE PALACE OF FLOWERS

(Winter Tue-Sat 10.00-19.00; Sun and holidays 10.00-15.00 / Summer Tue-Sun. 09.00-15.00 / € 8, only gardens € 5 / Free on Wed 14.00-17.00) Viana Palace is a manor worth five centuries of history and remodeling. The remodeling that took place in the 17th century is the one that gives the palace its present look. It was inhabited by the Marquises of Viana until 1980. It's worth the visit since both the palace and its 12 gardens are open all year round, which will allow you to enjoy the beauty of Cordovan patios regardless of the season. Besides, the palace houses the oldest documented patio in town, Patio de los Gatos, which was already shared by its neighbors back in the 15th century.

TOURIST CLASSIC

A B C WHAT'S A PATIO?

The early city dwellers, first the Romans and later the Muslims, already adopted the typical design of the popular houses to our hot climate, building the living space around an inner courtyard (Patio), normally with a fountain in the middle and often a well to store rainwater. The Muslims made further adjustments by filling the courtyard with plants to cool it down. The Patios Festival takes place in May. The magic of it lies in the fact that the patios are part of houses owned by common Cordovans who generously open their doors to visitors and share the treasure they have been keeping year-round. The main problem they face is the massive tourism that sometimes ruins the joy of the experience. But you can visit these three for free: **A** AMIGOS DE LOS PATIOS (Mon-Sun 11.00-14.00 and 17.00-20.00), **B** CASA DE LAS CAMPANAS (Mon-Sun 11.00-14.00 and 18.00-21:00) and **C** CENTRO DE INTERPRETACIÓN DE PATIOS (Mon-Sun 10:30-14:00; Mon-Sat 18:00-21:00). There are over 270 patios in neighborhoods such as San Basilio, Santa Marina, San Pedro, San Lorenzo... most of them do not accept visitors except in May, but if you ask politely, owners might show them to you at any time.



act like a LOCAL

LOOKING FOR A REAL LOCAL EXPERIENCE? Easy! Cordoba is the city in Spain with the highest number of 'local' people: **70% of its population was born here.** So basically you can't go wrong, as you're always surrounded by true locals!

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ACCENT. The rest of Spain thinks that all Andalusians have the same accent, but the truth is that every city or village has a different one. Here's a tip for beginners: forget about the consonant at the ends of words. Instead, we pronounce the vowels in a funny way, making them extra open. So "calor cordobés" would sound more like "calòh cordòbèh". This makes us stand out in any part of the world.

FLAMENCO DRACULA. Did you just bump into an old man wearing a cape and hat? Don't be afraid! He's not a vampire but what we call a "cordobita". This typical outfit from Cordoba is a sign of elegance and tradition, a look some people try to keep. You find them walking through side streets or chatting in traditional taverns **32 58 60**.

THE CORDOVAN SUMMER (ALWAYS IN HEAT!) There's nothing more Cordoba-like than bragging about the high temperatures we reach in July and August. In fact, we enjoy competing with our Sevillian neighbors regarding who is hottest. People in Cordoba love to post selfies with street thermometers showing temperatures of 45° or higher. If you're visiting in summer, go take your own and share it on your Facebook page!

BETTER ON FOOT. Forget the car. Walking or cycling is the only way to go through the narrow streets in which the city hides its treasures.

OUR OWN REMEDY FOR THE HEAT... You find drinking fountains in most squares, parks and streets in town. But only savvy Cordovans know which ones will get you the coolest water. We have marked our favorite ones **L**. You're welcome!

"A VER SI QUEDAMOS". When friends bump into each other we often conclude with "a ver si quedamos" or "a ver si te llamo", roughly "we should make plans to meet". Which does not mean we'll get in touch ourselves. Don't take it personally, we just understand this expression **more like a wish than as a commitment.** But we'll also say yes to a good plan!

