Intercultural Learning Through Texts

Picturebook Dialogues in the English Language Classroom

Sissil Lea Heggernes

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OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet
Universitetsbiblioteket
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Telefon (47) 64 84 90 00

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Summary

The overarching research question in this thesis is as follows: How can interaction with texts foster English language (EL) students' intercultural learning? The three articles explore the following research questions:

1. What types of texts and activities may foster EL students' intercultural learning?
2. What are the possibilities and challenges inherent in working with a challenging picturebook to foster EL students' intercultural learning?
3. How may EL students' intercultural learning be enhanced through a dialogic approach to picturebook reading?

The call for more empirical research on intercultural learning and reading practices in English language teaching (ELT) has motivated this PhD study. It consists of three articles and an extended abstract. The thesis is grounded in an ecological semiotic approach, which builds on and extends sociocultural theory.

The first article is a critical review of 36 empirical articles from ELT, located through systematic searches of databases and manual searches of academic journals. The review analyses text selection and justification, and activities for intercultural learning in ELT. The results show a prevalence of fiction texts, justified by their potential for cultural learning through the readers' engagement with the material, and that theoretically founded rationales are more frequently provided for fiction than for nonfiction texts. The theoretically grounded rationales for the selection of texts drew on reader response and critical theory and fronted the affordances of challenging fictional readings for intercultural learning. Studies on multimodal texts emphasised the link between multimodality and intercultural learning. Furthermore, most activities are student-centred and seemingly dialogic, but there are few experiential activities. Hence, the review set the scene for a case study in an 8th grade lower secondary EL classroom in Norway, where 22 students (13–14 year-olds) read a challenging picturebook (articles 2 and 3).

The second article explores the possibilities and challenges inherent in working with a hybrid picturebook/graphic novel to foster EL students' intercultural learning. Peter Sís's (2007) *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* is a memoir based on Sís's upbringing in Czechoslovakia during the Cold War. The article explores what seemed to trigger the students' learning and the aspects of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) that became manifest. Data from focus group interviews and student texts, triangulated by my

field notes from classroom observations, were analysed through content analysis. The results show that small group dialogues on the art used to illustrate the picturebook, stimulated by open questions, helped the students' language and intercultural learning. Knowledge of another culture was the most salient category, in addition to curiosity and different forms of empathy. The main challenges identified were the students' perceptions of what to learn in the subject of English and how.

The third article analyses focus group dialogues and classroom talk about the same picturebook through the lens of dialogic theory. I analyse what features of dialogue seem to stimulate intercultural learning and how teachers can facilitate students' intercultural dialogues. I argue that knowledge about dialogic features can serve as a tool for researchers and teachers to foster EL students' intercultural learning.

In this thesis, I argue that increased awareness of the affordances of different types of texts and the features of educational dialogues can help teachers and researchers to mediate intercultural learning. The thesis contributes theoretically through exploring the parallels between appreciation of art and intercultural learning in relation to picturebooks. Moreover, it contributes empirical knowledge to an under-researched area of ELT in secondary education. Methodologically, the thesis illustrates how EL students' intercultural learning can be studied through the lens of dialogic theory, and it provides didactic guidance for teachers in their choice of texts and mediation of educational dialogues for intercultural learning.

The thesis also identifies challenges connected to working with picturebooks for intercultural learning, which are related to stereotyping and expectations of teaching and learning. However, the main conclusion is that challenging picturebooks have great potential for fostering intercultural learning in EL classrooms.

Sammendrag

Det overordnede forskningsspørsmålet for denne avhandlingen er: Hvordan kan samhandling med tekster fremme elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget? Avhandlingens tre artikler tar for seg følgende forskningsspørsmål:

1. Hvilke typer tekst og aktiviteter kan fremme elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget?
2. Hvilke muligheter og utfordringer fremkommer gjennom arbeid med en utfordrende bildebok for å fremme elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget?
3. Hvordan kan elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget fremmes gjennom en dialogisk tilnærming til lesing av bildebøker?

Behovet for mer empirisk forskning på interkulturell læring og lesing i engelskfaget er utgangspunktet for denne doktorgradsavhandlingen. Avhandlingen består av tre artikler og en kappe. Avhandlingen er fundert i en økologisk-semiotisk tilnærming til læring, som bygger på sosiokulturell teori.

Den første artikkelen er en kritisk oversiktsartikkel som gjennomgår 36 artikler. Artiklene beskriver empiriske studier fra engelskopplæring med henblikk på interkulturell læring gjennom arbeid med forskjellige typer tekst. De er funnet gjennom systematiske databasesøk og håndsøking av tidsskrifter. Artikkelen analyserer valg av og begrunnelser for hvilke tekster og aktiviteter som er brukt. Resultatene viser at de fleste studiene benytter skjønnlitterære tekster, noe som begrunnes med at elevene og studentene kan lære om kultur gjennom tekstene. Disse studiene inneholder oftere en teoretisk begrunnelse for valg av tekst enn de studiene som involverer sakprosa gjør. Begrunnelsene for valg av tekster baserer seg på resepsjons- og kritisk teori, og fremhever læringspotensialet i utfordrende tekster. Når det gjelder aktivitetene i studiene, kan de fleste karakteriseres som studentsentrerte og dialogiske, men de gir i liten grad elevene muligheter til å trekke veksler på egne erfaringer. Studiene der multimodale tekster leses, knytter multimodalitet til interkulturell læring. Med dette som bakteppe, gjennomførte jeg en kasusstudie i engelskundervisningen i en 8. klasse på en norsk ungdomsskole, hvor 22 elever på 13-14 år leste en utfordrende bildebok (artikkel 2 og 3).

Den andre artikkelen utforsker mulighetene og utfordringene som fremkommer gjennom arbeid med en hybrid bildebok/grafisk roman for å fremme elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget. *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* av Peter Sís (2007) er basert på forfatterens oppvekst i Tsjekkoslovakia under den kalde krigen. Artikkelen tar for seg det som ser ut til å bidra til læring hos elevene og hvilke elementer av interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse som kom til syne. Datagrunnlaget, som ble gjenstand for

innholdsanalyse, består av intervjuer i fokusgrupper og elevtekster. Analysen ble videre understøttet av feltnotater fra observasjoner av undervisningen. Resultatene viser at dialoger i liten gruppe, med utgangspunkt i åpne spørsmål om kunstneriske bildebokillustrasjoner, ser ut til å fremme elevenes språklige og interkulturelle læring. Den mest fremtredende kategorien i analysegrunnlaget var kunnskap om annen kultur, i tillegg til nysgjerrighet og ulike former for empati. De største utfordringene var knyttet til studentenes oppfatninger om kompetansemålene og hvordan man kan lære engelsk.

Den tredje artikkelen benytter dialogisk teori til å analysere dialoger i fokusgruppe og hel klasse om den samme bildeboka. Jeg analyserer hvilke dialogiske trekk som ser ut til å kunne bidra til interkulturell læring og hvordan lærere kan legge til rette for interkulturell dialog i klasserommet. Jeg hevder at kunnskap hos lærere og forskere om dialogiske trekk kan være et redskap for å fremme elevers interkulturelle læring i engelskfaget.

I avhandlingen argumenterer jeg for at økt bevissthet om ulike tekster og læringsfremmende dialogers affordanser, kan hjelpe lærere og forskere å fremme interkulturell læring i engelskfaget. Avhandlingen gir et teoretisk bidrag til forskningsfeltet gjennom å utforske parallellene mellom kunst, eksemplifisert ved bildebøker, og interkulturell læring. I tillegg bidrar avhandlingen med empirisk kunnskap på et lite utforsket område av engelskfaget i ungdomsskolen. Metodologisk bidrar avhandlingen med å vise hvordan engelsk-elevers interkulturelle læring kan studeres i lys av dialogisk teori, og den gir råd til lærere om valg av tekster og tilrettelegging for læringsfremmende dialoger med henblikk på interkulturell læring.

Avhandlingen peker også på utfordringer knyttet til arbeid med bildebøker for å fremme interkulturell læring. Disse handler først og fremst om faren for å bidra til stereotypier, og om forventninger til læring og undervisning i engelskfaget. Til tross for dette, konkluderer avhandlingen med å fremheve det store potensialet utfordrende bildebøkers har for å fremme interkulturell læring i engelskfaget.

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Part II: The Articles

1) Heggernes, S.L. (2021). A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. *Educational Research Review*, *33*, Article 100390, 1-12.
DOI: **https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390**

2) Heggernes, S.L. (2021). Intercultural learning through Peter Sís' The Wall: Teenagers reading a challenging picturebook. In Ommundsen, Å.M. & Haaland, G. & Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. Exploring challenging picturebooks in education: International Perspectives on Language and Literature Learning, (pp. 475-82). London: Routledge.
DOI: **https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003013952**

3) Heggernes, S. L. (2019). Opening a dialogic space: Intercultural learning through picturebooks. *Children's Literature in English Language Education, 7*(2), 37–60.
URL: **https://clelejournal.org/article-2-intercultural-learning/**

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ELT	English language teaching
EL	English language
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FLT	Foreign language teaching
L1	First language
L2	Second language
L3	Third language
IC	Intercultural competence
ICC	Intercultural communicative competence
LK06	The Knowledge Promotion (The Norwegian national curriculum of 2006/2013)
LK20	The national curriculum in Norway
RFCDC	The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe)
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

Part I

Extended abstract

1. Introduction

This article-based thesis explores how reading literature, and in particular picturebooks, can foster English language (EL) students' intercultural learning. Through a literature review, the study synthesises knowledge of research from English Language Teaching (ELT) targeting intercultural learning through students' engagement with texts. Moreover, the PhD study addresses the scarcity of empirical research on intercultural learning through picturebooks in ELT in lower secondary school through a case study from a Norwegian 8th grade EL classroom. The case study explores the EL students' intercultural learning through engaging with Peter Sís's (2007) *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*, which relates the author's experiences of growing up under a totalitarian regime.

1.1. Background

In a world marked by increasing globalisation and diversification, it is vital to develop the ability to communicate across cultures and deal with cultural differences. Accordingly, intercultural learning has become a concern for educators and researchers alike. *Intercultural learning* in ELT is defined in this thesis as the process of developing *intercultural communicative competence (ICC)*, namely, the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for constructive communication and behaviour 'when interacting across difference' (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5).

Intercultural learning is an interdisciplinary concern. However, the language classroom is, for several reasons, particularly well-suited for intercultural learning. Interaction happens through language, which is intrinsically linked to communication and cultures. The EL subject content is conveyed through different types of texts, so, consequently, interaction with EL texts is central. Arguably, reading literature in a foreign language is in itself an intercultural experience (Fenner, 2001; Hoff, 2017; Matos, 2011), and the Norwegian English subject curriculum (LK06)[1] encourages engagement with different types of texts (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013). The English subject is to function both as a tool and to promote the general education perspective[2] (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013), a term

[1] LK06 was the curriculum in effect during the work with this PhD study, and it will be referred to throughout the thesis. The new curriculum, LK20 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020), implemented in autumn 2020, will be referred to when relevant.

[2] The term 'dannelse' is used, which is the Norwegian translation of the German 'bildung'. Bildung is related to personal growth, moral development and developing critical skills through socialisation into a culture. Intercultural dialogue can promote students' bildung. See Hoff (2014) for a more thorough discussion of '[b]ildung as a philosophical and educational concept' (p. 509).

closely connected to intercultural learning.

Both intercultural learning and multimodal texts, and more specifically, picturebooks, are concepts that have found their way into the Norwegian English subject curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). The curriculum grants EL teachers in Norway freedom in their selection of texts, and in alignment with both the former and the current curricula (LK06 and LK20), this thesis employs an open definition of text. Texts are considered as semiotic entities, which are open for interpretation. A text can employ multiple semiotic systems, such as verbal text, font, pictures and sound. Hence, texts may include everything from articles, novels and picturebooks to films and art installations.

Many students struggle with reading literature in a foreign language. Reading texts with multiple semiotic resources, such as pictures and verbal text, may both assist the students' meaning making and foster their capacity to interact across difference. This thesis argues that picturebooks have affordances that make them suitable for intercultural language learning, for reasons discussed in Chapter 2. Picturebooks relate a narrative through the interaction of pictures and words (Ommundsen, 2018, p. 1), and this picture–text interaction may both support and challenge students.

Byram's (1997) work on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has inspired this thesis. The 1990s saw an expansion of research on the connection between language and culture learning, positing that language learning should take an intercultural perspective (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). Byram's (1997) model of ICC, which builds on Van Ek's (1986) model of communicative competence, came to be particularly influential in foreign language teaching (FLT) through his work with the Council of Europe (Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020a). However, it was not until a decade later that the intercultural turn found its way into language learning curricula (Tolosa, Biebricher, East, & Howard, 2018). Yet, an analysis of 14 curricula from across the globe, including Norway, found that few of them provided guidelines for the teachers about how to incorporate the intercultural dimension in their teaching. Furthermore, the knowledge dimension was more strongly focused than the attitudinal one and the acquisition of discovery and interaction skills (Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2015). This may be problematic, as the different elements of ICC are interrelated. The lack of guidelines grants didactic freedom to teachers but also fails to support them in mediating students' intercultural learning (Conway, Richards, Harvey, & Roskvist, 2010; Oranje & Smith, 2018; Peiser & Jones, 2014). Drawing on perspectives from Vygotsky (1978), Bakhtin (1981)

and van Lier (2004), mediation in this thesis is understood as the use of inner and outer resources to make meaning of texts and interpersonal communication, and how teachers may facilitate this process in their students. The lack of support may be one of the reasons why much work remains to incorporate the intercultural dimension in language teaching, despite overall positive attitudes among teachers (Byram, 2014; Oranje & Smith, 2018; Sercu, Bandura, & Castro, 2005).

There is no unanimous agreement on how to develop ICC (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Nevertheless, some key factors can be detected from the intercultural literature (e.g. Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Deardorff, 2019; Dypedahl & Lund, 2020), such as: (1) Learning about one's own cultural perspectives to gain insight into those of others; (2) Opportunities to personally relate to the teaching materials and activities and; (3) Decentring, seeing your own cultural perspectives from the outside and those of others from the inside. The latter involves several facets of ICC, such as a genuine sense of wonder, critical detachment and empathy. Both personal contacts and a variety of teaching resources can help students gain insight into different perspectives. Much research literature pertains to the role of fiction in fostering intercultural learning, including the studies of Bland (2013a), Bredella (2000), Delanoy (2018), Fenner (2001), Hoff (2016), Kramsch (1998), Matos (2011) and Matos and Melo-Pfeifer (2020b). Through fiction, readers may build identity and learn about others (Bishop, 1990), and dialogues about the cultural content may contribute to the readers' intercultural learning (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Kramsch, 2011; Maine, 2013; Matos, 2005, 2011; Youngs & Serafini, 2013).

Interaction across difference is also required to develop theory in ELT. Delanoy (2018) posits that 'border crossing is encouraged to bring the field [of ELT] up to date with present concerns', as multiple theoretical perspectives are necessary to understand the complexities of literature and language learning (2018, pp. 141–142). Accordingly, this study is based on ecological-semiotic theory (van Lier, 2004), combining perspectives from intercultural, picturebook and dialogic theory (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006, 2019; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Vrikki, Wheatley, Howe, Hennessy, & Mercer, 2019; Wegerif, 2008, 2011).

1.2. Relevance and motives

My choice of research study can be condensed into the following four societal-, system-, research- and personal motives. Necessary features important for this study will be considered in connection with the motives. At the same time, these also expose the relevance of the thesis.

The *first motive* is societal. Norway has always been a culturally diverse society (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2014). However, since around 1970, increased immigration from other countries has led to even more cultural diversity. An educational implication of this is the need for inclusive teaching approaches and materials. Whether learners experience encounters with difference in physical or virtual settings, intercultural learning fosters essential skills in the 21st century. These skills and competences, which include democratic and critical skills, are required to deal with societal trends, such as globalisation and increased diversity (Erstad, Amdam, Arnseth, & Silseth, 2014; NOU 2014:7).

When interviewing EL teachers for this study, I asked them what they considered as the most important thing for their students to learn. The unanimous reply was the ability to communicate well in English, a view shared by the Danish EL teachers in Svarstad's (2020, p. 3) study. Good communication in a diverse society involves developing the skills necessary to communicate effectively and appropriately across difference (Deardorff, 2009b, 2019), i.e. *intercultural communication*. The use of English as a lingua franca entails a shift in language pedagogy from a native-speaker model to a focus on the language structures necessary for effective communication across a range of contexts (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). Additionally, elements of ICC, such as openness towards others and knowledge of other cultures, tolerance of ambiguity and empathy, can facilitate intercultural communication (Deardorff, 2006). It is impossible to teach the specifics of all the different cultures students may encounter, especially as cultures are not stable entities. Rather, the students should develop knowledge of constitutive elements and processes of socialisation into cultures (Byram, 1997). For this purpose, a picturebook from a non-English speaking culture, such as the one used in my case study, is just as relevant as one from a country in which English is the official language.

The *second motive* is systemic. The Norwegian Education Act calls for an education that 'opens doors to the world', based on human rights, fostering cultural awareness and critical thinking (1998 §1-1). The education should both promote insight into diversity and occur in an inclusive and diverse learning environment (Core Curriculum, 2017, p. 4; The Education Act, 1998 § 1-1).[3] These foundational values are reflected in both the core curriculum[4] and other policy papers (NOU 2015:8; The Ministry of Education and Research, 2016), underlin-

[3] All translations from the new curriculum, including the core curriculum, are my own.
[4] The national curriculum in Norway consists of an overarching core curriculum, designating values and principles for primary and secondary education, in addition to the subject curricula.

ing the role of the school in providing an education, a general education and fostering democratic citizens. Art and cultural expression have unique value and can promote the students' general education, which is a rationale for the use of high-quality picturebooks and other forms of art. However, neither The Guidelines for Teacher Education for English nor the LK06, the curriculum in use when starting the study, specify that students should engage with art and/or picturebooks. Hence, it was of interest to study the specific affordances of picturebooks, including their artistic illustrations, to elicit potential implications for policy making.

Neither LK06 nor LK20 prescribe pedagogical methods. However, the core curriculum focuses on dialogue to develop the students' social skills. Through dialogue the students may learn to listen to one another, justify their arguments, challenge one another's ideas, deal with conflict and find shared solutions (Core Curriculum, 2017, pp. 8–9). The values promoted through the Education Act and the core curriculum align with a focus on intercultural learning through dialogue.

There is a tension in the English subject curriculum of LK06 between the perspective of English as an international language, through which understanding and respect across cultures can be nurtured, and a focus on knowledge of culture in English-speaking countries. The latter reflects a more static, nation view on culture (Rindal, 2014). To some extent, the curriculum of LK06 encourages intercultural learning and the use of different types of texts. While the terms 'intercultural' and 'multimodal' are not explicitly mentioned in the English subject curriculum of LK06, in the new subject curriculum, LK20, the inspiration from research on English as a lingua franca and intercultural competence is visible. LK20 focuses more strongly on intercultural learning, including terms such as intercultural competence, multimodal texts and picturebooks, and introduces Democracy and Citizenship as an interdisciplinary theme (in alignment with, e.g. Byram & Wagner, 2018). These revisions to the curriculum highlight the relevance of the current thesis.

The call for research-based teaching and the need to address gaps in the research literature constitute the *third motive*. Byram, Holmes and Savvides (2013) have drawn attention to the lack of empirical studies on ICC development, and, according to Hoff (2017), there is no extensive study on the use of literature to foster ICC. Although some progress has been made, my study also reveals several research gaps, as discussed in Chapter 3.

There is a need for inclusive teaching approaches and resources to cater to the needs of a diverse classroom, both culturally and with regard to skills. Scholars have advocated for the inclusion of multimodal texts in FLT, as they can help to prepare students for an increasingly

multimodal reality and engage the literacies acquired out of school by a generation of digital natives (Habegger-Conti, 2015; Skulstad, 2018). While this is true of all multimodal texts, picturebooks have the added value of affording what Hayles refers to as deep attention (2007). Picturebooks can be a suitable resource for intercultural learning, as readers at all levels can access their content. Inclusive teaching resources and practices that appeal to a broad range of interests and skills are essential to intercultural learning.

The *fourth motive* is personal. I strongly believe in the power of fiction to shape our way of thinking and feeling. This is paralleled in the cognitive and affective aspects of ICC. Furthermore, telling stories is central to human meaning-making (Deardorff, 2019; Hardy, 1977; Szurmak & Thuna, 2013). Having worked in secondary school for more than a decade, I have witnessed first-hand the great variety of EL students' reading skills. My attempts to find differentiated reading materials to cater to the needs of a diverse group of students always felt unsatisfactory; ad hoc solutions that were not properly integrated with the curriculum. Before I knew the term intercultural learning, I always aimed at challenging the students' stereotypes and making them see beyond the confines of their local community. Additionally, I have struggled with how to activate all the students. Working dialogically with a challenging picturebook to foster intercultural learning targets all three of these concerns.

