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Master's thesis

Teaching Intercultural competence in the English subject: Teacher's practices and perspectives from Norwegian primary schools

Undervisning i interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget: lærerens praksis og perspektiver fra norsk grunnskole

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In the beginning of September 2021, someone told me that writing a master's thesis would be fun, but stressful, and even painful at times. I must report that they were right in every aspect. However, sitting here with a finished product makes me proud, and I feel like the work with this thesis has provided me with an insight which has made me grow as a teacher, but also as a human being. However, I would never have managed to do all this work on my own, and there are some people who deserve some extra credit.

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Abstract

Title: Teaching Intercultural competence in the English subject: Teacher's practices and perspectives from Norwegian primary schools

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When the curriculum renewal was introduced to Norwegian compulsory education in the autumn of 2020, intercultural competence became an essential term and learning objective in the English subject (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

This MA thesis defines *intercultural competence* as the combination of culture-related knowledge, specific skills, and attitudes, which refers to essential components of intercultural competence learners must develop to be able to encounter and interact with people from different backgrounds (Byram, 2020; Deardorff, 2006). This thesis explores the EFL teachers' teaching practices and perspectives on intercultural competence to provide an insight into how teachers teach aspects related to the term in the English subject in year 5-7. Observations and semi-structured interviews have been used to collect data in this thesis, and the results are discussed with relevant theory (e.g., Byram, 2020; Byram et al., 2002; Huber et al., 2014) and previous research (e.g., Listuen, 2017; Skaugen, 2020; Bandura & Sercu, 2005).

The results in this study imply that teachers have a common understanding of the term intercultural competence and how it should be taught. For instance, the participants in this study emphasise *diversity* as an essential aspect of intercultural competence. They also report that developing the learners' communicative competencies is essential. However, *knowledge* appears as the component of intercultural competence the teachers in this research most emphasise, while the components of *skills* and *attitudes* appear to be taught implicitly. The content the teachers teach relates to several aspects of intercultural competence and is commonly taught through the use of authentic English language texts and reflective activities.

Norsk sammendrag

Tittel: Undervisning i interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget: lærerens praksis og perspektiver fra norsk grunnskole

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Da fornyelsen av læreplanen ble innført i den norske skolen høsten 2020, ble *interkulturell kompetanse* et vesentlig begrep og læringsmål i engelskfaget (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

Denne masteroppgaven definerer *interkulturell kompetanse* som kombinasjonen av kulturrelatert kunnskap, spesifikke ferdigheter og holdninger, og refererer til essensielle komponenter innenfor interkulturell kompetanse som elever må utvikle for å kunne møte og samhandle med mennesker med ulik bakgrunn (Byram, 2020; Deardorff, 2006). Denne oppgaven utforsker EFL-lærernes undervisningspraksis og perspektiver på interkulturell kompetanse for å gi et innblikk i hvordan lærere underviser aspekter knyttet til begrepet i engelskfaget på 5.-7. trinn i grunnskolen. Observasjoner og semi-strukturerte intervjuer er brukt for å samle inn data i denne oppgaven, og resultatene er diskutert med relevant teori (f.eks. Byram, 2020; Byram et al., 2002; Huber et al., 2014) og tidligere forskning (f.eks. Listuen, 2017; Skaugen, 2020; Bandura & Sercu, 2005).

Resultatene i denne studien antyder at lærere har en felles forståelse av begrepet interkulturell kompetanse og hvordan det skal undervises. For eksempel fremhever deltakerne i denne studien *mangfold* som et vesentlig aspekt ved interkulturell kompetanse. De rapporterer også at det er viktig å utvikle elevenes kommunikative kompetanse. Likevel fremstår *kunnskap* som den komponenten av interkulturell kompetanse lærerne i denne forskningen legger mest vekt på, mens komponentene *ferdigheter* og *holdninger* ser ut til å bli undervist implisitt. Innholdet lærerne underviser i forholder seg til flere aspekter ved interkulturell kompetanse og undervises ofte gjennom bruk av autentiske engelskspråklige tekster og reflekterende aktiviteter.

1 Introduction

In this MA thesis, I explore and discuss how English as foreign language (EFL) teachers in primary school practice their teaching of intercultural competence in years 5-7. This chapter introduces the topic and relevant aspects of the thesis and how it is relevant to English education in Norwegian primary schools. The chapter also presents the research questions relevant to this thesis's research and the study's scope.

1.1 Topic and contextual background

With globalization, the technological revolution and migration as the backdrop, the worlds' citizens are closer connected than ever before (Hoff, 2018, p. 67). As a result, children in Norway and elsewhere are growing up in diverse societies, where the demographic consists of people from different cultures, nationalities, religions, social status, etc. (Borchgrevink Hansen, 2018, p. 97). Having people with various backgrounds and cultural attachments in a local or global society, results in different people interacting at all levels of society. This leaves us all with a responsibility to treat each other with respect and tolerance and co-exist without having anyone feeling discriminated against. It is thus necessary to be equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be able to meet and interact with others in an appropriate manner. This equipment can be understood as *intercultural competence*. The purpose of this MA thesis is to explore how English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools teach intercultural competence in the classroom in order to help their learners develop the different components within intercultural competence.

The term *intercultural competence* became an essential learning outcome in the English subject with the renewal of the curriculum (*LK20*), which was introduced to Norwegian schools in the autumn of 2020 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3: 2021, p. 63). In the Official Norwegian Report concerning the future of Norwegian education (NOU 2015:8, pp. 27- 30), the committee states that communication, interaction, and participation are important aspects of social life, education, and working life. Because of globalisation and migration, people with different cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds have more platforms to interact (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, pp. 2-3). The learners must therefore acquire the ability to interact and collaborate with people in their close environment and outside of Norwegian boarders who might belong to different cultures and religions, and of different opinions and keeping

different values than oneself (NOU 2015:8, pp. 19, 27-30). Hence, it is important to show respect, and acknowledge people's perspectives, so that everyone can utter their opinion and build positive relations to others (NOU 2015:8, p. 27).

With English being a global language used in several contexts and for different purposes by over two billion native and non-native speakers across the world (Rindahl, 2020, pp. 23-24), the English subject has a central role in promoting intercultural competence. This means that teachers should help learners develop certain skills and abilities for interacting with people through the English subject. To do so, it is necessary to equip the learners with the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prepare the learners to interact with people with different backgrounds than themselves, also known as *intercultural competence* (Byram, 2020).

1.1   Reason and purpose of research

For this MA thesis, I wanted to research how teachers practice their teaching of intercultural competence as it is a term I find complex, yet so crucial in a society where we are constantly reminded that discrimination and prejudice are ongoing, and sadly, frequent problems. My interpretation of intercultural competence is that by developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required, the learners will be better equipped to face a diverse world society and knowing how to be a good world citizen. Intercultural competence is a concept concerning how we can interact with other people. For me, it also means that we should work with ourselves and gain knowledge to change our views to prevent people from being discriminated against. Intercultural competence should provide children growing up today with the tools they need to function in their daily lives. As teachers and grown-ups, we have a responsibility to prevent the coming generations from continuing to discriminate against each other, and rather see, learn about, and accept each other.

The purpose of this study is to discover how EFL teachers in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary school work with intercultural competence in the English subject to help develop their learners' intercultural competence. *LK20* is the first curriculum using the term *intercultural competence* when defining the cultural dimension of the subject curriculum and what it entails (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). This study has explored how teachers have adapted the objectives into their teaching, and how they facilitate the learners' education to develop the learners' intercultural competence. Additionally, since

previous studies show that intercultural competence has been lacking as a specific focus in the previous curricula (Listuen 2017; Lund, 2007; Skaugen 2020), this study can help see if the focus on intercultural competence has changed following having it defined in the renewal of the curriculum. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of research on how intercultural competence is taught in Norwegian primary schools and how teachers in primary schools approach the concept. Previous research in the Norwegian context seems to be focused on lower secondary and higher education (Listuen, 2017; Skaugen, 2020). As intercultural competence is supposed to be practiced in schools from year 1, it is of interest to see how teachers who are preparing learners for lower secondary work with intercultural competence in their teaching.

1.2   Research questions

The purpose of the research in this thesis is to shed light on how English teachers in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools practice their teaching of intercultural competence. Hence, it was essential to create research questions that could help investigate typical features in teaching intercultural competence and its components. The main research question for this research project is thus:

How do EFL teachers in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools practice teaching intercultural competence?

The main research question is broad. I therefore included the following sub-questions to help limit the scope of the thesis and research:

- How do the teachers define and approach intercultural competence?
- Which components do the teachers emphasise in their teaching of intercultural competence?
- What materials do the teachers use in their work with teaching intercultural competence?
- What activities do the teachers carry out in the classroom when teaching intercultural competence?

In order to answer these research questions, the research for this thesis is designed from a qualitative research approach, using the combination of observation and interview to generate data. I developed an observation form with a focus on what materials and activities the teachers used in the lessons and which components of intercultural competence the teachers taught during the lessons. I also developed an interview guide with focusing on the teachers' approaches toward teaching intercultural competence and investigated the teachers' cognition around intercultural competence and their thoughts on the different components. The interviews also investigated the teachers' experiences and preferences for materials and activities when teaching intercultural competence.

1.3   Defining terminology

In this thesis, I investigate teachers' practice of teaching intercultural competence in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools. Hence, I have explored definitions of intercultural competence and its related aspects in existing theory and previous research. In this section, I present the definitions used throughout the thesis, in addition to the components of intercultural competence and aspects related to the term.

1.3.1   Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is a term necessary to define as it is fundamental for this thesis. The term is complex and defined in many ways, which will be explored and explained closer in this thesis's theoretical framework. In this thesis, I use the definition from Deardorff (2006, p. 247) to define the term. Deardorff, defines *intercultural competence* as "knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing oneself. Linguistic competence plays a key role" (2006, p. 247).

For the conceptual framework of this thesis, I decided to use Byram's model of intercultural competence in foreign language education from 1997 (cited in Byram, 2009, pp. 325-326; 2020, p. 62). In the model, Byram presents the five *savoirs*: *knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness, skills of interpreting/relating*, and *skills of discovery/interacting,* which describe the components one should develop to become interculturally competent in an educational setting (2020, p. 62, see Chapter 2, Section, 2.2., Figure 2.1). In his work, Byram

describes intercultural competence as a combination of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflect different ways to comprehend cultural knowledge to interact with people from different backgrounds (2020, pp. 61-62).

In this thesis's definition of intercultural competence, *linguistic competence* is an important aspect. (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). *Communication* and *intercultural encounters* are thus a concept and aspect the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 will explain. When exploring communication within intercultural competence in Chapter 2, I use the term *intercultural communicative competence* as the "ability to interact with people from another social group in another language" (Byram, 2020, p. 97). *Intercultural encounters, identity,* and *culture* are also concepts which will be defined and explained int the theoretical framework in this thesis, as they help gain an understanding of concepts relating to intercultural competence (Huber et al., 2014, p. 13).

1.3.2   English as a foreign language

In this research, I refer to learners in Norway as *English as a foreign language* (EFL) learners. Rindal argues if Norwegian learners should be characterised as ESL learners instead (2020, pp. 33-34). It is important to be aware that Norwegian learners can be placed in both categories as English is a language that has increased in its use outside of school and business (ibid.). It is also necessary to understand that English is not necessarily the second language the learners learn as they, for instance, might acquire other languages at home. Nevertheless, as Byram's theory concerns foreign language teaching (2020), I chose to use English as a foreign language (EFL) as the terminology in this thesis.

1.4   Intercultural competence in the English subject curriculum

Intercultural competence is not a new phenomenon in the English subject in Norwegian primary schools. For a long time, the English subject has had the purpose of developing the learner's ability to communicate in English. However, there has also been a cultural dimension in the English subject that has been important to address. In the prior English subject curricula in Norway, the subject has been pointed out as important for the learners' acquirement of other cultures and to help build a foundation for learners to be able to communicate with others across cultures (Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1939; 1974; 1987; The Norwegian Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs,

1996; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006). For several decades, the cultural dimension has been an essential component in the English subject but has not been emphasised in the learning objectives in previous curricula.

The English subject curriculum refers to intercultural competence in various sections. The *Relevance and Central Values* of the English subject suggest that learners should acquire knowledge of the language and be competent users of it, as it is essential for their future education and learning (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). The subject aims to provide the learners with "the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). This imply that when teaching the English subject, teachers must assist learners in developing knowledge of various ways of living, thinking, and communicating to connect and interact with others from different backgrounds. This relates to the core element of *Working with texts in English,* where it is suggested that the learners will develop intercultural competence as they will discover and acquire knowledge of different ways of life, thinking, communication patterns and social conditions through encounters with English texts (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). It is also suggested that by working with English texts, the learners should develop an understanding of their own and others' perspectives of the world, be able to see their own and others' identities in a diverse environment and be able to communicate appropriately (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, pp. 2-3).

Intercultural competence is also related to the interdisciplinary topics of *Health and Life Skills* and *Democracy and Citizenship* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). The topic of *Health and Life Skills* aims to develop the learners' ability to express themselves and convey their feelings, thoughts, opinions, and experiences in another language (ibid.). Moreover, gaining the ability to use linguistic and cultural knowledge to handle different situations can help the learners improve their self-image (ibid.). As for the interdisciplinary topic of *Democracy and Citizenship*, the English subject should be an arena for the learners to learn the English language to explore and experience different societies and cultures, and to be able to communicate with others regardless of their background (ibid). The ability to communicate with others aims to open new interpretations of the world and see others' perspectives.

Intercultural competence is also essential in the *Competence Aims* throughout primary school (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, pp. 5-8). For instance, after year 2, the learners should be able to "learn words and acquire cultural knowledge through English-language literature for children" (ibid., p. 5). After year 4, the learners should be able to "talk about some aspects of different ways of living, traditions and customs in the English-speaking world and Norway" and "learn words and phrases and acquire cultural knowledge through English-language literature" (ibid., p. 6). As one can see from the examples above, there is an advancement in the competence aim for each year. After year 7, the learners should be able to "investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 8). Considering the focus intercultural competence has in these competence aims; the teachers should teach and help their learners develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required.

1.5 Delimitation of scope

Because of the complexity of intercultural competence, the scope of this thesis must have limitations. Although *communicative language teaching* is relevant in foreign language teaching (Byram et al., 2002, p. 4), I chose not to explore it in this thesis. I have also decided not to look into *in-depth learning*, even though this is an aspect emphasised in *LK20*. In-depth learning is considered valuable when teaching intercultural competence, as learners get to explore cultures and other relevant aspects more thoroughly (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). I am more interested in seeing how teachers practice their teaching of intercultural competence in general. *Non-verbal behaviour* is an aspect of intercultural competence that Byram (2020) has included in the model used in this thesis. Nonverbal behaviour is an important aspect of communication and intercultural competence as it can help evaluate and understand people in certain situations. However, I decided to not investigate this aspect in this research, as I find it less relevant than the other components of intercultural competence when exploring the teachers' practice. Lastly, some theorists and scholars consider intercultural competence as relevant for the learners' *Bildung* (e.g., Bohlin, 2013; Byram, 2009). I have decided to leave Bildung out of this thesis, as I consider it to not contribute to my investigation of how teachers teach intercultural competence.

1.6   Thesis structure

The current chapter has introduced the topic of this thesis and presented the research questions relevant to the research. Further, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework for this thesis, which mainly evolves around Byram's (2020) work on intercultural competence teaching in foreign language classrooms, and previous research relevant to this study. In Chapter 3, I present the research project's design, including the sample of participants, the data generating methods, and the outline of the data analysis. The chapter also discusses the reliability and validity of the study before it presents the ethical considerations and limitations of the research. Chapter 4 presents the results from the study before I discuss the main results with the theory and previous research in Chapter 5. Finally, I provide the concluding remarks in Chapter 6.

2 Theoretical framework and previous research

When teaching intercultural competence, teachers are required to have knowledge of what concepts and notions intercultural competence relates to and how one best can facilitate intercultural teaching. *Intercultural competence* is an essential and complex concept related to the cultural dimension in the English subject curriculum (Rindal et al., 2020, p. 219). The complexity of defining intercultural competence is partially because it consists of sub-concepts that need to be understood (UNESCO, 2013, p. 22). Examples are *identity, culture*, and *intercultural encounters* that Huber et al. mention (2014, p. 13), and *culture* and *communication* presented by UNESCO as the core of the term (UNESCO, 2013, p.23). Exploring these concepts help understand the different aspects of intercultural competence and what EFL learners should acquire to develop it.

 In this chapter, I start by defining the term *intercultural competence* in Section 1.1 before explaining Byram's (2020) theoretical framework for teaching intercultural competence and how the components relate to *identity, culture,* and *intercultural encounters* in Section 1.2. In Section 1.3, I present the relationship between education and learners' development of intercultural competence and explore how teachers may facilitate their teaching and what materials to use for developing their learners' intercultural competence. In Section 1.4, I present an outline of previous research relevant to the topic of this thesis.

2.1 Intercultural competence

The definition of *intercultural competence* used in this thesis is obtained from Deardorff's (2006) research project on how intercultural competence should be assessed. In her work, Deardorff considered that because of the complexity of the term, having a shared understanding of it would help find appropriate methods to evaluate learners' achievement in intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, p. 241). To arrive at a more universal definition, Deardorff carried out a study where 23 established scholars were asked which out of nine definitions of intercultural competence they mostly agreed with (2006, p. 247). The study showed that out of the nine definitions, the most applicable definition of intercultural competence was "knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing oneself. Linguistic competence plays a key role" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247).

Deardorff's definition relates to Byram's conceptual framework of intercultural competence (2020), which is essential for the work in this thesis (see Section 2.2). To become interculturally competent, EFL learners should be able to relate and interact with others from other backgrounds; have and seek knowledge and understanding of other peoples' experiences, beliefs, and values; acquire the skills to understand and reflect around different values and behaviour; and be open to discovering new knowledge in order to understand where misunderstandings may occur when encountering people with an unfamiliar background (Byram, 2009, pp. 323-324). Furthermore, intercultural competence involves becoming more aware of one's own culture, values, beliefs, and perspectives.

2.2 Conceptual framework of intercultural competence

In 1997, Michael Byram developed a model of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching, which had the purpose of being a guide for teachers in their teaching of intercultural competence (cited in Byram, 2009, pp. 325-326; 2020, p. 62, see Figure 2-1 below). The model presents how intercultural and linguistic competence can be acquired in education and has the purpose to develop *intercultural speakers* (Byram, 2020, p. 96; 2009, pp. 325-326).
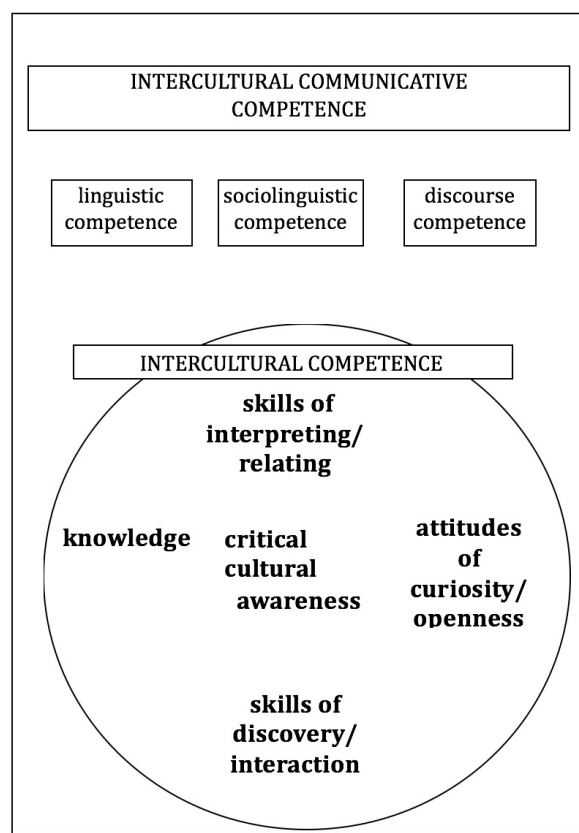
FIGURE 2-1: BYRAM'S MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE (BYRAM, 2020, P. 62).