EAT LOCAL. Our typical food is a perfect mix of the Arab, Roman and Jewish influences we are proud to have. Here are a few suggestions: "flamenquin" (rolled pork meat filled with Serrano ham), "salmorejo" (cold tomato cream), "berenjenas con miel" (aubergines with honey), "rabo de toro" (oxtail — it may sound weird but it's delicious), "mazamorra" (almond-based cold cream), "pastel cordobés" (Cordoba's traditional cake with pureed pumpkin filling). Don't be fooled by the Sevillians: **these dishes are 100% Cordovan.**

WE HAVE A WINE FOR YOU! Don't leave without tasting our famous white **Montilla-Moriles.** Because of the

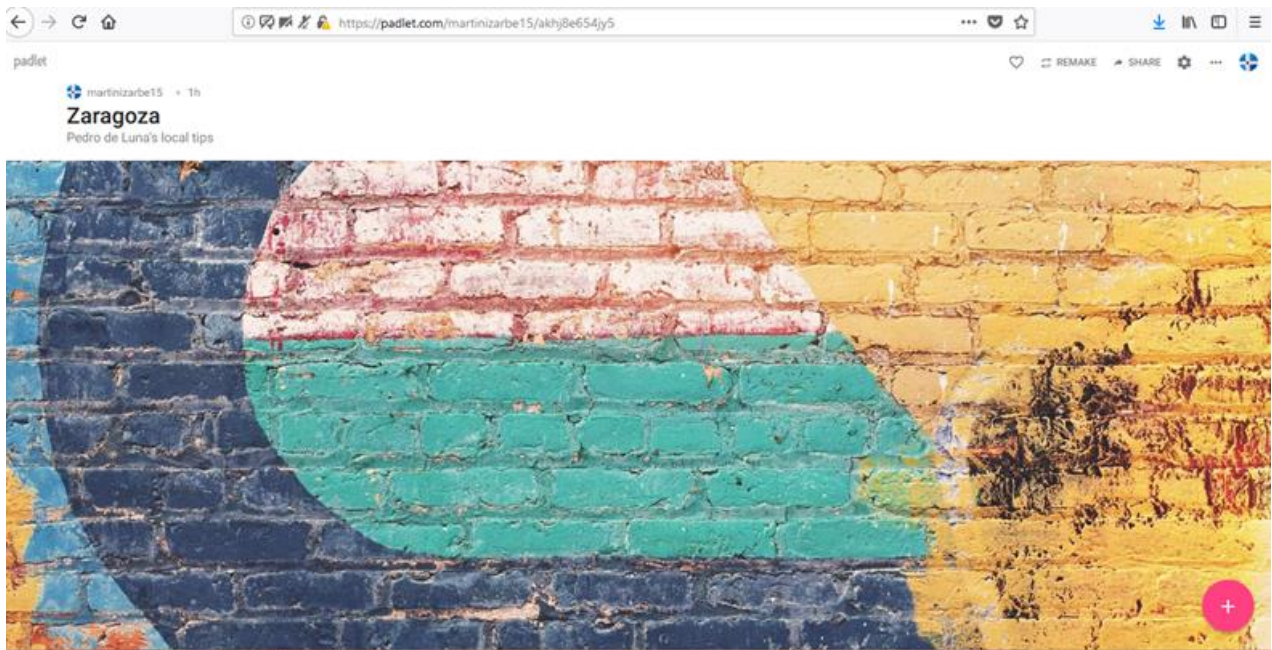


EAT LIKE A LOCAL. When you go to a genuine bar or tavern during mealtimes, you'll realize there are no individual dishes. Your only option is sharing. "Tapas" are small portions, "raciones" (full portion) or "medias raciones" (half portion) are bigger, and they are supposed to be shared by everybody from the same plate. Don't be picky and try everything!

DRINK LIKE A LOCAL. Beer is usually served on tap so if you want a specific brand, ask for a bottle. Beer is available in two sizes: "tubo" (long glass) and "caña" (smaller glass). Germans will need to order many more tubos than your regular local, but these sizes are perfect to always have a chilled beer in your hands. So, instead of complaining, ask for one more!

(Source: Córdoba map)

7. Padlet: empty padlet to teach students how to use it



Available in: <https://padlet.com/Izarbe/akhj8e654jy5>

Lesson 3

8. Images: introducing the idea of the target readers (foreigners)



9. Padlet: posts about Zaragoza written by students

Anonymous 11d

SECOND HAND SHOP'S WALK

Hey! I'm Maria and if you are into fashion and at the same time you don't mind reusing clothes keep an eye on the names below! These shops have unique garments that you'll love to use in your outfits and no other person will wear :)

All of them are located near each other and the best of all... near our school I.E.S Pedro de Luna, in "El barrio de la Magdalena"

1. Flamingos Vintagekilo
2. Carmen Zirelli Almacenes de Moda
3. Plastik Vintage Clothing
4. Blue Velvet Vintage Clothing

Anonymous 4d

The Expo

Hi I'm Edu and I think that now that we are arriving to the summer the Expo is an amazing place to spend our free time or hang out with our friends, because the Expo is near to the Ebro so you can take amazing photos at sunset or to cool off with the floor fountains and at the same time have fun with our friends. You can also go on bike around the spectacular buildings while you admire them and even explore them.