1.3. Context

This section will present English language teaching (ELT) as the context of this study, the status of ELT in Norway as well as explaining some changes in terminology occurring throughout my study.

ELT is an umbrella term, covering different contexts where English is taught as a second (ESL), third or foreign language (EFL). These contexts have different pedagogical implications, as learning English in a setting where it is the majority language (ESL) allows a much greater degree of exposure to the language than language learning in a context with low exposure (EFL). However, the purpose of fostering ICC remains the same.[5] This was a rationale for including studies from both ESL and EFL classrooms in the first article, presuming that the pedagogical approaches to intercultural learning would have more similarities than differences.

The context for the case study, providing data for the second and third articles, is ELT in Norway. The situation of English in Norway is somewhere on a continuum between ESL

[5] That being said, I am not oblivious to the fact that ICC may be interpreted differently and filled with different content in various educational contexts.

and EFL. English is not an official language. However, through media and travelling, Norwegians have considerable exposure to English. English is also used as a lingua franca in working life, and, in some settings, as the official language of communication in working life in Norway. Consequently, the level of English in the population is quite high, which leads Bland (2018a, pp. 1–2) to argue that learning English in Norway has much in common with learning English as a second language (ESL). Some Norwegian ELT studies also describe English as a second language (e.g. Brevik, 2019; Røkenes, 2016). Arguably, ELT in Norway veers towards the ESL side of the continuum as the students become proficient enough to learn subject content through English, rather than focusing on language forms and function (Mahan, 2020, p. 74). However, there is still a need for improved academic and occupational English (Hellekjær, 2005; Hellekjær & Fairway, 2015), and Norwegian classrooms are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse.[6] In 2016, 16% of school children 6–15 years of age were immigrants or children of immigrants, an increase of 66% from 2008 (Statistics Norway, 2017)[7], meaning that English is potentially a third or fourth language. Furthermore, 6.7% of students in lower secondary school select in-depth English rather than other foreign languages (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019b). This subject is mostly chosen by students who struggle with English and language learning (Haugen, 2017). Moreover, 7.7% of students enrolled in compulsory education also receive special needs education, and nearly 50% of this occurs inside mainstream classes (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2019a). Consequently, Norwegian classrooms include students who range from fluent to beginning EL learners, which are arguments for considering English as a foreign language, and EFL is a term that is still frequently used (e.g. Hoff, 2019; Munden, 2018; Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær, & Hertzberg, 2017).

Another consideration in my choice of terminology was the connotations of ‘foreign language’. English has been taught as a foreign language in Norway since the end of the 19th century (Ibsen, 2000). In this period, the approach to literature and culture in the curriculum has changed along with the expanding role of English as a lingua franca. In EFL curricula in the first half of the 20th century, culture teaching focused on factual information about national cultures in what Kachru (1985) refers to as inner circle countries, where English is the first and majority language, and knowledge about the literary canon and art, so called ‘Big C’

[6] I am familiar with Dervin’s (2016) criticism of the term diversity but choose to use terminology that is widely accepted in the field, acknowledging that this may change.
[7] The statistics do not distinguish between children born inside or outside of Norway.

culture (Risager, 2018, p. 40). Gradually 'little c' culture, knowledge of the cultural products, perspectives and practices of the native population, made its way into EFL education. The culture of a target country was compared and contrasted to that of the learners. This approach may be a first step towards ICC. However, it privileges a nation view of cultures, where culture is regarded as a static entity. In today's world, with more non-native than native speakers of English, the relevance of a nation view of cultures has been questioned (Blair, 2020). Throughout the course of my PhD study, my use of terminology in this thesis shifted from EFL to ELT. As outlined in this section, there are valid reasons for considering the English subject in Norway as both EFL and ESL, and lower secondary school can be said to be somewhere in the middle of this continuum. Further, to avoid the connotations of a static culture concept related to EFL, the umbrella term ELT was chosen.

English is a mandatory subject in the Norwegian school system from Year 1 to 11 (ages 6–16). There are one to two lessons a week in primary school, increasing to five in the final year. The 8th grade group in my case study had two weekly lessons. The standardised national curriculum in force from 2006 (LK06) outlines the purpose of the subject and the curricular aims for language learning, written and oral communication and culture, society and literature (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013). The case study involved activities in alignment with LK06.

1.4. Research questions

The overarching research question for this PhD study is as follows: How can interaction with texts foster EL students' intercultural learning? To address this question, I pose the following sub-questions:

1. What types of texts and activities may foster EL students' intercultural learning?
2. What are the possibilities and challenges inherent in working with a challenging picturebook to foster EL students' intercultural learning?
3. How may EL students' intercultural learning be enhanced through a dialogic approach to picturebook reading?

The first question is addressed by article 1, the second by article 2 and the third by article 3. Articles 2 and 3 also illustrate how picturebook reading may foster EL students' intercultural learning. Even though the setting for this study is English language teaching, I believe the research is relevant for other language subjects as well. An overview of the articles is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Overview of the Research Questions, Data, Key Concepts and Main Findings of the Three Articles

Article	Research questions in each article	Data	Key concepts	Main findings
1. A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom (submitted to Educational Research Review with minor revisions, November 2020)	1. What types of text are represented in EFL/ESL classroom studies concerning students' intercultural learning? 2. How is the selection of texts justified? 3. To what extent are text-based activities student-centred, experiential or dialogic? 4. To what extent do the studies' research designs serve to illuminate the students' intercultural learning processes?	36 articles	- ICC - EFL/ESL - Fiction texts - Nonfiction texts - Rationale - Affordances - Student-centred, dialogic and experiential activities	- Fiction texts are more frequently used and more strongly justified than non-fiction texts for intercultural learning - Most activities are student-centred and arguably dialogic - Experiential activities are underrepresented - Few studies employ research designs that illuminate the students' processes of intercultural learning - An awareness of the affordances of texts can guide the selection of texts for intercultural learning
2. Intercultural learning through Peter Sis' *The Wall:* Teenagers reading a challenging picturebook **In *Picturebooks in Education* (Routledge, in press)**	1. What are the possibilities and challenges inherent in working with a challenging picturebook to foster students' intercultural learning? 2. What aspects of ICC manifested themselves? 3. How did the students learn?	Audio-taped focus group interviews Student texts Field notes from	- Intercultural learning: Knowledge and empathy - Picturebooks - ELT - Dialogue - Experiential learning - Visual literacy	- A challenging picturebook can contribute to EL students' intercultural learning in lower secondary school. - Small group dialogues around the pictures, stimulated by open questions, fostered the students' language and intercultural learning. - Two challenges were the perceptions of what to

		observations	- Perceptions of learning	learn in the subject of English and how, and the danger of stereotyping.
3. Opening a dialogic space: Intercultural learning through picturebooks **(CLELE, 2019, *7*(2))**	1. What features of dialogue seem to be conducive to intercultural learning? 2. How might teachers facilitate students' intercultural dialogues?	Two audio-taped focus group interviews Field notes from observations	- Intercultural dialogue - Processes of intercultural learning - Dialogic features - Visual literacy	- Students' agency, willingness to actively listen, explore conflicting ideas and change their mind are dialogic features contributing to intercultural learning. - Teachers may facilitate students' intercultural dialogue through knowledge about dialogic features, open questions and refraining from providing 'correct' answers.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The extended abstract consists of six chapters, which contextualise the PhD study, expand on the theoretical perspectives and the methodological approach, present and critically discuss the results, present the contributions of the results and their implications and make suggestions for further research. Chapter 1 presents the background and relevance of the study in addition to the context of ELT. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for the PhD study based on ecological semiotics and intercultural research literature, highlighting interaction with texts for intercultural learning and the affordances of picturebooks, in addition to outlining teaching approaches for intercultural learning. Chapter 3 consists of a literature review, with a focus on reading literature and, in particular, picturebooks from ELT. The chapter focuses particularly on relevant literature not covered by article 1, which is a literature review. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the methodological approach, data collection and analysis, evaluation of the research quality, ethical considerations and limitations. Chapter 5 presents the results from the three articles. Finally, Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the findings, reflections on the main theoretical, methodological, empirical and didactic contributions, suggestions for further research, implications for policy making, teacher education, the field of

research and practice and concluding remarks. The three articles are included after the appendices.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter expands on the theoretical framework of my thesis. The overarching theory, ecological semiotics, is presented first, before I expand on the intercultural research literature and interaction with text for intercultural learning.

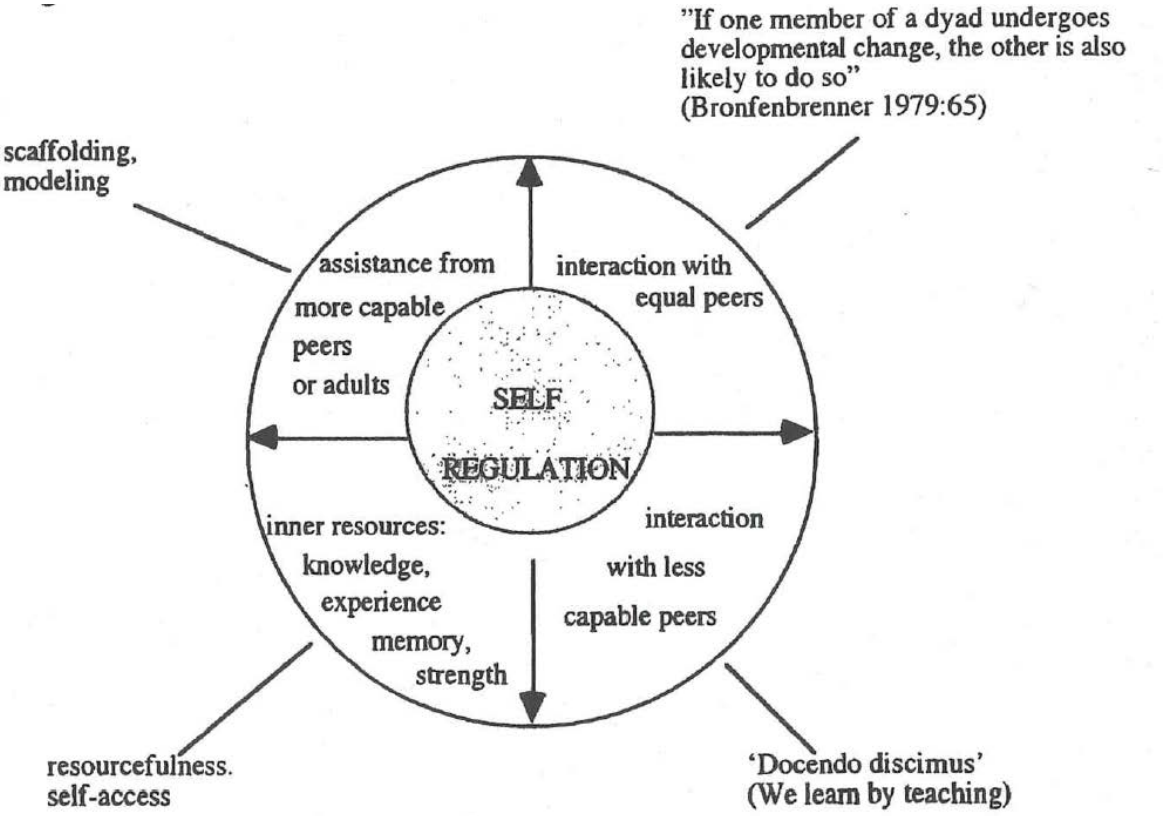
2.1. Ecological semiotics

The theoretical framework developed for the study concurs with ecological semiotics. The framework was chosen due to its holistic approach to language learning, which takes into account the social, physical and symbolic context (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5). As such, and as will be elaborated on below, I argue that intercultural learning is an integrated part of ecological semiotics. The framework has implications both for the research methods (see Chapter 4) and teaching approaches selected for the case study (see section 2.4.). In the following, I will present some of the basic tenets of ecological semiotics relevant to this thesis, which explores how interaction with text can foster EL students' intercultural learning.

Ecology is neither a theory nor a method 'but a world view' (van Lier, 2004, p. 222). It builds on sociocultural theory, one example being the expansion of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978). Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) demonstrated how *interaction* with an adult or a more capable peer can lead to learning within a learner's zone of proximal development. However, he wrote very little about how the ZPD can be applied in the classroom, which has led other scholars to further develop his theories (van Lier, 2004, p. 146). There is a considerable amount of research on how a variety of participation structures lead to learning in interaction (e.g. Davin & Donato, 2013; Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Scollon, 1976). In addition to the novice–expert structure, learning also takes place when more experienced learners explain materials to less experienced peers, explore ideas in interaction with equal peers and draw on their own inner resources (e.g. through using learning strategies), as visualised in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Van Lier's (2004, p. 158) Expanded Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)



Additionally, semiotic theories of how humans make sense of language and their implications for language learning are central to ecological semiotics. In a semiotic tradition, language use equals the making and use of signs. This study employs an open definition of text as a semiotic entity, which carries meaning and is open for interpretation. Texts are constituted by signs, and consequently, semiotics is a relevant theoretical backdrop for a study of text and engagement with text. The ways in which these signs are composed and assembled are influenced by culture, making text creation and interpretation a cultural concern. I will briefly present two approaches to signs to illustrate how semiology and semiotics can be linked to a static or dynamic conception of culture. This dichotomy can be linked to discussions in the intercultural field, which will be further elaborated in section 2.2.

Saussure (1907/1983) presented a two-partite sign constituted by the signifier and the signified. The signifier is a sound-image,[8] for example, the word 'heart'. The signified is the meaning granted to the signifier, for example, 'a human organ'. Saussure's two-partite sign implicates a static and arbitrary connection between the signifier and the signified within a closed system. More than half a century later, Barthes (1969) showed that words have a denotative and connotative meaning. 'Human organ' is the denotative meaning of 'heart', but it can have many different connotative meanings, such as 'love' and 'life'. This shows that both words and images are used as symbols with cultural connotations. Considering the connotative meaning of signs emphasises that a static semiotic approach cannot account for the dynamic nature of culture.

Van Lier (2004) draws on Pierce's account of the three-part sign to illustrate how second language (L2) learners may be helped or hampered in their progress, depending on their access to and opportunities to relate to the symbolic content of language learning materials.[9] Pierce's triadic sign involves Firstness ('the [material] quality', 'what is', connected to 'feeling, or possibility'), Secondness ('reaction, relation, change, experience') and Thirdness ('mediation, habit, interpretation, representation, communication, symbolism') (van Lier, 2004, p. 61). Relating this to the reading of a text, Firstness may represent the text itself, Secondness, the reader's reaction to it and Thirdness the mediation of the text. The inclusion of the reader's reaction (Secondness) and mediation of symbolic content to other readers (Thirdness) highlights the dialogic nature of language (see Bakhtin, 1981). Furthermore, it shows the dynamic nature of signs, and in turn of language. How readers make sense of the trifold levels of texts will depend on multiple factors, such as their knowledge of the target language, the setting of the text and the readers' own cultural background. L2 readers need to be given rich opportunities to relate to the texts to engage at all three levels of reading. Responding to the symbolic content (Thirdness) of a text from a different cultural setting is an intercultural experience, as the reader will always draw on her own cultural context in responding to the text.[10]

Humans make sense of their existence through language. Van Lier (2004) refutes the view of language as a fixed code that can be transmitted from an expert to a learner. On the contrary, language use is situated and may take on different meanings in different contexts. An

[8] For Saussure (1907/1983), the signifier is a mental construction, but later developments in semiotics gave the signifier material form, as something which could be seen, touched and smelled (Hjelmslev, 1943/1966, ch. 13).
[9] The following account of Peirce's triadic sign is based on van Lier (2004).
[10] This argument could be taken further. Considering the dynamic nature of language and culture, no one reader will have the exact same interpretation of a text. However, even if one recognises culture as dynamic, readers with a similar background may share similar cultural connotations.

implication of this view is that intercultural learning is subsumed within language learning, as learning emerges in relation to an ever-changing, dynamic physical, social and symbolic context. These contexts involve texts, their differing affordances for intercultural learning and how texts are mediated in the classroom.

In the following, I will present perspectives from the intercultural field, interaction with text, the affordances of the picturebook and approaches to intercultural education. In addition, I will conceptualise terms of importance to the analysis and discussion.

2.2. Perspectives from the intercultural field

This section will elaborate on the terms intercultural learning, intercultural education, intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence (ICC), all of which are used in this thesis. My understanding of these terms draws on work by Michael Byram (e.g. 1997, 2009, 2014) and colleagues (Boye & Byram, 2018; Byram et al., 2002; Byram & Wagner, 2018; Wagner, Perugini, & Byram, 2018), in addition to Darla Deardorff (2006, 2009a, 2019). Much of Byram's work is connected to the Council of Europe, and Deardorff's is affiliated with UNESCO (e.g. Deardorff, 2019), both Western institutions with a strong influence on education. As such, my thesis belongs to a Western tradition emphasising 'human rights, democracy and the rule of law' as founding principles of intercultural education[11] (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 13). I will return to the main points of critique of this approach below.

2.2.1. Definitions of IC/ICC

In order to discuss interculturality, it is necessary to consider how culture is understood. Culture is a complex concept, which some scholars have argued is no longer useful (Dervin, 2016, p. 13; Holliday, 2010). However, as a part of common parlance and language teachers' vocabulary, culture is arguably a pedagogically useful concept (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 142). To simplify a complex concept, a working definition of culture in this PhD study has been that it relates to the shared products, practices and perspectives of a group (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). A caveat is required here to affirm that, while socialisation into cultures is an ongoing phenomenon, cultures are constantly changing, and at an increasing speed due to the processes of globalisation. Furthermore, people may identify with several cultures.

[11] The term 'democratic education', which overlaps with intercultural education, is increasingly used (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 14).

Dervin (2016, pp. 75–82) distinguishes between solid and liquid approaches to IC. While the former is rooted in a static approach to culture, defining people's identity based on their nation cultures, the latter understands culture as dynamic and liquid (Dervin, 2016). The static/dynamic culture dichotomy has a continued usefulness, for example, when analysing teaching materials for representations of culture (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Lund, 2007), and much IC scholarship from the 20th and early 21st century could be positioned within a solid approach, something which I will return to below.

Since intercultural communication and intercultural education emerged as fields of research in the 1980s, there have been multiple attempts to define IC or ICC (Dypedahl & Lund, 2020, p. 19). Conceptualisations of IC/ICC have been developed within different fields, including psychology, human resources and education. The focus on ICC situates this thesis within language learning, a field which is still influenced by Byram's 1997 model. Byram (1997) distinguishes between IC, which is required for effective and appropriate interaction with someone 'from another country and culture' (p. 70) in a speaker's first language (L1), and ICC, where communication occurs in the L2/L3[12] of at least one of the interactants.

Gudykunst (2005) advances that intercultural adaptation leads to feeling comfortable in a host culture. A strong cultural identity and knowledge about the culture of the other increase the likelihood of 'socially appropriate behaviour' and effective communication (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 425). IC could also be regarded as 'the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own' (Guilherme, 2000, p. 297). Guilherme's definition incorporates the notion that our perception of someone as different comes into play. As such, it highlights the subjective element of perception and that reality may be perceived differently depending on one's background. This perspective accentuates the necessity of decentring, i.e. the ability to see others from the inside and oneself from the outside, which makes the definition relevant for intercultural learning.

Byram (1997), Gudykunst (2005) and Guilherme (2000) seem to take what Dervin (2016, p. 78) defines as a solid approach to IC. The focus on nation cultures and 'successful interaction', depending on knowledge of culture to 'predict' the behaviour of the other (Byram, 1997, p. 36; Gudykunst, 2005, p. 435), has been heavily criticised as essentialism (Dervin, 2016; Hoff, 2014, 2020). It should be noted, however, that both Byram (1997, p. 39)

[12] There is no end to how many languages may be involved, but for reasons of simplicity I draw the line at the third language (L3).

and Gudykunst (2005, 435) early on warned against representing culture as static and stereotyping others. Yet, how to define culture was not resolved, More recently, the focus on nation cultures has been abandoned in IC research and educational policy documents in favour of a dynamic approach to cultures (e.g. Byram & Wagner, 2018; Council of Europe, 2018; Guilherme, 2019; Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020a). This underlines that an understanding of culture as dynamic and fluid is necessary in an era of cultural interpenetration (see also Holliday, 2010).

Holliday's (2020) analogy of culture as blocks, which separate us, and threads, which connect us (p. 47), may be useful in an empirical setting. Cultural products, perspectives and practices, which Holliday refers to as blocks, do not define who we are. However, they can serve as resources for intercultural interaction, through which we can find connections with others, or in Holliday's words, 'threads that bring us together' (2020, p. 48). After all, cultures are not objective realities but products of our collective imagination (Harari, 2011, pp. 30–36), and, as Dervin (2016, p. 9) affirms, we do not meet cultures—we meet individuals. This latter idea is in alignment with Dypedahl (2019), who views all encounters that entail friction as a result of different perspectives as intercultural. He defines IC as 'the ability to relate constructively to people who have mindsets and/or communication styles that are different from one's own' (2019, p. 102).