Intercultural speakers are communicators who do not have the *native speaker* as the ideal. Byram argues that having foreign language learners master the language at the same level as a native speaker is challenging because foreign language learners do not acquire the language in the same way as a native speaker (2020, p. 17). Byram has been more concerned about providing learners with the ability to "see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own beliefs, values, behaviours and meaning" (2020, p. 17). According to Byram et al., an intercultural speaker should

> engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity (Byram et al., 2002, p. 5).

2.2.1 The five savoirs

According to Byram (2020, p. 62, 96), there are five components, or *savoirs,* which describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learners need to develop to achieve intercultural competence and become intercultural speakers. The five savoirs of intercultural competence are *knowledge, skills of interpreting/relating, skills of discovery/interaction, attitudes-curiosity/openness,* and *critical cultural awareness* (education) (Byram, 2020, pp. 62, 96). These savoirs both relate and depend on each other in many ways. The aim is to have the learners see and become aware of how one's own and other cultures relate, how one's own culture can be seen from other people's perspectives, and hopefully have the learners become open and curious to differences in society (Byram et al., 2002, p. 6). It is the *competence*, or the "combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills" (Huber et al., 2014, pp. 16-17), in interaction with people from different backgrounds which is known as intercultural competence.

The savoir of *knowledge (savoirs)* concerns knowledge about one's own and other people's cultures, countries, societies, cultural practices, products, identities, and social processes (Byram, 2020, pp. 85; Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143). Huber et al. define culture as the common features within a group which embrace physical goods such as tools, clothing, and food, important social institutions such as language, religion, cultural icons, and laws etc., but also beliefs, norms, values, attitudes, and practices that create a framework of how people see, relate to, and understand the world (2014, pp.13-14). Knowledge can also concern history,

memories, and events that have importance for one's own and others' country's boundaries and geographical spaces, in addition to institutions that affect people's lives and education systems (Byram, 2020, pp. 85-87). Further, knowledge includes social groups in one's own and other societies and how diversity in different cultures should be obtained (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143; Byram, 2020, pp. 85-87). This also incorporates an understanding of how identities function and develop, making the concepts of identity essential within intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, p. 12). *Identity* defines by how people see and describe themselves. Huber et al. claim identity to be the combination of name, personal features and attributes, economic background and education, and social belonging (2014, p. 13). However, when it concerns the affiliation to a cultural group where one shares aspects distinct to the specific group, it is called *cultural identity* (UNESCO, 2013, p. 10).

Byram presents the *Skills of interpreting and relating* as the ability to understand and relate to other cultures' documents and events (2020, pp. 87-88). This means that learners should achieve the ability to use prior knowledge of a society to interpret the information in foreign texts and relate this information to one's own society (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143). Moreover, learners should gain new knowledge and understanding of their interlocutors through working with foreign texts and explaining what is written and how it is significant and related to different aspects of the society (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143).

Skills of discovery and interaction can best be described as the abilities to acquire new knowledge of culture and use knowledge in *intercultural encounters* and communication (Byram et al., 2002, p.13; Byram, 2020, pp. 88-90). *Intercultural encounters* can be understood as interactions between people or groups where different cultures, identities, and backgrounds are mixed and acknowledged. Interculturality is to encourage discourse between "diverse cultural identities" (Bland, 2020, p. 69), and unite in shared understanding and respect. Interactions between people from different nations, religions, or even regions, and people with different lifestyles, gender, or age, are all counted as intercultural encounters. Huber et al. (2014, p. 16) also use *inter-personal encounters* about interactions between people. "An interpersonal encounter becomes an intercultural encounter when cultural differences are perceived and made salient either by the situation or by the individual's own orientation and attitudes" (Huber et al., 2014, p. 16). By interacting, people can discover new knowledge by daring to ask questions that elicit information which seldom is mentioned and one does not necessarily think one knows from earlier (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143).

Likewise, questioning things one has knowledge of but does not speak openly about, such as beliefs, is part of showing the skills of discovery and interaction.

The savoir *attitudes (savoir être)* refers to the ability to be open and curious about other cultures and show willingness to change one's own beliefs and perspectives to prevent people from experiencing rejection (Byram, 2020, pp. 84-85; Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 143). It is essential in intercultural encounters to be open to differences and be able to adopt certain behaviour and act appropriately according to the specific culture. The intercultural learner should be interested in how people personally experience their lives and understand that someone's "normal" can be different from somebody else's (ibid.). It is better to ask questions and show interest than rely on presumption. One should acknowledge the differences and *relativise* oneself, which means to understand that others might see one's own culture as different and weird and understand why this can be interpreted as different (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143; Rindal et al., 2020, pp. 220-221). Therefore, it is necessary to understand how someone's culture affects them and what is important to them and value, respect, and tolerate the diversity between oneself and others (Huber et al., 2014, p.19). Respect, tolerance, open-mindedness, and flexibility are important attitudes to meet other people with (UNESCO, 2013, p. 11).

Critical cultural awareness is the educational dimension of intercultural competence and concerns the teacher's responsibility of teaching and ensuring the learners to be critical towards themselves and others (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 144). Critical cultural awareness means to be aware of where conflicts might occur and then be open to discussing and evaluating what is being written, said, or done to be able to negotiate and find a reasoned solution (Byram, 2020, p. 90). Learners should learn the ability to be critical of their own and others' values and perspectives (Byram et al., 2002, p. 13; Byram, 2020, p. 90). To do so, learners need to be made aware of the criteria they are evaluating other's beliefs, behaviours, and meanings from and be able to look at one's own culture with the same critical eyes (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 144). It is common just to compare these aspects with one's own perspective. However, having the ability to decentre and look at things from different perspectives and challenge what is taken for granted helps them understand that culture is dynamic and can change (ibid.).

In addition to knowledge, attitudes and skills, Huber et al. (2014, p. 19-20) mention *understanding* and *action* as important components of intercultural competence. Although these presented as separate components, they overlap with Byram's five savoirs. For instance, when acquiring knowledge about differences and similarities within and across cultures, social distinctions, and diversity within communities and cultures (Byram, 2020, pp. 85-87), one needs to *understand* the diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups to avoid discrimination (Huber et al., 2014, p. 19). Moreover, they explain understanding to concern seeing how peoples' world view is influenced by culture. This is connected to critical cultural awareness and attitudes in the way that one needs to be aware of why certain things are the way they are in a particular culture and be curious to seek more information about it to take on different perspectives.

Actions mean transforming knowledge, skills, and attitudes into actions in real situations (Huber et al. 2014, p. 21). It means to actively seek opportunities for intercultural encounters and communicate and co-operate with others in an appropriate and effective manner to challenge and discuss issues from different perspectives in order to understand each other (ibid.). By acting in terms of IC, one acts as a global citizen (ibid.), using their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prevent discrimination and ensure that all individuals are treated equally regardless of their cultural, religious, national etc., affiliation and stand up for human rights. Huber et al. therefore define intercultural competence as the ability to respect and understand others and oneself, interact and communicate with others in a suitable, respectable, and beneficial manner, in addition to build relationships with people from different backgrounds than oneself (2014, pp. 16-17).

The understanding of intercultural competence is that it is a combination of concepts concerning cultural knowledge and attitudes and how these components impact the communication between people with different affiliations and backgrounds (Huber et al. 2014, pp. 16-17). In the definition used in this thesis, Deardorff (2006) points out that, in addition to Byram's five savoirs, *communication* plays an essential part in intercultural competence. Byram's five saviors (2020) provides a framework which describes what skills, knowledge, and attitudes learners should develop to achieve intercultural competence. However, it is essential to understand that these are not isolated components. Byram presents the combination of the five savoirs as essential within *intercultural communicative competence* (2020, p. 62, see Figure 2-1). The components of intercultural competence are

thus integrated into the dimensions of communicative competence. Hence, Sercu even argues that communicative competence should be seen as a sixth savoir because of its essential role in the intercultural communicative competencies (2005, p. 3).

Intercultural communicative competence is ultimately the "ability to interact with people from another social group in another language" (Byram, 2020, p. 97). Having intercultural competence is described by Spitzberg and Changnon as being equipped with knowledge and understanding to behave and communicate in a way that corresponds with a specific culture (2009, p. 4). According to UNESCO (2013, p. 23), *communication* is the second root of intercultural competence and is essential in intercultural encounters as one can address differences and similarities in each other's backgrounds. Communication can be understood as the use of language and nonverbal behaviour, and it is important regarding intercultural competence as it allows people to inform and be informed about culture, find a common understanding, and see different perspectives (UNESCO, 2013 p. 11-12). Being competent in communication means using language to convey meaning in encounters with others (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). Most people are probably able to interact in their own language with people from another cultural or social belonging than themselves and practise the skills, knowledge, and attitudes important to intercultural competence in their mother tongue. However, to have intercultural communicative competence, one should also be able to interact and use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in encounters with others in another language.

In his model, Byram presents *linguistic*, *sociolinguistic* and *discourse competence* as important within intercultural communicative competence (2020, p. 62, see Figure 2-1). These competencies concern the knowledge of the language and how to use and differentiate language in social interactions, and how language is influenced by culture, etc. L*inguistic competence* defines by Byram as "the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language" (Byram, 2020, p. 60). This means that when communicating in a foreign language, it is enough to apply some language rules and not live up to the standards of a native speaker (2020, p. 61). Further, he defines the *sociolinguistic competence* as "the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor" (Byram, 2020, p. 60). Byram implies that in encounters and interactions with others, one should have the ability to discover new meanings of language different from those one has

acquired through knowledge of a foreign culture (2020, p. 61). Byram defines *discourse competence* as the "ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologic or dialogic texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor…" (2020, p. 60), which leaves it to the learners to find strategies to produce and receive information through reading, writing, or speaking that are suitable for the context and oneself.

2.3 Teaching intercultural competence

In this section, I explain the school's role related to intercultural competence and how the term is relevant to teach in the English subject in Norway. I also explore how theory suggests teachers to practice their teaching of intercultural competence in terms of what materials and activities to include in their teaching. The last subsection shortly explores how the teachers' beliefs, thoughts and experiences can influence their teaching practices, which also has been a relevant aspect to research in this thesis (see Section 3.4).

2.3.1 The school as a responsible arena

Developing the learners' intercultural competence has become an important objective of the English subject in the Norwegian education system. The Education Act states that one of the schools' missions is to "provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions" (Education Act, 1998, § 1-1). This means that the education system should make it possible to build a foundation for learners by helping them gain enough knowledge about different cultures and ways of life to interact and co-exist with people from different backgrounds with respect and understanding. The teachers in the Norwegian education system are thus legally required to help develop the learners' competencies and values to secure equality and equal rights (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 6). Moreover, learners in Norwegian schools should develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed in their social and working life (Education Act, 1998, § 1-1). Teachers also have a responsibility to help build a foundation for learners to "preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 7), and to create reflective individuals who are curious, critical thinkers (ibid., p. 8).

Further, Byram claims in his model that the *classroom, fieldwork*, and *independent learning* are important arenas for learners to develop their intercultural competence (2020, p. 98, see

Figure 2-2 below). *Independent learning* refers to the intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes the learners acquire on their own based on personal experiences outside of school and later in life (Byram, 2020, p. 95). *Fieldwork* follows an educational structure and can be a trip to e.g., a museum organised by the school or teacher, or a longer stay abroad for studies. However, fieldwork refers to situations where the learners can experience and develop intercultural competence in real-time situations outside of the typical learning environment, such as the classroom (Byram, 2020, pp. 94-95).
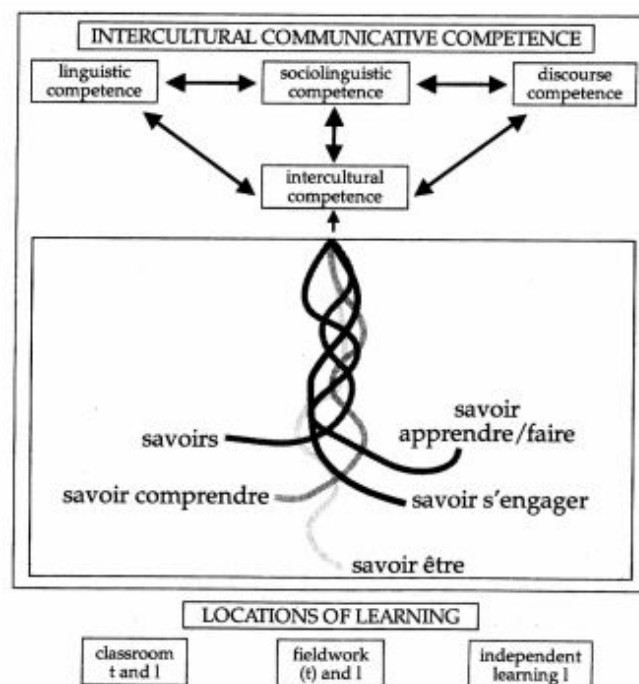
FIGURE 2-2: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND LOCATIONS OF LEARNING (BYRAM, 2020, P. 98).

The *classroom* is the most important arena for the research context in this thesis. Teaching intercultural competence in the classroom has advantages. It can provide a structured presentation of knowledge and have learners practice and acquire skills with the teacher present to guide them (Byram, 2020, p. 92). Teachers are used to teaching knowledge and skills; however, the attitudes and the critical cultural awareness which creates the foundation of intercultural competence might be a more challenging task for teachers to take on (Rindal et al., 2020, p. 220). Although it seems challenging to develop the learners' respect, openness, and curiosity towards others and teach them the ability to value others and relativise themselves, Byram claims the classroom to be a safe environment to reflect upon the

knowledge and skills acquired both in and outside of school, and thus help to develop the learners' attitudes towards what they experienced (2020, p. 92).

2.3.2   Intercultural competence in the English subject

In terms of intercultural competence, Byram finds the traditional teaching of culture to focus on knowledge about other countries and cultures, and that language learning might have become less important in work with the cultural aspects (Byram, 2020, pp. 91-92). There are several references to intercultural competence in the English subject curriculum as the subject is essential for developing the learners' identity, cultural understanding, and all-round education (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2, see Section 1.4). However, there is a focus on language learning in most of these sections. For instance, in the core element of *Working with texts in English,* it is stated that in addition to developing intercultural competence, learners learn language when encountering different types of texts (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). It is suggested that by having the learners reflect, interpret, and critically assess the texts, they will acquire language as well as knowledge of culture (ibid.).

For the Norwegian context, the combination of the five savoirs and communicative competence mentioned in Section 2.2.1, corresponds with the purpose of the English subject in primary school. The subject should build a foundation for the learners to communicate in English and with people from different backgrounds who also share the competence to communicate in English (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2, see Section 1.4). Byram and Doyé (1999, pp. 139-140) suggest that language learning should include "cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings" since communicating with others demands the competence to behave and adjust the language to the situations and people one speaks with, and not just be occupied with being grammatically correct when speaking. Teaching intercultural competence should therefore include a combination of developing the learners' knowledge of language and the knowledge of foreign countries, cultures, and social groups. Language learning is essential in the English subject to help the learners become confident users of English as it is considered important for future education and work-life (NOU 2015: 8, pp. 27-30), but the cultural dimension is also essential. In accordance with the purpose of the subject curriculum, Byram et al. find the cultural dimension to rather be the *intercultural dimension* in foreign language teaching, as the aims would be to develop the

learners' intercultural and linguistic competence to prepare the learners to interact with, understand, and accept different aspects of people belonging to another culture (2002, p. 6).

2.3.3 How to teach intercultural competence

It is important that the EFL teachers in Norwegian primary schools practice their teaching in a way that helps develop their learners' intercultural competence, as well as their learners' linguistic competencies. It is essential that the teachers work with these competences in terms of what the English subject curriculum aims for the learners to achieve (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). In the following subsections, categories considered relevant to English teaching are used to present how teachers can practice teaching to help their learners acquire intercultural competence.

2.3.3.1 Activities

Byram et al. (2002, p. 2) suggest that teachers should create activities that promote critical thinking and discussions where the learners are given the opportunity to draw conclusions based on the interpretations and discoveries made through working with the materials provided in the lessons (ibid.). It is important that the teachers create learning situations that provide possibilities for the learners to analyse their own culture from others' perspectives as well as discover new knowledge of a foreign culture (Byram et al., 2002, p. 10). EFL teachers should encourage curiosity and openness in their teaching and help create a learning environment where all learners take part in discovering cultural knowledge (Lund & Villanueva, 2020, p. 151). This can extend from learners telling each other about themselves to having them discuss historical aspects. The teacher should embrace what the learners share and show how the learner's culture, religious practices, interests, clothing, and daily lives differ from the other people and use this as a starting point for reflection (Lund & Villanueva, 2020, p. 152).

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, pp. 59-61) explain the practice of intercultural teaching as a cycle consisting of four processes describing how the learners' intercultural competence develops (see Figure 2-3). For instance, when provided with different learning materials, the learners develop both their language skills and cultural knowledge (see Section 2.3.2). The thought is that when engaging with new materials or content, the learners will start *noticing* linguistic and/or cultural elements. The learners will start *comparing* the elements they

discover with elements they already are familiar with from their background and former language acquisition. In the comparing process, the noticed elements will be identified and compared. This could, for instance, be a comparison between elements from their own culture and the target culture (ibid.). The next process is for the learners to *reflect,* which is a fundamental aspect of intercultural competence. The learners should reflect upon how they can interact with people from different backgrounds and then move on to *interaction* and practice to communicate their experiences (ibid.). These processes will help the learners make sense of experiences and practise to understand their experiences from different perspectives. It is also important to reflect upon what diversity means for the learners and how they think and feel about it, in addition to speak about their experiences. However, when being introduced to new knowledge and practising the use of language in interaction, it is fundamental for the learners to receive support from the teachers to be able to make sense of the new information as well as to become confident users of the language (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, pp. 59- 61).
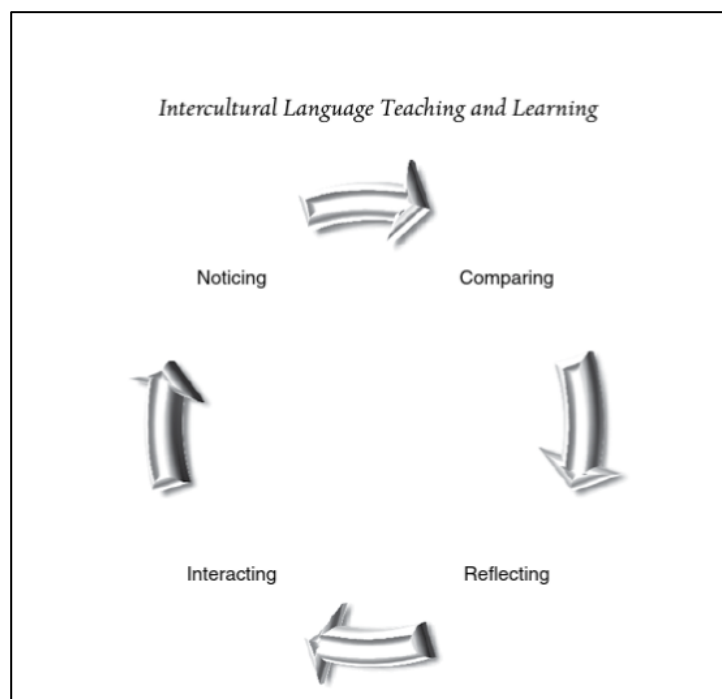
FIGURE 2-3: INTERACTING PROCESSES OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING (SCARINO & LIDDICOAT, 2009, CITED IN LIDDICOAT & SCARINO,2013, P. 60).

2.3.3.2 Materials

The English subject curriculum stresses the value that working with English texts in the EFL education has in helping the learners start developing intercultural competence (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). In the curriculum, the definition of texts is broad, which provides teachers with the freedom to choose the text and medium they find most suitable for the topic one is supposed to teach (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 61). According to the English subject curriculum, a text

> can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical. The texts can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message. (The Norwegian directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3).