Anonymous 6d

Don't go nuts, go croquetas!

Hi I'm Michelle! If you're a foodie and really want to get a taste of Zaragoza "CroquetArte" is the place for you! Their food is amazing, their service is even better and if you're in a hurry to see all of Zaragoza or just don't have the time don't worry! Just pop in and get a take away. If you're a vegetarian or a vegan there are special ones without meat. If you're a celiac there are ones without gluten. So, what are you waiting for?

Careful with Sundays they close at 15:30

Location: C/ Coso,14

Anonymous 8d

Walking along the Route of the Sieges

Hi, I'm Dani and if you're interested in history, check the post below.

One of the most significant events in the history of the city are the **Sieges of Zaragoza** (1808-1809), framed in the Peninsular War. To commemorate that, there are some information points in the meaningful places of the sieges creating the Route of the Sieges. If you want to know about the city's past, you cannot miss it. However, some points are far apart, so if you are not used to walking, it's better to walk the route in two days (meanwhile you can visit other monuments nearby).

There is a map in every point, but I attach one in *Google Maps* anyway.

Anonymous 4d

FOR NATURE LOVERS

Hi! I'm Sara and if you like nature and you need to take a breathe and leave the crowded center behind, you just have to ask for a map of "**El Anillo Verde de Zaragoza**" in the office tourism, rent a bike and simply go cycling (or walking) around Zaragoza through this magic bikeway, where most of the times you'll go near the River Ebro and surrounded by the vegetation. It's another way to know a city and to relax after a hard journey of work or exams.

Don't think about it, just go out and breathe!!

:D

Anonymous 4d

Parque Grande, "Adventure" Grande.

Hello, I'm Danila! If you are a fan of sports or having a chill day, this is your place. You can do tons of activities there, alone or in company but enjoying it is a must-do. Night time there is as majestic as daytime and you always can have a photoshoot if you feel more like an influencer.

If you are not interested in sports or just chilling, you can also find a bunch of tree species to investigate or a lot of commemorations to famous spanish figures!

Don't forget to leave your opinion!

 Anonymous 4d

EL PILAR

Hi I'm Juan. The basilica of El Pilar is the most iconic bulding of our city so it is compulsory to visit it if you come to Zaragoza. This baroque basilica was built in 1680 for christianism.

If you want to enter you should know the schedule: Monday to Saturday from **6:45 to 20:30 h** and on Sunday from **6:45 to 21:30 h**.

But if you dont want to enter a good option will be going to a bar in Pilar square and enjoy the amazing views you have.

 Anonymous 3d

Heaven is ice-cream

Hi I'm Carol! If you are a sweet-toothed like me, you have to go to **"Heladería Tortosa"**. This ice-cream parlour is located in the city centre and it is the best stop for tourists and also locals. There you can find more than twenty different savoury flavours. Lactose and gluten intolerants and diabetics can taste too the best Zaragoza's ice-creams. And if you are cold-blooded, don't worry! In autumn you also can enjoy homemade waffles.

My recommendation for chocolate lovers is Straciatella with Kinder and for fighting a summer day, lemon with mandarin is the perfect combination.

But be careful! In winter it isn't opened.

Location: C. Don Jaime I, 35

 Anonymous 4d

BEST COFFEE SHOPS


Hi, I'm Sigrid! If you are looking for cool places to have a nice time by your own or just to get together with your friends and spend a lovely time with them, take a quick look at these coffee shops.

I truly believe they are especial and welcoming places where you can chat with your peers at the same time as you are having a coffee and a delicious piece of home baked cake, and the best of all is that they are well located (all of them in the city centre).