In my PhD study, I argue that intercultural encounters can take place through readers' encounters with texts, a point that is also highlighted by Fenner (2001), Hoff (2016) and Matos and Melo-Pfeifer's (2020b) edited volume on literature and intercultural learning. Adding to this work, I also advocate the visual aspect of texts as spaces for intercultural encounters. All these definitions of IC and ICC focus on the skills and attitudes required for interaction across difference. Strongly inspired by Deardorff (2009b, 2019), I define ICC as the attitudes, skills and knowledge required for constructive communication and behaviour 'when interacting across difference' (2019, p. 5). The use of the word *difference* rather than *culture* highlights that differences in perspectives also occur between people with seemingly similar cultural backgrounds and calls attention to the fluidity of culture in a globalised society. Recent scholarship also distinguishes between values that 'are general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life' and attitudes as 'the overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something' (Council of Europe, 2018, pp. 38, 41). While this is an important distinction, the students' values were not scrutinised in this study and hence are not included in my definition of ICC.

2.2.2. Intercultural learning and education

In this thesis, I define *intercultural learning* as the process of developing the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for constructive communication and behaviour 'across difference' (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5). These types of attitudes, skills and knowledge can be defined as ICC. ICC can be developed in interaction with difference, be it related to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, style or other categories that may affect communication. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, intercultural learning can also develop through textual encounters.

Intercultural education prepares students to engage in their communities through 'interact[ion] with difference and otherness' (Council of Europe, 2020a). The Council of Europe defines intercultural education as the 'teaching of languages and cultures', providing learners with 'language and intercultural competences which will enable them to operate effectively as citizens, acquire knowledge and develop open attitudes to otherness' (Council of Europe, 2020b). This definition aligns with the aims of the case study of this thesis. A recognition of plurilingualism is also an inherent aim of intercultural education (Council of Europe, 2020b), but it is not a focus in this thesis.

2.2.3. Byram's model of ICC

Some of the most influential models in language learning are Byram's (1997) model of ICC, Deardorff's (2004, 2006) pyramid and process model of intercultural competence and Bennett's (1986) developmental intercultural competence model.

Byram (1997) developed the first, and still the most influential, model of ICC for FLT. His work through the Council of Europe has had a huge impact on intercultural scholarship and FLT across Europe and internationally (Hoff, 2020, p. 56), including Norway[13] (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013). As a 'prescriptive model for the guidance of teaching and assessment' of foreign languages and focusing on intercultural communication (Byram, 2009, p. 325), it is suitable for a study on intercultural learning in ELT. It draws on van Ek's (1986) 'model of communicative ability' (p. 35) for foreign language learning. However, Byram is critical of van Ek's (1986) implicit native speaker ideal. Furthermore, Byram's (1997) model of ICC challenged the trend of communicative language teaching at the time, which did not properly attend to the intercultural aspects of communication when transferring the notion of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) to FLT (Byram, 1997, p. 8; Hoff, 2020, p. 56).

[13] For example, the foreign language and EL subject curricula in Norway's national curriculum from 2006 to 2020.

In brief, Byram's (1997) framework consists of the following elements:

- Skills of interpreting and relating
- Skills of discovery and/or interaction
- Attitudes: relativising self, valuing other, curiosity and openness
- Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and social
- Education: political education; critical cultural awareness

Throughout the course of education, intercultural educators need to target all these elements. However, for the sake of analysis and the limited format of the three articles, this thesis focuses specifically on a limited number of elements, namely, curiosity, knowledge, critical cultural awareness and empathy. Before I expound on these elements, I will discuss the main points of critique of work by Byram and The Council of Europe.

2.2.4. Critique of work by Byram and The Council of Europe

Since Byram developed his framework for ICC in 1997, researchers have continued to build on, discuss and criticise it (e.g. Dervin & Gross, 2016; Hoff, 2014). The main criticism, as mentioned in section 2.2.1, is that it presents successful intercultural communication as a mediation between two national cultures, as implied by the frequent use of the word 'country' in association with culture (Hoff, 2014, p. 58; 2020) and the prefix 'inter', which means 'between'.[14] Static culture teaching can easily lead to stereotyping and is misaligned with the fluid nature of cultures discernible in English as lingua franca interactions (Jenkins et al., 2011).

Between 1973 and 1995, the EU admitted nine new member states, and thus building tolerance and co-operation between the nation states of Europe became a significant concern (Knudsen, Julsrud, Tvedt, & Trondal, 2020). Byram's model (1997) was developed against this background. More recent work by Byram expressly states that linking language teaching to specific countries is an 'inadequate' approach to developing ICC (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 140).

Today, work from the Council of Europe reflect the dynamic and fluid nature of cultures and highlight the need to preserve and develop democracy (Council of Europe, 2018; Hoff, 2020). To this end, a new model of the competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue has been developed (RFCDC) in which both knowledge and the will to act (savoir s'engager) are vital (Council of Europe, 2018). Democratic citizens need

[14] See Hoff (2019, 2020) for a further account of the criticism of Byram's model.

knowledge and critical understanding of, for example, politics and law, human rights and cultures in addition to values, attitudes and skills. The cluster of competences presented in the RFCDC can equip citizens to act 'appropriately and effectively [in] intercultural situations' (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 38). Still, the RFCDC has been criticised for Eurocentrism and othering (Simpson & Dervin, 2019), a criticism rebutted by Barrett and Byram (2020) on the grounds of multiple errors.[15]

Byram's work[16] is further critiqued for instrumentalism and its focus on assessment (Hoff, 2020), something that is discernible in the RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018). The RFCDC includes 20 competences with 135 key descriptors of democratic and intercultural competence that may be implemented in education. While the authors acknowledge that it may not be possible for educators to implement all 20, they warn that omissions may 'undermine the overall rationale of the Framework' (Council of Europe, 2018, pp. 57–58).

Using the RFCDC for assessment purposes may be problematic on several counts. From a practical pedagogical standpoint, it is not feasible to use 135 descriptors. Several scholars, (e.g. Borghetti, 2017) have also questioned the ethicality of assessing learners' personal qualities, values and attitudes. Another point is that highly specific competences may not cover the complexity and fluidity of intercultural interactions, which occur in a variety of settings (Baker, 2011, p. 210). Holliday claims that reducing interculturality to measurable elements is a result of the neoliberal influence on education (Holliday, 2020, p. 43). The accountability regime of neoliberalism is at odds with the values of bildung, which are foundational to interculturality. While the debate on assessment raises serious concerns, it is challenging within the current educational systems in Europe to forgo assessment completely. Arguably, there is a need to find ways of assessing ICC in a manner that upholds the values upon which intercultural education rests. Byram and Wagner (2018) also make a case for simplifying complex concepts in a school context 'before adding complexity' (p. 142). In my study, the aim was not to measure the students' levels of ICC but rather to observe manifestations of it. For analytic purposes and due to the short time span of the case study, the focus is on a few elements of ICC rather than on attempting to describe the full complexity of students' ICC.

Byram's model and the term 'intercultural' is also criticised for not encompassing the complexities of communication in the hybrid, multicultural reality of the 21st century (e.g.

[15] Barrett and Byram (2020) highlight 12 factual, interpretative and category errors in Simpson and Dervin's (2019) description of the RFCDC.
[16] See Hoff (2020) for a more extensive account of the criticism of Byram's (1997) model.

Dervin, 2016; Hoff, 2014; Ros i Solé, 2013). Hence, new terms have been proposed, such as transculturalism (Risager, 2018; Welsch, 1999) or cosmopolitanism (Osler & Starkey, 2018; Ros i Solé, 2013), the latter focusing on empowering learners to become world citizens. As the notion of communication 'between' two static cultures has been largely abandoned in intercultural research, the prefix 'trans', meaning through, arguably describes how culture as a dynamic construct affects and constructs communication more aptly than 'inter' (Byram, 2014).[17] Yet, the term 'intercultural' is more predominant in EFL.[18] Delanoy (2013, pp. 157–158) argues that inter- and transculturalism scholarship have more in common than what separates them. Furthermore, several interculturalists, such as Hu (1999), Volkmann (2000), Hofmann (2006) and Kramsch (2011), go beyond the duality of cultures traditionally implied in the concept of interculture (Delanoy, 2013, p. 160). For example, Kramsch (2011) highlights the need for symbolic competence. Elaborating on Kramsch's earlier work, Kramsch and Whiteside (2015) define symbolic competence as the ability to manipulate language as a symbolic system for effective intercultural communication. Symbolic competence relates to an understanding of how communication is constructed through multi-layered discourses. This is required to reveal underlying conflicts and imbalanced power relations that may be concealed by the ideal of effective and appropriate communication (Dervin, 2016; Hoff, 2014). I will return to symbolic competence in section 2.2.7.

Terminological disputes aside, inter- and transcultural competence share a focus on the ability to see different perspectives. Geertz concluded his seminal work *The Interpretation of Cultures* by stating that all 'societies, like lives, contain their own interpretations [and one] has to learn how to gain access to them' (1973, p. 453). His conclusion has not lost its relevance. Hence, decentring (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993, 2011), can be considered a key competence for the 21st century, vital to both learning languages and developing democratic and interculturally competent citizens (Council of Europe, 2016). The importance of decentring provided the backdrop for the reading project reported on in articles 2 and 3.

In the following sub-sections, I will define elements of ICC relevant to the thesis. Apart from section 2.2.8. Empathy, they are based on Byram (1997). As mentioned previ-

[17] See also Byram's publications in the last decade (e.g. 2012, 2013, 2018), which reflect an expanded conception of ICC, for example, through a dynamic conception of culture.
[18] Delanoy (2013, p. 157) refers to the intercultural approach as the dominant one in EFL teaching. A search in Google scholar for the key words 'intercult*' + 'foreign language education' produced 20200 results, as opposed to 1650 for 'transcult*' + 'foreign language education'.

ously, Byram's (1997) model of ICC was developed especially for FLT, and its broad international influence testifies to its relevance. The model's thorough conceptualisations were helpful in the process of data analysis and reporting. However, other conceptualisations and updated research on ICC were also considered.

2.2.5. Attitudes and skills: Curiosity

Curiosity and openness are frequent components of intercultural frameworks, present for example in the models of Byram (1997), Portera (2014) and the RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018). Discovering knowledge of self and other requires a curious and open attitude, and it can occur through engagement with cultures experienced as different from one's own, on an equal footing. This is distinct from seeking out supposedly exotic experiences. It entails an interest in different ways of looking at both 'familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in one's own and other cultures' (Byram, 1997b, p. 50). This is sometimes referred to as making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. Both articles 2 and 3 illustrate how a picturebook can arouse the students' curiosity about and interest in learning about another culture. The third article also discusses the role of curiosity in stimulating intercultural dialogue.

An intercultural speaker needs the ability to mediate between different cultural perspectives. The skill of interpreting and relating requires the ability to decentre, to interpret the cultural perspectives reflected through a text or in an intercultural encounter and to relate this to one's own or other's cultural perspectives (Byram, 1997). For this, the skill of discovery is required. Discovery of new knowledge entails 'building up specific knowledge as well as an understanding of the beliefs, meanings and behaviours which are inherent in particular phenomena, whether documents or interactions' (Byram, 1997, pp. 37–38). The study suggests that this can be done through shared reading, dialogical, student-centred and experiential approaches. For example, allowing the students to discuss the pictures with their peers helped them discover knowledge we had not covered in class.

2.2.6. Knowledge of self and other

Knowledge is a central part of several conceptualisations (models and theories) of IC, including those of Byram (1997), Deardorff (2004, 2006), Fantini (1999), Kupka (2007), Lustig and Koester (2013) and Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998). However, it is defined and conceptualised to varying degrees across the models. Frequent elements associated with the concept of knowledge are culture-specific and general knowledge (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004, 2006; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989), knowledge of social interaction (Byram, 1997; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989) and linguistic competence (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Kupka, 2007). Article 2

includes a discussion of the role of knowledge in the English subject curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013), knowledge acquisition and different types of knowledge. Below I will focus on what type of knowledge is involved in ICC.

One can distinguish between two types of knowledge related to ICC: cultural knowledge and cultural awareness (Broady, 2004, pp. 68–69). Cultural knowledge is primarily fact-based, for example, knowledge of the traditions and 'processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country' (Byram, 1997, p. 51), whereas cultural awareness involves 'skills exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness' (Broady, 2004, p. 69). The former is frequently held to be static and of lesser use within the dynamic pluricultural reality of the 21st century, particularly because it may lead to generalisation about and stereotyping of 'the Other' (e.g. in Broady, 2004, p. 69). While this is a significant concern, fact-based knowledge still has a role to play, as reflected in the RFCDC (see also section 2.2.1). Of particular relevance to the PhD case study is the focus on '[k]nowledge and understanding of […] democracy, freedom, justice, equality [and] of how people's cultural affiliations shape their world views […] and interactions with others' (Council of Europe, 2018, pp. 54–55).Through socialisation, everyone has tacit as well as explicit knowledge of their own cultures with regard to values, beliefs, artefacts and how to interact in appropriate ways. This knowledge can affect our encounters with other cultural perspectives. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and analyse one's own socialisation processes to understand how these shape one's interactions with others (Byram, 1997, p. 52; Council of Europe, 2018, p. 55). Through analysing one's own and other's cultural perspectives, ethnocentrism and stereotyping can be minimised or even avoided. Articles 2 and 3 discuss how the students co-constructed knowledge of another culture.

2.2.7. Education: Critical cultural awareness

Critical cultural awareness involves looking critically at both your own and other cultures. This necessitates an understanding of socialisation processes and the ability to decentre (the ability to see a phenomenon from multiple perspectives), which shows that the various factors of Byram's framework are interdependent (1997, pp. 34–35). Critical cultural awareness is related to the symbolic dimension of interculturality. Symbolic competence involves reflexive questioning of how identities, cultures and discourses are shaped by subjective, aesthetic, historical and ideological dimensions (Kramsch, 2011, p. 355). Accordingly, intercultural education should emphasise the critical questioning of discursive practices by asking questions such as the following (Kramsch, 2011, p. 360):

- Not which words, but whose words are those? Whose discourse? Whose interests are being served by this text?
- What made these words possible and others impossible?
- How does the speaker position him/herself?
- How does he/she frame the events talked about?
- What prior discourses does he/she draw on?

Increasingly, critical perspectives have been highlighted as an essential aspect of intercultural education (e.g. Dasli, 2011; Dervin, 2016; Hoff, 2014, 2020; Holliday, 2020), and article 2 discusses the extent to which the reading study stimulated the students' critical cultural awareness.

2.2.8. Empathy

Empathy is a central element of IC[19], as it can be linked to the ability to decentre. It includes both an affective and a cognitive component. The word 'empathy' is derived from the Greek *en + pathos*, which can be translated as *in feeling*. The etymology of the word is reflected in Bloom's (2017) definition, which focuses on the affective component. According to Bloom (2017), empathy is 'the act of coming to experience the world as you think someone else does' (p. 16). The cognitive component is visible in Nikolajeva's (2019) definition of empathy as 'the capacity to understand other people's emotions independently of one's own' (p. 29). Even if affective and cognitive facets interact, they will be kept apart here for analytic purposes. Multiple attempts have been made to define and operationalise empathy, most of which comprise (1) Cognition, (2) Affect and (3) Action. Drawing on the ability to understand and empathise with others' feelings in order to take action on behalf of others is at the core of ICC (Byram, 1997, 2012). The following sections contain a discussion on the development of empathy and how this development can be related to art and IC.

Numerous studies connect the development of empathy to reading literature (e.g. Daly, 2020; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Mangen et al., 2018; Nikolajeva, 2013, 2017; Porto & Zembylas, 2020). To develop empathy, an understanding of how other people are feeling and thinking and the ability to use this understanding to predict behaviour must be developed.

[19] In Deardorff's (2004, 2006) Delphi study of IC, prominent IC scholars generally agreed that cross-cultural empathy was a central element of IC. Empathy is a prerequisite for Byram's model and one of the components of many other models of intercultural competence (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Of these, Ting-Toomey & Kurogi (1998) are the only ones who define empathy.

This capacity is referred to as theory of mind (TOM) (Doherty, 2008). Research from literature, neuroscience and psychology similarly argues that reading fiction improves TOM and perspective-taking skills, thus fostering empathy (e.g. Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Nikolajeva, 2013; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2015). Young readers can gain new experiences vicariously through the perspectives of fictional characters. Kidd and Castano (2013) claim that this effect is due to the literariness of fiction. As the texts have a defamiliarising effect on the readers, they have to employ their cognitive faculties to understand and predict the characters' motivations; that is, the reader is challenged (Miall & Kuiken, 1994). Through narrative devices, such as focalisation (Genette, 1980, p. 189)—from whose perspective the narrative information is seen—readers can walk in somebody else's shoes.

Pictures may have particular characteristics for stimulating empathy. Nikolajeva (2014) argues that, since pictures are processed more rapidly than words, they have a higher emotional impact on the viewer. Making sense of pictures more closely resembles how we make sense of other people's emotions in real life than how we interpret verbal statements about emotions (Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 96). Hence, emotional and visual literacy are connected through picturebooks (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 132; Nikolajeva, 2014, p. 96), which provides a rationale for reading picturebooks to develop empathy. Article 2 draws on Nikolajeva's (2014, 2018) argumentation regarding the potential of picturebooks to foster empathy development.

Cognitive criticism draws on neuroscience to argue that readers' affective responses to literature may be a result of the workings of mirror neurons (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2012; Nikolajeva, 2017). This may explain why they react emotionally to characters' thoughts and feelings 'as if they were real' (Nikolajeva, 2013, p. 96). Through observing other people, our minds may mirror what those people are feeling (Speer, Reynolds, Swallow, & Zacks, 2009; Stueber, 2018). These processes stimulate decentring and empathy, which are vital components of intercultural competence. EmpathyLab (2020), a British cross-disciplinary research centre, sums up the above-mentioned research, explaining that empathy works through (1) Thinking: Attempts at understanding how other people feel (2); Feeling: Resonating with other people's emotions; and (3) Acting: Helping others as a result of realising how they feel.

The teaching approaches and, consequently, the teacher's role are central to what the students may gain from engaging with texts. Along with literature, many different art forms

have been linked to the development of empathy. Heath (2006) has studied empathy development through art, drawing on insights from fields as diverse as linguistics, neuroscience, visual cognition and anthropology. Having observed a high number of young people involved in the visual arts, drama, music and/or film, she concludes that 'play and involvement in art […] support the 'development of language fluency and empathy for the perspectives of other' (2006, p. 134). The students' development is attributed to the shared focus on visual detail, agency, shift of perspective and talking about art.

Young readers are frequently encouraged to identify with literary characters. However, Nikolajeva stresses that, for literature to teach children empathy, the readers should be encouraged to detach themselves from the subject position of the characters and adopt an outside perspective (2010, p. 186). In this manner, they can develop critical skills and detect eventual narrative manipulation while simultaneously feeling concern for the characters (Nikolajeva, 2010). Maintaining both inside and outside perspectives may also help readers avoid the fallacy of only empathising with those who are similar to themselves (Bloom, 2017). In article 2, sympathy is referred to as feeling concern for others. Also known as 'compassionate empathy' (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 49), this feeling may inspire us to act for the benefit of others (Batson, 2009; Batson et al., 1997). This prosocial behaviour can lead to civic action, which is essential to ICC (Byram, 1997, 2012).

In sum, this section has established empathy as a central element of IC. The cited studies indicate that engagement with art forms, such as literature and visual art, may foster different facets of empathy. Focusing on the visual aspects of art and sharing reflections on art in a group may lead to increased perspective-taking skills. However, it should be noted that Kidd and Castano's study has been contested, as attempts to replicate it have been unsuccessful (Panero et al., 2017). Moreover Nikolajeva's (2013, 2014) argument is theoretical and needs to be explored empirically. This need is addressed by the second article in my study, which discusses the extent to which sympathy and cognitive and affective empathy appeared in the students' responses to a picturebook.

2.3. Interaction with text for intercultural learning

Texts are central to language teaching. Taking a holistic view of language learning, which includes intercultural learning, L2 learners benefit from rich and diverse teaching resources to provide multiple opportunities for meaning making (van Lier, 2004, p. 158). This approach is reflected in both the former and recent EL curricula in Norway (LK06/20), which state that language learning occurs through engaging with a variety of texts (Ministry of Education and

Research, 2006, 2013). A broad definition of text is adopted by LK06, and LK20 explicitly encourages the use of a wide range of texts with a variety of modalities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 3), aligning with the open definition of text adopted by this study (see 2.1.). Consequently, studies on printed texts, digital texts and visual texts, such as film and images, were included in article 1.