Despite the teachers' freedom to choose, it seems to be a tendency for learners to encounter excerpts of literature, poems, and factual texts in the classroom (Ørevik, 2018, p. 93). There is a long-standing tradition of using English textbooks in primary school. These textbooks often present excerpts of authentic texts and texts adapted and created for EFL learners (Birketveit et al., 2018, p. 1). However, although learners encounter a lot of different texts in the English classroom, it can be argued that the advantages of working with English texts in terms of intercultural competence do not come across by reading excerpts in a textbook (ibid.). Especially as the cultural dimension of the English subject commonly has focused on what Holliday calls the BANA countries: Britain, Australia, and North America (Holliday, 1993, p. 3, cited in Bland, 2020, p. 70). Bland argues that the English-speaking world is more extensive than the BANA countries and that it would be beneficial for learners to meet authentic English texts early to have a better learning outcome when it comes to culture (Bland, 2020, p. 70).

Authentic English texts are produced by and for native English speakers (Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p. 275), and is thus defined as texts which are produced for an English-speaking audience, and not for learners to learn English as a second language (Birketveit, 2013, pp. 17-18). This means that the content is non-pedagogical and not altered for educational purposes (Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p. 275). There are several reasons for using authentic English texts in the EFL classroom. First, different texts communicate different aspects of English, such as

intonation, dialects, accents, rhythm, phonology, and semantics (Villanueva, 2020, p. 90; Bland 2020, p. 79). These are all great examples of how learners' intercultural communicative competence can benefit from encountering different texts from different places in the world. Second, learners are presented with different cultural aspects when encountering authentic English texts. These texts can be literary works, non-fiction texts, music, film, pictures, and real-time interactions, to mention some examples. Byram et al. state that

> It is important to use authentic material but to ensure that learners understand its context and intention. Materials from different origins with different perspectives should be used together to enable learners to compare and to analyse the materials critically. It is more important that learners acquire skills of analysis than factual information (Byram et al., 2002, p. 19).

Burwitz-Meltzer claims that by using fictional texts in intercultural learning, learners get introduced to a subjective view of different people, countries, and cultures (2001, p. 29). Learners get to know people or characters set in a certain environment, portrayed through values and stereotypes (ibid.). Authentic texts often reflect the culture and mindset they are produced in and can describe a different image of the world and help expand the learners' perception of it. Through reflecting around and interpreting these texts, learners can develop an understanding of other societies and cultures (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). It can be beneficial for the teacher to provide material concerning factual information about countries, cultures, lifestyles, and customs (Byram et al., 2002, p. 10). In terms of intercultural competence, reading and encountering literary texts is claimed to provide the learners with the opportunity to identify with people who have a different life than themselves (Ørevik, 2018, p. 94, see sections 1.4 & 2.3.2)

2.3.4   Teacher cognition

Borg (2003) defines *teacher cognition* as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching what teachers know, believe, and think" and how this affects what the teachers do in the classroom (2003, p. 81). In addition to the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts, teacher cognition concerns the teachers' attitudes, perspectives, assumptions, and experience of every aspect of education (Borg, 2003, p. 82; Barnard & Burns, 2012, pp. 2-3). The teacher develops cognition about teaching, learners, materials, activities, subjects etc., through education and teaching practice (ibid.).

In the curriculum, intercultural competence is an essential competence for learners to develop in compulsory education. The teachers are the ones who make the decisions and plan how they would teach intercultural competence in the classroom. They are the "executive decision-makers" (Barnard & Burns, 2012, p. 2). Barnard and Burns (2012, p. 1) suggest that the teachers' choices of what to do in the classrooms are constructed based on the teachers' own beliefs and knowledge. The teachers' experiences, thoughts and beliefs construct essential knowledge the teachers need to consider when they determine the content to teach and what materials and activities to include to best help their learners achieve the aims in the curriculum. Hence, teacher cognition is an essential and decisive component in teaching intercultural competence since what the teachers "think, know, and believe" (Borg, 2003, p. 81) is important for how the teachers facilitate their teaching.

2.4   Previous research

In the work with this thesis, teachers' practices of teaching intercultural competence in Norwegian primary schools appear to benefit from further research. However, the teaching of intercultural competence and related aspects have been researched in different contexts and levels. In this section, I examine previous research within the field to better understand it and place this thesis in a larger context. The section presents an overview of previous relevant studies as a backdrop for this thesis. For the Norwegian context, e.g., Listuen (2017), Skaugen (2020), Lund (2007), and Heggernes (2019), have explored relevant aspects concerning intercultural competence and teaching. Moreover, research carried out by Davcheva and Sercu (2005), Ciornei and Dina (2014), Bandura and Sercu (2005), and Dusi et al. (2017) investigate relevant aspects of teaching intercultural competence outside of Norway.

In her MA thesis, Listuen (2017) studied cultural teaching in lower secondary schools as part of the larger LISA[1] project. Listuen (2017) investigated what characterises the cultural teaching within the English subject in two Norwegian lower secondary schools (2017, p. 6). By videotaping eight English lessons and conducting interviews with two teachers, she investigated "*what* was taught by the two teachers, *why* they taught culture in their English lessons, and *how* they approached teaching these topics" (Listuen, 2017, p. 6). She discovered that most materials provided for the learners in the English lessons were authentic material

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[1] Linking Instruction and Student Experiences (LISE)- project (project leader Kirsti Klette, project coordinator Lisbeth M. Brevik. (Listuen, 2017; Skaugen, 2020).

and that culture teaching in these two lower secondary classes concerned what Kramsch (2006, cited in Listuen, 2017, p. 83) calls big-c culture. *Big-c culture* includes arts, literature, history, and important institutions of the nation (Kramsch, 2006, cited in Listuen 2017, p. 12). Most importantly, Listuen found that the objectives mostly related to developing the learners' general knowledge and did not focus on developing their communication skills or their insight into different ways of living (2017, p. 83). Based on her results, Listuen (2017) argued for emphasising intercultural competence as a learning objective in the English subject. Listuen's research has been looking into similar aspects as I do in this thesis. However, it concerns a different level in the educational system and the prior curriculum, *LK06*, where intercultural competence was not a specified learning objective (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).

Skaugen's (2020) MA thesis had a similar aim as mine. She investigated how *knowledge, skills,* and *attitudes* were present in teaching of intercultural competence in the English subject in lower secondary in Norway. The study was based on the LISA study and thus collected data from analysing the videotaped material collected in the LISA project (Skaugen, 2020, p. 23-24, see paragraph above). The aim was to see how the three components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes were present in the lessons to develop the learners' intercultural competence. Skaugen found that the two components of knowledge and skills were included to a satisfactory degree and that the skills related to gaining and using knowledge. Attitudes were not explicit in the teaching she observed (2020, p. 64). This is interesting as attitudes is the component pointed out as the most significant within intercultural competence (Byram, 2020).

In their research, Davcheva and Sercu found that the majority of teachers use textbooks in their teaching, despite teachers having a great freedom to choose materials to use in their teaching (2005, p. 90, 106). Textbooks have received criticism for presenting unmotivating texts which leave little space for creativity in the classroom. Davcheva and Sercu (2005) also found that textbooks teach about culture in a stereotypical manner.

In the Norwegian context, Lund (2007) did a comprehensive study on how questions of context and culture were dealt with in textbooks in her PhD thesis. She researched how textbooks following the curriculum of *L97* dealt with questions of context and culture. The main results are that most textbooks from this period concerned cultural material from the UK

and the US, with varied glimpses of the English-speaking world. There was, however, a lack of materials where the learners' communicative skills and their abilities to reflect upon intercultural issues were practised (Lund, 2007, pp. 323-329). Lund utters a hope for future textbooks to take intercultural issues more seriously and provide learners with a better learning outcome when teaching culture in the English subject (2007, pp. 321-331).

In a study carried out by Heggernes (2019), the aim was to see how knowledge of dialogic features could foster learners' intercultural competence. Hence, Heggernes investigated how teachers might facilitate learners' intercultural dialogues (2019, p. 38). The study showed that by presenting learners in year 8 with an authentic picture book, representing an unknown culture, the teachers arose the learners' curiosity (Heggernes, 2019, p. 55). Moreover, by providing learners with additional information about the context and having teachers facilitate activities where the learners got the opportunity to provide thoughtful responses, the learners clearly participated in dialogues, shared ideas, and changed perspectives through conversations (ibid.). This study shed light on how authentic texts can help develop learners' intercultural competence, as, if facilitated correctly, the learners can interact and share ideas, thoughts, and perspectives.

In another study investigating the use of authentic texts, Ciornei and Dina (2014, p. 279) found that authentic texts improved communication and cultural knowledge. Ciornei and Dina state that using authentic texts provides learners with "ideas, words, phrases and expressions that are heard and read in real-life situations" (2014, p. 275). They conclude their study by saying that by using authentic texts in EFL teaching; teachers develop their learners' capabilities in language and cross-cultural skills (Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p. 279).

As part of larger research project investigating foreign language teachers' views and practices, Bandura and Sercu (2005) did a study where teachers from Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain, and Sweden were asked about their culture teaching and how they approached it in terms of developing their learners' intercultural competence (Bandura & Sercu, 2005, p. 76). According to Bandura and Sercu, there appears to be contradiction between the teachers' teaching practices and the practice theory describes to develop the learners' intercultural competence (2005, p. 83). Although their results indicated that learner-centred activities best promote the development of intercultural skills (ibid.), the results showed that teachers mostly took advantage of teacher-centred activities where the teacher

defined the cultural content and interaction. Another important aspect found in Bandura and Sercus' study was how the cultural content teachers focus on mostly dealt with "daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc" (Bandura & Sercu, 2005, p. 85), that the focus often was laid upon comparing different cultures. Traditions and youth culture also scored high. Ethnical and social groups, on the other hand, scored quite low on the frequency of it being worked with in the classroom, and the teachers answered that activities where the learners should reflect upon sources and culture, explore aspects of foreign cultures, and empathise with other people, were less frequent (ibid.).

As I am researching how teachers in years 5-7 work with intercultural competence in their teaching in this thesis, it has been interesting to see the results from studies investigating teachers' approaches towards intercultural competence. Dusi et al. (2017) researched how Italian primary teachers approached diversity when teaching in multicultural classrooms. The main objective was to see what behaviour, expertise, and operational skills teachers employed when teaching in a multicultural classroom (Dusi et al.,2017, p. 100). Moreover, Dusi et al. were interested to see if the teachers' practices indicated possession of intercultural competence (ibid.). This was done by having fifty teachers working in multicultural primary schools in Italy describe their teaching practices and methods with the focus on situations where diversity played an essential role. The study concluded that less than a third of the fifty teachers participating in the study showed that they were interculturally competent. The remaining group is described as teachers lacking cultural awareness and awareness of their own prejudice (Dusi et al., 2017, pp 100-101). The researchers imply that the teachers who lack these important components of intercultural competence do not try to develop their learners' intercultural competencies and struggle with their own prejudice towards their heterogeneous group of learners (ibid.).

2.5   Summary

In this chapter, I began by defining the term intercultural competence with the help of Deardorff's (2006) definition (see Section 2.1). I then outlined the theoretical framework of intercultural competence and the five saviours, in addition to aspects related to the term (Byram, 2020; Huber et al., 2014, see Section 2.2). This chapter also presented important aspects concerning the teaching of intercultural competence and how theory suggests this can be done for the best learning outcome for the learners. The curriculum has also been

necessary to address, as it can help say something about the teachers' practices. Last, I presented prior research related to the teaching of intercultural competence. I have included research from the Norwegian context as well as studies from abroad to provide a broader perspective on the discussions this thesis will provide. The theoretical framework and previous research will be used to discuss the results and shed light on how teachers in Norway work with intercultural competence.

3 Method

In the current chapter, I present the research design of this thesis. In Section 3.1, I describe the design of the research, before I introduce the sample of participants in Section 3.2. In Section, 3.3, I present the methods used for collecting data to help answer the research questions in this thesis (see Section 1.3) and outline the process of the data analysis within each method. Additionally, I discuss the reliability and validity of the study in Section 3.4, and the ethical considerations made in the research in 3.5.

3.1 The design of the study

For this thesis, I decided to conduct a qualitative research project where the methods of observation and interview were combined to explore how EFL teachers practice their teaching of intercultural competence. Qualitative research methods are considered to provide a deeper understanding of different phenomenon (Kvarv, 2014, p. 137). Observation and interview are both considered qualitative methods that have the purpose of describing, understanding, and finding meaning in what people do (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 95). The current study is designed to answer which components within intercultural competence the teachers emphasise when teaching intercultural competence, in addition to what materials and activities the teachers use in their lessons to develop their learners' intercultural competence. Moreover, the research is designed to investigate the teachers' own interpretations, thoughts, and opinions around intercultural competence and how it affects their didactic choices. The combination of the two methods allowed me to study what occurs in a teaching sequence, as well as explore the teachers' personal experiences and reflections on the topic (Tjora, 2021, p. 63; Kvarv,2014, p. 137). I decided to carry out the observations prior to the interviews. This way, I would have the opportunity to ask questions to elaborate on what happened in the lessons observed to understand the teachers' choices better.

Observation and interview are considered to complement each other as they both could provide data on the teachers' practice from two different perspectives (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115). Observation generates data on what the informants do in a teaching sequence from the researcher's perspective and thus helps secure evidence of the practice happening in the classroom (Tjora, 2021, pp. 62-63). By using observation as a method, the research will show a more objective perspective on the teachers' practice, as it is not the teachers' own words that become the foundation for the analysis (Tjora, 2021, p. 62). Nevertheless, it is

important to keep in mind that the data collected through observation is not all objective, as the researchers' subjectivity and presumptions will affect the results (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 114). On the other hand, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, pp. 46-47) suggest qualitative interviews as suitable for obtaining insight into the participants' practice as teachers and how they see their practice from a subjective perspective. Interviews provide data on the interviewees' opinions, experiences, and attitudes, and it is the interviewee's words and thoughts that will shed light on the topics in question (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2012, pp. 17-22). The interview is considered a subjective data collecting method, as it most often provides information from the interviewee's point of view and their thoughts and opinions on the matter being researched (Tjora, 2021, pp. 128-129). The combination of interview and observation provides intersubjective knowledge and understanding of the topic in question, which is constructed between the participants in the study and the researcher (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115).

3.2   Sample

This subsection presents the following information about the sample: plan and process, convenience sample, confidentiality, and informed consent.

3.2.1   Plan and process

This research in this thesis aims to get a deeper understanding of how teachers work with intercultural competence in the classroom. Hence, it was not important to have a large sample of participants but rather to recruit fewer qualified participants to provide data on how intercultural competence is taught in years 5-7. I decided to attempt to recruit a small sample of 4 English teachers who would agree to let me observe how they work with intercultural competence in the classroom and look deeper into their presumptions and thoughts of intercultural competence in EFL education by participating in an interview. This is what Kvarv (2014, p. 137) calls an *intensive strategy*, where the number of participants is often low as one wants to understand a phenomenon and not its scope. As this study directs toward how intercultural competence is taught in the EFL classroom, the criteria I set for the sample were for the teachers to be qualified English teachers with credits in English from higher education and that they needed to teach EFL in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools.

To recruit participants, I decided to take advantage of my personal network and reach out to various schools to recruit participants who fit the criteria I set when designing the project. It would be beneficial if the participants took a personal interest in the topic of intercultural competence. However, the most important factor was that they were qualified to teach English in years 5 -7 in Norwegian primary schools, meaning they have at least 30 credits in the English subject. I must admit that the process of recruiting informants for this study was demanding, as finding teachers who had the time to participate was a challenge. Nevertheless, with the help of my personal network, I was able to recruit three participants who were willing to let me observe their work in the classroom and interview them afterwards. In addition, a fourth informant participated in the study just by providing data through an interview, as certain circumstances made it difficult to carry out observation. Although this was not according to the plan, the contribution from this participant was helpful and provided insightful data to the study.

3.2.2   Convenience sample

The sample in this research consists of four qualified English teachers with at least 30 credits who teach English in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools. Table 3-1 below, outlines the participants' educational qualifications and teaching experience, together with practical information from the observations and interviews. The table shows that the teachers participating in this study are all qualified English teachers with 30 credits or more in the English subject. Moreover, three of the participants are teaching English in year 7 this year, and one participant is teaching in year 5.

Informant:	English Education:	Experience;	Year:	Topic:	Lessons observed:	Time of day:	Duration:	Interview:	Learners:
T1	30 credits	25 years, 3 as English teachers	7	Down Under	2	08.45-09.30 and 09.45-10.45	2x60 min	15 minutes	21
T2	60 credits	8, all as English teacher	7	Identity and cultural belonging	2	09.45-10.55	70 min	26 minutes	27
T3	30 credits	16 years, 4 as English teacher	5	Public health and life skills - features	1	12.00-13.20	80 min	34 minutes	26
T4	90 credits	12 years, 8 as English teacher	7	Down Under	0			35 minutes	

TABLE 3-1:OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

3.2.3 Confidentiality and the informed consent

Before approaching any candidates with the request to participate in this project, it was necessary to have the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approve my research project (Tjora, 2017, p. 167). NSD is where information that can identify informants is registered (ibid). It is important to prevent the teachers participating in this research from being identified if their contributions could have negative consequences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 107). As I planned to record the interviews with the participants, getting approval from NSD was crucial because the participants' voices and the collected information can be used to identify them. This application was approved in September 2021 and was an essential step in preserving the study's confidentiality and protecting my informants (see Appendix 1). Additionally, to prevent disclosing any names, the participants are simply named T1, T2, T3, and T4.

Additionally, *informed consent* is an important area within research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 104). When recruiting participants for the sample in this study, those willing to participate were given a letter with all the practical information about the project, how the research would be carried out, and the participant's rights (see Appendix 2). In the same letter, the teachers were asked to sign a consent form where they agreed to partake in the research by allowing me to observe them while teaching and be interviewed in order to provide data for the study. Moreover, they consented for me to keep the data until I finish the research. All four participants signed the consent form before the data collection started. All participants in this study were well informed about the project, their anonymity rights, and their right to withdraw from participating at any given time of the project. The three participants it concern have signed and agreed to allow observations in their classroom, and all four participants have signed and agreed to take part in individual interviews.

3.3 Observation

By using observation as a method, I was provided with the possibility to enter a classroom and collect data in authentic, real-time situations on how the teachers practice their teaching of intercultural competence (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 113). According to Bjørndal, it is important to determine the focus when doing observation research (2017, p. 53). *Focus* refers to the elements one decides to look for during an observation (ibid.). In this research, observation is used as a method to generate data on which components within intercultural

competence the teachers emphasise in their teaching (see Section 2.2), in addition to what materials and activities the participants include in their teaching of intercultural competence.

3.3.1   Observation instrument

To register the data from the observations, I used an observation form. According to Bjørndal, the choice of focus has consequences for how one registers the data (2017, pp. 53-56,). Therefore, I created an *observation form* with closed categories (ibid., see Figure 3.1 below & Appendix 3). Although the focus established closed categories for the observation form, the structure of the observation was determined to be *semi-structural,* since I wanted the opportunity to add additional notes from the observation that could shed light on issues relevant for the research (Cohen, et. al., 2018, p. 543). The observation form I developed focuses on the five *savoirs* in Byram's model (2020, p. 62, see Section 2.2). I also decided to focus on what sorts of materials and activities the teachers use in their teaching, as these are claimed to affect the learners' acquirement of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, pp. 10, 19; Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p. 279).

The observation form is divided into a three-parted lesson, based on what Munden (2014, p. 86) has written about how a lesson should have a *pre-activity* before the *main activity* and a *summing-up activity*. This helped in having the form become more adaptable for observing lessons in school and separate *what* was taught *when*. The form (see Figure 3-1 & Appendix 3) is based on traditional observation forms used in education, as there is room for registering what year the teachers were teaching, how many learners there are in the class, what time of day it the observation is done, and the duration of the lessons. I also added room for documenting the topic for the lesson.

Date:	Time of Day:		Duration of Lesson:		Number of Learners:		Year:	Topic:
	Materials:	Skills of interpreting and relating:	Activities:	Skills of discovery and interaction:	Knowledge:	Attitudes:	Critical cultural awareness:	Other:
Pre-Activity:			.					
Main - Activity:								
Post - Activity:								
Other:								

FIGURE 3-1: OBSERVATION FORM.

3.3.1.1 Focus

The *material* category was to document and naming what material the teachers had chosen to hand out or work with during the lesson, and what it entailed. I chose to include a broad understanding of this category, similar to the definition of texts in the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3, see Section 2.3.3.2). The material category relates to the next category of skills of interpreting and relating as this concerns working with culture through working with foreign texts (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143).