Go visit any of them and have a nice time! :)

1. **Café Botánico**
2. **Doña Hipólita**
3. **Café Nolasco**

6 comments

 Anonymous 2mo

Hi , Sigrid ! I see we have similar taste in coffe shops , I love Café Nolasco I think it's a great place to spend the afternoon enjoying your mates and the attractive scent of coffe . I will definetly check out Café Botanico . If you wanna try a new place or maybe a new type of coffe I recommend you La Bendita and La Clandestina . They are my two favourite coffe shops . Both of them are located in the city centre and have a very good reputation . But , if I had to choose one I will go for La Clandestina because as it is less known , there's a smaller chance that it is crowded ... well , the Red Velvet cheescake may have influenced my election too. - xoxo , Irina

 Anonymous 2mo

Thanks for your recommendations, Irina! It's great getting to know new coffee shops. I've tried Cafe Nolasco's Red Velvet cheesecake and I love it, I'm willing to try new ones :) Oh, and if you want to go to Café Botánico, I recommend you go in the morning since it's less crowded than in the afternoon. Still, you can try to go on weekdays rather than on weekends, this way maybe you're lucky enough to find an unoccupied table. But, in any way, I hope you have a lovely time while enjoying your coffee! -Sigrid.

 Anonymous · 4d

El Armadillo Ilustrado

Hi! I'm Francesca and I'm kind of new here in Zaragoza. Moving here was a big change for me. I used to live somewhere much smaller so at first I found the city a bit stressful. But when I found this book shop I also found somewhere where you can just unwind while browsing through some books. They have every type of illustrated book you could think of and I think some of them are just wonderful.

Maybe you are just visiting or maybe, like me, you are new here; it doesn't matter which, if the city gets a bit too much and you just need to relax or if you are just a bookworm, go there. I promise you won't regret it.

 Anonymous · 4d

Kill two birds with one shot

Hi! I'm Alexandra and I would like to recommend you the best place in Zaragoza dedicated especially to tourists. In this case, it is not a place, but a street. We're talking about the Don Jaime street. Here you can find many souvenir shops where you can buy something to your familiars, as well as buying Dulces de Aragon (meaning " Aragon 's sweets ") in Fantoba shop so you can taste some typical food from here. Apart from that, Don Jaime is placed next to the Pilar Square and near to the city center. As you can see, this is a very useful street!

Hope you enjoy it!

One street, an entire journey!

Hi I'm Irina! If you are a productive person that love to get the most out of anything and hate doing the same activity for long then dont worry, I got your back!

Calle Alfonso may seem like another street of zaragoza but in fact it guides you to a lot of adventures. A perfect afternoon will start with visiting the 3 most important monuments of Zaragoza, all of them located just at the entry of calle Alfonso. You can take your time admiring la Seo and the Pilar or going to el Torreón de la Zuda and get a higher view from the city. If you are not afraid of heights then you should take the elevator to the Pilar's tower, you would be nicely surprised by the expansion of the city and the river's flow. After all the tourism it's time to recharge and take a break, in Calle Alfonso you will find many food shops but the best one is Smooy. Smooy has a lot of yogurt ice cream options for different food allergies which is great for tourist that have a sensitive gut. To end up your day you can relax visiting the shops that you have on calle Alfonso or the ones located just above in Independencia. I hope you make the most out of your journey!

 Anonymous · 4d

Jose Antonio Labordeta's Park

Hi I'm Fernando! Summer is getting closer and I have the right place to spend most of your time. The park of Jose Antonio Labordeta, also known as "Parque Grand" is a fantastic place where you can do a lot of activities. For example you can rent a bike to ride around the park or pay for a train ticket that shows you the whole park.

Also if you are a nature lover is a place with a lot of animals and different types of vegetation. And if you love football the stadium is next to the park!

Finally if you only want to relax you only have to sit and admire the landscape

Anonymous 1m

Reading doesn't have to be expensive!

Hi, I'm Nerea! If you ever walk near Paseo de Fernando el Catolico, I'd really recommend checking out this awesome, second-hand bookstore called Re-read.

They've got an amazing selection of all the different genres you could ever dream of! There's also a very good mixture of old and new books so, if you're coincidentally searching for a specific edition that was released decades ago, there's a good chance they might sell it to you here.

There are also great deals, like one book for 3€, two books for 5€ and five books for 10€. That's such a bargain, keeping in mind that a single brand new book costs approximately 20€. This is an incredible way of saving money, reusing and going on the hunt for incredible, cheap literary finds, don't you think?