To further students' learning, teachers are urged to use authentic texts created to fulfil a communicative purpose of a language community (Little, Devitt, & Singleton, 1989, p. 23). As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, fictional texts are authentic texts that may have particularly strong potential for intercultural learning (e.g. Bredella, 2000; Bredella & Delanoy, 1996; Fenner, 2001; Hoff, 2017; Kramsch, 1993; Matos, 2011; Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020a). The reasons for this, which will be addressed in the following sections, are that (1) literature can reflect and build one's own cultural identity and (2) help readers understand and engage with other perspectives (Matos, 2011, p. 11), even when they conflict with one's own (Hoff, 2014). The rationale can be expressed through Bishop's (1990) metaphor of texts as mirrors, windows or sliding glass doors, allowing the reader access to another world while seeing how we are all connected. In today's pluricultural reality, one should add that texts can only represent one or some perspectives on a culture.

Reading culturally relevant texts was the most frequent reason for the selection of texts in the studies reviewed in article 1. Culturally relevant texts is a term borrowed from multicultural literature, drawing on Bishop (1990), describing texts in which the readers can recognise themselves or learn about others (Sailors & Kaambankadzanja, 2017). Similarly, exposing the students to an authentic text from an unknown culture was a rationale for the choice of Sís's *The Wall* for the case study. While this is vital, it is also important not to lose sight of the aesthetic value of the text. Hoff (2019) posits that if literature is treated 'as any other text [it loses] its unique value as an aesthetic form of cultural expression' (p. 14). The aesthetic dimension is at the forefront in picturebooks. It may add another layer to intercultural learning, through students' engagement with the semiotic meaning derived from the picture–text relationship (Evans, 2013, pp. 239–243). Aesthetic experiences have a transformative potential and may change people's thinking (Rasmussen, 2013, p. 33). For these reasons, a picturebook was considered suitable for a project focusing on intercultural learning.

In the following, I will present some theoretical perspectives on interaction with culture through different types of texts. The discussion centres on the affordances of fiction, es-

pecially picturebooks, and the role of art, visual literacy and teaching approaches to intercultural learning. The section also contains a presentation of Peter Sís's (2007) *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*, which was read by the participants in my case study.

2.3.1. The affordances of fiction for intercultural learning

Kramsch (1993, p. 131) highlights the multiple ways readers can make sense of fiction dialogically. She emphasizes that fiction is rich in affordances. Affordance can be defined as the 'action potential [that] emerges as we interact with the physical and social world' (van Lier, 2004, p. 92). Different types of text, for example, a newspaper article and a poem, have different affordances, which includes both opportunities for and limitations to meaning making (van Lier, 2004). One of the affordances of fiction is based on its polyphony, or multivoicedness (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6–7). Bakhtin considers a work of fiction to be in a continuing dialogue with itself (intratextuality), other texts (what Kristeva (1980, p. 68) refers to as intertextuality) and with the reader. In any fictional text, there are gaps (i.e. blank spaces the author has left for our imagination to fill in) (Iser, 1978, p. 182). In order to fill the gaps, the reader must engage with the text to co-construct meaning (Rosenblatt, 2005). In doing so, readers draw on their schemata, which include their background knowledge of the topic, and social and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, readers' interpretations of fiction will vary, depending on their schemata and imagination. Rosenblatt (2005, pp. 10–14) refers to this transaction with the text as aesthetic reading. It is on the one end of a continuum of reading, while reading for information, efferent reading (Rosenblatt, 2005, pp. 10–14), is at the other end. When the reader discusses the text with other readers, yet more voices become a part of the polyphony. When readers share their experiences in a dialogue around the text, multiple opportunities for interpretation arise. In this way, the development of new schemata may occur. Gaps that exist between different readers may also be filled, as readers make connections to the social, physical and symbolic contexts expressed through the text and by other readers (cf. van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5).

Gonçalves (2011), who builds on Iser and Rosenblatt, sees connections between intercultural encounters and reading dialogically. Similarly, Hoff (2013) shows how dialogic explorations of fiction texts can lead to learning situations amenable to the development of students' ICC. Recent studies on reading also conclude that children have higher learning gains from reading fiction books than from reading nonfiction books and other genres (Jerrim, Lopez-Agudo, & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2020; the study does not include picturebooks). The study does not consider how children read and engage with the texts, but drawing on Iser

(1978), a possible hypothesis is that there are more ways of interpreting and interacting dialogically with a fictional text than with a factual one. The distinction between fiction and nonfiction[20] is not clear-cut. For example, autobiographies, which are branded as factual texts, present narratives. In the last decade, nonfiction picturebooks have increasingly used many of the same devices as fiction texts to engage the reader in a transaction (Amlani, 2014; Davies, 2014). However, the main purpose of nonfiction is to provide information (Amlani, 2014). Consequently, even if not subscribing to Lotman's (1988) notion that nonfiction texts are univocal, fiction texts allow for more interpretations than nonfiction texts.

Jerrim et al. (2020) and Bland (2018a) focus on the potential of high-quality fiction to challenge the reader, as it engages our cognitive and emotional faculties. This is due to the texts' literariness (see section 3.2.6.), which is another affordance for intercultural learning. Deconstructing the literary devices and structure used to convey meaning can enable critical reflections on the text. Students can be asked to reflect on the effect of allowing characters to speak for themselves, through a first-person perspective, or being spoken for, through a third-person perspective. In this manner, a critical approach to the texts' literariness can bring an intercultural perspective to reading, for example, through asking questions related to what is said or left unsaid, by whom and how (Kramsch, 2011, p. 360).

Furthermore, genres are constituted as a result of historical and social circumstances. Accordingly, different genres can be related to—and are used in different ways—by dissimilar social and cultural groups (Aamotsbakken & Knudsen, 2008, ch. 5). For example, a Snap[21], which can be a meaningful way of communicating, bonding and expressing identity for certain groups, appears meaningless to others since it disappears soon after it has been opened. Thus, when teaching for a diverse classroom, the choice of text matters. Teachers must consider what types of texts can serve as mirrors and windows and how they can stimulate their students' intercultural language learning. However, the way in which texts are exploited pedagogically is equally important, which will be considered in section 2.3.4. First, I will turn to a type of text with the potential to include and challenge all learners.

2.3.2. The picturebook

This section will consider the affordances of picturebooks and how the picturebook medium lends itself to fostering intercultural learning. Picturebooks are often considered as easy to

[20] In hindsight, I would have chosen a more neutral term than nonfiction, such as informational or factual texts, so as not to insinuate that nonfiction is inferior to fiction. However, as the term is used in article 1, I also use it in this thesis.
[21] Social media where messages that are sent disappear within seconds.

read, suitable for young children. This misconception belies the broad range of picturebooks available today, ranging from stories with pictures that mimic the verbal text to aesthetically demanding picturebooks on challenging topics for both young and adult readers. Theoretical work on picturebooks began in the 1960s.[22] Prior to the 1980s, picturebooks were studied as art (Cianciolo, 1970; Klemin, 1966; Lacy, 1986), following a thematic, stylistic or literary approach (Bader, 1976; Feaver, 1977; Hürlimann, 1968; Roxburgh, 1983), or due to their educational and social function (Schwarcz & Schwarcz, 1991; Stephens, 1992). In the 1990s, semiotics and other theoretical approaches, such as psychoanalysis, feminist studies and multiculturalism, provided new perspectives on picturebooks (Arizpe, Farrar, & McAdam, 2018, p. 372). The 2000s has seen the rise of ecocritical (Curry, 2013; Dobrin & Kidd, 2004; Goga, Guanio-Uluru, Hallås, & Nyrnes, 2018) and post-humanist approaches (Flanagan, 2016; McCulloch, 2016).

While my project acknowledges the role of society and culture in the construction of texts and the readers' responses, it is also influenced by the material turn (see Nikolajeva, 2016) and the cognitive approach (Kümmerling-Meibauer, Meibauer, Nachtigäller, & Rohlfing, 2015; Nikolajeva, 2014). Exploration of the materiality of picturebooks and the corporeal aspects of reader–text interaction is a possible entryway into understanding their affordances. When reading a physical picturebook, the reader experiences 'the drama of the turning page' (Bader, 1976, p. 1) and can explore the physical features of the book, such as dust jackets, folds and flaps. This provides a tactile experience that is missing when watching a read-aloud on video of the same book. Therefore, each student in my case study was provided a physical copy of *The Wall* (2007) to facilitate physical exploration of the book. Advocates of the cognitive approach to children's literature (Kümmerling-Meibauer, Meibauer, Nachtigäller, & Rohlfing, 2015; Nikolajeva, 2014) rely on neuroscience to explain the link between visual perception and emotional response. These various theoretical approaches all provide valuable lenses through which we can study the picturebook as an aesthetic, culturally and materially constructed object. To gain an understanding of the students' responses, this theoretical framing has been supplemented by reader-response theory (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 2005), as presented in section 2.3.1.

Ommundsen defines picturebooks as 'a book with at least one picture per spread, where both words and pictures carry meaning and work together to construct a narrative'

[22] This historical overview is primarily based on Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) and Nikolajeva (2016).

(2018, p. 151; my translation). Picturebooks with a complex relationship between pictures and verbal text can be referred to as, for example, complex (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 3), polysemic (Ghosh, 2015, p. 201), postmodern (Allan, 2018) and challenging and controversial (Evans, 2015). Of particular interest to this thesis is the notion of the challenging picturebook, proposed by Ommundsen, Haaland and Kümmerling-Meibauer (in press) in their volume *Exploring challenging picturebooks in education*. They state that picturebook definitions can have a twofold focus, relating to their affordances and/or the reader engagement. Challenging picturebooks provide cognitive, aesthetic and/or emotional challenges. They offer opportunities for learning through, for example, a complex interplay between pictures and words, hybrid formats, playful narratives and visual devices. The form and content invite the readers to see new perspectives and co-create meaning by filling narrative gaps (Ommundsen, Haaland & Kümmerling-Meibauer, in press).

Discussing 'the picturebook text', Hallberg (1982) introduced the concept iconotext to refer to 'the implicit picture/text interaction' that materialises while reading a picturebook (p. 165; my translation). The focus on the reader makes the concept relevant to an empirical study focused on readers' meaning making of the interplay between verbal text and images. The iconotext varies on a continuum from near symmetry, where the verbal text and the images tell the same story, to an independent relationship (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; introduction). Some attempts were made between the 1970s and 1990s to develop a picturebook typology (Golden, 1990; Gregersen, 1974; Rhedin, 1993; Schwarcz, 1982), but Nikolajeva and Scott's work considering the interaction between pictures and verbal text in picturebooks has been the most influential. Nikolajeva and Scott's (2006; introduction) typology for describing the relationship between pictures and text covers the full range of picture–text relationships. It consists of five types:

1. Symmetry (words and pictures tell the same story)
2. Elaboration (words and pictures fill each other's gaps)
3. Enhancement (words and pictures expand each other's meaning)
4. Counterpoint (words and pictures challenge or contradict each other)
5. Sylleptical (words and pictures tell different stories, independent of each other)

In article 2, I use Nikolajeva and Scott's (2006) typology to analyse some of the challenging aspects of the picturebook used in my case study. The iconotext of the picturebook that was used in the case study, *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (Sís, 2007), ranges from elaboration to counterpoint. However, the overall impression is one of enhancement,

where the pictures provide information not found in the verbal text and vice versa. The use of symbolism makes this more than just gap filling, as in an elaborative relationship, because the pictures can be interpreted metaphorically. To makes sense of the iconotext, readers[23] use their visual literacy, as will be presented below.

2.3.3. The role of art and visual literacy in intercultural learning

High-quality picturebooks are objects of art (Bader, 1976; Kiefer, 2008), but what is the role of art in intercultural learning? Art has the advantage of offering 'instant access' and encouraging experiential and reflective thinking (Perkins, 1994, pp. 82–85). Bland (2013b, p. 87) posits that the illustrations of high-quality picturebooks are 'complex, naturalistic, untidy [and] ambiguous', facilitating deep learning and higher order thinking (Delanoy, 2018). As mentioned in section 2.2.6., Heath (2006, p. 134) states that engaging in art supports the ability to understand other perspectives, which is central to ICC. The ability to see images works as 'the great leveller' (see also Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 66; Coulthard, 2016, p. 84).[24] Whereas written text may hinder understanding, talking about pictures allows students with varying reading skills to express complex understandings (e.g. in Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 66), which makes the picturebook ideal for including students at all levels and with different cultural backgrounds in ELT. Students can draw on their understanding of images obtained out of school, but their visual literacy can of course vary. Therefore, Arizpe, Farrar and McAdam (2018) argue that learners can benefit from learning about 'how symbols and other visual codes work' (p. 375) with the help of a mediator. Articles 2 and 3 discuss how the teacher may guide the students' meaning making of a picturebook and how dialogue about the iconotext may allow students to draw on their own and their peers' resources to foster intercultural learning.

Unless there is a symmetrical relationship between texts and images, visual literacy is needed to make sense of the images. Traditionally, literacy has been defined narrowly as the ability to read and write or to make sense of verbal text (Beard, 1990; UNESCO, 1957; Ørevik, 2020, p. 143). To make sense of picturebooks, the concept of literacy needs to be expanded, and The New London Group (1996) coined the term 'multiliteracies' to account for meaning making across linguistic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, in the 21st century, a

[23] For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term 'reader', even if 'viewer' may be even more appropriate in the context of visual literacy.
[24] Unless you are visually impaired. However, picturebook with tactile illustrations accompanied by verbal text in Braille exist, for example, Cotton and Faria's (2008) *The Black Book of Colors*.

range of literacies is necessary to navigate a semiotically complex world, such as visual literacy, which can be defined simply as 'the ability to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn and express oneself in terms of images' (Braden & Hortin, 1982, p. 38). In alignment with ecological semiotics (presented in section 2.1.) and intercultural theory (in particular section 2.2.1.), a broader definition, which also takes into account how we are socialised, is necessary. Readers bring their experiences and backgrounds with them to the reading/viewing. Thus, Raney (1998, p. 38) defines visual literacy as

> [t]he history of thinking about what images and objects mean, how they are put together, how we respond to or interpret them, how they might function as modes of thought, and how they are seated within the societies which gave rise to them.

This indicates that images, like verbal texts, are cultural products. Challenging picturebooks, advanced through this study, are also pieces of art. Hayik (2011, p. 95) posits that art is ideologically positioned. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) make a similar point about images and reminds us that 'visual communication is always coded' (p. 32). This means that picturebooks communicate through symbols, which express the ideology of cultures. Regarding texts as semiotic entities, picturebooks potentially offer a richer polyphony than verbal texts. At least two semiotic systems work together (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006), providing both a cognitive and an aesthetic experience; the latter referring to the emotional perception of art (Dufrenne, 1973). Using visual literacy in their meeting with a picturebook, readers also draw on their own cultural backgrounds. According to Raney's (1998) definition, which includes the readers' responses, there is no one correct way of responding to images. The two symbol systems both express culture and interact with the readers' cultures. This semiotic landscape of picturebook reading offers huge potential for exploring, reflecting on, learning about and creating culture. The second article of this thesis discusses (1) How the hybrid format of *The Wall* challenges the reader's visual literacy, (2) How the students made use of their visual literacy to make sense of the picturebook and expand their intercultural learning and (3) How visual literacy served as a leveller between students with differing verbal language skills.

It has even been argued that reading picturebooks can challenge the existing power relationships in a teaching context (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 66). Reading texts that are culturally relevant to the students allows the students to draw on their cultural backgrounds in their

interpretations and offer new insights to their peers and the teacher (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 53; Stewart, 2015). Importantly, books with universal themes, such as friendship, can have the same effect (Coulthard, 2016, p. 86). Additionally, when studying the pictures, students will often spot details the teacher has missed, as seen for example in Coulthard's (2016) study, where a six year-old 'taught [her] to look in a different way' (p. 83). Both scenarios allow the students to teach the teacher, rather than the other way around. In a society increasingly relying on visual communication, visual literacy is a part of many students' knowledge reservoir. There is no key to the right interpretation of an aesthetically challenging picturebook. This has a democratising effect: It challenges the traditional hierarchy of the teaching context. It also creates interdependence between the actors: We need each other to make meaning of the text. The latter point is highlighted in Heath's (2000) focus on the 'communal membership' (p. 138) as more important than individual abilities to make sense of visual texts. The reason for this is that 'connections between perceptual and conceptual or linguistic representations […] always will emerge in socially interactive situations that punctuate, underline, and enlarge individual understanding' (Heath, 2000, p. 138). Through dialogue, listening, considering each other's contributions, sometimes rejecting them and at other times building on them, we can arrive at a more reflective understanding of the text than is possible in a more hierarchical, univocal classroom. This leads us to the teaching approaches advanced through this study.

2.3.4. Dialogic, experiential and student-centred approaches to teaching and learning

The ecological-semiotic view on learning as emerging through interaction with adults, peers and one's inner resources led to a focus on group dialogue. These participation structures, central to van Lier's expanded ZPD (2004, p. 158), were all put into play in the PhD case study, where EL students' read a challenging picturebook. Article 3 expounds on the interaction between the teacher and the students, the dialogues between peers and the students' inner (cognitive and affective) resources and how these interactions led to intercultural learning.

Dialogic theory provided both a theoretical framework for developing activities for the case study and an analytic framework for the dialogues in article 3 (see article 3 for a more detailed account). The case study was also inspired by reader-response theory, allowing the students to construct meaning in dialogue with the text by filling in the gaps (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 2005).

A common challenge in language teaching is how to promote student talk and increase textual engagement. Intercultural learning requires teaching approaches that include and engage all students. Studies from a range of fields, such as arts, language arts, literacy studies, education, linguistics and psychology, support a dialogic approach to developing cognitive and emotional skills (Heath, 2006, p. 134; Rojas-Drummond, Mazon, Fernandez, & Wegerif, 2006, pp. 90-91; Wegerif, 2011, p. 184), which forms the basis for intercultural learning. A *dialogic activity* is one where the students engage in a dialogue, not only with the physical texts or people but also with the multiple voices represented and echoed in the texts (Bakhtin, 1981). Students are given agency to steer the discussions and build on each other's contributions to construct meaning from discussions of open questions (Alexander, 2008, p. 189–190). Building on Alexander (2008) and Nystrand (1997), Reznitskaya (2012) explicates how teachers may facilitate classroom dialogue through (1) shared control over content and turn-taking, (2) open questions that encourage critical reflection, (3) feedback prompting exploration of ideas, (4) meta-level reflection linking student ideas, (5) elaborate contributions where students justify their ideas and (6) critical and collaborative co-construction of ideas (Reznitskaya, 2012, p. 450).

Many of these features are recognisable when zooming in on the dialogue itself. Summing up the most influential research in the field (Alexander, 2008; Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008; Nystrand, 1997), Vrikki et al. (2019, p. 86) stress that educational dialogues require an atmosphere of respectful listening and share the following features:

- invitations that provoke thoughtful responses (e.g. authentic questions, asking for clarifications and explanations);
- extended contributions that may include justifications and explanations;
- critical engagement with ideas, challenging and building on them;
- links and connections;
- attempts to reach consensus by resolving discrepancies.

Studying groups that were more or less successful at co-constructing meaning, Wegerif (2011) found that the vital feature was 'identification with dialogue itself ' (p. 184). This identification is visible in participants who are more concerned with finding good collective solutions than about being right. It mirrors Bakhtin's notion that truth cannot be found inside one individual's mind but 'is born *between people* collectively searching for the truth' (1984, p. 110;

author's italics). Article 3 focuses on how intercultural learning processes can be illuminated by focusing on dialogic features.

Dialogic, *experiential* and *student-centred* approaches to intercultural learning are highlighted in the intercultural research literature (Byram et al., 2002; Fenner, 2001; Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen, & Lehtovaara, 2017; Li et al., 2016; Sercu et al., 2005) and can be regarded as the principles of an intercultural pedagogy. Dialogue leads to a greater degree of personal involvement, which can foster ICC development (Fenner, 2001). Consequently, activities within a dialogical approach are student-centred. The aim of *student-centred* activities is to grant students agency to construct and co-construct knowledge, as opposed to passively receiving knowledge (Kohonen et al., 2017). In this process, students' experiences are taken into account (Kolb, 1984). *Experiential activities* allow students to draw on kinaesthetic experiences and reflect on meetings with perceived otherness, which is also a starting point for critical pedagogy (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell, & McAdam, 2014, p. 315). Our first reactions to experiences are often physical; bodily knowledge predates 'conscious thought' (Østern, 2013, p. 57). Therefore, it is important to take all the senses into account when teaching. Examples of activities include critical incidents, role-play, physical and virtual encounters with speakers of the target language and reflection on intercultural meetings (Boye & Byram, 2018, p. 444). However, meeting other cultures is not in itself a guarantee of ICC development. Therefore, Kolb (1984) stresses the need to reflect on experiences for learning.