In the column of *skills of interpreting and relating*, I registered how the materials concerned intercultural competence and what the topic was. This would, for instance, be seen in the classroom if the learners were given materials to interpret, meaning to use the knowledge one has of one's own and others' culture to understand and explain how the topic relates to one's own culture, such as in a text about the use of school uniform in other cultures (Byram & Doyé, 1999, p. 143).

I decided to include *activities* as a category in the observation form since the choice of activities can affect the learners' achievement of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, p. 10). Activities are also connected to the next category of *skills of discovery and interaction* (see definition in Section 2.2.1). In the form, I registered what the activity was and elaborated on how it was carried out. In the category of skills of discovery and interaction, I

registered how the activity was related to intercultural competence. For instance, the category of skills of discovery and interaction, could be observed if the learners were to practice how to greet each other and interact in certain situations. A second example would be if the learners are given the task to tell each other how they celebrated Christmas. This would be an example of how the skill of discovery is practiced, as the learners discover something about each other as they interact with each other through telling and asking questions.

The *knowledge* category involves what content knowledge related to intercultural competence the teacher taught and had the learners working with in the lesson. Knowledge refers to content about one's own and other's cultures. For instance, the content can concern social practices, products, history, and daily life in other cultures and one's own. For example, even though many cultures have a tradition of fairy tales, the specific aspects of these fairy tales might be culture-specific; Norwegian fairy tales often tell stories of kings, princesses, and trolls. However, in some cultures, fairy tales may include animals not present or less common in Norway, such as hyenas, lions, and snakes. Knowing about these differences would fall under the category of cultural knowledge.

The category of *attitudes* is explained as the willingness to accept other people's perspectives and be open to and curious about differences and similarities within all cultures, countries, and people (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143). Within intercultural competence, attitudes mean valuing diversity, showing respect to others and their cultural affiliations, being willing to learn about foreign cultures and perspectives, and questioning knowledge one already possesses (Huber et al., 2014, p. 19). Moreover, the component of attitudes in intercultural competence is about developing empathy, understanding and respect for others. Working with attitudes can be seen in the EFL classroom if the topic touches upon how people feel and relate to others.

Critical cultural awareness is about comparing, reflecting, and reasoning one's own culture with other cultures and acknowledging others' perspectives as normal (Byram, 2020, p. 66). This can, for instance, be observed if the teacher talks about how summer in Australia is in the months of December, January, and February when it is winter here in Norway. It can also be seen if the learners are asked to compare a story told from two different perspectives, such as *The Three Little Pigs* from both the pigs' and the wolf's perspectives. Critical cultural awareness is additionally presented as the teachers' responsibility to ensure that learners gain

the ability to analyse and reflect upon cultural issues and be conscious in evaluating cultures (Byram and Doyé, 1999, p. 144). It is therefore important to show how one's life affects one's view of the world. Working with such a text as the example mentioned above might help learners see reasonable arguments as to why the two parties see things differently. Critical cultural awareness can also be observed in the classroom as questions from the learners and comments from the teacher that might help shed light on different issues that might occur when people from different backgrounds interact.

3.3.1.2   Pilot

A pilot study is a small-scale study, which can be carried out for testing out the research instrument (Kim, 2010). I found it important to pilot the observation form because I developed it myself. Because the observation form focuses on the five components of intercultural competence (Byram, 2020, p 62) and how materials and activities can influence the learners' achievements (Byram et al., 2002, pp. 10, 19; Ciornei & Dina, 2014, p. 279), I wanted to see if it was possible to document these categories during a lesson. I also wanted to see if I needed to do some changes to the form. Hence, I carried out a pilot study to test the observation instrument and see if the observation form functioned in accordance with the intentions of it (Kim, 2010, p. 191). The form was also tested to see if the observation method would work to provide answers to the research questions (Kim, 2010, p. 192).

The pilot was carried out in a social studies class in 6th grade, where the topic was the Same people in Norway. As the topic is relevant for the research of this study, I was able to see if I could document if and how the categories of the form were touched upon by the teacher during the lesson. By carrying out this pilot, I learned that the categories were satisfactory in terms of the teacher's implementation of the lesson. However, I realised that I needed to provide more space for documenting the occurrences, but also develop the form further by adding space to document the topic of the lesson as this would be important in terms of what the teachers would teach about. Most importantly, I found it necessary to be better prepared on what each category represented in the form to be more accurate in my documentation in terms of doing a better analysis of the data collected. The pilot was thus also testing myself as a researcher and how ready I was to step into the classrooms to collect data (Kim, 2010, p. 193).

3.3.2 Observation procedure

The observations for the research in this MA thesis have taken place in three different schools in Eastern Norway. The data was generated through observing three out of four informants teaching English. I observed four English lessons taught in year 7 and one English lesson in year 5, where all lessons related to intercultural competence (see Table 3-1 in Section 3.2.2).

I attended the classroom as an *observer as participant*, which means that I would be present in the classroom while observing, but not take part in the activities I observed (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115,). It was important to be clear on the fact that I was there to observe the teacher and his/her practice so that everyone involved was aware of my role in the classroom and why I was there. Hence, after being introduced, I decided to sit in the back of the room, as I considered it to be the least interfering with the teacher and the learners' work. As I placed myself in the back of the classroom, I was able to observe the whole classroom situation, which was of great help when writing detailed descriptions of each of the lessons. To be able to register as much as possible in the observation form, I decided to fill in the observation form by combining writing on the computer and by hand.

The form worked well in its purpose of finding evidence of how intercultural competence is being taught by EFL teachers in Norwegian years 5-7 classrooms. After making the necessary changes from the pilot study, the observation form proved its purpose in how the teachers facilitated their teaching of intercultural competence through different texts and activities. I was able to note down what sort of texts and activities the teacher took advantage of. Additionally, I documented what the teachers were doing or saying that were relevant to the components of intercultural competence and put them into the columns they belonged to. If I was unsure if something could be relevant, I wrote it down in the *other* category.

3.3.3 Observation data analysis and techniques

To analyse the data generated through the observations, I decided to use the *qualitative content analysis method*. Qualitative content analysis is a method to analyse data in studies where existing theory is decisive for what to research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Downe-Wamboldt, (1992, p. 314, cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005 p. 1278) claims that qualitative content analysis has the purpose "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study". According to Hsieh and Shannon, there are three different

approaches to qualitative content analysis, depending on how the research aims to add to the existing theory (2005, p. 1277). *Conventional content analysis* aims to describe a phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279), while *directed content analysis* has the purpose of validating the already existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). However, the directed content analysis approach also helps create initial codes for the analysis from already existing theory (ibid.). The third approach in the qualitative content analysis method is the *summative content analysis* (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283). This approach often has the aim to provide a context to a phenomenon.

For analysing the data generated through the observations in this study, I have used aspects from both the conventional content analysis and the directed content analysis approach. In terms of conventional content analysis, I have read thoroughly through all the data to get a holistic picture of the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). The conventional content analysis approach has also been important for the discussion of the results, as this research project aims to describe how EFL teachers in years 5-7 work with intercultural competence in the classroom (ibid.). It was thus considered to use aspects from conventional content analysis as prior research and existing theory will be important in the discussion.

Although there are aspects in the analysis that belong within the conventional content analysis approach, this analysis mainly uses *directed content analysis* to analyse the observation data. The directed content analysis should provide evidence that supports the theory and present the results as codes which exemplifies the results, in addition to be descriptive (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). The directed content analysis is a deductive analysis approach, as it is driven by how the theory is decisive for what data is relevant to collect (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281; Johannessen, et al., 2018, p. 37). When I developed the observation form, I decided to create categories coherent to the theoretical framework Byram is providing for intercultural competence in foreign language teaching (2020, p. 62). Furthermore, the choice of material and activities had to be included as these components are suggested by Byram et al. (2002, p. 10, 19) and Ciornei and Dina (2014, p. 279) to be relevant for learners' acquirement of intercultural competences (see Chapter 2, sections 2.3.3.2 & 2.4). The theory has thus been decisive for the focus of the observations *and* the analysis in this study.

The first step in the analysis of the data generated through the observations, was to write a more detailed description of what happened in the lessons I observed. This is recommended in the conventional content analysis approach, as it can help the codes in the analysis to be more reflective (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). Moreover, both the conventional and directed content analysis propose that the results should be presented as descriptive (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp. 1279, 1282). As I wanted to get as much detail from the lessons as possible, the description of the lessons was written right after each lesson, as it was fresh in my memory. Additionally, the practical information about the lesson, which was noted in the observation form, was of great help in the work of writing the descriptions as it helped set the context of the observations. In accordance with conventional content analysis, I continued the analysis by reading through the notes from the observation to get a holistic understanding of the data collection (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279).

The next step was to categorise the data into codes. There are two strategies to use for analysing data within the directed content analysis approach and how to code the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). One strategy is to highlight the main points from the data and start categorising from predetermined codes (ibid.). The second strategy, which I chose for the analysis of the data collected from the observations, was to start coding "immediately with predetermined codes" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). The categories in the observation form are considered to not influence the identification of the relevant texts in the observation forms (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). The categories in the observation form have thus functioned as the predetermined codes for this analysis, which mean that I could start analysing the data immediately. In Figure 3-2 below, the predetermined codes for this analysis are presented.
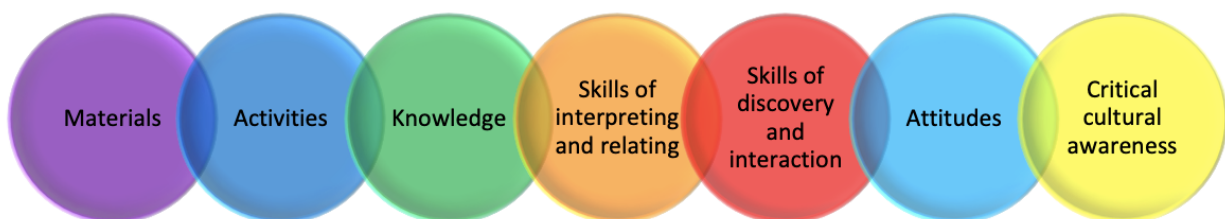

FIGURE 3-2: PREDETERMINED CODES FOR DIRECTED CONTENT ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION DATA.

Following the strategy within directed content analysis where predetermined codes were drawn from theory and used as categories in the observation form (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282), I began placing the generated data within each code. This was in a way already done in the observation form, however, it let me have a more analytic and reflective view of the data collected. During this process, I found a great variation within several of the codes, and I found that some codes could be narrower, and split them into new codes or subcategories (ibid.). For instance, the knowledge category could be narrowed down and be made into new codes, considering what sort of knowledge the teachers focused on in their teaching, e.g., factual, and linguistic knowledge. However, I made the decision to present the results as the main codes and rather show the variations within them in terms of what each teacher did in their lessons. Additionally, it appeared that a large content of the data was concerning several of the codes, which is coherent with the complexity of intercultural competence. In Table 3-2 below, examples from how the observation data have been analysed in the difference codes are presented.

Code	Description	Example
Materials	What materials the teachers used in the lessons observed.	T2 is using the film *Pride* as the basis of a project about identity and cultural belonging.
Activities	What activities was carried out in the lessons observed.	T1: The learners were given the task to tell each other about what they did the day before. T3: Describe a candy's external and internal features.
Skills of interpretation and relating	Were skills of interpretation and relating worked with and how was it worked with.	T2: reading and answering questions about closing the mines. The class also reflected around demonstrations and related it to their own lives.
Skills of discovery and interaction	Were skills of discovery and interaction worked with, and how was it worked with.	T1: when the learners were asked to tell each other about what they did after school the day before, they were discovering something about each other as well.
Knowledge	What knowledge was being taught.	T1: History and culture in Australia. T2: Historical knowledge of the mining industry in Britain. T3: Linguistic knowledge – polite phrases.
Attitudes	What attitudes in terms on intercultural competence were touched upon in the lessons observed and how it was done.	T2: Solidarity, prejudice, respect, and curiosity. T3: gratefulness and respect.
Critical cultural awareness	How critical cultural awareness touched upon in the lessons observed.	T2: What is identity? What is cultural belonging? The teacher had the learners reflect and carried out a class discussion afterwards.

TABLE 3-2: ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION DATA

3.4   Interview

As this project aims to research teachers' practices and perspectives on intercultural competence in an EFL classroom, it has been important to look deeper into the teachers' cognition and their thoughts and knowledge behind their teaching decisions. The teachers' decisions on what to do in the classrooms are suggested to be made based on the teachers' own beliefs and knowledge (Barnard and Burns, 2012, p. 1), also known as *teacher cognition* (see Section 2.3.4). Borg defines teacher cognition as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" and how this affects teachers' decision-making process when planning what to do, and what materials and activities to include in the classroom (2003, p. 81). The interviews collect data on the teachers' interpretations and definitions of the term intercultural competence and what the participants find important within the field. Moreover, the participants' experiences from working with intercultural competence in the classroom can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the teachers work with it and how their decisions are made. It has also been of interest to see different perspectives on the topic.

3.4.1   Interview Instrument

I considered the semi-structured interview a good approach for researching the teachers' thoughts and opinions (Tjora, 2021, p. 128). Interviews are seen as interactive situations, where the information is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2012, p. 20). Tjora (2021, pp. 127-128) states further, that by conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer allows the interviewee to elaborate and reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer. Additionally, the interviewer has the opportunity to raise additional questions to gain clarity, or if there is something one find the need to dig deeper into. The semi-structured interview is close to a regular conversation; however, it evolves around different topics provided in an interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 46). As the semi-structured interview should leave room for reflection and elaboration, it was important to come up with good, open-ended questions. The aim of using interviews in this research has been to see how teachers think around and practice their teaching of intercultural competence in the classroom.

The interview guide (see Appendix 4) evolves around the teachers' understanding of intercultural competence and what they think regarding the different components the learners should develop. I also asked questions regarding the teachers' practice and their experiences from working with intercultural competence in the past. To have the participants reflect and elaborate on their experiences from former lessons had the purpose of adding to the data from the observations about their teaching practices. This was also a way to find out *how* and *why* the teachers teach what they do when teaching to develop their learners' intercultural competence. It has also been interesting to see if the teachers have experienced any change of focus caused by the renewal of the curriculum. I find the questions in the interview guide to help answer the research question as they touch upon essential aspects of how the teachers work with intercultural competence in terms of why they do what they do, and what and why they choose to use the activities and materials they include in their lessons.

3.4.2 Interview procedure

The interviews in this study were conducted in hindsight of the observations and were carried out as one-on-one conversations with the interview-guide as a guideline for the conversation. This provided the possibility to clarify if any questions arose during the lessons I observed. However, there is one exception as one of the participants was not able to let me observe a teaching sequence (see Section 3.2.1). In this case, the participant was asked to explain more in detail about the project the class had been working with.

To create a safe atmosphere for the participants, I decided to carry out the interviews in Norwegian, as this felt most natural for the participants and me. Hence, the data presented in thesis, will be a translated version of the participants answers translated by me. When starting the interview, I began asking questions regarding the participants teaching experience, education level and what grade they teach English in. This was to help both the participants and me to relax and set the scene (see Appendix 4). Moreover, all interviews took place at the participants workplace, as it was most convenient with me already being there for the observation of three of the participants and a known environment for the teachers.

Before starting the interview, the informants were informed that the interviews would be recorded by the help of the application *Nettskjema,* provided by the University of Oslo. The application is approved as a secure platform with the intention to secure the participants

privacy. The recorder allowed me to record 45 minutes at the time. However, the interviews lasted from 15 to 35 minutes. Moreover, the recording made the transcription process easier, as I was able to listen to the interviews several times and write the foundation for the analysis.

As the interviews were semi-structured, the questions would vary a bit depending on how the participants answered. Thus, I was not able to ask all the participants the exact same questions. However, the teachers spoke freely, and I evaluated the data they provided to be coherent with what I wanted to find out from the interviews.

3.4.3   Interview data analysis and techniques

As the theoretical framework in this thesis also works as the foundation for the research, the data gathered from the interviews were analysed by using both the conventional and directed content analysis approach within the qualitative content analysis method (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The first step of the analysis of the data generated from the interviews, was to transcribe the interviews. *Transcription* is a procedure that helps structure the data from an oral to a written form (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 206). Having the interviews structured in written texts is the first step for analysing the data, as it becomes more manageable to use in the codes for the analysis (ibid.). The transcription took place as soon as possible after each interview, and I chose to write it out word for word and tried to leave out unnecessary sounds such as "eh" to have a cleaner text. This was also helpful when translating the data. I also separated the participants' answers from my questions and comments in the margin to distinguish what was said by whom.

The theory has provided some predetermined codes for the analysis of the interviews, which are outlined in Figure 3-3 below, concerning the components of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching (Byram, 2020, p. 62), the choice of materials and activities (Byram et al., 2002, pp. 10, 19; Ciornei and Dina, 2014, p. 279), and the teacher's cognition and experiences (Borg, 2003). However, because the interviews were semi-structured, the questions and direction of the conversations varied. This made it challenging to start analysing immediately from the predetermined codes. Hence, following conventional content analysis, I began by reading carefully through each interview to gain an understanding of what each interview provided to the study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). This was

helpful in getting a holistic understanding of the conversations in each interview (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279).
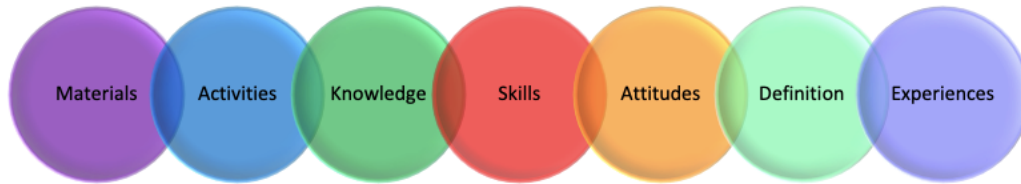

FIGURE 3-3:PREDETERMINED CODES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS.

For the next step in the analysis, I continued to process the data by reading the transcriptions and highlighting the data. The data appeared to relate to the predetermined codes derived from the theory and the questions from the interview guide (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). Hsieh & Shannon (2005, p. 1282) argue that highlighting the texts increases the trustworthiness of the analysis. When highlighting the data, I used different colours to code the data in accordance with the predetermined codes in Figure 3-3. Highlighting the text with the help of colour coding can be seen as the strategy of immediate coding within the directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). However, I used the colour codes to identify the instances, which seemed to relate to the different categories and predetermined codes from my first impression. This is a different strategy within the directed content analysis approach, as I did not begin to categorise the data immediately. However, it was a significant step of the analysis as the informants spoke of various aspects concerning the different components important for this study in several of their answers (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). I was thus able to sort out what the participants uttered about the different topics in the interview guide. This process is also in accordance with the conventional content analysis approach. During the process of colour coding the data, I got to read the text word for word and process the text in order to see if codes might emerge from the data material in addition to the predetermined codes drawn from theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). The analysis of the interview data can thus be claimed to be more inductive than the analysis of the observation data (Johannessen et al., 2018, p. 37).

After reading through the texts and having colour coded the data in terms of the predetermined codes, I started categorising the data into the codes with the help of a handmade table. In this table, I started with the predetermined codes. Hsieh and Shannon

(2005, p. 1281) suggest that categorising the different utterings would help seeing if I needed to create new codes. Furthermore, I was able to see if there were any of the utterings that could belong to more than one category. In this case, I broke the utterings down to see if they became easier to categorise. However, there were some data that did not belong in any of the codes, which then were closely examined and interpreted to place in the correct category or found as not relevant. As the questions the participants answered were related to theory and made to answer the research question, I was able to fit the relevant data into the predetermined codes derived from the theory and the questions in the interview guide. In Table 3-3 below, I present the codes used in the analysis and examples of the participants' contributions.