Do you have any books you're desperate to get rid of, but don't want to throw them away? You're lucky, because you can also sell them here! They will give you a symbolic amount of money in exchange to sell them themselves. Isn't that great? You can finally throw away all those dusty books and get money in return!

I don't know about you, but this place sounds right up my street. You should definitely check it out at one point! I'm sure you won't regret it.

Anonymous 1mo

Tapas in 'El Tubo'

Hi, I'm Pablo! If you're visiting Zaragoza and you're looking forward to hanging out with your friends, you can't miss El Tubo and its tapas. A wide range of bars along a few narrow streets will give you an unforgettable experience full of laughs. If you are a wine geek then you must keep an eye on 'Bodegas Almau', it won't disappoint you. Some people might say the best croquettes in Zaragoza can be tasted here, in 'Doña Casta', available in all flavours, so maybe you'd like to give it a shot. Otherwise, if you'd rather opt for fish, 'El Hormiguero Azul' is your place. To end up the day, 'El Plata' will bring Las Vegas directly to Zaragoza. Here you'll find a great stage where shows are done on Thursday and Friday at 23:00 h, and on Saturdays at 19:30, 23:00 and 1:00 h, but know that no under-age people are allowed in there!

All of these can be found in C/ Libertad and in C/ Estébanes, both located behind Plaza España.

Above all, don't drink too much!

Anonymous 1mo

For theatre lovers ♥

Hi, I'm Clara! If you are a theatre lover like I am or you just want to do something a little bit different for a day you should definitely go to "El Teatro Principal" which is the most important theatre of the city. The theatre is located in the centre of the city what means that is really easy to locate.

Going to the theatre is a great way to spend time whether is with your family, your friends or just by yourself, you don't have to worry about anything but enjoying the show. What is even better is that is open every time of the year.

Also it has lots of things to watch for different tastes. Apart from plays you can also watch concerts or dancing shows, it's up to you!

You can purchase the tickets and see what shows will be next by looking at their web page

(<http://www.teatroprincipalzaragoza.com/lista.php>) or at their ticket window which is next to the front door.

Location: Plaza de José Sinués y Urbiola, 2, 50001 Zaragoza

Anonymous 4d

Alfajeria Palace

Hi tourists! It's me, Noara. Are visiting arab palaces your cup of tea? If so, go on a sunny morning to the Alfajeria Palace: orange trees, large courtyards and even abandoned cells (only brave ones allowed). A little bit of historical culture never hurt anyone, right?

Gluten free Zaragoza

Hi, I'm Héctor!

Sometimes, planning to visit or staying in a city may be a rough chore if you are gluten intolerant. But here in Zaragoza you don't have to worry about finding gluten free food in any of its forms.

-Supermarkets: Most supermarkets in Zaragoza have a great range of gluten free products, which are usually marked with the "sin gluten" signature. The best example of a gluten intolerant friendly market is Mercadona; Mercadona has more than a thousand gluten-free products and it's a pioneer in gluten-free food. As there isn't one mercadona in every neighborhood, Erosky and El árbol are a good alternative.

-Restaurants: Eating at a restaurant if you're gluten intolerant shouldn't be a problem in our city, most of the restaurants know already about the celiac disease and provide gluten-free options or even have adapted menus which are all gluten free. The best restaurants to eat gluten free at the city centre are:

La Quebradora (Mexican food) C/Cinegio 3

Fray Juan (Burgers) C/ Fray Juan 6

La Tagliatella (Italian) C/ Jerónimo Zurita 15

El morrudo (Spanish food) C/ Azoque 58

-Bakeries: If you are looking for freshly baked gluten-free bread or pastries, "La mar de cookies" is a whole gluten and lactose-free bakery located in two different spots of the city, they only bake gluten and lactose-free products, so there's no possibility of crossed contamination. They have over 60 products for the moment.

C/ San Pablo 95 C/ Francisco de Vitoria 21

Another option if you're looking for a gluten-free bakery is

"Toque de Canela" located on C/ San Vicente de Paúl 7

I hope you find this guide helpful, if you have any doubt about restaurants or products, you can get more information at FACE, the gluten intolerant association of Spain.

10. Peer Feedback: Compass points dynamic

Compass points

- N:
What else do you need to know?
- E:
What excites you about this idea or proposition? What's the upside?
- S:
Suggestions for moving forward
- W:
What do you find worrisome about this idea or proposition? What's the downside?