There are clear parallels between the expanded ZPD and an intercultural pedagogy. Both approaches stipulate that learning happens through, respectively, (1) interaction/in dialogue, (2) activating the students' inner resources/drawing on their experiences and (3) interaction with peers and scaffolding by adults/facilitating students' active construction of learning.

2.4. Summary of the theoretical framework

In the context of this thesis, ecological semiotics provides a holistic approach to intercultural and language learning, which can occur through relating to the physical, cultural and symbolic context of literary texts. Intercultural learning involves fostering the required attitudes, skills and knowledge for constructive communication across difference. To support EL students' intercultural learning, the teacher can facilitate their active construction of knowledge through dialogue with peers. Picturebooks that challenge the reader are fertile grounds for in-

tercultural learning, as readers at differing levels can jointly explore the picture–text interaction. Drawing on their own experiences, the readers can both reflect on their own cultural perspectives and those of others. A participative ethos allows students to expand and challenge one another's ideas to co-construct meaning in dialogue with their peers and the picturebook. Finally, the parallels between an expanded ZPD (van Lier, 2004) and an intercultural pedagogy are highlighted.

3. Literature review

In this chapter, I situate the thesis in relation to the relevant research literature on reading for intercultural learning in ELT. The empirical context of the study is EL education in Norway, but I will also review international research on reading literature and picturebooks for intercultural learning in primary, secondary and tertiary ELT, delimited to studies published in English. The chapter starts with an overview of literature searches for the thesis (sections 3.1 and 3.2.), followed by a review of relevant international ELT reader-response studies and IC (3.3.), with a particular focus on intercultural learning (3.3.1.), and responses to picturebooks (3.3.2). Next, a review of relevant studies from ELT in Norway is presented (3.4.). Finally, the characteristics of the existing research literature and the gaps addressed by this thesis are summarised (3.5.).

Given that there is a limited, albeit growing, number of EFL/ESL classroom studies on picturebooks, a few studies on other types of multimodal literature and from the L1 classroom are included. The first article in this thesis is a literature review. Consequently, Chapter 3 focuses on the literature not covered in article 1. However, the studies reviewed in article 1 are referred to when relevant to provide an overarching review of the relevant literature. The concepts that provided the analytic lens for the review provided in this chapter are *student-centred*, *experiential*, *dialogic* as well as *challenging readings*, as these are central to intercultural education (Byram et al., 2002; Fenner, 2001; Kohonen et al., 2017; Li et al., 2016; Sercu et al., 2005).

3.1. Retrieval of literature for the thesis

Literature reviews can serve to scope, map and critique existing research (Boote & Beile, 2005; Grant & Booth, 2009). In the case of a thesis review, it should also reveal gaps in the field (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 4). I have taken a multifaceted approach to retrieve literature, allowing an overview of the relevant literature to develop. Given that the thesis spans reading in ELT, children's literature and intercultural education, I have searched for literature straddling these fields. Then, a sample frame, functioning as a map of relevant studies within which the thesis is situated, was created (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006; Maxwell, 2006). The review in Chapter 3 also reveals gaps for further research and shows how the thesis addresses some of these gaps.

Systematic database searches were combined with manual searches of relevant journals within ELT, literature and IC, including: *CLELE: Children's Literature in English Language Education* (2013–2020), *Children's Literature in Education* (2015–2020), *Language,*

Culture and Curriculum (2008–2018) and *Language and Intercultural Communication* (2008–2018). Section 4.3.1. provides further information about this. Google Scholar was used to identify relevant studies. Edited volumes[25] were hand searched to find studies that would be missed in database searches, and the reference mining method was used extensively. Reviews, state-of-the-art articles, theses in my field, seminal works and recommendations led to further results. These searches were supplemented by searches, for example, in Wiley Library and *TESOL Quarterly*, employing the keywords 'Intercultural + literature', 'Intercultural + picturebooks' and 'Intercultural + literature/picturebooks + English'. The preceding overview is not exhaustive but illustrates the most successful search methods.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no literature reviews from ELT focusing on intercultural learning through text-based activities, which motivated the first article in this thesis. However, nearly all of the studies in article 1 on fiction texts include a theoretically founded rationale for the choice of text, centring on the affordances of fiction texts for intercultural learning (see section 2.3. for more information). In contrast, few studies including nonfiction texts highlighted the reasons behind their selection. Consequently, the literature review of this thesis will focus on empirical studies from ELT focusing on reading literature, and specifically picturebooks.

3.2. Existing literature reviews of IC and reading practices in ELT

Much research has gone into providing a theoretical rationale connecting reading literature and intercultural learning (Bredella, 2000; Bredella & Delanoy, 1996; Greek, 2008; Hoff, 2016, 2017; Kramsch, 1993; Matos, 2005, 2011). The main arguments of these studies are reported in Chapter 2, as they provide a part of the theoretical framework for this PhD study. However, there is less empirical work, both within intercultural education (Byram et al., 2013) and reading practices in foreign language classrooms (Hoff, 2017). Furthermore, there are few literature reviews in intercultural education and ELT/FLT. Existing reviews on intercultural competence analyse models and their components (Kojour, 2016; Müller et al., 2020; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Wilberschied, 2015) or have a narrow thematic focus (Kudo, Volet, & Whitsed, 2017). Reviews at the intersection of ELT/FLT and IC attempt to give an overview of the research literature (Byram, 2014; Çetinavci, 2011), sometimes in a specific

[25] For example, Bland (2015, 2018), Lütge and Bland (2013), Deardorff (2009b), Jackson (2012) and Kümmerling-Meibauer (2018).

national context (Porto, Montemayor-Borsinger, & López-Barrios, 2016; Valencia, 2014). Despite some references to classroom studies, pedagogical approaches and resources are not focalised in these studies, which therefore give limited insight into intercultural learning processes in ELT/FLT. This aligns with the following report from a three-year longitudinal study of 40 primary school foreign language classrooms in Britain, stating that:

> [e]vidence is very limited about how teachers develop learners' curiosity and openness, and which types of activities and tasks are most effective for children of different ages in helping them develop skills to 'step into another's shoes' or understand the complexity of intercultural interaction (Driscoll and Simpson, 2015, p. 175).

3.3. International ELT reader-response research and ICC

In the following sections, I will review international ELT research on the reader response to literature and picturebooks, with relevance to intercultural learning. Studies that address the overarching research question of how interactions with text can foster EL students' intercultural learning have been sampled. My own study adds to this work by exploring lower secondary EL learners' responses to a challenging picturebook, focusing on the role of the iconotext and dialogues for intercultural learning. I suggest that van Lier's (2004) expanded ZPD is a suitable framework for discussing the interactions between the text and the readers, and analysis of the dialogic features can illustrate intercultural learning processes. Furthermore, I argue that knowledge of dialogic features might allow teachers to mediate EL students' intercultural learning.

3.3.1. Reading for intercultural learning: International studies on ELT

As reading for intercultural learning in ELT is covered in article 1, this section briefly discusses three studies not included there. Internationally, Burwitz-Melzer was the first to conduct a major study on reading literature to foster ICC in ELT in Germany with 10–17 year olds (Risager, 2012, p. 7). Considering 15 case studies, she developed 'intercultural objectives for literature-based EFL' (Burwitz-Melzer, 2001, p. 31) and a typology of tasks. The objectives can be used to assess students' ICC and plan teaching modules. However, rewording of the objectives would have been necessary today to avoid static perceptions of culture[26].

[26] For example, Burwitz-Melzer illustrates the following criterion, 'compare their own culturally determined opinions', with this example of observed behaviour: 'You as a Turk have a problem with the behaviour of this girl, while for me her behaviour seems absolutely normal. But…'

Glazier and Seo's (2005) study on the use of multicultural literature and dialogic teaching is based in a linguistically and culturally diverse language arts classroom in the USA. Despite the differences in L1 and L2 teaching—for example, in terms of the students' vocabulary—it shows how literature discussions may materialise with secondary EL students. Engaging with both factual texts and a multicultural[27] story, the students were encouraged to make connections to the text through both small-group and whole-class discussions. The study highlights the role of the teacher in facilitating dialogue by asking open, clarifying, extending and elaborating questions. This modelling allowed the students to take over and steer the discussion themselves. A combination of a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of conversational segments offers insights into how the students related to the story. The analysis shows the number and length of turns, who speaks, about what and what prompts the students to speak. In combination with case studies of individual students, the authors reveal differences in how majority[28] and minority students relate to the text and their learning outcomes. Whereas majority students made text-to-text connections and gained insight into the cultural perspectives conveyed through the text and those of their classmates, minority students also made more text-to-self connections and learned more about both their own and other cultural perspectives. The authors hypothesise that the differences are due to the majority students' lack of insight into cultural characteristics, which led them to express that they do not really have any culture. The study illustrates the importance of knowledge about culture (Byram, 1997) and inclusion of multiple perspectives for making connections to texts. My study was inspired by the dialogic perspective, particularly how the teacher facilitated literary dialogues through 'questions designed to encourage responses' (2005, p. 692). However, the chosen text for my case study represented an even more unfamiliar setting to the students than that of Glazier and Seo's (2005) study, who worked with texts related to Native American history. I was also inspired by the mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to analysis. However, whereas Glazier and Seo (2005) highlight the students' cultural connections to the text, I focus on how the dialogic features contributed to the development of intercultural learning.

The final study in this section is included because it targets some practical considerations of teaching in addition to a critical issue for intercultural learning: stereotyping. Ortells Montón (2017) aimed at familiarising Spanish EL students with diversity in the USA through engagement with multicultural literature, As a pre-reading task to stimulate the students' pre-

[27] Multicultural literature gives a voice to historically marginalised groups (Gopalakrishnan, 2011)
[28] Glazier and Seo (2005) use 'majority' to refer to white Americans of European descent.

knowledge, a group of 70 high school students were asked to brainstorm ideas about things American before drawing an American citizen. In another group (also with 70 students), the order of the tasks was altered. The results showed 53% less stereotyping, through more neutral drawings, in the group that created a drawing before brainstorming ideas. This may indicate that the sequencing of activities affected the degree of stereotyping, a discussion I will return to in section 6.2.3.

3.3.2. Responding to texts and pictures: International studies on ELT

The first major study on children's responses to picturebooks was published in *Children Reading Picturebooks* (Arizpe & Styles, 2003). This seminal work is, to the best of my knowledge,[29] is still the largest study in the field (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. xv). Arizpe and Styles collected data through interviews and questionnaires from a total of 486 children between the ages 4 and 11 on their responses to contemporary picturebooks. The results show that both L1 and L2 learners displayed personal and affective responses and perspective-taking skills, irrespective of their language skills. This indicates that both groups are capable of sophisticated analyses of picturebooks. The study highlights the aesthetic aspects of reading, considering the role of pictures in triggering a response and the importance of children's visual responses to picturebooks to express understanding. In the updated version of *Children Reading Picturebooks*, Arizpe and Styles (2016) provide a review of new research on children's responses to picturebooks in L1 settings. This research can be divided thematically into studies on responses related to (1) 'the process of meaning-making', (2) 'methods for obtaining response' and (3) developing literary literacy in educational settings (2016, p. 134). Of particular interest to this thesis is the focus on providing challenges, often relating to culture (e.g. McGilp, 2014, 2016; Mourão, 2015), and group dialogue, where students may challenge one another's ideas. For example, in McGilp's (2016) study, young learners working with translating multilingual picturebooks have their cultural stereotypes challenged when a book in Arabic 'opens the wrong way' (p. 11). By engaging with the choices required when translating, the students develop their ICC (2016, p. 12). Additionally, several studies replicate Arizpe and Styles' findings referred to above, hence also recommending picturebooks that challenge readers for young L2 learners with diverse backgrounds (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 139). These books may contain postmodern features, such as disrupted and multivoiced narratives (Allan, 2018, p. 205), and/or provide aesthetical or thematical challenges (Arizpe &

[29] Limited to studies published in English or Norwegian.

Styles, 2016, pp. 139, 182–183). However, Arizpe and Styles (2016, p. 140) point out that research on teenagers responding to picturebooks is scarce. Through my case study, I aim to address this gap and add to the reviewed research by examining the reading of a thematically, culturally and aesthetically challenging picturebook in ELT with a focus on dialogue.

The majority of picturebook studies from the ELT classroom are small-case studies, often undertaken by a teacher-researcher. Even though one cannot make statistical generalisations based on studies with a small sample, a synthesis of such studies may provide insight into the benefits and challenges of intercultural learning through picturebook reading.[30] Few of these studies focus directly on intercultural learning, but they often target related skills, such as metacognition. Kolb (2013) studies extensive reading of picturebooks in a German primary school. The case study aims to see if children could learn from picturebooks through independent reading and what strategies they would use. It shows how students used and developed metacognitive skills. Ellis (2018) reports that methods that allowed young learners to engage and use metacognitive strategies while working with a picturebook facilitated multiliteracies, including intercultural learning. Furthermore, metacognition is the focus in Arizpe and Ryan's (2018) chapter on reading wordless picturebooks. They conclude that 'further research is required on how teachers can best mediate these texts in an ELT classroom and on how the wordless picturebook links to language acquisition, intercultural learning and cultural identity' (2018, pp. 77–78).

As mentioned above, there is little research on teenagers' responses to picturebooks. Two studies that target this population are Mourão (2013) and Yeom (2019). Mourão's (2013) study on responses to Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing* was motivated by a desire to study the affordances (as in van Lier, 2004) of picturebooks for language learning for teenagers, an understudied field. She shows the potential of interpretative discussions of multimodal texts for developing EL students' vocabulary and critical engagement with the text and its possible interpretations (2013). Yeom (2019) discusses the role of visual literacy in teenagers' discussions of multicultural picturebooks. Highlighting the picturebook as an art form, Yeom shows that visual analysis allowed the students to reflect on both their own and other's cultural perspectives. The analysis of discourse moves shows how the teacher facilitates the students' noticing of and reflections on the images, stimulating 'empathy and perspective taking' (Yeom, 2019,

[30] For example, Yin (2013) holds that analytic generalisation of case studies is possible through comparison with extant research literature, revealing overlaps and gaps, in addition to conducting replication studies.

p. 1). Furthermore, students draw on their cultural knowledge in interactions with peers to co-construct meaning.

Analysis of discourse features of literary dialogues can illuminate intercultural learning processes. However, as far as I am aware, this is quite rare in EFL/ESL research, with Yeom's (2019) study on visual literacy being one of the exceptions. More frequently, the object of study is language learning. An example is Kaminski's (2013) mixed methods study in a primary school German EFL classroom. Drawing on discourse analysis, Kaminski presents how picturebook dialogues contribute to the students' language learning. It is clear that the pictures arouse the students' curiosity, and the dialogic approach prompts them to contribute ideas that are elaborated upon and challenged by peers, leading to joint meaning making. The power of the picturebook story becomes evident, as the children manage to reconstruct the narrative 12 months after they had first read it.

Analysis of literary dialogues is more frequent in studies conducted in L1 primary classrooms. Fiona Maine (2013) demonstrates how empathy and language accommodate primary school children's engagement in dialogic transactions with multimodal texts. The children use their empathy with the characters to suggest and explore possible interpretations. Furthermore, the children synthesise clues in the iconotext to make meaning. Their dialogues correspond to what Mercer (1995) refers to as 'exploratory talk' (Maine, 2013, p. 154). Similarly, Wiseman (2011) and Pantaleo (2007) have studied students' cognitive and emotional development through analyses of the discourse features of literary dialogues. Youngs and Serafini's (2013) analysis of dialogues shows 5th graders moving from literal to deeper reflections on picturebooks when revisiting the images. The study also draws attention to the role of the teacher in mediating educative dialogues in which students feel safe to contribute and expand on one another's ideas (Alexander, 2008, p. 185). A final point is that giving students agency to contribute their perspectives allowed the researchers to see the picturebooks in a new light (Youngs & Serafini, 2013, p. 196). Implicitly, these studies can offer insights into intercultural learning processes through literary dialogue. Zhou's (2016) study from an L1 classroom also analyses dialogue through the lens of discourse analysis. It discusses how an Arab-American boy struggles to make his voice heard in literature discussions and illustrates the importance of drawing on the students' funds of knowledge. This is a rationale for the experiential and student-centred approaches shared by several studies on multimodal texts in ELT (Arizpe & Ryan, 2018; E. Braden, 2019; Brinkmann, 2015; Fleta & Forster, 2014; Glazier & Seo, 2005; McGilp, 2014; Mourão, 2013; Ortells Montón, 2017).

3.4. Norwegian ELT reader-response research and ICC

Empirical research on reading literature in ELT in Norway related to interculturality is still limited, including ELT research on picturebooks, which I will return to in section 3.4.2. One relevant study reports from an online exchange between teacher and literature students from Norway, Pakistan and the UK reading and responding to a classic novel (Varga, McGuinn, Naylor, Rimmereide, & Syed, 2020). A main finding is that the students' choice of either an efferent or aesthetic reading approach enabled an intercultural dialogue or, in the words of the authors, 'a cosmopolitan 'conversation' (2020, p. 515), where the students engaged with the experiences of others from unfamiliar contexts. However, critical readings grappling with the complexities of the novel were largely absent. Hence, the authors highlight the teacher's role as a mediator of literary dialogues (2020, p. 516).

A few additional Norwegian studies are relevant to intercultural learning, without being situated within the intercultural field. Larsen (2018), Munden (2010) and Wiland (2011, 2016) have conducted reader-response studies with teacher students, and Wiland has also done so with upper secondary students. Wiland's research focuses on the reading of poetry, while Munden's doctoral thesis was a contrastive study of students' responses to literature in light of their cultural background. Larsen (2018) studies teacher students' use of intertextuality and metacognition when reading excerpts from a novel set in a multicultural community in Norway. She finds that 'enhanced knowledge of […] intertextual traits may facilitate the development of metacognitive strategies for reading' (p. 1). Although Larsen's concern is not ICC, her study could implicitly have some relevance to research on fostering ICC, as metacognition has been linked to ICC (e.g. Dypedahl, 2018). A more recent PhD thesis investigates teachers' choice of literature (Lyngstad, 2019). The aforementioned studies investigate culture and literature in ELT in upper secondary and tertiary education. My thesis adds a focus on the classroom practices of intercultural learning in a lower secondary EL classroom, particularly dialogues about a picturebook. Studying teenagers' responses is important because the students' emotional and intellectual maturity may significantly impact their responses to texts and activities.

3.4.1. Reading for intercultural learning: Norwegian studies on ELT

The most relevant studies to my thesis, in a Norwegian context, have been conducted by Fenner (2001) and Hoff (2014, 2016, 2017, 2019). In a study supported by the Council of Europe, Fenner (2001) considers how a dialogic approach to literature in the EL classroom can foster intercultural learning. Grounded in hermeneutic, dialogic and reader-response theory

(Bakhtin, 1981/1984; Gadamer, 1979; Iser, 1978; Ricoeur, 1992), she argues that, as authentic texts (see section 2.3.), 'literature has richer and more diverse semiotics than factual text genres and consequently offers more learning potential' (Fenner, 2001, p. 16). The literariness of the texts leaves gaps for the reader to fill (Iser, 1978, p. 182). Fenner examines how lower secondary EL students respond to reading Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*. Being from a different age and culture, Wilde's text provides an encounter with otherness and may challenge the readers, for example, through the theme of religion. Fenner shows how the pupils enter into a dialectic dialogue with the text and emotionally relate to it. This process results in intercultural learning as the students consider their own cultural perspectives and those of the text. The study is theoretically solid and provides guidance to EL teachers on how to facilitate literary dialogues. Fenner proposes that teachers ask open-ended questions, allow the students to draw on their own experiences and avoid 'impos[ing] his or her interpretation of the text upon the learners' (Fenner, 2001, pp. 31–32). This advice aligns with dialogic theory (Alexander, 2008; Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Being published in 2001, the study is rooted in a paradigm of nation cultures, which tends to be more static than what is the trend in intercultural language learning today. Nevertheless, the didactic guidance is still valid. Her approach can be considered as student-centred, dialogic and experiential, the latter in terms of allowing the students to draw on their own experiences. My thesis draws on Fenner's theoretical perspectives and didactic guidance but adds a focus on dialogic features, in addition to paying attention to the role of pictures and visual literacy.