Code	Description	Example
Definition	How does the teachers define the term *intercultural competence*	T2: "I believe that one should learn about how things work within a culture. How one sees it from the outside and learn about others through others".
Knowledge	What knowledge do the teachers emphasise in their teaching of intercultural competence	T1: language, history, and culture. T2: how things function within different cultures. T3: Language e.g., polite phrases and symbolism. T4: Differences in languages and ways of life.
Skills	What skills do the teachers find important for their learners to acquire in terms of intercultural competence	T3: Discover new things about each other. T4: use of language. Interaction and discovery.
Attitudes	What attitudes do the teachers find important for the learners to practice and acquire in terms of intercultural competence.	T1: Tolerance, understanding, and empathy. T2: Respect, tolerance, and understanding. T3: Respect, support, and curiosity. T4: Mutual respect, curiosity, and openness towards learning about different cultures.
	Critical cultural awareness- is CCA something the teachers think about when teaching intercultural competence.	T2: How people from a culture can be presented as something exotic, however, they are "normal" and do also like to play soccer and music.
Materials	What materials do the teachers prefer to work with.	T1: textbook- Skolestudio T2: film and literature T3: Children's' literature and film. T4: Film, literature, and digital resources
Activities	What activities do the teachers take advantage of when teaching intercultural competence.	T1: Communication T2: Class discussion and tasks. T3: Practice language T4: Conversations and reflective activities
Experiences:	How often the teachers teach intercultural competence.	T1: When the textbooks touch upon it T3: All the time
	Earlier projects where intercultural competence was in focus.	T4: task: What do you need to know when traveling abroad? Project about New Zealand and Maori-culture.
	Experienced changes in terms of the English subject and intercultural competence after the renewal of the curriculum.	T1: More freedom T2: More focus on learning about cultures before, now it is more about the people within the culture.
	Experienced challenges.	T1: One needs to break free from teaching materials and be more focused on it. T2: More time spent on preparation- awareness of texts and pictures used.

TABLE 3-3: INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS

3.5   Reliability and validity

In this subsection, I discuss the reliability and validity of the research in this thesis.

3.5.1   Reliability

Reliable research defines as research that can be re-tested and still end up with the same results (Holand, 2018, p. 99). Postholm and Jacobsen, argue that qualitative studies can be difficult to re-test, as the people involved will be different (2018, p. 223). Nevertheless, this study has aimed to create objective research questions and data generating instruments that should be possible to replicate and still present an answer to how intercultural competencies are taught by EFL teachers to increase the reliability. However, the subjectivity, people's thoughts, and opinions are personal and contextual. Thus, the results would never be completely the same if re-testing the research in this study with another researcher and sample of participants. The interview guide, for instance, uses open-ended questions following the principles of semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 46). Thus, it allows both the interviewer and the interviewee to elaborate and discuss what comes up during the interview. Although the questions in the interview guide would be the same, this part of this research is difficult to replicate and still get the same results as the researcher can look past the script to get the participant to elaborate. On the other hand, the observation form operates with closed categories with a defined focus based on theoretical framework and research. Hence, the observation should be possible to re-test, and the researcher would be able to document the same sort of data to answer the same research questions.

Reliability also concerns the research's trustworthiness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 276). In this study, observation and interview have been used to generate data. The combination of these is claimed to be a strength in the research as each method provides different perspectives on the teachers' teaching practice (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115). The combination of interviews and observation for gathering data has provided intersubjective knowledge and understanding of how intercultural competence is taught by EFL teachers in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools, and the teachers' cognition behind it. This knowledge and understanding have been constructed between the participants in the study and me as the researcher (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115). Bjørndal states that by using two separate methods, the results will be more trustworthy if they are in accordance with each

other (2017, p. 132), and as the results in this study show, the lessons I observed reflect what the teachers claim to emphasise in their teaching during the interviews (see Chapter 4).

Additionally, a research project's reliability can be measured by the connection of the empirics, analysis, and theory (Tjora, 2021, p. 263). Qualitative research often bases the research questions on theory (Tjora, 2012, p. 39). In this MA thesis, the theoretical framework and previous research have been decisive for the research questions (see Section 1.3), the focus of the data generating instruments (see sections 3.2 and 3.4), in addition to the methods of analysis (see sections 3.3.3 and 3.4.3).

3.5.2   Validity

The study has thus proven an internal validity, as there is a close coherence between what I have been researching and the theory and prior research used for describing this phenomenon (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 229). Moreover, the validity of a study is determined by how the data and results answer the research questions and how successfully they do so (Tjora, 2021, p. 260; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 276). The questions asked in this research project were concerning how intercultural competence is being taught; through what sort of materials and activities it is being taught; which components and aspects the teachers emphasise in their teaching; and how the teachers define intercultural competence. The first step of seeing if the research could successfully answer the research questions was taken before I started the data collection when piloting the observation form. This was important to do in terms of testing if the form was suited for documenting the observations concerning intercultural competence in a lesson and see if the categories were relevant (Kim, 2010, p. 191). As for the interviews, the questions in the interview guide were read through and approved by my supervisor. I also tried them out on some fellow students to see if they understood the questions. There were no closed questions, but questions that enabled elaboration and reflective answers from the participants. Nevertheless, as this was a semi-structured interview, I can, in hindsight, see that the results would have benefitted from me having to be more consistent when asking the questions.

Cohen et al. (2018, p. 245) state that the choice of methods and instruments to collect data in a study should seem sound for understanding a phenomenon for the study to appear valid. For this research, I considered it the best approach to combine observation and interview to get a truthful and nuanced insight into teachers' practice and how they teach intercultural

competence in Years 5-7 in primary school. By carrying out observation, one enables an insight in what happens in the classroom situation. As an observer, one has the possibility to collect objective information which is not based on the participants' own words. It is, however, important to keep in mind that there is no such thing as a neutral observation, as all observation is affected by the researchers' interests and what he/she is looking for (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 114). The purpose of including interviews as a method to collect data was to provide insight into the teachers' own perspectives on intercultural competence and their practice. Combining the two methods helps gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers teach intercultural competence.

The combination of methods adds to the study's validity as there are two different sources of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). As Tjora states, interviews study what the informants are saying, and observation investigates what the teachers do (2021, p. 62). The combination of the two methods has thus developed an intersubjective knowledge and understanding of how intercultural competence is taught by EFL teachers in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115). Moreover, the interviews provided supporting evidence of the choices coming to light in the classroom. This is by Bjørndal suggested to strengthen the research design validity (2017, p. 132)

The validity of this research is determined by the results from the study and if the results can be seen as valid for EFL teachers in Norway (Holand, 2018, p. 100). This study has used what Kvarv (2014, p. 137) would call an *intensive strategy*, where understanding a phenomenon is essential and not its scope. The sample in this study consists of four teachers from different schools with variations in experience and educational backgrounds (see Table 3-1, Section 3.2.2). As the sample in this research is small compared to the total number of English teachers in Norway, I find it difficult to argue that the results are valid for all EFL teachers in Norway. Nevertheless, all teachers in Norwegian schools are subjects to the same curriculum. Therefore, based on the results from this study, one can assume that all teachers are teaching intercultural competence in approximately the same way. The results from this study show that there are variations in how teachers are teaching intercultural competence and how in-depth they have their learners work with it. There also appears to be differences in which components they emphasise when teaching intercultural competence. However, it appears from the results to be a general common understanding of the term *intercultural competence* and what aims they are working towards.

3.6 Ethical considerations

When conducting a research project like this, there are several ethical considerations one needs to keep in mind. Kvale and Brinkmann present four areas where ethics must be considered (2015, pp. 104-110). These are informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher's role. In the following section, these four will be outlined in terms of how they were handled in this MA project.

Both the confidentiality and the informed consent secure the informants from experiencing any negative consequences from participating in the research project. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p. 107) suggest that being involved with a research project should be safe for the participants and that the participants should not be afraid of being harmed. To secure the confidentiality, it was necessary to have the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approve my research project before I could approach any teachers with the request to participate in the project. I got this approval in September 2021 (see Appendix 1). Moreover, all participants received an information letter, where the teachers were asked to sign a consent slip where they agreed to partake in the research (see Appendix 2). All four participants signed the consent slip before the data collection started. Moreover, when doing the interviews, I recorded the conversation by using the application *Nettskjema* to secure the data. Furthermore, to keep the participants anonymous in this thesis, I have simply named them T1, T2, T3, and T4.

The researcher's role concerns the researcher's moral and ethical responsibilities (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 108). Essentially, it narrows down to how the researcher's moral is decisive for the ethical considerations made in research. For instance, having observation as a method can be challenging, especially when the observation is in a classroom with minor learners. However, I was determined to focus my research on the teachers and their work. Hence, when writing my application for NSD, I made it clear that it was the teachers' teaching practice I wanted to study and that I would leave the learners out of my research. Moreover, I gave the teachers an information letter, informing them that the learners would not be observed and used in the research.

I decided to take on the role as *observer as participant* because it allowed me to be present in the classroom to observe, but not take part in the activities (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 115). As the observation in this research has aimed to see how the teacher works with

intercultural competence, it was necessary to be present in the situation. However, there was a chance that both the teacher and the learners would behave differently when having a stranger present in their lessons. It was thus important for me to let the learners know why I was there and then place myself in a position that would not disturb what was going to happen in the classroom. I thus made the conscious choice of placing myself in the back of the classroom to be less of interference for the learners.

3.7   Limitations of research

This study included a small sample of participants who have shown an interest in teaching intercultural competence. This can be argued to prevent the generalisation of the findings. However, as the research in this thesis does not investigate the "truth" about all EFL teachers' perspectives and teaching of intercultural competence in year 5-7, but concerns how the participants practice and think about teaching intercultural competence, it can still provide valuable insight on the topic. The research could also have benefitted from including the learners, as I would have been able to analyse how they respond to the teachers' practices. However, I considered it unnecessary as the research focuses on the teachers' practice and perspectives.

As I use observation as a method for data collection, the research in this thesis is limited to the lessons observed. Thus, I cannot say much about what happens when I am not present. Hence, it was essential to ask the teachers about prior experiences in teaching intercultural competence, as it would provide information about how they usually do it and their perspectives on intercultural competence in general. When collecting data for this research, I observed three out of four teachers who participated in the study. This limits the possibility of exploring the fourth teacher's practice of teaching intercultural competence. However, I tried to interview the fourth teacher, emphasising the teacher's experience in teaching intercultural competence.

4   Presentation of results

In this chapter, I present the results from the analysis of the data generated through the research in this thesis. The results are organised by the data collecting methods and presented thematically categorised by the codes from the data analysis. I also distinguish between the participants when presenting the results within each code. If there is a lack of results from teachers, this is because I did not observe it in the lessons. In Section 4.1, I present the results from the observations before presenting the results from the interviews in Section 4.2. Some of the results I present in this chapter will overlap each other. This is to provide context to the results and because some of the data were analysed to fit into several categories and are therefore double coded.

4.1   Observation Results

The observations were carried out in five English lessons divided between three teachers: two teachers teaching English in year 7, and one teacher teaching English in year 5. In this section, I describe the lessons I observed, before the results from the analysis of the observation data will be presented.

4.1.1   The lessons

Teacher 1

The observation carried out with teacher 1 (T1) took place in two English lessons in two separate 7th grade classes with 21 learners in each. Before starting the observation, I was told that the classes had been working on a project with the topic of *down under*, mainly focusing on Australia, for a period of six weeks. For the lessons I observed, the teacher had planned for the learners to do a quiz as an activity to sum up the project. The lesson began with T1 asking the learners to tell their learning partner about what they did after school the day before. The teacher walked around and encouraged the learners to elaborate and be detailed when talking together. The teacher also gave those who wanted to share with the class the opportunity to do so. For the quiz, the learners were divided into groups of four/five learners. Then the learners were given 15 minutes to divide the texts about Australia within their groups so that each learner read up on one of the topics to cover the whole. The aim was for the learners to be able to repeat all the material to answer all the questions in the quiz. Next was the quiz, which asked various questions about Australia. Most of the questions were based on Australia's

history and factual knowledge about the country. The teacher played music by Australian singers and bands in between the questions, which was well received. Unfortunately, they were not able to finish the quiz, as there were many questions. In the second lesson I observed T1, the learners' curiosity was taken seriously by the teacher, as T1 put on *BBC News- News round* as a post-activity before lunch. The learners were presented with news from around the world. However, it was not the news that got the attention, but the accent of one of the reporters. After being asked about this, the teacher did a google search and showed different English accents. English accents were compared to Norwegian dialects. It was discussed that it could be difficult for native English speakers to understand some of them, just as some native Norwegian speakers might have trouble understanding dialects in Norway.

Teacher 2

In the observation of teacher 2 (T2), I observed two lessons over two days, taught in one 7th grade class consisting of 27 learners. The two lessons were the start-up of a project about identity and cultural belonging. In the first lesson, the teacher started by telling the learners about the project and what they could expect from it. The lesson was mainly constructed to prepare the learners for what was to come. The teacher carried on with presenting the learning objective for the period, which was "to be able to say something and reflect around the terms identity and cultural belonging". As a pre-activity in this lesson, the learners were asked to discuss these two concepts of identity and cultural belonging with their learning partner, before getting a definition from the teacher. This was then followed up by a class discussion on what identity and cultural belonging mean. The teacher then continued by explaining that they would start the project by watching a film concerning the minor strike in Great Britain in the 1980s. The teacher asked questions like "Do you know what a strike is?" and had a class discussion on this topic. Moreover, the teacher handed out a text about mining with accompanying questions and tasks that would help the learners understand the context of the film. The questions concerned the text about mining, while the tasks were to find facts about Wales and Margaret Thatcher. These tasks were summed up at the end of the lesson. The learners were also provided with a vocabulary list that would help them get a better grasp of the text.

In the second lesson observed in this class, the teacher shortly repeated some of the things they had discussed the day before, before showing the first 30 minutes of the film *Pride* (Livingstone & Warchus, 2014). After watching, the teacher focused on asking the learners

questions about what they saw. Moreover, the teacher started to build on the learners 'own experience with demonstrations against injustice and drew a parallel to a solidarity act the whole school had attended. The teacher also asked reflective questions about homosexuality and if the learners found sexual orientation to be something they could choose. Most of this lesson was a class discussion, where the learners, together with the teacher, reflected upon the topics from the first part of the film. It seemed to be a lesson where the teacher wanted to evoke the learners' curiosity and build on their prior knowledge on topics touched upon in the film.

Teacher 3

Teacher 3 (T3) taught English in year 5, with 26 learners present. In this lesson, the learners were going to present a self-written book. The books the learners had written were based on the *Mr. Men/ Little Miss* series, where the learners had been given the task of writing a story about their own Mr. or Little Miss (Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 1971-2021). The learners were divided into smaller groups, and the learners who were not presenting their book were supposed to provide feedback on the book they were listening to. This feedback was written down by following the *two stars and a wish*- principle. Although there was not much teacher-led teaching in this lesson, the teacher had planned a lesson where oral communication was essential. Additionally, there were several times during the lesson when the teacher focused on politeness. For instance, the teacher gave each learner a piece of candy to use in a star-up activity. The task was to describe the candy's external features, meaning how it looked, if it was hard or soft etc., and their expectations of the taste. After finally having eaten the candy, the learners were to describe the internal features of the candy, such as taste. When handing out the candy to the learners, T3 was very clear about the polite phrases "you're welcome" and "thank you". T3 was also very particular in reminding the learners to respect the person of the group who presented their book and how the learners should be polite and show respect when listening and providing feedback.

4.1.2 Knowledge

The first category concerns knowledge and includes the content knowledge the teachers taught in terms of developing the learners' intercultural competence (see Section 3.3.1.1). The participants showed a great variation in the content touched upon within this category.

For instance, T1's the class were doing a quiz, and in the preparations for the quiz, the learners had to read up on factual texts about Australia. The quiz asked questions that mainly concerned history and facts about the country, such as what treatment the aboriginals received, when Australian women got the right to vote, and why English convicts were sent to Australia during the colonisation. Some examples of questions from the quiz are:

"What is the official name of the capital city in Australia?"

"How many people live in Australia?"

"What is the national symbol tree of Australia?"

"What do Australians often put on their sandwiches?"

The last question touches upon cultural content, pointing to something very specific in Australian eating traditions

Cultural content was also touched upon in the last lesson with T1. The class were watching the *BBC News' Newsround* (2022), and during this clip, the learners asked questions about different accents. After doing a quick search on the internet, T1 found a clip of the Liverpool accent. The class ended up having a conversation about differences in language and how accents and dialects are common features that show the variety in both the English and the Norwegian languages, which additionally can say something about where one is from.

In T2's first lesson, the content taught related to culture as the class was discussing what identity and cultural belonging mean. To understand what identity is, the teacher drew on how a person can have different ways of seeing themselves depending on the situation one is in. For instance, T2 said that one could identify oneself as "a friend, pupil, son or big sister". As for cultural belonging, T2 drew on examples known to the learners since one can belong to a soccer team, a band and that even being a part of a particular school or class could be seen as belonging to a culture.

Knowledge concerning the history of Great Britain and the mining industry was also part of the content taught in T2's first lesson. The mining industry is unfamiliar to the learners in the

class I observed, and learning about it would help them understand the narrative of the film better before they were going to watch it the next day. Through reading factual texts and answering questions, and solving tasks, the learners got more familiar with the mining community in Great Britain and the conflict which occurred when Margaret Thatcher served as prime minister in the 1980s. For instance, the learners were given the task of finding five facts about mining, Margaret Thatcher, and the country of Wales to set the context for the film they were about to watch. The content in this lesson was mainly taught to help set the context for the film the class was going to watch the next day. T2 therefore presented the learners with a vocabulary list of useful words to understand when preparing for this lesson and watching the film the next day. Moreover, T2 led a class discussion on what unions are and why we have these, including what it means for workers to go on strike, which the teacher stressed as important knowledge in a democratic society.

In the second lesson with T2, the content knowledge concerned the topics in the film. The lesson began by watching the first 30 minutes of the film, *Pride* (Livingstone & Warchus, 2014) followed by T2 asking questions aloud in the class based on what they had just watched. For instance, T2 gave the learners space to discuss their experiences with demonstrations and injustice. As the film is about a homosexual group supporting the striking minors in solidarity, T2 acknowledged how homosexuals have been discriminated against and how it is still relevant today. For example, T2 asked the learners to research if there still are countries where being gay is prohibited.

In T3's lesson, the content focused on communication and language. Practising common English polite phrases was central in the pre-activity in this lesson. This is an example where data has been double coded as possessing knowledge of English polite phrases also is relevant in the *skills of discovery and interaction*-code. When T3 gave each learner a piece of candy for the task, T3 was very consistent in saying "one for you" and "you're welcome" when handing out the candy. T3 also reminded all the learners to say, "thank you". Knowledge of language was also practised as the learners were expected to practice the use of adjectives when describing the candy.

4.1.3 Skills of Interpreting and Relating

This category refers to how the teacher's included interpretation of texts and documents and how the learners' ability to relate the content to their own lives was practised (see Section 3.3.1.1).

When the learners in T2's lessons were reading and searching for facts regarding the knowledge mentioned in 4.1.2, skills of interpretation of texts were practised as the learners needed to interpret the texts they read. Moreover, the film was a text the learners needed to interpret (see definition of texts in Section 2.3.3.2). In terms of having the learners relate to the texts they were working with, T2 linked what they had read and watched about demonstrations and strikes to something regarding their own lives and experiences. T2 asked if there were any of the learners who knew of a time when a group of people had been striking or demonstrating and if any of the learners had personal experiences from participating themselves or knew someone who had been striking or demonstrating. Following the learners' sharing their experiences, the T2 mentioned how both teachers in Norway often go on strike and how the farmers in Norway had been demonstrating in several ways to be heard about the pricing of their products. T2 also related the topic to a common experience the learners shared from a previous year when the whole school had demonstrated in solidarity against racism.

4.1.4 Skills of discovery and interaction

This category refers to how one interacts with others, and how interaction can help people discover new knowledge (see Section 3.3.1.1).

The learners in T1's class were interacting with each other in the start-up activity (see Section 4.1.1). The learners were to tell each other about what they did after school the day before, which could possibly allow the learners to discover something new about their peers, such as interests and hobbies. During this activity, the learners practised their communicative skills in a real-time, one-on-one interaction.

Real-time interactions were also practised in T2's lessons, where most of the interactions were carried out through discussions between the learners in pairs, smaller groups, or in-class discussions led by the teacher. In addition to the learners actively interacting with each other, the learners were also given space to share their perspectives based on personal experiences

with demonstrations, as well as their presumptions of sexual orientation, identity, and cultural belonging in the discussions.

I saw a different approach in T3's lesson, where interaction was the key component. As the learners were reading and presenting their self-written books to their peers and providing each other with feedback, the learners were practising their oral skills since they both had to speak English and practice to be good listeners. Moreover, the teacher kept reminding the learners of how to act in the particular situation and being respectful towards each other, which are important aspects of intercultural competence.