Like Fenner (2001), Hoff (2014, 2016, 2017, 2019) draws on reader-response, hermeneutic and intercultural theory but focuses on the intercultural reader and the teacher's role in facilitating intercultural reading. For this purpose, she has developed a theoretical model to study the reading of literature in a foreign language, called the Model of the Intercultural Reader (MIR) (Hoff, 2017). The model accounts for the interaction between the intercultural reader of a text in a foreign language and other texts, other readers, cognition, emotion, sociocultural and aesthetic factors, such as narrative style and structure. Hoff uses the MIR to study literary dialogues in four upper secondary EL classrooms in Norway. She examines some of the possibilities and challenges of intercultural learning focusing on the role of intertextuality and reader response while touching upon dialogic features. In this manner, she aims to capture 'the communicative processes [of the] 'intercultural reader'' by illustrating how the reader interacts with the different elements of the MIR (Hoff, 2017, p. 4). Hoff recognises that the teacher needs a high level of intercultural competence and ability to tolerate ambiguity to

help transform conflictual encounters into intercultural learning experiences (2019, pp. 106–109). She advises teachers to help students to maintain a critical approach to their own reactions to avoid stereotyping. The theoretical insights of Hoff's research have informed my thesis in multiple ways, as elaborated in section 2.2.

3.4.2. Responding to texts and pictures: Norwegian studies on ELT

To the best of my knowledge, no study in Norway has examined the role of picturebooks in fostering intercultural learning in ELT. Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017) is the only picturebook study from ELT published in Norway. The authors investigate how extensive reading of picturebooks affected the writing skills of a class of 11-year olds. They hypothesize that reading a complete story told through text and picture interaction, as opposed to textbook excerpts, helped the students fill in the gaps and make meaning from an authentic text. Additionally, the study touches upon the aesthetic dimension of picturebook reading by gauging the participants' perceptions of the iconotext. Whereas the majority favoured a conventional symmetrical relationship between text and images, two-thirds of the students also believed that the images should enhance the verbal text. I will return to the students' perceptions of picturebooks in the discussion chapter.

Due to the scarcity of Norwegian picturebook studies from ELT, I include two studies related to multimodal texts that illuminate the role of pictures in students' learning. Jakobsen and Tønnessen's (2018) single-case study considers the role of multimodality and learning design in a lower secondary EL class reading Alexie's (2015) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*[31]. The findings reveal that multimodality is used mainly to scaffold learning. The study shows that students draw on visual resources to make meaning of the text. Brown (2019) studies the effects of an intervention dedicated to critical visual literacy (CVL) skills in an upper secondary school. The aim was to create awareness of and reduce visual stereotypes through tasks related to various multimodal texts over a time period of 16 weeks. The results showed a decrease in stereotyping. Interestingly, the stereotyping of Asians decreased more than the stereotyping of other groups. Brown speculates that this may be due to the effect of reading a graphic novel, *American Born Chinese* (Yang & Pien, 2006). The story may have had a stronger effect than the tasks related to advertisements and pictures alone. Although based on a small sample, Brown's hypothesis concurs with theory on the effect of narratives (Deardorff, 2019; Hardy, 1977; Szurmak & Thuna, 2013). Brown's study also

[31] This novel could also be defined as an illustrated novel, but despite the focus on verbal text, the images expand the narrative.

touches upon how knowledge may be constructed and ideas challenged in a dialogue. Brown studies 'the instructional effects of the CVL approach on stereotyping' and provides instructional aims (Brown, 2019, p. 122). However, more research is needed to address the role of the teacher in mediating intercultural dialogues.

My thesis adds to the aforementioned studies from the Norwegian context by analysing how intercultural learning processes develop in dialogues stimulated by picturebooks through the lens of dialogic theory. Moreover, the thesis addresses how the artwork of a picturebook may stimulate cognitive and affective responses (Heggernes, 2019). Furthermore, my research provides guidance to teachers on how to mediate dialogues and adds to the scarcity of research in Norway on lower secondary EL students' intercultural learning.

3.5. Characteristics of the existing research

Returning to the overarching research question of how interaction with texts can foster EL students' intercultural learning, the review in this chapter aligns with the findings of article 1. The reviewed studies indicate that engaging with fiction texts in ELT has great potential for intercultural learning. Through student-centred, dialogic, experiential and critical approaches, fiction may foster affective and cognitive skills related to intercultural learning, such as (1) metacognition (e.g. Arizpe & Ryan, 2018; Ellis, 2018; Kolb, 1984; Larsen, 2018), (2) criticality (e.g. Brown, 2019; Hoff, 2017; Mourão, 2013; Porto, 2014) and (3) literary literacy fostered, for example, through aesthetic reading (Lütge, 2013) or making intertextual connections (e.g. Hoff, 2017; Larsen, 2018). Developing these skills is related to engagement with challenging texts, as highlighted by all the contributions in Bland's (2018b) edited volume on challenging reading in ELT. Moreover, culturally relevant texts are recommended (see article 1), as they allow insight into other people's ways of living and thinking as well as mirroring one's own. However, the focus on culturally relevant texts may lead to literature being used instrumentally, as a means to improve language skills and/or gain cultural knowledge, overlooking the aesthetic dimension of texts. Today, there is an increasing interest in how the text may affect and challenge the reader. Moreover, the notion of what is culturally relevant has been expanded, for example, to include texts from outside the inner circle countries (Kachru, 1985) and a wide range of perspectives (Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; see also 1.3. Context).

Dialogic theory is prevalent in reader-response studies, and dialogic approaches are considered central for helping students make meaning of literature. Yet, dialogic theory is used to inform pedagogical approaches rather than as a method of analysis. The focus on stu-

dent-centred approaches follows naturally from combining reader-response and dialogic approaches. To make self-to-text connections, students are encouraged to draw on their own experiences in their interpretations, but there are few reports of experiential activities, such as drama and role-play (see article 1). This trend is consistent with the shift in focus in literature research from deconstructing the text to find the right meaning to what the reader brings to the text (Grenby & Reynolds, 2011). Accordingly, reader-response theory has influenced the great majority of studies, especially those focusing on multimodal texts. This trend was also noticed by Arizpe and Styles (2016) in their review of picturebook research. Consequently, they call for further investigation of areas such as cognitive, emotional, visual, critical and literary skills, second language learning and social and cultural awareness (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 181).

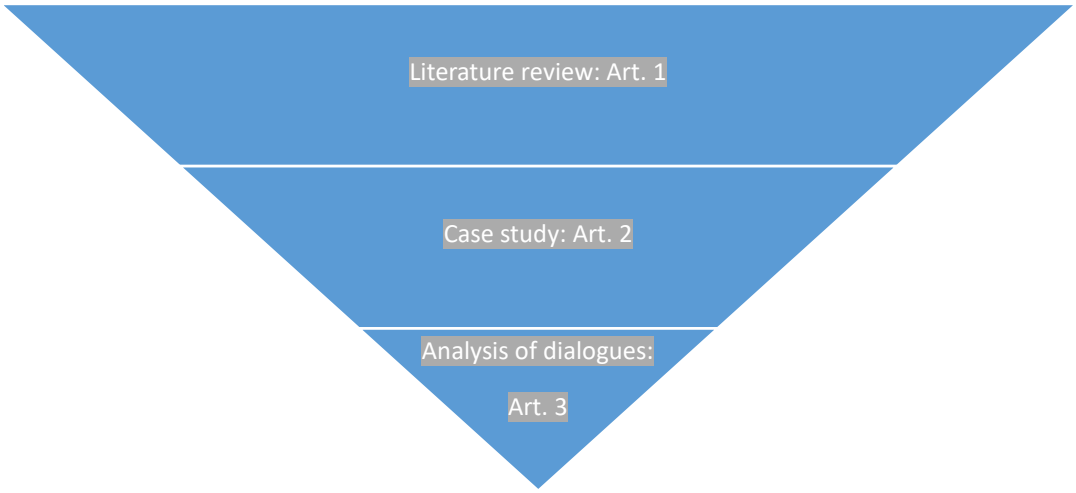
Although many studies touch upon intercultural topics and dialogue, there are few in-depth studies on how these fields interact. Studies on how reading picturebooks may foster EL students' intercultural learning are scarce, particularly in secondary education; in fact, the database and manual searches for article 1 and the thesis have only retrieved five studies (Hayik, 2011; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Mourão, 2013; Stewart, 2015; Yeom, 2019). My thesis aims to contribute to the growing focus on the aesthetic aspects of literary texts, which is particularly strong in picturebook research. It combines reader-response, dialogic, intercultural and cognitive theory, aiming to contribute new understandings of (1) the affordances of challenging picturebooks for intercultural learning and (2) how processes of intercultural learning may transpire in EL students' dialogues about picturebooks. Finally, my thesis addresses the gap of research on EL secondary students' intercultural learning and reading of picturebooks.

4. Methodology

This thesis explores how interaction with text can foster EL students' intercultural learning. The study has employed different research strategies to illuminate the object of study from a broad perspective, while gradually zooming in.

Figure 2

Overview of the Three Articles



These strategies have facilitated the study of intercultural learning in a holistic manner; that is, gaining an understanding of the object of study in relation to its individual parts. I will start this chapter by attending to epistemological and ontological concerns. This is followed by a brief section on data collection for article 1 and the pilot study. Subsequently, I present the case study, an overview of the data collection and analysis, an evaluation of the research quality, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

4.1. Methodological approach

Epistemology and ontology form the theoretical basis for the choice of research methods. An understanding of how meaning is constructed is central to fostering intercultural learning through texts, and this PhD study draws on ecological-semiotic perspectives, which build on and expand sociocultural theory. The most central aspects to this thesis are how an ecologic-semiotic approach to language learning relates to the developments in semiotic theory, the focus on affordances, critical perspectives and the 'appreciation of variation and diversity' (van Lier, 2004, pp. 20–21).

As pointed out in section 2.1., ecological-semiotics employs a holistic approach to language learning, addressing the social, physical and symbolic context of the students' learning (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5). Although the approach does not exclude specific research methods,

it lends itself well to qualitative methods due to its holistic focus, which involves an exploration of the object of study from multiple perspectives. A key element of qualitative research is data collection in naturalistic settings (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Bell, 2017). Undertaking a case study in an EL classroom allowed data gathering in a real-life context. Another key element is considering the researcher as a research instrument (Eisner, Noddings, Uhrmacher, & Moroye, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Being present on-site to observe teaching allows the qualitative researcher to use multiple senses to gain a fuller understanding of the context of the object of study (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 287). Hence, observation of teaching was one of the data collection methods in this PhD study.

The study has an interpretive character. According to Heidegger, 'all description is always already interpretation. Every form of human awareness is interpretative' (Van Manen, 2011). Qualitative methodologies recognise the subjectivity of research, as the data are mediated through the perspectives of the researcher and the participants (Cohen et al., 2017). However, to arrive at a holistic understanding of the students' intercultural learning, the primary data included the students' perspectives, expressed through verbal text and speech. The focus group interviews with students and their texts were complemented by the teacher interviews and my field notes from observations.

Language is central to meaning making (Bakhtin, 1981; van Lier, 2004). It is situated, which means that the social context influences language use, and vice versa. As learning, to a great extent, happens through language, the situated and interactive nature of intercultural learning necessitates the employment of multiple data collection instruments to capture the object of study in different forms and from different angles. In this study, I explore what language can reveal about the students' processes of intercultural learning, as expressed through oral and verbal texts, and how these processes were prompted by a visual text.

Recognising that meaning is constructed in dialogue both with other interactants (Vygotsky, 1978) and texts (Bakhtin, 1981), focus group interviews in which the students participated in dialogues about the selected picturebook were crucial. Furthermore, the affordances of the picturebook, which formed part of the social, physical and symbolic context of learning (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5), was explored (Heggernes, in press). Considering the object of study from multiple angles also provided critical perspectives on the data (van Lier, 2004).

4.2. Methods

Due to the exploratory nature of this PhD study, qualitative methods were deemed suitable. Qualitative methods are suitable for exploring an understudied phenomenon and/or sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 19). As expounded on in section 2.2, intercultural learning is a multifaceted concept. The debate on the assessment of ICC (Byram, 2014) highlights the challenges of defining and operationalising it. Individual assessment has certain limitations, as intercultural learning can only develop through interaction. The tentative consensus suggests that assessment should take place in multiple ways and by multiple agents, including the learners, their peers and the teacher (Byram, 2014; Deardorff, 2009b). Hence, a variety of data collection methods and collecting data from multiple perspectives were considered appropriate, providing thick descriptions of the case (Geertz, 1973). A minor quantitative element, frequency counts (appendix 8), was also included, as counting frequencies provide information about general tendencies within the case (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478). Further, frequency counts make it possible to avoid contamination of the analysis by outliers (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478). As a researcher, this helped me to consider the salience of the codes and, combined with the qualitative methods, provided an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In alignment with the interpretive character of this study, I have kept a research journal, noting down impressions and reflections. Following every interview and observation, I have also made notes of my observations, feelings and reflections. I attempt to describe how various facets of intercultural and visual competence are manifested through what the students say and write, bearing in mind that learning is situated.

4.3. Data collection for article 1 and the pilot

I will start by briefly describing the data search for article 1 and the data collected in the first phase of the project. While I have only used one interview from these data, they have been important in shaping the study in terms of the literature review, the interview questions and the classroom activities.

4.3.1. Article 1

In order to establish a baseline for my own research (Hart, 2001), the first article is a critical review of empirical studies from ELT relating to the overarching research question. The review allowed me to document and critically analyse current knowledge and reveal gaps in the field (Flick, 2020, pp. 86–87). The methodological approach to and purpose of reviewing is

thoroughly accounted for in article 1; accordingly, this section limits itself to a brief account of the literature search.

I searched for literature reviews and state-of-the art articles in the databases ERIC, Scopus and Oria[32], two of the most prestigious journals for review studies, *Review of Educational Research* and *Educational Research Review* and hand-searched journals focusing on IC/ICC and language learning. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I found no reviews at the intersection of language teaching, IC/ICC and texts.

In the following, pilot systematic database searches were performed using a search string in ORIA, ERIC, SCOPUS and Web of Science for relevant studies for article 1. As the search in ERIC yielded the most relevant results, whereas the searches in the other databases merely produced a few duplicates, the search in ERIC was fine-tuned. The final search had no time frame, and in order to stay updated, there has been an alert on this search since 2018. To further scope the field, hand searches of relevant ELT, IC/ICC and literature journals, including the last 5–10 yearly editions (depending on the relevance of the journal), were performed (see article 1 for in-depth information on the search string, data collection and analysis).

4.3.2. Pilot

For the pilot study, I interviewed four lower secondary school EL teachers about their approach to teaching the cultural aims of the English subject curriculum and their perceptions of ICC. The interviews also allowed me to fine-tune the interview questions to ensure that they were unambiguous and comprehensible (cf. Appendix 1). To my surprise, most of my informants highlighted factual texts as possibly the most beneficial for enhancing EL students' ICC. This answer was based on the teachers' practical knowledge: Reading fiction requires the ability to read between the lines. This requires a mature reader and is more complex than making sense of nonfiction texts. These findings prompted the question of what types of texts are represented in studies targeting the development of EL students' ICC (see article 1). Subsequently, I interviewed four other teachers, which helped me find a teacher for the case study. The interviews offered me insight on how a sample of teachers relate to the cultural aims of the EL curriculum and ideas for activities for the case study.

[32] A local database.

4.4. The case study

The next two sections describe the purpose of a single-case study, the sampling procedure, the case and the picturebook read in class. The study could be referred to as ethnographically inspired. I spent time in the field and used data collection methods frequently employed by ethnographers, such as observation, field notes, informal and semi-structured interviews and texts. As a participant observer, I attempted to establish a relationship with the participants by chatting with them during breaks, listening to their ideas and answering questions. Ethnographic research is holistic (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 293), as was my approach to data analysis. However, I was not in the field long enough to become completely immersed. Additionally, I had theoretically inspired categories in mind when entering the classroom. This differentiates this study from a pure ethnography, which typically relies on an inductive approach to data analysis (Blikstad-Balas, 2017; Yin, 2014).

4.4.1. Purpose of a single case study

My study is a single instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), aiming to illustrate some of the possibilities and challenges of working with picturebooks in a lower secondary EL classroom to foster intercultural learning. Thus, the purpose was to collect data that could indicate manifestations of intercultural learning and illuminate how this learning had taken place.

In a case study, it is essential to collect data from a number of different sources to explore the case from different perspectives, allowing for 'in-depth understanding' (Creswell, 2013, p. 321; Yin, 2013). Through a process of crystallisation, multiple data sources and analytic frameworks can illuminate different facets of the object of study, which allows a deepened understanding and emergence of new perspectives on the object of study (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018). Crystallisation is similar to triangulation, both relying on a combination of methods to find similarities and patterns (Patton, 2015, p. 652). However, the concept of triangulation has evolved within a realist paradigm in pursuit of research objectivity, relying on the assumption of 'a single truth' (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). Crystallisation, on the other hand, draws on qualitative methodologies, suggesting that different perspectives on the same phenomenon may provide 'a deepened, complex [but still] partial understanding' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 823).[33]

[33] I use 'triangulation' in article 2, as I was unfamiliar with 'crystallization' at the time of writing, a term which I consider more appropriate for my study.

The explanatory potential of case studies is challenging, but cross-case comparisons can reveal patterns within multiple cases (Yin, 2013, pp. 322-323). However, with multiple-case studies, there is a risk of 'diluting the overall analysis' (Creswell, 2013, p. 101). Consequently, a single case study was chosen, as it allows for intimate knowledge of the different aspects, such as the context, the participants and the collected data, which turns into a form of embodied learning on the part of the researcher.

4.4.2. Sampling

Article 1 revealed a scarcity of empirical studies on intercultural learning through picturebooks in secondary EL education. Hence, I purposefully selected a lower secondary school, as there were few studies from this level of education. Furthermore, I have teaching experience from lower secondary school, which could provide deeper insight into the context and be beneficial when designing activities. Purposeful[34] sampling allows in-depth knowledge of a case but not statistical generalisation (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 218; Patton, 2015, p. 264). However, through a rich description of the case and a transparent description of the research design, the study can still provide relevant knowledge to the field. This case study can serve as a teaching case (Patton, 2015, p. 275) for teacher education, offering in-depth knowledge of EL students' intercultural picturebook dialogues.

To increase the likelihood of obtaining useful data, it was important to find a teacher who was both open to try out new approaches and able to maintain control of the classroom. The latter was crucial because, to gather rich data about the activities and their potential for intercultural learning, the teacher would have to be able to carry them out with the students. The EL teacher who participated in the case study was recommended by a colleague at the university—through the snowball sampling method (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 220)—due to his reputation as highly competent and development oriented. The majority of the students I interviewed can be referred to as a convenience sample (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 218; Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 150). To elicit a diversity of perspectives, I interviewed all the students who consented to be interviewed. Furthermore, I purposefully selected another four students who had not replied to the question of willingness to be interviewed and asked them if I could interview them. The reasons were their interesting contributions in class and willingness to discuss the project with me during breaks. Two of these students agreed to be interviewed (see section 4.8.1. for more information on these two students).

[34] Patton (2015, p. 265) prefers the term 'purposeful' over 'purposive', as the latter (1) is harder to understand and (2) was historically related to finding a 'statistically representative sample'.

4.4.3. Description of the case: The school, the group of students and the teacher

The school is situated in a small town in Eastern Norway. According to the teacher who participated in this study, it has a reputation in the local community for being strict. The school focuses on content knowledge[35], reading and ensuring good exam results. The school library is well frequented, and the librarian plays an active part in the school's literacy instruction. A news article on the door to the teachers' room reports on excellent results in national tests.

The 8th grade group had 22 students between 13 and 14 years of age, from a rather homogenous middle-class neighbourhood. Four students were children of immigrant parents. These students all participated in the focus group interviews; three of them three or four times. Another of my recurring interviewees had spent three years at an international school abroad, meaning that five out of 13 interviewees potentially had more intercultural experience than the others. The group had never worked with a picturebook at school. However, drawings from a reading project were exhibited in the classroom, so the students had used visual methods to convey their understanding of literature.

The teacher was 43 years old with 21 years of teaching experience. He was the pastoral care teacher[36] of the class and taught Norwegian, English and Social Sciences. Thus, the bulk of his workload was dedicated to this group. He reported that he had not focused much on cultural issues. Reading literature, however, was a strong focus, and he said that through reading one learns about 'the human condition' (interview with teacher, December 2017). Cultural topics related to the curriculum and the personal preferences of the teachers were included in 10th grade, when the then 15–16-year-old students work with the theme 'Aborigines'. Cultural targets in the subject curriculum, such as 'cooperation, understanding and respect between people with differing cultural backgrounds' and 'strengthening democratic commitment and citizenship' (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013), were not dealt with explicitly.

In our discussion on how to foster intercultural communicative competence, the teacher stressed that knowledge about other cultures, their ways of thinking and why they act

[35] The teachers are organized in teams according to their main subject (e.g. English, Science etc.), something which is not the norm in lower secondary schools in Norway, where teacher teams are more frequently organised according to year groups.