4.1.5 Attitudes

This category refers to how attitudes related to intercultural competence were touched upon in the lessons (see Section 3.3.1.1). The results in this category concerning T1 and T2's lessons might appear repetitive from Section 4.1.2 concerning knowledge, as the data is double coded in the analysis. The results from T3's lessons are double coded with the activity – category (Section 4.1.1.8).

When watching *BBC News' News Round*, the learners in T1's class uttered curiosity about the reporter's accent. T1's reaction indicates that the teacher takes the learner's curiosity seriously. As mentioned in 4.1.2, a discussion about how accents and dialects are common features in Norwegian and English arose. T1 showed in this sequence that it is important to be curious and willing to search for answers to gain knowledge.

The content knowledge about identity and cultural belonging worked with in T2's lessons also relate to attitudes (see Section 4.1.2). After the learners had discussed the terminology, the teacher defined *identity* and *cultural belonging* and continued to reflect upon how people can identify themselves in multiple ways. T2 moved on by explaining cultural belonging as belonging with someone and being a part of something larger, whether it was in a football team, band, LGBTQ/pride, or religion. T2 drew the parallel to a prior project concerning intercultural competence, where the learners had reflected upon how animals often stick together in groups of their own species. Additionally, T2 spoke of how it is important to acknowledge and respect people for how they identify themselves. *Solidarity* and *prejudice*

were words the learners were asked to reflect around in T2's lessons. However, the reflections were never summed up.

In the pre-activity in T3's lesson, the learners' curiosity was awoken when they were going to describe and explain their expectations for eating the candy (see Section 4.1.1). Additionally, the learners' openness was put to the test, as they could anticipate not liking the candy, but had to try it to find out. The pre-activity was thus practising the learner's willingness to try something new to gain new knowledge. Respect was also an important attitude present in this lesson when the learners were going to present their books. T3 kept reminding the learners to show each other respect when listening and providing feedback (see sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.1.8).

4.1.6   Critical Cultural Awareness

This category concerns how the teachers managed to practice their learners' ability to compare and reflect upon differences related to the concepts relevant to intercultural competence (see Section 3.3.1.1).

While T1's learners talked to each other about what they did after school the day before, T1 walked around to each pair and encouraged them to elaborate and be more detailed in what they told each other. This support from the teacher made the learners more aware of what they are spending time on outside of school, which is a part of their daily life and identity. Furthermore, critical cultural awareness was worked with in the end of T1's last lesson, as two cultures and their linguistic features were compared (see Section 4.1.1). The Norwegian and English languages were compared as both Norwegians, and British people have different accents and dialects depending on which area of the countries the people come from.

In T2's lessons, critical cultural awareness was worked with as there was a lot of reflection upon the different topics. The reflections and discussions helped connect the topics to a known context for the learners. For instance, when discussing how homosexuals have been discriminated, and still are, the teacher gave the learners the task to find out if being homosexual still is illegal in some countries. They then reflected upon why that could be and how to love and marry someone of the same gender is no longer illegal in Norway.

Another example is how T2 reflected on identity and how complex identity is. One person can identify oneself as many different things, such as learner, brother, soccer player and so on. This led to a discussion on how cultural belonging is important for humans, as one needs to experience the feeling of belonging with someone, whether it is with one's family, friends, or a soccer team. An important element in these discussions was how the class reflected upon how people can identify themselves in various ways and that they might like different things than others, but still belong to and identify themselves within a certain social group.

4.1.7   Material

This category refers to the materials the teachers were using in their lessons (see Section 3.3.1.1).

In the material category, I observed a variation of materials used by the participants. T1 used the digital teaching aid *Skolestudio* (Gyldendahl, n.d.)*,* which is the teaching material this school uses. In addition, T1's class watched and listened to authentic English in BBC program *Newsroom* (2022).

In the lessons I observed with T2, the film *Pride* (Livingstone & Warchus, 2014) was the primary text used for the class to work with. The film is about a homosexual community in London. The members started helping the miners on strike because Margaret Thatcher's politics threatened their jobs in the 1980s (ibid.). Moreover, the learners were given the task of finding five facts about mining, Wales, and Margaret Thatcher to provide an understanding of the context of the film. To search for facts about mining, the teacher provided the learners with a handout where the content was mainly retrieved from web pages aimed toward native, English-speaking children. T2 was this way taking advantage of authentic language texts in the lessons. To find facts about Wales and Margaret Thatcher, the learners had to do their own research online.

In T3's lesson, the learners were presenting their own written texts, which were based on the *Mr. Man series* (Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 1971-2021), which presents characters who have very specific features.

4.1.8 Activities

The activities category refers to what activities the teacher used to teach intercultural competence (see Section 3.3.1.1). The current activities are referred to in the prior sections of this chapter. However, as I stated in the introduction, some of the data were relevant for several codes and therefore double coded.

In the lessons I observed, the teachers used various activities in their teaching. For instance, T1 used a quiz as a summing up activity for the class's project about Australia. Before starting the quiz, the learners had to read up on the texts they had used earlier in the project. This was done by dividing the texts between the learners in their groups.

In the lessons I observed with T2, the teacher mainly included class discussions and individual work for the learners, which involved reading followed by complimentary tasks and questions as teaching activities. The individual work was to prepare the learners for watching the film. This was also the purpose of the class discussions as they reflected upon important topics the film touched upon. The teacher allowed the learners to discuss between themselves in pairs or smaller groups before sharing what they had talked about with the rest of the class to vary the discussions.

In T3's lesson, the main activity was for the learners to present their self-written books and provide each other with feedback. This was done by dividing the learners into smaller groups so that all learners could present their books and leave enough time for all the learners to receive feedback. As a pre-activity, the learners would describe a piece of candy's external and internal features to their group. The learners were thus expected to use adjectives and warm-up before their presentations.

4.2 Interview results

The purpose of including interviews as a second method in this research was to explore the teachers' cognition, meanings, thoughts, and opinions behind their choices when teaching intercultural competence (Borg, 2003, pp. 81-82, see Section 3.4). I interviewed four teachers with variable education and experience as English teachers. Three of the participants teach English in year 7 and one in year 5. In this section, I present the results from the interviews. The results are organised according to the topic of the questions I asked during the interviews (see Appendix 4, the interview guide). The questions seek answers relevant to the research questions of this thesis (see Section 1.3), but they also address the teachers' experiences with teaching intercultural competence. If there is a lack of results from teachers, this is because the interviews were semi-structured, and the conversations were led into other aspects (see Section 3.4.2). Because the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, all quotes in this section are translated by me (see Section 3.4.2).

4.2.1 Definition

The first question I asked the participants concerned how they would define intercultural competence. The results from the analysis show that there are some variations in how the teachers interpret the term, but that they mostly agree on what the term entails. The results from the analysis show that all four teachers agreed that *diversity, knowledge,* and *usage of language* are important aspects of intercultural competence. T1 was clear in the response when saying: "Diversity. That is what I primarily think of". Further, three of the participants pointed out that having the learners master the English language well enough to communicate is an essential aspect of their interpretation of intercultural competence. Additionally, T4 explained how linguistic differences in the English-speaking world come to mind: "We use the English subject both to look at different ways of living and differences in language in the various parts of the English- speaking world. We also talk a lot about why the English-speaking world is so widespread". T4 continued by saying that being aware of the role the English language has in Norwegian learners' lives today and why it has become such a great part of one's life is an important aspect T4 thinks of related to intercultural competence.

T3 was more hesitant when asked to define intercultural competence and admitted that it was a terminology they[2] had not thought so much about.

> I don't know, but it is about, in my opinion, that we live in a diverse society, and that it is not about cramming English, but rather having the ability to use the language no matter where in the world one is. You should use the English you have and make yourself understood.

Additionally, T4 said that knowledge of cultures and drawing parallels between different cultures and ways of life are important in teaching intercultural competence. This statement was also supported by T2, who initially thought of teaching culture as the most central aspect of intercultural competence when asked to define the term. T2 compared *LK06* with *LK20* and explained:

> I think that the focus was more on learning about the culture, while with intercultural competence I think it is more about learning how things work within the culture in a way. Earlier one learned about others, but now, maybe one is learning about others through others.

4.2.2 Knowledge

When asked about what knowledge they emphasise when teaching intercultural competence, the teachers show that there are some distinctions in what content they find important to teach. T1 explained that they found knowledge about the English language and how to use it relevant for intercultural competence, but that the content often concerns history and culture; "Now that we learned about Australia, it has been about the aborigines, for instance. And then it has been for example history and a little about the culture and such". T1 further explained how they find knowledge important within every aspect of intercultural competence. "I think one should know quite a bit so that one has something to say and mean about something based on knowledge".

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[2] For the purpose to keep the participants anonymous, I use singular *they* as the pronoun when referring to each participant. ("They", n.d.).

On the other hand, T2 believes that it is not just about learning facts about a culture or a country. T2 thinks that learners should learn how things work within the culture and emphasise identity as an important aspect when teaching intercultural competence.

> I see identity as an important part of intercultural competence, learning about different identities within cultures and not just that each country has their culture, but a country has many different cultures and within those there are different ways of speaking to one another, different values perhaps.

As an example, T2 reflected upon how indigenous people often are presented as something exotic and dressed up in their national costumes or with other features which are very distinctive for their culture: "They become very strange and very different. While "regular" people are presented as ordinary children and youth". Therefore, it is important for T2 to teach and discuss how people within these cultures might have the exact same interests as children growing up in Norway to develop and change the learners' perspectives. T2 elaborates by saying that it is important to touch upon cultures that are unfamiliar to Norwegian learners, such as the mining community (see Section 4.1.1); "Although this perhaps isn't a culture with the same focus in Great Britain today, there still is a working-class, which we don't know of in Norway".

When T3 was asked the question concerning knowledge, the immediate response was "Respect. Respect for each other and that there are things we can find weird and different". T3 follows up by telling how they think it is important for children in Norway to understand how something they had not heard about can be such a big thing all over the world and vice versa. "Like for those who come to Norway and get to see the *luciatoget* for the first time and find it weird. How would we feel about similar experiences, right?". T3 is thus concerned with teaching the learners about symbols in other cultures, and not just for the Norwegian context. For instance, the children's book about *Elmer the Elephant* (McKee, 1968) is brought up. "They have an Elmer-day in English speaking countries, which I have told my learners about", and explains how this is a symbol of diversity that might be unfamiliar to the learners. Moreover, T3 explained that the focus at the moment had been on how everyone is unique and on gaining an understanding of what makes us unique. The class had also worked a lot with polite phrases the whole year, which is an aspect T3 finds important within intercultural competence and knowledge and use of language.

T4 explains that there is a great variation in what sort of content they teach. T4 elaborates by saying that in addition to history about how language and cultures have been influenced and developed for several centuries, T4 also likes to take advantage of the learners' interests when choosing what to teach. "If you have a group of learners who are interested in war history, for instance, well, then we can read about that in English. If a group is very interested in geography, then you can work with that in English". T4 explained that if there is a group that likes to read and work with literature, it gets easier to motivate the learners to work with Shakespeare for two months and still be able to meet the goals of the curriculum.

4.2.3   Skills

In this section, I refer to the *skills of interpreting and relating*, *skills of discovery and interaction, communicative skills* (Byram, 2020, see Section 2.2.1), and other skills the participants find important in their teaching of intercultural competence.

Regarding skills the teachers find important for their learners to acquire, T1, T3, and T4 agreed that communicative skills are essential. T4 made the point that "a large part of the English subject is to get everyone to talk English. To make everyone comfortable in expressing themselves in another language". The teachers also agreed that the goal was not for the learners to sound like a native speaker, but rather to dare use the language. T4 explained that "oral activity is perhaps the most important, and that the learners dare to fail. Communication in another language doesn't have to be perfect or polished but be able to understand and be understood". T3 thinks that speaking English in the lessons is important, as they find it essential to be able to work together as a group and use the language actively. T1 also got this impression and finds it exciting that the learners dare to speak English in class, and think it is important to be a good model for the learners when they practice their oral skills.

> I try to follow the principle of speaking English all the time and encourage the learners to do the same. And I notice that they feel a lot safer doing so as I am doing It. And I don't have perfect pronunciation and I need to search for words quite often.

As explained in the section above, T1 finds the skill to acquire and use knowledge as important. This is also a skill the rest of the participants agreed with. In the interview, T2 reflected upon the fact that having the learners discover new knowledge and interpret and relate that knowledge to something known is essential. Moreover, T3 explained how

providing open tasks could be helpful in terms of having the learners discover new things about each other and learn something they would not necessarily have learned in a more closed task. This was also something T4 found important and said that learners could learn about each other through interaction. Additionally, T3 talked about how learners can interpret what they are talking about and start reflecting on it and relating it to their own lives. T4 built on the same thing and said that it is important to have the learners see the common aspects in cultures, such as how indigenous people have been treated all over the world and reflect upon it.

4.2.4   Attitudes

Within the attitudes code, I decided to include all attitudes the teachers related to intercultural competence, in addition to what they said concerning critical cultural awareness, as I consider this aspect to be related to attitudes (see Section 2.2.1)

Regarding attitudes, the teachers are concerned with their learners becoming tolerant towards others and understanding the diversity in society and the aspects related to culture that might occur as different. When asked about what attitudes they emphasise in their teaching of intercultural competence, all four participants agreed on respect and understanding as being important attitudes for the learners to acquire. T4 said that "The respect we expect to receive from others, others need to expect from us as well". This reflects in T3's response on how they find respect related to knowledge (see Section 4.2.2). T3 reflected upon having respect for others and the cultural aspects that might seem "weird" and different for the Norwegian context by saying, "I also think it is important to reflect upon these things, and how traditions can vary, however, still be normal for the people having these traditions". T3 continued by comparing how people coming to Norway and getting to see the *luciatog* would find that strange, just as their learners found a tradition of moving a football through all villages in a place in England to be unusual.

All four teachers state that one should work with building an understanding of the diversity in society and how these "weird things' can be "normal" for others and the other way around. "Attitudes towards others is something I find myself working with in every lesson, since it is important that we learn how to be supportive to each other" (T3). T3 further explains how it is important for them to have the learners become curious about others and make it safe to talk about others, in addition to using what they have learnt when they talk about themselves and

what makes them unique. This reflection received support from T4, who said that "it is important for the learners to be curious about other people, and the learners should be open and interested in learning about other countries and cultures". T4 expressed how important it is to compare cultures, which relates to critical cultural awareness, and that learners should discover how things Norwegians do can be seen as crazy and weird in other people's eyes. "What about Norwegians going ice bathing? How absurd does it not seem for someone coming to Norway from a country where there never are degrees below zero?" T4 is thus engaged in using the competence the learners in the classroom already possess, as they all have different experiences to draw upon.

Concerning attitudes and critical cultural awareness, T2 stressed how indigenous people often are represented as something exotic and even strange.

> They are often represented by images were people wear their national costume. Not all members within a group own one of these and they should be presented as "normal" as anyone. It is thus necessary to reflect on how complex culture and identity are.

According to T2, it is thus necessary that the teachers also become more aware of how they present culture, and that they have a responsibility to try remove "them" and "we" as words to use when talking about people with a different belonging.

4.2.5   Materials

When asked about what materials they use when teaching intercultural competence, the teachers indicate a variation in their choices. For instance, T1 explained how they mainly have been using *Skolestudio* (Gyldendahl, n.d.)*,* a digital learning material. "This year has been a running-in period for me, as we have started using Skolestudio, in Gyldendahl's digital textbook series. However, I also use other materials, such as *Elevkanalen* (TV2, 2009-2022), and *BBC News' Newsrooms* (BBC, 2022). Occasionally we watch films". Further, T1 explained how they encourage their learners to read and have a small library set up in the classroom where the learners can borrow authentic English texts for reading at home. "It has been important to find something they would find cool to read. Want to read. To gain the joy of reading in English as well".

T2 explained how they use a variety of different authentic English language materials when teaching intercultural competence. "As a person who reads a lot, I always read with the thought of how a book can be used in the classroom in the back of my mind". T2 mentioned *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Dahl, 1970) and *Charlotte's Web* (Williams, 1952) as examples of books the class had been working with. T2 also include film, such as *Pride* (Livingstone & Warchus, 2014)*,* and *Whale Rider* (Barnett & Caro, 2002), when suitable for the topic they teach. In terms of factual texts, T2 does a lot of research online to find suitable texts for children. As the school T2 works at does not use a textbook. "There have been times where I search for information online or in other types of texts and rewrite the information for it to be suitable for the learners in my class".

T3 is very excited about using the *Mr. Men/ Little Miss series* (Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 1971-2021)." I really love working with those books!" T3 explained how these have been helpful in the work with personal characteristics and how to explain internal (personality) and external (looks) features. "The learners are very good at saying *good at soccer* etc. But what's on the inside?" T3 also said that children's books will be more and more introduced in their classroom and that textbooks only serve as inspiration, "I rarely use them. Very little use of textbooks. I see what needs to be done and use my own or other's ideas instead".

T4 was vaguer when explaining what materials they use in their teaching. However, they use films and literature, in addition to digital resources in their teaching. Concerning literature, *Shakespeare,* and *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 1997-2007) were brought up as examples, and T4 said that they often use *Shakespeare* to discuss how the English language has spread and developed throughout the years. "We talk about the impact Shakespeare has had within language development and how his works have been translated into so many languages, which again has had an influence on the rest of the world".

4.2.6   Activities

On the questions of what activities they include, T1 answered that they always start the lessons with an oral activity where the learners talk with their learning partner about a certain topic. T2 explains that they normally continue by repeating what they did in the previous lesson. However, variation is important in T1's lessons.

One must be able to think about variation in the lessons, and I try to do that. We talk a lot! And then I like to break it up with some games, in addition to individual work. Change it up a bit, but always use the language.

In T2's and T4's lessons, conversations and class discussions are the most common activities as they find it important for the learners to be able to reflect. The learners are also provided time to reflect individually and do tasks concerning the topic they work with. T2 explained that they often use class discussions and individual tasks in their teaching.

I think that class discussion is the best choice, as it also allows the learners to discuss with each other. Lessons often begin and ends with a class discussion, and the learners get tasks to solve individually or in pairs as the main activity.

When working with a book or a film, T2 breaks up the material into smaller sections so that the learners get time to work with tasks regarding certain topics touched upon in what they have read/ watched. "I really like the way we have been working now, by dividing the film into sections and having the learners work with tasks related to the topic. This is also the way we commonly work with books". Moreover, T2 explained that the learners sometimes might be asked to continue a story or write a factual text. Nevertheless, the most important thing when planning the activities is that the activities encourage reflection and that the learners can process what they have learnt so far.

T3 has had the learners write their own short books to have them become better at writing English and says that they use a lot of time to template the work the learners are supposed to do. However, T3 implements oral activity in every lesson. Additionally, T3 utters a wish for the future to create cooperation with a school abroad. "It would have been so much fun to be able to make a podcast and do something that will motivate the learners and meet their interests. Perhaps cooperate with a school in another country".

4.2.7 Experiences

As seen in Table 3-3, this category deals with the teachers' experiences from teaching intercultural competence. In this category, I have included the teachers' previous experiences from working with intercultural competence, how often they work with it, if there are any challenges, and if the teachers have experienced any changes related to teaching culture after the new curriculum was introduced.

When asked about how often they teach intercultural competence, T1 answered that "It has been a lack of it the past year. However, it is something that I want to get a greater focus on". In contrast, T2, T3, and T4 all said that intercultural competence is touched upon in every lesson. "We work a lot with the interdisciplinary topics across different subjects. I feel that culture and intercultural competence is something we work with all the time in different ways" (T2).

T2 continued by mentioning a previous project where indigenous people had been the topic. The class then watched the film *Whale Rider* (Barnett & Caro, 2002). The class had spent a lot of time on reflecting why the culture was presented as it is in the film and if this is representative of the Maori people today. This was worked with parallelly as they worked with the Same people in social studies. Further, T2 recalled the time the class had read the book *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, and how they had been talking about the different perspectives presented in the book. "We discussed and reflected upon how it is wrong to steal, but how the animals were forced to do it to survive. We then reflected upon how this could relate to situations in real life". Moreover, the book presented animals as friends across species, and T2 compared it to how humans are friends with each other despite differences.