[36] In Norway, pastoral care teachers, 'kontaktlærere', are responsible for the general well-being and progress of the students, besides being the primary point of contact for the parents. A percentage of their workload is set aside for this purpose, and the teacher will meet the group multiple times a week, ideally gaining intimate knowledge of the students' needs and development.

in the way they do are essential. Through the five preliminary observations and teacher interview, I noticed that vocabulary learning was a primary concern. The teacher used the initiation–response–evaluation pattern and closed questions, with pre-defined answers, extensively, so the students could successfully complete the learning objectives of the lessons. According to the teacher, only a few of the students managed to reflect on texts. Thus, at this stage, the focus was not on making the students reflect. Accordingly, the teaching was not dialogic, and there were few open questions. However, the teaching approaches provided multiple opportunities for student activity through reading, writing and speaking the English language. The teacher described the class as average, with few A-students.

The teacher had an authoritative style in the sense that he maintained control in a caring manner, frequently praising the students in front of their peers. He regularly monitored the students' comprehension, and the majority of the students were attentive and worked well. This contributed to a good atmosphere with polite and well-behaved students who seemed to trust their teacher. Many of them used Norwegian when working in groups, but most of them tried to speak English when asking questions in class. The students expressed that they expected to learn new words, grammar and work with verbal text in their English lessons, and they are were unaware of the cultural competence aims of the curriculum. Their appreciation of the English subject ranged from average to high. A few students loved to read, whereas others were less enthusiastic. Few read in their spare time but reading in class was considered to be acceptable.

4.4.4. The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain

The picturebook chosen for the case study that provided data for articles 2 and 3 was Peter Sís's (2007) *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. Article 2 (Heggernes, in press) provides a rationale for the selection of this book and an analysis of the potential challenges it may present to the reader. Here, I will provide a brief summary of the content and the material qualities of the book. *The Wall* is a memoir that relates Peter Sís's experiences of growing up in Czechoslovakia during the cold war. It shows a society in which students were indoctrinated into the communist ideology and where censorship and repression of 'defectors' were widespread. Nevertheless, as Peter grows older, he starts asking questions and is influenced by Western music and culture. The Prague Spring of 1968 temporarily leads to a more liberal regime, but following the suppression of the progressive government, Peter flies to the West. The book ends with the fall of the communist regimes of the Eastern bloc.

The Wall is a hybrid picturebook/graphic novel. It has a traditional picturebook format (32 pages) with single and double spreads, and every page is underlined with a single caption. However, it also uses frames and excerpts from Peter's diaries to narrate the story (see article 2 for a more extended analysis). In this way, it resembles a graphic novel. I have chosen to rely on picturebook theory to analyse the book, as my focus is on how the iconotext may affect the readers' responses, in addition to a more general discussion of the affordances of picturebooks for intercultural learning. A picturebook with a hybrid format may give the reader even more to reflect upon than one employing a more traditional format. Granted that the format is only one of the ways in which a book may enable intercultural learning, a hybrid format is one of *The Wall*'s affordances for intercultural learning.

4.5. Overview of data collection methods for the case study

Table 2 provides an overview of the data collection methods for the case study. The primary data are highlighted. The selection of primary and secondary data is accounted for in section 4.6.1.

Table 2

Overview of the data collection methods

When?	How?	Sample	Duration
Beginning (Dec 2017)	Interview	Teacher	45 min
Beginning (January–February 2018)	Observation	4 classes	4 hours
During (March 2018)	Observation	5 classes	5 hours
During (March 2018)	4 Pair and focus group interviews	15 students	95 minutes
During (March 2018)	Notes and logbooks	22 students	
End (March 2018)	Texts (answers to questions about the project)	21 students	

End (April 2018)	2 focus group interviews	13 students	80 minutes
End (April 2018)	Interview	Teacher	45 minutes

Of the 15 students I interviewed, one student was interviewed four times, three students three times, two students twice and nine students once. As I did not have a large sample, I interviewed the students who were willing to be interviewed to gain as much information as possible. There were nine boys and six girls, which was close to the gender distribution of the group (13 boys/9 girls).

4.5.1. Interviews

Interviewing is one of the most frequently utilised data collection methods in qualitative research, as it allows insight into the perspectives of the participants. Using this method, I gained access to the 'single hermeneutic' (Waale, 2013, p. 34), the first level of interpretation. In interviews, the participants can elaborate their ideas (Kvale, 2007, p. 4). I conducted audiotape interviews with the teacher and 13 out of 22 students. All interviews were semi-structured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Accordingly, I could structure the interview around the overarching research question and still allow discussion of spontaneous ideas from the participants or myself (Kvale, 2007, p. 9). Still, the agenda is set by the researcher, who has to be mindful of the imbalance in power this entails (Kvale, 2007, pp. 9–10). I sought to create a relaxed atmosphere to facilitate the exchange of ideas. The dialogues that were sparked by open questions, as discussed in article 3, and the criticism expressed by some students, as discussed in section 4.8., 'Ethical considerations', indicate that the participants could express themselves freely.

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian in group rooms at school. I chose the language best mastered by all participants to ensure that the students could express themselves freely (I discuss to the extent to which this choice might have affected the interview data in section 6.2.7). As soon as the interviews were completed, I made notes about my thoughts, impressions and topics and questions I wanted to pursue. Some hours later, I listened to the interviews again and repeated the same process. This provided a useful distance from my own feelings in the interview situation (whether the informants were positive, negative, what I could have done differently and so forth) and helped me focus more clearly on what was said, what competence was shown and what topics came to the forefront.

As stated in section 4.3.2., the goal of the teacher interview was to learn about his perceptions of culture, ICC and how these topics could be targeted in the EL class. The purpose of interviewing him prior to and following the picturebook sessions was to see if any change in his perceptions of how to target the cultural aims of the curriculum and foster ICC had occurred. However, throughout the PhD, my focus shifted to the students, and for this reason his views on what and how the students learned became more important. This helped me gain an additional perspective on the activities, in addition to my own and that of the students. Even though we were mostly in agreement, we did not always have the same interpretation of events. Additionally, we summed up each session as soon as possible after they were completed. These brief talks provided the teacher's perspective on what had worked well or not and whether the students were motivated by the activities. I took brief notes of the talks, and they informed the planning of activities. The talks also informed the analysis on data, providing another facet through which the data could be refracted. One example is when we discussed the 'two-corners' activity described in article 2, where we posed questions and the students picked a corner depending on their answer. Whereas one student stated that it was noticeable that her peers had reflected on their choices before taking a stand, the teacher thought most of them had just waited to see what their friends chose. As a researcher, I attempted to account for both possibilities when reporting the data.

Focus group interviews are useful for obtaining multiple perspectives on a situation (Creswell, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Combined with data from the observations, student logs and texts, the interviews contributed to a deepened understanding of the object of study. The students were interviewed as quickly as possible after the sessions, so their perspectives on what and how they had learned were still fresh in their minds. Along with the interview guide (see appendices 2 and 3), I read the student logs from the sessions before the focus group interviews to clear up questions from the students and ask questions that they found relevant (Postholm, 2010). The student logs and my observations also provided topics that could be clarified, expanded on and sometimes shown in a new light in the interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

As the students were in their early teens, focus group interviews were chosen to help them relax since they had only met me a few times prior to the interviews. Furthermore, in line with a dialogic approach, they could build on each other's contributions and develop a deeper understanding of the topics (Wegerif, 2011). This aspect was highlighted when I asked them to discuss pictures from the picturebook. Due to sick leave, two of the initial interviews

were conducted in pairs. The students seemed comfortable with each other, but this led to fewer ideas coming to the surface, as is apparent in the length of these interviews, the shortest being only 15 minutes long. On the other hand, bigger groups change the dynamic, something that might be both fruitful and challenging. It is important for the interviewer to ensure that all participants are heard. This was sometimes difficult, as some participants were much more outgoing than others. Teenage hormones and social status might have contributed to lesser participation from otherwise talkative informants when in bigger groups. It can also be difficult to ascertain if the students are stating their own opinions freely or if they are registering what the more 'popular' students say before contributing their ideas. To address this possible bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188), the interviews were complemented by individual texts, as described in the next section.

4.5.2. Texts

Each student was provided with an exercise book to take notes. All tasks and notes for the discussions were recorded in this book, in addition to log questions at the end of every session. Further, during the final session, they answered questions about what they had learned and their perceptions of, and questions for the story. Alongside the interviews, the texts allowed all the students to express understanding, regardless of whether they were more verbally or orally articulate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188).

4.5.3. Observations

Observations allow the researcher the opportunity to collect 'live data' on-site (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 542). They served the purpose of giving me first-hand knowledge of the activities and the students' responses, in addition to 'second-hand accounts' (Cohen et al., 2017). Thus, the observations strengthen the credibility of the study through my engagement with the data (Stige, Malterud, & Midtgarden, 2009, p. 1508).

I observed four EL classes prior to introducing the picturebook, three of which were related to literature teaching. The aim was to collect information about the class, the teacher's teaching style and how they worked with literature in the EL classes. I took care not to generalise about the teacher's teaching style based on the limited number of observations. Yet, this gave me an impression of the teaching style and what types of activities the class was accustomed to. Additionally, observation is a suitable method for capturing potential discrepancies between what is being said and what is done (Klette, 2017; Patton, 2015). In alignment with the Seidel/Prenzel observer interference scheme (in Klette, 2017), I asked the teacher after each session if this had been an ordinary day and if the class had behaved as normal. When

taking field notes, I split the page in two. The left side was descriptive, whereas the right side included comments, thoughts and feelings. This is a method for keeping recording and analysis of data separate (Klette, 2017). The field notes were comprehensive, considering the five elements listed by Klette (2016, p. 3) as parts of observation manuals on classroom learning: instructional clarity, cognitive challenge, interaction, organisation/instructional format/activity and relations/emotional climate. However, the most important element was the interaction between the teacher and the students, on which I focused systematically. I took notes on how often the teacher asked questions querying the students' factual knowledge, reflection, identification with the text, transference of knowledge to other areas and uptake (Skarðhamar, 2011)[37]. This overview helped me guide the teacher in taking a dialogic approach to working with texts.

According to the teacher's expressed wish, I developed suggestions for activities. These were discussed and, if needed, adapted based on the teacher's input. The rationale for this way of working is elaborated upon in section 4.8. 'Ethical concerns'. During these pre-project meetings, we also discussed intercultural learning and dialogic teaching to arrive at a shared understanding. For example, we discussed the difference between open and closed questions and the importance of inviting the students to provide thoughtful reflections on the picturebook. Then, I created a lesson plan with activities and aims (see article 2, (Heggernes, in press), for more information about the activities).

When the five picturebook sessions started, I remained an observer, taking field notes. While I remained in the background most of the time, my role was that of a part-time[38] participant observer (Fangen, 2010). I occasionally answered questions from students about the content during the sessions, and I chatted with students during breaks. Furthermore, I had to teach the third session, as the teacher had an in-service day, thus crossing the border from observer to participant. This shift provided insight into the teacher's role. My main supervisor observed this session and took field notes, allowing an outside perspective at the moment when I myself crossed the border from observing researcher to teacher.

Taking field notes places great demands on the researcher. I decided not to videotape the sessions, considering manual field notes to be a less intrusive approach, minimising the researcher's interference with the data (Klette, 2017). However, when taking field notes the

[37] As Skarðhamar's typology is intended to help teachers mediate literary dialogues rather than for research purposes, I relied on Andersson-Bakken's (2015) operationalisations of the questions.
[38] Fangen (2010) distinguishes between full-time observers, who live with and spend all their time with the participants, and part-time observers, who come and go over a period of time.

researcher must be extremely alert to register as much information as possible (Klette, 2017). The possibility of rich descriptions is one of the strengths of high-quality observations (Patton, 2015, p. 335). To capture as much information as possible and 'being open to what emerges' (Patton, 2015, p. 335), I did not use pre-determined categories when observing the five picturebook sessions. Nevertheless, the theoretical framework inspired my reflections. The main focus was on capturing the interaction between the teacher and the students when working with the picturebook. I found that I was able to effectively capture what the teacher and the students said in the plenary sessions. On the right-hand side of the page, I wrote down reflections on the context, the students' engagement, their visual literacy, the knowledge conveyed and how the students drew on their pre-knowledge or classroom activities in their responses. Furthermore, I took notes on the nature of the teaching and the extent to which it was dialogic. In noting my reflections, the analytic process started; it involved a 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens, 1984, p. 284), where I tried to make sense of the participants' responses. To some extent, 'the triple hermeneutic' of critically interrogating the participants' responses and motives was also involved (Waale, 2013, p. 34). Finally, I noted my own feelings to consider how they might affect my interpretations of the data. This was important to ensure researcher reflexivity (Hernandez & Preston, 2013). Both my teaching and research background could affect my own response to the classroom interactions, and these notes helped me compare and contrast my perceptions to those of the students and the teacher.

It was difficult to capture everything that was said in the groups among the students. Interviewing students after every session and asking them to discuss the pictures again contributed to making up for much of what was not covered in the classroom observations. In this way, I avoided 'death by data' and ensured intimate and contextualised knowledge of the data. The analysis also shows a high degree of correspondence between observations, student texts and interview data, with a couple of interesting exceptions.

4.6. Analysis of data in a case study

In qualitative research, inductive approaches to data analysis are common. Qualitative researchers are urged to free themselves from theory and let the data speak to them. However, there is also scepticism of a theory-free approach (Gibbs, 2007, p. 5). The theory presented in Chapter 2 was used to formulate hypotheses and research questions for my study. For this reason, it made sense to start the analyses with a priori categories, following a deductive approach. The mode of analysis adheres to the hermeneutic principle: I have moved back and forth between the whole and the individual parts while continually considering the overall

context (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017, p. 134). Alternating between induction and deduction can be referred to as abductive analysis (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Eriksson & Lindström, 1997). Eriksson and Lindström regard abduction as 'a way to discover meaningful underlying patterns [that] makes it possible to integrate surface and deep structures' (1997, p. 195). In my project this entailed an interaction between theoretically and empirically grounded knowledge. Data have been coded according to categories deduced from the theory and the research questions, but new categories have also emerged during the fieldwork and through the analysis. Repeated re-readings of the data have led to refining important concepts and codes. Whereas my knowledge of the theoretical fields counteracts the possibility of purely speculative conclusions, the empirical grounding serves to contextualise the analysis (Fangen, 2010, p. 250). The following subsections will account for the purpose, procedures, stages and nature of the analytic process, before I address the most salient codes.

4.6.1. Procedures

In qualitative research, data analysis goes hand-in-hand with data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192; Fangen, 2010, p. 208). This was also the case in my study. Data have been compiled from four sources:

- Pre- and post-interviews with the teacher
- While[39]- and post-interviews with students in pairs and groups
- Field notes from observations of classes
- Student texts (tasks and logs carried out throughout the sessions and answers to questions, after the final session)

In order to focus the study (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 648), I adopted the following procedure: As soon as an interview was completed, a reflection note was written. Here, I noted salient points with relevance to the research questions, my feelings and observations (Fangen, 2010, p. 15). In addition, I listened to the audiotaped interviews. Occasionally, this led to new interpretations of the data, for example, regarding what competence the students had shown.

I recorded field notes during the sessions and collected the students' exercise books after each session. The students were encouraged to write in English but could use Norwegian as a resource if necessary. Then, I wrote a reflection note based on my field notes and the students' written work. The student log entries, where the students wrote about what they found

[39] Interviews carried out throughout the picturebook project, after each session.

interesting about the book and noted questions, also guided my interview questions. They allowed me to clear up contradictory statements, such as that the activities were both boring and a bit fun. I could also probe for information on interesting points, such as 'I found out that I decide much more than I thought. I also found that colours have very much power.' This quote from a student's log entry targets intercultural learning, as the meeting with the different cultural perspectives conveyed through *The Wall* (Sís, 2007) led the student to reflect on his own life. It also relates to visual literacy, and follow-up questions in the interview permitted deeper insight into this student's learning. Furthermore, a preliminary analysis of the data was made half way through the case study, which helped me focus the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

When all data are collected, the researcher has to 'winnow […] the data' to avoid data overload and consider which data are best suited to answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). I considered the focus group interviews and student texts summarising the picturebook sessions to be the best sources for capturing the students' perspectives on what and how they had learned, as these data were collected at the end. Hence, they represent the primary sources of data. In addition, the focus group interviews carried out throughout the project, the student log entries and my own field notes served to illuminate different facets of the primary data through a process of crystallisation (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, pp. 824–825; Tracy, 2010, pp. 843–844). The students' written and oral contributions in class were, to a great extent, confirmed in the focus group interviews. However, the written contributions were often brief and required expansion to clarify what the students had learned. For example, a high number of students wrote that they had learned about the culture of Czechoslovakia. Follow-up questions in the interviews allowed me to clarify what type of knowledge they had gained; for example, cultural knowledge, in terms of historical facts, and/or cultural awareness, in terms of observations on 'difference and sameness' (Broady, 2004, pp. 68–69).

These data help illuminate the possibilities and challenges of working with picturebooks to foster intercultural learning, from both an etic (outsider) and emic (insider) perspective (Cohen et al., 2017). The various forms of data also served two other purposes. One purpose was to consider the salience of the findings. For this, the size of the categories and the frequency of the codes were considered in light of the context (Maxwell, 2010). Another purpose was to avoid fragmentation of data. A holistic approach to data analysis was enabled through the limited format, which allowed intimate knowledge of the data. I am familiar with

the context of every statement or text. For example, when reading one of the student's comments on red as the colour of violence, I am aware that the comment resulted from a dialogue regarding a picture in which red is a prominent colour. Additionally, I am aware that this is a genuinely independent reflection, as the point had not been raised in the whole-class discussion. I could also consider the informants' background, chronology (at what point in the learning sequence the utterances were made) and so forth. Having observed the teaching and interacted with the students during breaks and interviews contributed to a holistic overview of the data. Moreover, I consider the social dynamics when analysing interview data. For example, I am aware that some informants who offered deep reflections in one group were reticent in a differently composed group. Thus, I avoid drawing conclusions about their learning based on the latter interview. Collecting data from my own perspective, the teacher's and the students' perspective have allowed me to catch the emic perspective from different angles as well as the etic perspective (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 648). Furthermore, my advisor's observation of the third session added an outsider's perspective, allowing for crystallisation (Gough, Oliver, & Thomas, 2017).

When the case study and interview transcriptions were completed, I read through all the data chronologically to get an overview and avoid fragmentation. The interviews were transcribed and coded in NVivo. I shared responsibility for the transcriptions with a transcription assistant but checked all her transcriptions against the audio recordings. To ensure consistency in the transcriptions, the assistant followed a transcription key I had developed based on the Jefferson (1984) notation. The student texts and workbooks were hand-coded using a table in a Word document, which was subsequently uploaded in NVivo under the pertaining codes. The functionality in NVivo allowed me to see where codes overlapped. This was a useful tool in the analytic process. If, for example, the code 'visual' frequently overlapped with 'curiosity', this might indicate that the pictures stimulated the students' curiosity.

4.6.2. The stages of content analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse data from the focus group interviews and students' written texts (cf. appendix 7). Working with one source of data at the time, the analysis followed five stages, inspired by Cohen et al. (2017): (1) Coarse coding of data into theory-based and emerging codes. These allowed me to focus on 'a few key issues'. To better 'understand […] the complexity of the case', deviant examples were also included (Creswell, 2013, p. 101); (2)

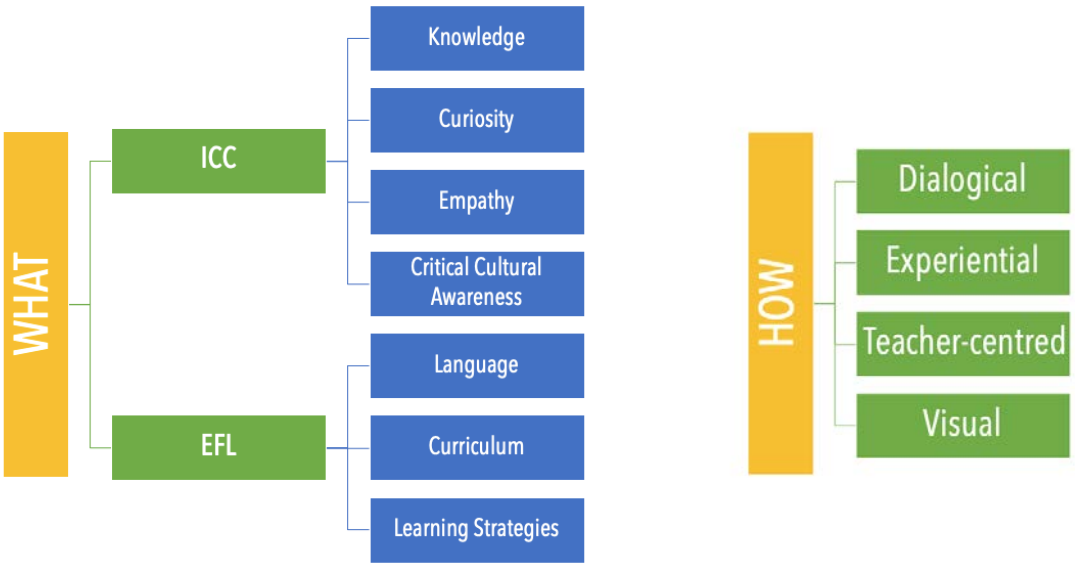
Sorting data into categories: ICC, EFL[40], How (did the students learn) and What (did the students learn). (3) Creating a code structure and including frequencies. To avoid losing context, I also kept a note of who had said/written what; (4) The next step involved going through the structure and checking for category overlap, as strict interpretations of coding require the researcher to avoid overlapping codes (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 682). However, the research questions of my study, focusing upon manifestations of what the students have learned and how, invite overlap. The goal was to see what aspects of the classroom activities and materials seemed to contribute to learning. The functionality of NVivo allowed the visualisation of code overlap through coding stripes. This was useful for discussing what elements might have contributed to (perceived) learning; (5) Finally, Cohen et al. (2017) recommends to 'comment on the groups or results […] and review their messages' (p. 683), a process that took place during the phase of writing up the results.