T4 mentioned a project the class had been working with where the learners were to figure out if they knew enough English to travel abroad. Another project, which they recently had been working with, was a project where the learners were to choose between the Aboriginal or Maori culture and present something from one of these cultures. Some learners chose one specific aspect of the culture, such as dance, while others wrote about several aspects of the culture, such as tattoos and food traditions.

All four teachers find the change of focus in the subject curriculum to mean they have more freedom in their choices of materials and activities. However, T1 pointed out that with

freedom follows more requirements for the teachers and their work. T1 also experience that it is challenging to break free from the textbook.

The difference T2 drew attention to is that although culture has always been an important aspect of the English subject, the interpretation of the renewal is about the complexity within cultures, not about the culture. T2 explained how this could be challenging and that the main challenge they experience is that working with intercultural competence asks more of the teachers in terms of preparations. "I need to get more acquainted with the cultures than I needed before. Additionally, I must be aware of what images I use, what words I use when I speak of people, that I don't affect the learners' thoughts and stigmatise in a way". Earlier, T2 used textbooks and followed what they presented. Now, on the other hand, T2 makes much of the materials they use themselves. "It is challenging. Not necessarily that it takes time, but that one has to secure the quality in other ways".

T3 feels the same way. "As I´m not using textbooks but have the freedom to use other resources, I find the freedom to provide a gap in the quality check from others". Nevertheless, T3 find the renewal of the curriculum to help with ensuring that what they do is good enough. "The main change I´ve experienced is that there is more room for cooperation between teachers in different years, that you have more people to ask for advice. Additionally, the interdisciplinary topics require the teachers to work with different topics across subjects, which results in deeper learning for the learners".

T4 said they were happy about the focus intercultural competence has got in the curriculum renewal. Their understanding is that it has become important to acknowledge diversity in the class, school, and society. "To take care of and lift up the learners. The fact that learners with different backgrounds have the opportunity to show their culture, where they come from, and that it is something to be proud of and not hide away". Teachers should embrace the diversity and use it as an asset instead of something different and challenging. "We should teach our learners that they should be curious and positive and want to learn about others".

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the results from the analyses of the data collected through observations and interviews. First, I presented the observation results. These results relate to the five savoirs presented in Byram's framework (2020, see Section 2.2), and the types of material and activities the teachers included in the lessons I observed. Last, the results from the interviews were outlined, which have the purpose of providing insight into the teachers' thoughts and beliefs about intercultural competence and their teaching and experiences with teaching intercultural competence to help provide insight into how the teachers work. The results presented in this chapter will help me discuss how the teachers practice intercultural teaching and what they emphasise when teaching.

5   Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss EFL teachers' practices and perspectives concerning intercultural competence in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools based on the results from observations, interviews (Chapter 4), the national curriculum (Chapter 1), and the theoretical framework and previous research (Chapter 2). This chapter is organised by the sub research questions for this thesis. Section 5.1 will discuss how the teachers define intercultural competence, while 5.2 concerns the teachers' practices regarding the different components of intercultural competence. Section 5.3 and 5.4 will discuss the usage of materials and activities.

5.1   Intercultural competence

Listuen (2017) argued that intercultural competence should be emphasised as learning objectives. Since her study, the Norwegian curriculum has been renewed, and intercultural competence has become an essential and carefully defined aim in the *LK20*'s core elements (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). As addressed in 2.1, intercultural competence is a complex term consisting of multifaceted aspects. This complexity of intercultural competence became evident in the interviews with the teachers, as they have different interpretations of the term, and emphasise different aspects related to it. However, when asked to define the term, the abilities to understand and use the language in communication stand out as important for the teachers, and it appears to be a common agreement that understanding diversity is an aspect they strongly connect to intercultural competence.

Within the field of intercultural competence, several aspects are emphasised, including the ability to interact with people of different social identities, acknowledge their multiple identities and individuality (Byram et al., 2002), and understand how the individuality creates diversity within cultures and groups (Huber et al., 2014). The understanding of diversity and communication is therefore closely linked to intercultural competence. T2 pointed out *identity* as essential when defining intercultural competence and explained that learning about identities within cultures has become more important than focusing on the fact that each country has certain cultures belonging to them. T2 also pointed out that different cultures can have different ways of speaking and behaving toward one another. T2, therefore, agrees with

the idea of a person's identity being composed of many different "labels" (Huber et al., 2014, p. 13), and that as an intercultural being, one needs to acknowledge these factors to succeed in the interaction.

Listuen (2017) found the learning objectives not to represent the aims within intercultural competence regarding the learners' communicative skills and their insight into different ways of life, but rather related to developing the learners' general knowledge. I will argue that the results from my research show that, although the teachers focus on different aspects, the learning objectives are representative of the aims within intercultural competence, but at different levels of depth. It is evident that the teachers focus on developing their learners' communicative skills in line with how the aspect is emphasised in the curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), and how communication is an important component of the competence.

5.2 Components of intercultural competence

Byram (2020) presents intercultural competence as a combination of the five savoirs: *knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, attitudes,* and *critical cultural awareness*. Skaugen's (2020) investigations showed that knowledge and skills were adequately included, but attitudes were not explicitly taught. The results from my research indicate that all components of intercultural competence are present in the observed lessons. However, it appears that the teachers focus on teaching knowledge explicitly and that skills and attitudes are being taught implicitly through individual work and class discussions. The theoretical framework shows that the five components rely on each other (see Figure 2-1) since the combination of these constructs the *competence* in intercultural competence (Byram, 2020; Huber et al., 2014). This is also supported by the results in this thesis, as the teachers appear to include the five components in their teaching and in their reflections upon their practice.

5.2.1 Knowledge

In her MA thesis, Skaugen (2020) found that knowledge was worked with to a satisfactory degree. I agree with her findings, as my results respond to my anticipations and show that the teachers demonstrate that they emphasise the role of knowledge when teaching intercultural competence. In the conversation with T1, knowledge was considered essential in every aspect

of intercultural competence and the key to being able to say something about anything. One can argue that the theoretical framework supports this, as knowledge keeps being referred to in the other components of intercultural competence as the process of learning. Whether it is to acquire new knowledge about a person or a culture or use the knowledge one has gained in encounters, knowledge is essential for being intercultural as it can help people behave and meet others in an appropriate manner.

The results show that the teachers teach a variety of different knowledge related to intercultural competence, which fits within the definition of the savoir (Byram, 2020; Byram et al., 2002, see Section 2.2.1). Bandura and Sercu (2005) found that knowledge often relates to traditions and living conditions and that knowledge about social groups was less frequent. The results in my study imply that the teachers also focus on exploring foreign cultures and social groups. For instance, T2 focused on differences and similarities within social groups, while T3 focused on features related to identity. T4 also said in the interview that drawing parallels between cultures are important. On the other hand, T1's lesson included knowledge about the culture and country. This aspect aligns with what Bandura and Sercu (2005) found about how the teachers often define the cultural content. Therefore, the variations within knowledge in my results can be seen as evidence for teachers choosing to focus on what they are engaged in or feel safe in teaching. Some teachers imply that teaching intercultural competence requires more from them to provide good content to the learners.

As Byram (2020, p. 85) and Byram and Doyé (1999, pp. 142-143) emphasise, the savoir of knowledge means to gain knowledge about other countries, societies, identities, cultural and social practices, and products, in addition to one's own. This research found examples of the role of knowledge in T1's quiz, which asked questions that mainly concerned facts about history and culture, and in the written text with accompanying questions and tasks T2's class worked with (see Section 4.1.2.). This is coherent with Listuen's findings (2017), which indicate that most knowledge taught within intercultural competence is in line with how Byram (2020) suggests knowledge of history, events, and institutions as essential to acquire.

The teachers also showed a great understanding of other aspects of knowledge. Coherent to how knowledge of different social groups and their diversity are relevant aspects of intercultural competence (Byram, 2020), diversity, identity and how identity develops were pointed out as significant aspects to teach. In the interview, T3 told me that the class focused

on how different features help build people's identities and make us all unique in the previous lessons. This reflects Huber et al.'s (2014) definition of identity (see Section 2.2.1), and what Byram says about diversity within a group (2020). Byram et al. (2002) also claim that knowledge and understanding of the complexity of identity and social groups are significant in the meeting with other people to avoid discrimination (2002, p. 12). This is something I found T2 to succeed with in her lessons. Together with the class, T2 reflected upon how identity and cultural belonging are complex and that there are some things about our identity that we cannot change. The class discussed how identity is an important factor in all people's life, regardless of their national and cultural belonging, and how cultural belonging can mean belonging in different arenas. T2 elaborated on this in the interview when saying that the way minority groups often are presented as something exotic, makes it essential for the learners to become aware of and understand that people belonging to the specific culture not necessarily appear, act, or identify themselves as those who are represented in images. Neither do people have to feel like they belong in the group they are born in. This is a point I find interesting and important, as there might be people who do not identify themselves with the culture they were born in at all. Therefore, I find the teachers make good reflections on this issue that can help prevent prejudice and touch upon aspects that might help the learners develop as individuals.

The teachers in this study emphasise knowledge of the language and how to use it in interactions with others (see sections 4.1.2 & 4.2.1). As explained in sections 1.3.1 and 2.2.1, communication is an essential component of intercultural competence, which argues to be juxtaposed with the five savoirs (Sercu, 2005). Although communication is considered a skill, the learners need to acquire linguistic knowledge to become competent users of the language (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2). It may therefore be said that it is not too surprising that three out of four participants emphasised how important it is that their learners acquire enough language to be able to use it. T4 also mentioned that it is important to help the learners see the linguistic differences in languages and how the English language can differ in the English-speaking world. The other teachers support this as they also argue that having knowledge and understanding of the language and different variations of the English language is important.

Intercultural communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate with people from another culture in a foreign language (Byram, 2020). Although it is important to know some rules and patterns in the target language, Byram thinks the goal should not be to achieve the level of a native speaker but rather to become an intercultural speaker that can make oneself understand and understand the person one is talking to in intercultural encounters (ibid). This is a point the participants in this study commonly agree on and made a point of how it is important for them as teachers to stand out as good role models and speak English all the time, despite the variations in fluency. T3 also explained that the class practised polite phrases in English the past year. As T3 saw it, politeness is an essential aspect of English. Using it is important not to be mistaken as rude, which is related to the discourse competence regarding following conventions in the English language and culture (Byram, 2020). I would thus argue that the teachers in this study do not emphasise the learners' *linguistic competence* (Byram,2020, see Section 2.2.1) but rather focus on developing the learners' *sociolinguistic* and *discourse competencies* as these relate to how one uses the language in interactions with others to make oneself understood. As T3 said, "You should use the English you have".

That being said, it is important to note that in certain situations, the learners need to be introduced to specific vocabulary to understand and produce texts and develop their linguistic competence (Byram, 2020). For example, T2 provided the learners with a vocabulary list to help them get a better grasp of the text they were reading (see Section 4.1.1). This shows how it is important to develop the learners' linguistic competence (see section 2.2.1) to help them interpret written and spoken language.

5.2.2 Attitudes

The savoir of attitudes concerns the attitudes one has in encounters and interactions with others. As Byram (2020) pointed out, learners should be open and curious toward other people and cultures and willingly change their beliefs and perspectives in what Bland (2020) and Huber et al. (2014) calls intercultural encounters (see Section 2.2.1). It is essential to be open to differences and develop the ability to adapt certain behaviour within a culture to prevent misunderstandings. The results in this study support the emphasis on openness and curiosity, and T3 and T4 are both interested in their learners being curious about other people and cultures and being open to gaining new knowledge about them. UNESCO (2013) also include respect, tolerance, and flexibility as essential attitudes within intercultural competence

(see Section 2.2.1). The teachers in this study all report that respect and tolerance are the most important attitudes for their learners to develop. For instance, T4 said that "the respect we expect to receive from others, others need to expect from us as well".

Despite attitudes being fundamental to intercultural competence and essential to what the teachers want their learners to acquire, attitudes were not explicitly visibly taught in most of the lessons I observed (see Section 5.2). The exception was in the lesson with T2, where the learners were asked to reflect upon the two terms solidarity and prejudice, terms I argue to be explicitly linked to the teaching of attitudes. The results in this study are in line with Skaugen's (2020) research, where it appears to be a challenge in the explicit teaching of attitudes. Byram (2020) claims the classroom to be a suitable arena for working with attitudes (see Section 2.3.1). The classroom should be a safe environment where the teacher can help the learners reflect upon the knowledge and skills they have acquired and help develop the learners' attitudes towards what they have experienced. One example is how T1 took the learners' curiosity seriously when asked about an English accent and built on the learners' knowledge of dialects in Norway (see Section 4.1.6). T2 also worked with attitudes when leading a class discussion about identity and cultural belonging and how one should be open to understanding how identity, in particular, is complex. According to T3, they worked with attitudes towards how someone can be seen as different and how people can have different qualities.

5.2.3   Critical cultural awareness

Byram and Doyé (1999) define *critical cultural awareness* as the educational aspect of intercultural competence. The teachers' responsibility is to teach the learners to be critical towards themselves and others. This means that teachers should help the learners become conscious of how they see different cultures and be able to use the same criteria to evaluate one's own culture. The results from this study show that the teachers are concerned with having their learners be as critical of their own culture as they are of others and be able to see things from different perspectives. The teachers were clear in their wishes to have their learners acquire the ability to see how aspects they consider normal in their daily lives do not necessarily appear normal to other people and vice versa. They presented aspects of other cultures that were unfamiliar to the learners, yet that the teachers considered essential and used this as an opportunity to draw upon learners' knowledge and experience to discuss and

reflect upon why some traditions might appear strange to them, whereas they are "normal" to others. The results therefore indicate that the teachers in this study support how theory find critical cultural awareness to be closely connected to attitudes, as one needs to be aware of why certain things are the way they are in a certain culture and be curious to seek more information about it to be able to take on different perspectives (Huber et al.,2014).

My results imply that the teachers are engaged in having their learners reflect upon cultures and the different perspectives and aspects within cultures. However, the results also suggest that the analytical aspect of critical cultural awareness is less emphasised in the teachers' practice and that the focus is to compare cultural aspects instead. The theory suggests that teachers should help the learners evaluate their own cultures by using the same criteria when evaluating others'. (Byram & Doyé, 1999). This means, that if learners come across something unfamiliar, which seems strange from their perspective, the learners should be able to analyse the unknown aspect using their understanding of how something they consider essential in their own culture is not essential in others, and thus understand why this is seen as an essential aspect from another perspective. I did not see different perspectives and how to use the criteria in evaluation being explicitly worked with in the lessons. I will rather argue that the teachers in this study approached critical cultural awareness through implicit teaching of attitudes and simple comparisons. The results in this study are thus in line with previous research (Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Skaugen, 2020, see Section 2.4) and the challenges related to the teaching of attitudes.

Dusi et al. (2017) found that the majority of primary school teachers in Italy lacked cultural awareness and that these teachers are incapable of trying to develop their learners' intercultural competence. I will argue that these results do not apply to the participants in my study. The teachers who participated appear critical of their own assumptions and practices and show cultural awareness, which can help impact the learners' development of critical cultural awareness. For instance, T2 pointed out critical cultural awareness as the main challenge when teaching intercultural competence because they felt the need to become more aware of what materials to use, how to speak in the classroom, and how they practice their teaching, in addition to what they should avoid. For instance, T2 brought up how minority groups are often presented as exotic by wearing their traditional costumes or doing something culture-specific. The differences are often what is presented, although the people in the images or stories might have more in common with people from outside their cultural group.

T2 is thus using a lot of time searching for images and information that can help reflect upon how culture and identity aspects are complex and diverse and not necessarily just foreign and strange. T2 also try to avoid distinguishing between "us" and "them". The reflections T2 has made are supported by the other teachers as well. This implies that the teachers in this study have more than sufficient awareness about culture and their own perspectives on teaching intercultural competence, which is essential in order to teach others about it.

5.2.4   Skills of interpreting and relating

In Byram's framework, he presents the skills of interpreting and relating as the abilities to read, understand, and relate to documents and important events in another culture (2020, p. 87-88). An intercultural person should thus be able to use prior knowledge to interpret information in foreign texts and relate this information to one's own society and life (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143). I observed the practice of these skills in T2's lessons. In these lessons, the learners were given texts to read and interpret to be able to answer questions concerning the texts. Regarding relating to a text, T2 used film to interpret and relate to topics of intercultural competence (see Section 4.1). T2 then helped the learners relate what went on in the film to their own lives by building on the learner's prior knowledge and experiences. This was not observed in the other lessons. This appears to be a component of intercultural competence less emphasised by the teachers. However, this may be particular to the lessons I observed.

One reason why the skills of interpreting and relating appear missing might be due to the content of the lessons and the way I have interpreted it to be employed in the observation form. When changing my interpretations of the component, I can argue that the learners had to interpret the texts to understand the content when preparing for the quiz in T1's lessons. I will also suggest that the self-written books T3's learners presented were written based on their interpretations of an already existing series related to the identity aspect of intercultural competence. This implies that the learners have used their own interests and life experience to interpret the book series they read and used it in their own productions.

5.2.5   Skills of discovery and interaction

As mentioned in Section 5.2.1, communication is the aspect of intercultural competence the teachers in this emphasise. Further, within intercultural competence, it is fundamental to be

able to communicate in real-time interactions (Byram, 2020; Byram et al., 2002). The results of this study clearly indicate that communication is an aspect the teachers in this study are engaged in having their learners master, as it will help them interact with people in intercultural encounters (Huber et al., 2014, see Section 2.2.1). In all lessons observed, interaction and communication in English were important. For instance, the learners in T2's lessons shared their viewpoints on several issues concerning identity and cultural belonging in English and communicated about how some social groups are experiencing discrimination. In T3's lesson, the learners were interacting in English the whole lesson. Although they did not discover new knowledge about one another, they had to practice being respectful when interacting with each other. In T1's lessons, the skills of discovery and interaction were explicitly worked with. In these lessons, the teacher asked the learners to talk to each other about what they did after school the day before. According to Huber et al.'s (2014, pp.13-16) definitions of identity and culture, all encounters are intercultural or interpersonal (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.3). In the activity in T1's lessons, the learners could discover new knowledge about their peers, which is seen as essential in the skills of discovery and interaction (Byram & Doyé, 1999, pp. 142-143).

The results show that skills of discovery and interaction are skills the teachers emphasise when thinking of intercultural competence. The study also shows that all teachers worked with this component when teaching intercultural competence since the component was practised in all the lessons observed. However, it seems like the teachers placed more emphasis on the interaction part than on the discovery part in this component. This might be explained by the emphasis on communication given in the subject curriculum, which makes communication a natural part of the English subject. The purpose of the English subject is to prepare the learners to become confident users of English (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). This means that although there might be variations in how the teachers include intercultural competence, the teachers aim to develop their learners' communicative skills in preparation for interactions with others using the English language.

5.3   Materials

The results show that the teachers are using a variety of different texts in their teaching of intercultural competence and are not surprising in accordance with the subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), which points out the use of

texts as essential for the development of the learners' language and knowledge of culture and society. The teachers evidently use texts that fit the definition of texts provided in the curriculum, such as written texts, film, oral speech, and self-written learners' texts (see Section 2.4.3: ibid.), which also is in line with Listuen's findings (2017), about how teachers use authentic English texts as to when teaching intercultural competence (see Section 2.3.3.2; Ciornei & Dina, 2014). For example, the teachers use children's books, films, and video clips that touch upon relevant topics such as unity in diverse societies and people of different backgrounds. The results also imply that the teachers agree with Ørevik's (2018) statement about how working with literary texts can provide the learners with the opportunity to identify with people who have a different life than themselves. Further, Burwitz-Meltzer (2001) claims that by using fictional texts in teaching, learners can be introduced to subjective views on people, countries, and cultures as the characters are often set in a certain environment and portrayed through stereotypes and can be transferred to real life. In the lessons observed with T2, the class watched a film in which stereotypes were prominent, read short factual written texts, and explored digital resources to search for information related to the topics. The teachers in this study show that they have a good understanding of the significance the use of texts has in teaching intercultural competence.

Theory suggests that using authentic texts in teaching intercultural competence also can communicate different aspects of the English language (Villanueva, 2020; Bland, 2020). This is supported by Ciornei and Dina's (2014) research. As the results in my study show, the teachers are concerned with having the learners develop their understanding and use of the English language. This also includes differences within the language. As an example, T1's class discussed how English accents are part of the language, just as dialects are in Norwegian, after hearing an unfamiliar accent. In my opinion, T1 used the advantage the text provided, took the learners' curiosity seriously and had them reflect upon different aspects of language. This incident shows that, in line with Heggernes' findings (2020), authentic texts can motivate and engage the learners, in addition to provide knowledge. The results of this and previous research (Listuen, 2017; Heggernes, 2020) show that teachers use authentic material in their teaching and take advantage of the potential the authentic texts provide.

There is a long tradition of using textbooks in EFL education at the primary school level, and Davcheva and Sercu (2005) found that most primary school teachers use textbooks in their teaching. However, the results from my study are consistent with previous research from the

Norwegian context (Listuen, 2017) and imply that the majority of teachers in Norway seem to move away from textbooks towards the use of authentic texts instead. Out of the participants in my research, T1 was the only participant who used the textbook as teaching material when teaching intercultural competence, but they also included other texts when relevant (see sections 4.1.2 & 4.2.2). The results indicate that teachers in Norway take more advantage of other materials than the textbook in their teaching.

Textbooks have received some criticism for not bringing the benefits of working with English texts across (Davcheva & Sercu, 2005; Birketveit et al., 2018). In the curriculum, the work with English texts is suggested to develop the learners' knowledge and experience with cultural diversity (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). What I can say from what I observed is that the texts T1 used from the textbook dealt with history and facts about Australia and her culture. In T1's textbook, social groups and diversity became implicit topics, and the learners were made aware of different aspects of the country's culture. I will therefore argue for the textbook to serve the purpose as an English text in T1's lessons that provided knowledge relevant to intercultural competence to the learners (Byram, 2020, see Section 2.2.1). Additionally, the freedom the teachers in this study experience when choosing texts allows them to find the texts they find suitable for their learners and the learning objectives. Therefore, I will argue that the benefits of working with English texts do not depend on where the text is from, but on how the teachers decide to work with the content to provide the best possible learning outcome for their learners in the frames provided.

5.4   Activities

In their research, Bandura and Sercu claim that there is a gap between the teaching happening in the classroom versus the practice theory describes to develop intercultural competence (2005, p. 83). As outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis, teaching practice is suggested to facilitate creative learner-centred activities that encourage reflection and discussion and develop the learners' communicative skills (Byram et al.,2002; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). These were some aspects that Listuen (2017) found missing in her study. In this study, it also appears to be a gap between theory and what activities the teachers use in the classroom. In accordance with Bandura and Serco's research, the participants in this study mainly used teacher-centred activities. For instance, although T2 was varying the activity in the classroom, there were many class discussions led by the teacher. Hence, the discussions circled around

what the teacher found important for the class to discuss, which refers to how Bandura and Sercu (2005) found the content of the lessons to be decided by the teachers (see Section 5.2). The results of this study suggest that, although the teachers report that they vary the activities, the teachers have the potential to improve by having their learners become more at the centre in the activities they carry out and provide tasks and activities that allow more individual reflection for the learners.

In the curriculum, reflecting, interpreting, and critically assessing different types of English texts, is suggested to help the learners develop intercultural competence (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Although the results show that the activities the teachers include often are teacher-centred, the informants in this study showed a great variation in the activities they used in their lessons. The teachers vary between individual work, group work, projects, and discussions (see sections 4.1.8 & 4.2.6). In line with Byram et al. (2002) and the subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), the teachers find it important to create activities that promote reflection, critical thinking, and discussions based on the materials are being worked with. Critical thinking and reflection were especially prominent in T2's lessons when the class discussed the complexity of identity and cultural belonging, and how people are being discriminated against (See Section 4.1.8). Additionally, T2 said in the interview that when working with literature or film, they like to break it up and provide the learners with tasks that help them reflect upon what they have read or watched. T4 also brought up reflection as a key term when teaching intercultural competence. It is not unforeseen that the teachers follow what is suggested in the curriculum. However, it shows that they have essential aspects of teaching intercultural competence in their minds when planning their teaching.

Providing creative activities when working with materials is suggested to be valuable when teaching intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, see Section 2.3.3.1). This was also an aspect Listuen (2017) lacks evidence on in her study. In this research, creative activities related to intercultural competence were demonstrated in T3's lesson. The learners had been given the assignment to write their own *Mr. Men/Little Miss book* (Hargreaves & Hargreaves, 1971-2021). The learners would emphasise the characters' features, such as looks, personality and interests. T3 had their learners creatively working with identity and diversity by making this a fun writing assignment. In order to solve the task, the learners needed to take advantage

of personal experiences and knowledge about what aspects of identity consist of to create such a character.

When presenting their books, the learners were also going to provide each other with feedback following the two stars and a wish model. However, I was uncertain of how I could find this relevant for intercultural competence. The conversation I had with T3 in the interview clarified that T3 felt strongly about developing the learners' respect for others. When presenting their work and providing others with feedback, the learners needed to respect the person who presented and be respectful and appropriate in their feedback. Thus, I would argue that the activity concerned the learners' communicative skills, such as speaking and listening, in addition to practising the learners' attitudes in terms of being respectful to their peers. T3 added that by giving the learners open and creative tasks, the possibilities for learning something new about each learner would increase, as they would build on something they knew from their lives. These examples from T3's lesson show that one can be creative and teach intercultural competence while working with other competence aims in the curriculum.

6   Conclusion

In this thesis I have studied and discussed how English teachers' perspectives on and teaching practices of intercultural competence in the year 5-7 classroom. Through observations and interviews with a total of four English teachers at four primary schools in Eastern Norway, I have been able to enter classrooms to investigate the teachers' practice and explore the teachers' thoughts and believes on intercultural competence. Throughout the work, four sub research questions have been essential in guiding the research, in addition to serve to limit the scope of the thesis.

6.1   Concluding remarks

The first research question asked how the teachers define the term *intercultural competence*. The teachers' interpretations of intercultural competence appear to be coherent with both the theory and the English subject curriculum. When the teachers define intercultural competence, the understanding of diversity is essential, as one needs to acknowledge each person's identity and understand how others might have different perspectives than oneself. Respect and tolerance were thus terms the teachers brought up as essential in their interpretations of intercultural competence. They also emphasised communication as being crucial in intercultural competence. The fact that they agree with the definition outlined in the curriculum is not that surprising as the curriculum is the teachers' work description. Conclusively for this study, the results imply that the teachers have a common understanding of intercultural competence and that the term concerns diversity and the ability to see different perspectives, communication, respect, and tolerance towards others.

The second research question sought answers to which components of intercultural competence the teachers emphasise in their teaching. This question is three-parted, as it concerns what *knowledge, skills,* and *attitudes* within intercultural the teachers find important for their learners to acquire. Regarding the knowledge component of intercultural competence, the teachers demonstrate in line with previous studies, that knowledge is the component the teachers emphasise in their teaching and that the teachers find knowledge important in every aspect within the term. The results also indicate that the way the teachers define intercultural competence is decisive for the content knowledge they teach, and that the teachers have a great understanding for the different aspects related to intercultural

competence. In their lessons, the teachers demonstrated to teach knowledge concerning history and culture, but also knowledge about social groups and identity, and the complexity within these aspects.

In relation to skills, the teachers report that communicative skills, with emphasis on sociolinguistic and discourse competence, are most important for their learners to acquire. The abilities to make oneself understood and knowing how to act appropriately in interactions with others are important aims within intercultural competence. It is evident that teaching language and practicing interaction have an important place in the teachers' classrooms as well. However, in terms of the savoir *skills of discovery and interaction*, the teachers put more emphasis on the interaction part than they do on discovery. The savoir *skills of interpreting and relating* were also less evident in this research. Although there are traces of teachers practicing their learners' interpreting skills, this research is lacking evidence on teachers working explicitly with the skill as it is defined in the theoretical framework, which also seems to be the issue in previous research.

Concerning attitudes, the findings are divided. Consistent with prior studies explored in this thesis, the results mainly imply a general deficiency in explicit teaching about attitudes. Despite the lack of explicit teaching about attitudes, the teachers agree that promoting openness and arousing the learners' curiosity is important when teaching intercultural competence. Openness and curiosity are attitudes the teachers find essential in the development of the learners' critical cultural awareness. The teachers suggest that by looking into other cultures and comparing different aspects within them, the learners can become more critical of their own culture and see that what they think of as normal not necessarily is a normal shared by others. Then they can start reflecting on why this is different. The results imply that the teachers are concerned with having their learners become more critical in how they see their own culture by analysing different aspects from the perspectives of others, and that the awareness they develop can help the learners change their own perspectives. However, there is a lack of evidence of the analytical approach to the development of critical cultural awareness.

The third question asked what materials the teachers use when teaching intercultural competence. The main findings from the study imply that the majority of teachers use authentic English texts when teaching intercultural competence. The teachers found it

important to engage their learners with authentic English texts created for native English speakers, as it is suggested in the curriculum that authentic language texts help set contexts of topics and show diversity in language, cultural aspects, and perspectives. Three of four teachers report that they never use textbooks when teaching intercultural competence, but rather use authentic literature, film, and other resources. It is worth mentioning that the teacher who were using a textbook report that there is a challenge to break free from it, but that they took advantage of adding authentic language resources when suitable. However, the textbook the teacher used touched upon aspects relevant to intercultural competence, which is contradictive to previous research.

The fourth question explores what type of activities the teachers use in their teaching of intercultural competence. To develop the learners' intercultural competence, theory suggest that the teachers should include activities that allow reflection and discussion, in addition to be creative and learner centred. The teachers in this study mostly include teacher-centred activities, which is contradictive to the theoretical framework in this thesis but consistent with prior research. However, the teachers show that they find it essential to include activities that allow reflection and discussion organised in different ways, but that they also provide the learners with individual work. When teaching specific content about countries and cultures, the teachers do seem to provide the learners with tasks and questions that seek one correct answer. When teaching content related to aspects within culture, it appears as the teachers plan for more reflective activities. As suggested in theory, there are also traces of creative ways to work with aspects related to intercultural competence. Conclusively, it appears from the results that whether the teachers focus on teaching vocabulary, *about* culture, or about different aspects *within* culture, the teachers in this study can relate the texts and content to intercultural competence and include varied, reflective, and creative tasks to practice the learners' skills.

The four research questions have aimed to answer how EFL teachers in Norway practice their teaching of intercultural competence in years 5-7 in primary school. I leave this project with a much greater understanding of intercultural competence and the aspects it concerns than I ever had before, and I will carry all the new knowledge I have acquired in this research with me into my classroom to help develop good world citizens with well-developed intercultural competences. To conclude, the teachers in this study demonstrate that knowledge is the component they emphasise, while attitudes and skills are being implicitly taught. The teachers

have a common understanding of intercultural competence to concern diversity and to show respect and be tolerant towards others, in addition to develop the learners' communicative skills. This is reflected in the content they teach, as it mainly concerns knowledge that will help the learners see different aspects of culture from different perspectives and content that will help develop the learner's language. As diversity is an aspect the teachers emphasise, the teachers practice their teaching by including authentic language materials that touches upon essential cultural aspects, and activities that are reflective and leave room for discussion and individual work. Not surprisingly, the teachers practice their teaching in coherence with what is suggested to promote intercultural competence in the curriculum. The teachers are thus following the guidelines they are given, to ensure their learners' development of intercultural competence.

6.2   Limitations

This thesis has explored teachers' practices and perspectives on intercultural competence in the year 5-7 classroom. Although the teachers in this study appear to have a common understanding of intercultural competence and how it should be taught, I must emphasise that the results in this thesis do not necessarily apply for all EFL teachers in Norway. As the sample of participants in this study only consists of four teachers, and because the perspectives and teaching practices presented and discussed are those provided by the participants in this study, the results cannot be seen as representative for all teachers who practice teaching of English and intercultural competence in year 5-7.

I also encountered issues with recruiting and scheduling observations and interviews. When recruiting participants for the research, it appeared as many teachers already had planned to work with intercultural competence at a time that would not fit with my time frame. This caused a loss of possible participants, which would have provided a larger sample to observe and interview.

6.3   Suggestions for further research

The research of this thesis has focused on intercultural competence teaching in Norwegian primary schools, which is an area that seems to have great potential for further research. The insight this thesis presents is new knowledge in the field of teaching intercultural competence

in years 5-7 in Norwegian primary schools. Nevertheless, further research can help guide the English teachers in their work with intercultural competence. For instance, as the teachers' choices of texts often are subjective, I would argue that exploring how textbooks relevant for *LK20* work with intercultural competence and culture would be an exciting field for future research projects as it could help teachers in their choice of resources. It also appears to be different understandings of the term intercultural competence and different aspects the teachers' emphasis when defining it. This arises a possible issue for further research and discussion. As intercultural competence is a relatively new term in the English subject curriculum, exploring further how teachers in compulsory education in Norway define intercultural competence is a topic that could benefit from further research. Another issue to research and discuss further, is whether the theory of intercultural competence aligns with the definitions related to the term in the curriculum. It would also be of interest to investigate how and if teachers practice their teaching to develop their learners' *skills of interpreting and relating*, and *skills of discovery and interaction* explicitly. The analytical dimension of critical cultural awareness and how teachers include this dimension in their teaching, is also an aspect that would benefit from further research.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Information Letter

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet *Intercultural Competence in Primary school*?

Dette skrivet gir deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Bakgrunn og formål med studien:
Dette er en forespørsel til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut av hvordan engelsklærere på 5.-7. trinn i grunnskolen arbeider med interkulturell kompetanse i klasserommet. Dette forskningsprosjektet vil bli gjennomført i forbindelse med skriving av masteroppgave i grunnskolelærerutdanningen ved Høgskolen i Innlandet skoleåret 2021/2022.

Med denne studien ønsker jeg å bidra til innsikt i hvordan det kan arbeides med interkulturell kompetanse på mellomtrinnet.

Hvem leder forskningsprosjektet?
Mariell Vesterås.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Høgskolen i Innlandet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du mottar denne forespørselen fordi du er en kvalifisert lærer som underviser i engelskfaget i 5.-7. trinn.
Hvis du ønsker å delta, må du skrive under på siste side i dette skrivet, og jeg vil kontakte deg.
Hvis du ikke ønsker å delta, kan du bare se bort fra dette skrivet og du vil ikke bli kontaktet.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i prosjektet for deg?
Ved å delta i prosjektet, vil du si ja til at jeg har mulighet til å intervjue deg og få muligheten til å observere deg i undervisning.
Intervjuet vil foregå som en åpen samtale, hvor jeg stiller åpne spørsmål rundt temaet interkulturell kompetanse og du får muligheten til å reflektere rundt dette sammen med meg. Tidsrammen vil være ca. 1 time.
Observasjonen vil foregå gjennom at jeg som ikke-deltakende observatør observerer ditt arbeid i klasserommet. Det er ønskelig å få observere 1-3 økter. Selv om det er ditt arbeid som vil være i fokus under observasjonen, kan foreldre/foresatte få tilgang til skjemaet for observasjonen hvis de ønsker for å sikre at barna deres ikke blir eksponert i oppgaven. Det som eventuelt vil bli skrevet om elevene er hva de eventuelt må utføre av aktiviteter.

Hva skjer med informasjonen som blir innhentet?
Av personlig informasjon jeg trenger fra deg er det navn og en måte å kunne kontakte deg på. Disse opplysningene vil kun bli benyttet i kontakten mellom oss, og ikke bli benyttet i oppgaven. All informasjon som blir innhentet vil bli lagret slik at ingen kan få tak i informasjonen om deg. De eneste som vil ha tilgang er veileder fra Høgskolen i Innlandet og jeg. Informasjonen vil bli lagret til 1/10 2022. Det vil ikke bli benyttet personlige opplysninger i prosjektet, og alle informanter vil være anonymisert ved hjelp av falske navn. Loven om personvern vil bli fulgt.

Under intervjuet vil det bli utført lydopptak ved hjelp av et sikkert verktøy levert av Nettskjema ved UiO. Lydopptaket vil slettes så fort intervjuet er transkribert.

Under observasjonen vil det bli benyttet et skjema, hvor jeg vil krysse av og skriftlig utdype hva du gjør i klasserommet. Dette skjemaet vil makuleres ved avslutningen av prosjektet.

Frivillig deltakelse.

Det er frivillig deltakelse i prosjektet, hvilket betyr at du velger selv om du vil delta eller ikke. Du kan når som helst trekke din deltakelse ved å kontakte prosjektleder. Hvis du velger å trekke deg, vil all informasjon om deg og dine bidrag slettes.

Dine rettigheter.

Du har rett på å få innsyn i de delene du har bidratt med informasjon til.

Du har rett til å rette opp i opplysninger hvis noe har blitt utformet feil.

Du har rett til å klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hvis dette høres interessant ut og du har lyst til å delta, kan du skrive under på neste side. Jeg håper at nettopp du har lyst til å være med og bidra til mer kunnskap på feltet!

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Hvis du har noen spørsmål angående prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med meg på epost, melding eller telefon:

Prosjektleder: Mariell Vesterås

Epost

Veileder for prosjektet er:
Rebecca Anne Charboneau Stuvland.
Epost:

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Intercultural Competence in Primary School*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

☐ Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju og observasjon hvor lydopptak under intervjuet tas opp og notater av observasjonen blir skrevet ned.

☐ Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

8.2 Appendix 2 – Approved NSD Application

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

Vurdering

Referansenummer

673345

Prosjekttittel

Intercultural Competence in Primary School

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk / Institutt for humanistiske fag

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Rebecca Anne Charboneau Stuvland,

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Mariell Vesterås,

Prosjektperiode

01.09.2021 - 01.10.2022

Vurdering (1)

16.09.2021 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 16.9.2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

DEL PROSJEKTET MED PROSJEKTANSVARLIG
For studenter er det obligatorisk å dele prosjektet med prosjektansvarlig (veileder). Del ved å trykke på knappen «Del prosjekt» i menylinjen øverst i meldeskjemaet. Prosjektansvarlig bes akseptere invitasjonen innen en uke. Om invitasjonen utløper, må han/hun inviteres på nytt.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

8.3   Appendix 3 – Observation Form

Date:	Time of Day:		Duration of Lesson:		Number of Learners:		Year:		Topic:
	Materials:	Skills of interpreting and relating:	Activities:	Skills of discovery and interaction:	Knowledge:	Attitudes:	Critical cultural awareness:	Other:	
Pre-Activity:			.						
Main -Activity:									
Post -Activity:									
Other:									

Intervjuguide

Hvilke/t trinn underviser du i engelsk?

Hvor mange års erfaring har du i grunnskolen?

Hvor mange års erfaring har du som engelsklærer på mellomtrinnet?

Hvor mange studiepoeng har du i engelskfaget?

I den nye læreplanen er det mange elementer som referer til interkulturell kompetanse.

 Hvordan definerer du begrepet interkulturell kompetanse?

Hvilke aspekter innenfor interkulturell kompetanse legger du vekt på i arbeider du med engelskfaget?

Hva tenker du er viktige ferdigheter for elevene å utvikle innenfor interkulturell kompetanse?

Hva tenker du er viktig kunnskap elevene skal oppnå og utvikle innenfor interkulturell kompetanse?

Hvordan arbeider du med forståelse og holdninger i engelskfaget?

Hvor ofte vil du si at du arbeider med interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget?

Hva slags materiell bruker du i undervisningen og hva bruker du det hovedsakelig for?

Hvilke aktiviteter bruker du å inkludere i arbeid med interkulturell kompetanse? Metoder?

Kan du fortelle meg om en økt eller et prosjekt du har hatt i engelskundervisningen hvor du hadde et stort fokus på interkulturell kompetanse? Hvordan var det? Hva gjorde du? Hva gjorde elevene?

Er det noe du finner utfordrende når det kommer til å arbeide med interkulturell kompetanse?

Hva har vært det beste med å arbeide med interkulturell kompetanse?

Er det noe du føler har endret seg i skolen i din tid som lærer når det kommer til dette temaet? Særlig med tanke på den nye læreplanen..

Hva tenker du om a interkulturell kompetanse har fått en såpass stor plass i den nye læreplanen?