4.6.3. Code structure

The abductive approach to analysis explained in section 4.6. resulted in the following code structure:

Figure 3

Code Structure



Two overarching themes[41] were deducted from the research questions: 'what' and 'how' the students learn. Under 'what' there are two subcategories: ICC and EFL. Due to my focus on

[40] A change of terminology from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English Language Teaching (ELT) occurred in the phase of writing up the data to better reflect my changed views on language learning.
[41] Node in NVivo.

intercultural learning, all the codes related to ICC were theory driven. Even though the context of the study was ELT, I did not intend to focus on language teaching in my analysis. However, as I was transcribing and analysing data, I realised that the context of language teaching could not be overlooked because the teacher's and students' perceptions of the objectives of language teaching and teaching materials strongly influenced their approach to the activities. Thus, the categories 'language' and 'curriculum' emerged. Furthermore, the analysis showed that the dialogic activities and visual learning materials aided the students' learning, which produced the category 'learning strategies'. The second theme, 'how', has three theory-driven codes: 'dialogical', 'experiential' and 'visual'. Additionally, it became apparent that some students preferred a more teacher-centred approach, which prompted a new code for this topic. The overarching themes are dealt with in articles 2 and 3. In the following, I describe the two most salient codes to illustrate the process of coding.

4.6.4. Knowledge

As described more thoroughly in article 2 (Heggernes, in press), it is not merely factual knowledge about various cultures that fosters ICC. Factual knowledge can play a part, but, according to Byram (1997), knowledge about the characteristics of cultures, processes of socialisation and critical cultural awareness is even more important. Hence, the analysis distinguishes between manifestations of factual knowledge, such as 'I learned a lot, a lot about Communism', and knowledge of social interaction, such as 'People [were]told to do what they needed to do [and] didn't have much right and freedom'. However, these two facets of knowledge also overlap, as the students learned facts about the rules and regulations and how they influenced the social interactions of Czech citizens.

4.6.5. Curiosity

Questions asked by the students throughout the project, in class, interviews and texts were coded as indications of curiosity. Some of these were pre-coded, an approach advocated by Gläser and Laudel (2013). Two examples are the summative questions 1 and 3: 'Note down at least two things you found interesting when working with *The Wall*' and 'What questions do you have about the story?' Questions noted in the log entries or as parts of in-class activities were also coded for curiosity. This choice can be questioned, as the students were requested to formulate questions. The frequency counts (cf. appendix 8) could thus indicate genuine curiosity, but also that students found easy solutions to the teacher's instructions. Often, a high frequency count is likely to indicate the latter. Questions posed to the teacher, in role as Peter, such as 'how old are you?' and 'where do you live?' fall into this category. Accordingly, the

frequency counts are used with caution, always considering the context to determine their importance. Questions asked by one student and repeated by the same student in an interview, for example, 'what happened to his family?' are more likely to represent genuine curiosity. Hence, coding of the texts was considered in light of the classroom observations. For example, the multiple hands that flew into the air when the teacher went into the role of Peter were interpreted as a sign of curiosity.

4.7. Evaluation of the research quality

Qualitative research consists of multiple approaches. It follows that preordained checklists of quality criteria may not consider the nature of qualitative studies (Stige et al., 2009). Evaluation of quality in a case study relates primarily to transparency and reflexivity (Yin, 2014). Stige, Malterud and Midtgarden (2009) propose an evaluation agenda focusing on *engagement*, *processing*, *interpretation*, *critique*, *usefulness*, *relevance* and *ethics* (EPICURE). Through a discussion of these themes, the rigour of qualitative research will be strengthened (Stige et al., 2009). In the following, I will briefly explain how EPICURE relates to my PhD study. Reflexivity is not a separate item but rather is discussed throughout as an integrated part of the EPICURE agenda (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1512).

'**Engagement** refers to the researcher's continuous interaction with and relationship to' the object of study (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1508). In section 4.6., I show how I have engaged with the data through the collection procedures and an abductive approach to analysis. Moreover, a reflexive approach to the role as researcher is a part of engagement. This theme is dealt with in section 4.8., 'Ethical considerations'.

Processing entails the production, ordering, analysis and preservation of empirical data (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1509). This is dealt with in section 4.5., 'Overview of data collection methods for the case study', and 4.6., 'Analysis of data in a case study'. The research quality has been checked through external auditing, peer reviews of the articles and peer debrief. The multiple discussions of the project with other scholars from in- and outside my field(s) and university have helped me stay updated in my field, to consider and sometimes to reconsider the value and usefulness of the codes and consistency of coding.

Interpretation relates to meaning making through noticing patterns and considering the context of the participants' and researcher's experiences and descriptions (Stige et al, 2009, p 1509). This has been a continuous process, which entails thick description (Geertz, 1973). The case and context are described in section 4.4.3. under 'Description of the case' and section 4.8., 'Ethical considerations'. As several months elapsed between the data collection

and analysis and interpretation of the data, member debrief was not used in the analysis phase. Member checking might have been flawed due to faulty memories or participants seeing the topics in a different light (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 649). However, the data have been crystallised (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, pp. 824–825; Tracy, 2010, pp. 843–844), striving to represent the students' voices in a credible manner. Furthermore, member checking was used in relation to dissemination to ensure that the participants recognised and approved the way in which they were depicted.

Critique entails accounting for the strengths and limitations of the study, including both 'self-critique as well as social critique' (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1510). I aim to be transparent in the reporting of the data and discussions of strengths and limitations. Rather than social critique, there is a call for a greater awareness of the choice of texts for ELT in secondary school and the relevance of a dialogical approach to intercultural learning. These points also relate closely to the **usefulness** of the study, which revolves around the practical value for the field of practice (Stige et al., 2009, pp. 1510–1511). My thesis provides guidance to teachers on suitable texts for intercultural learning and mediation of intercultural dialogues. In addition, it highlights the affordances of picturebooks for intercultural learning in secondary education.

Relevance concerns the contribution of the study to developing the knowledge of the field (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1511). This study draws on established theory within IC and literature teaching to add empirical knowledge to an understudied field. The conclusion of the thesis specifies implications for teacher education and ELT. Finally, **ethics** refers to the integration of reflections on values and moral principles throughout all stages of the study (Stige et al., 2009, p. 1511). This is thoroughly dealt with in section 4.8.

4.8. Ethical considerations

Classroom research involves some obvious ethical considerations, such as power relations, the possible disruptive effect on teaching and the need for the informed consent of the participants. Prior to conducting the study, I obtained permission from The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), which ensures general data protection and privacy. The names of the school and all participants were anonymised. In addition, I consulted the guidelines for research ethics established by The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). As my study involved minors, it was particularly important to ensure their right to protection. However, ethics does not merely concern the relations to the participants but should suffuse all phases of a study (Creswell, 2013; Postholm,

2010). In the following, I will account for ethical considerations prior to, at the beginning of, during data collection and analysis and in writing up the results of the study.

In the first phase, I mapped the field through a literature review. In this review, I have sought to be transparent and accurate in my representation of the data. The text specifies the inclusion and exclusion criteria and details how the literature searches were conducted to ensure that the review is replicable. Prior to the classroom part of my study, I observed five EL sessions in the participating class. This helped me develop phronesis as an ethical competence through an understanding of the classroom culture (Burner, 2016). Furthermore, I handed out consent forms (appendix 6) and informed the class about the project, what participation entailed and allowed the students to ask questions. We talked about dissemination (through articles and presentations), anonymisation and their right of reservation and to withdraw from the project at any point, even after having given their consent to participate. Written consent was henceforth obtained from students, parents, teachers and the principal. The letters of consent had been approved by my main supervisor and NSD. Only the undersigned and her co-researchers had access to the data in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. All personal information was treated confidentially and stored on an encrypted hard drive.

The data collection phase started by interviewing the participant teacher. The following reflections, however, are equally relevant to the student interviews. In the meeting with informants, power relations need to be considered. The informants should not in any way feel pressured into participating. In all the phases of data collection, it is vital to consider the effect the researcher has on the data collected, also known as reactivity (Blikstad-Balas, 2016, pp. 513–514; Maxwell, 2013). Reactivity concerns trustworthiness, but it can also be related to ethics, as it would be unethical to unduly influence the data collected, especially if this is not accounted for in the publications. Therefore, I needed to consider how my presence influenced the participants. In the interview situations, I aimed to make the interviewees feel at ease. It was important to ask open-ended questions and avoid influencing their answers or making them feel that certain answers were expected. This concern also lies at the intersection of trustworthiness and ethics.

I interviewed students after each session and at the end of the study. When interviewing young students, the effect of reactivity needed to be considered even more carefully. Interviews were only undertaken with students whose parents had consented and who had expressly indicated that they wanted to be interviewed. I still deemed it appropriate to approach a few students who had not ticked off the box indicating a wish to be interviewed, as the box

might have been overlooked. Two of these agreed to be interviewed, whereas two others declined the offer, a decision I respected. Nevertheless, these students willingly discussed the project with me outside of class, which indicates that my questions did not put them under undue pressure. Chatting with the students helped me build up a good relationship with them, and I need to consider that this may have affected their responses to my interview questions. I started the interviews by encouraging them to be honest, underlining that there were no right or wrong answers and that I was only after their opinions. Still, some of the interviewees asked me if they had answered 'correctly' and if what they were saying was what I wanted to hear. Nevertheless, the students did not seem afraid of criticising some of the activities and materials. While the overall impression is that the class was happy with the sessions, individual students reported that they did not understand all parts of the story or that they would have learned more by working with different materials or through other approaches. This could be taken as an indication of their honesty.

All research has a possible disruptive effect on the activities on-site. For example, one participant expressed the wish not to be observed. Even though this was a student who had agreed to be interviewed, I took care not to hover over this student's desk. As for the teacher, his main concern was the number of hours involved and the study's relevance for the curriculum. I attempted to be honest about the time frame and aimed to make participation in the study beneficial to the teacher in terms of opportunities for reflection on and enhancement of own practice and trying out new teaching methods. Additionally, all the activities targeted skills and traits in accordance with the curriculum, LK06 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006, 2013), and were useful from a general education perspective. This was one way of ensuring reciprocity, giving something back to the research field (Creswell, 2013). At the end of the project, the teacher was positive about the language learning outcomes, content, exposure to new teaching approaches and learning materials. I also believe that the students benefited from the study. The great majority expressed that working with a picturebook made it easier to understand the content and participate in discussions. The interviewees had the added benefit of revisiting and reflecting on the materials from class, which may have facilitated metacognitive perspectives.

The case study can be considered from two different perspectives. On the one hand, there is the aforementioned possible disruptive effect and the question of who benefits from the research. One of the main criteria for ecological research is that it is contextualised. There should be a correspondence between the perspectives of the researcher and the participants

(van Lier, 2004, pp. 193–195). In this case, the research was instrumental in furthering my PhD, and I set the agenda. This was a dilemma, and I wanted to involve the teacher in the planning. On a practical note, the teacher's ownership of the project could increase his engagement and improve the success rate (cf. Mercer, 2018). This being said, it was important for me to give something back, as I have myself worked as a teacher for years. Thus, I assumed the position of an outsider/insider researcher (Herr & Anderson, 2014) and purposefully sought ways to make the activities fruitful for the participants and find solutions to serve their needs. This involved finding common ground, or 'sameness (McArdle, 2008) and reciprocity (Robertson, 2000) between the practitioner and the outsider' (2014, p. 22). To include both emic and etic[42] perspectives (van Lier, 2004, p. 195), it was also vital that all the voices in the project were heard. The students were given a voice through writing log entries in their exercise books after each lesson, reflecting on what they had learned and the interviews. Their views were considered in the planning of new lessons. In the classroom, it was important that the students did not feel threatened by my presence or 'under supervision'. Eventually, in order to not disrupt the participants' work, my expressed wish to involve the teacher in the planning, execution of and reflection on the lessons was outweighed by the teacher's need to protect his time. I respected his wishes to receive input and limit the number of meetings. Consequently, I prepared suggestions for activities of which he approved or disapproved. I did not want him to feel co-opted or as if he was being told what to do, which brings me to the second angle from which to look at a case study.

If researchers have knowledge they regard as beneficial to the field, it could be considered unethical not to share it (Postholm & Madsen, 2006). Preparing for the study, I have read extensively, participated in courses and discussed my research with junior and senior colleagues. Furthermore, I have extensive teaching experience, at both the secondary and tertiary levels. It could be considered an ethical obligation to let the research field benefit from my experience and expertise, as long as the teachers themselves consider my contributions to be useful. This position brings power relations to the fore, not to mention the researcher's biases. I may be well read and educated. The teacher, however, who is also well educated, knows his pupils, and he has practical knowledge of classroom management, what Aristotle called phronesis (Eikeland, 2012), which is necessary to manage the classroom. We both had to be mindful of each other's biases, strengths and areas for improvement to undertake a successful

[42] Insider and outsider.

collaboration. In the case of deviant perspectives, they were resolved through discussions of the purpose of the activities and the study.

In the data analysis phase, one needs to be mindful of one's own biases and how data are presented. Both epistemological and methodological reflexivity need to be considered (Steen-Olsen, 2010). The ecological-semiotic approach entails a belief in learning through dialogue. Yet, through crystallisation of multiple sources of data (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, pp. 824–825; Tracy, 2010, pp. 843–844) and a holistic approach to data analysis, I have continually questioned my own biases. This is a way to ensure reflexivity and avoid confirmation bias (Hernandez & Preston, 2013). My teaching background and close cooperation with the informants necessitated a balance between reporting only positive results and going native (Creswell, 2013, p. 59). Creswell suggests that this issue is addressed by including 'multiple perspectives [and] report[ing] contrary findings' (2013, p. 59). Hence, I discussed my interpretations of the data with the teacher and included critical perspectives from the students in my articles.

The final phase, according to Creswell, is when the study is published. Ethics must also be considered in dissemination (Creswell, 2013, pp. 59–60). Specifically, it is an ethical concern to disseminate results in an accessible format to both the research field and the research community at large. To this end, articles have been published in research journals, journals for teachers and school leaders and a textbook intended for student teachers. Member checking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200) was carried out by sending the articles to the participant teacher before publication, encouraging his input. I received verification that he had read and approved of Heggernes (2019) and wanted to discuss the results with the participating students. I also offered to visit the school to discuss the case study or anything else the principal and/or teachers might deem relevant to their needs.

4.9. Limitations

The strengths and limitations of the research design have been discussed in the previous sections. Summing up, the literature review of article 1 did not include studies reported in edited volumes or journals that are not indexed in the selected databases. Consequently, relevant studies from these sources are discussed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, a qualitative single-case study indicates possibilities but does not yield data that may be generalised statistically (Cohen et al., 2017). However, a high degree of transparency allows analytic generalisation (Yin, 2013), as the study provides in-depth insights, permitting other researchers to compare this single-case study with other similar studies.

The participating students were a convenience sample, which can provide little information (Patton, 2015). During the interviews, there is a risk that they gave me the answers they considered ‘socially desirable’ (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 507). To address these concerns, I also observed classes, collected student texts and interviewed the teacher. These methods yielded rich data and allowed crystallisation (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, pp. 824–825; Tracy, 2010, pp. 843–844). It should also be taken into consideration that students who volunteer to participate in research may be more motivated to learn than others. However, based on the teacher’s description of the students and my own observations, the students represented a cross-section of the group in terms of motivation for learning, reading level and English skills.

When planning activities, the aim was to provide opportunities for reflection on both similarities and differences between cultural perspectives. However, as some activities were more time-consuming than expected, some of the experiential activities aimed at highlighting the similarities between the students, as teenagers, and the protagonist were cut. This may have impacted the results, as discussed in article 2 and section 6.2.6.

5. Results

This chapter will summarise the findings and discussions from the individual articles. I refer to Table 1, in section 1.4., for an overview of the research questions, data and key concepts.

Article 1, 'A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom', reviews 36 empirical articles. The analysis shows that fiction texts are more frequently used than nonfiction texts in EL classroom studies of intercultural learning practices. Moreover, nearly all the studies involving fiction provide a theoretically grounded rationale for the selection of texts, but only two of the studies involving non-fiction justify the selection of texts. The studies highlight the importance of reading culturally relevant texts, as they may help students gain insight into both their own and others' cultural perspectives. Furthermore, the affordances of fiction for intercultural learning are highlighted, related to the aesthetic dimension of fiction formats. The multimodal format may be particularly promising in this respect, but more research is needed to explore its potential for intercultural learning.

Nearly all the studies involve student-centred activities, with discussion as the most frequently reported activity. Several studies on fiction draw on reader-response and/or dialogic theory, yet few studies employ research methods that allow the nature of the discussions to become transparent, such as discourse analysis or quantitative methods for analysing classroom talk. Consequently, the studies do not reveal whether and how processes of intercultural learning may transpire through dialogues.

The review further reveals an underrepresentation of experiential, kinaesthetic activities, such as role play, despite their advancement in intercultural theory. However, EL students are frequently encouraged to use their own experiences as starting points for intercultural activities. Critical approaches and reading of challenging texts are also promoted (see 2.3.1. and 3.5.).

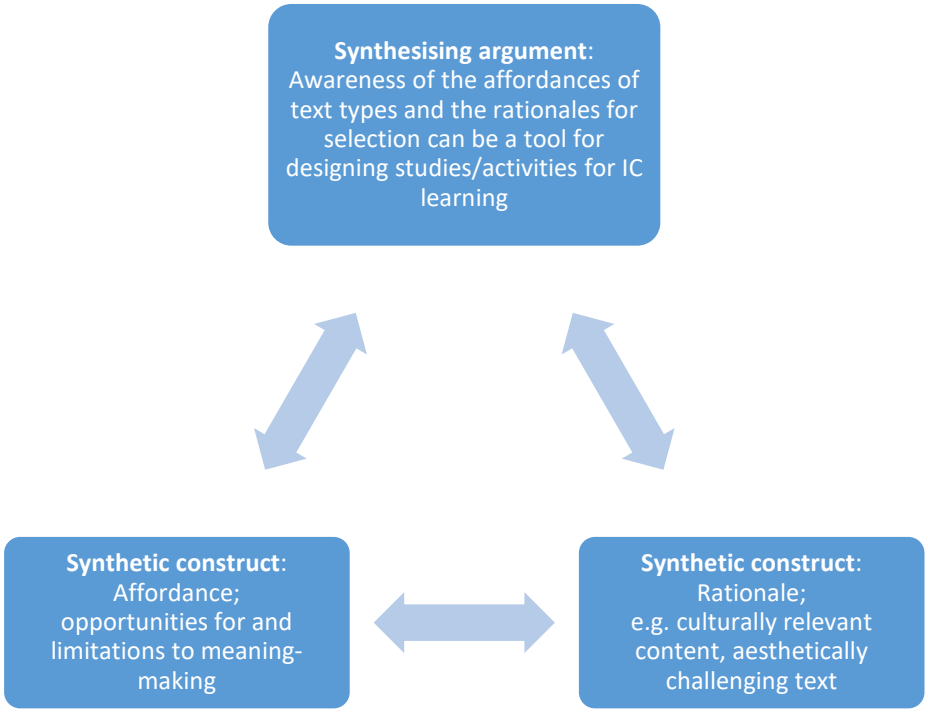
Fifty-eight per cent of the studies were conducted in tertiary education. Hence, my first article calls for more research in primary and secondary EL education on intercultural learning. Twenty-nine of the studies I investigated are qualitative studies, six are mixed-methods studies and only one study is quantitative. Consequently, article 1 calls for a wider variety of research methodologies and methods to gain a more holistic understanding of intercultural learning processes.

Through the constructs *affordance* and *rationale,* a synthesising argument was developed: An awareness of the affordances of texts can be a tool for guiding the selection of texts

for intercultural learning. This awareness provides researchers and teachers with rationales for selecting texts and tasks amenable to the achievement of learning goals.

Figure 4

Synthesising argument



The synthesising argument arises from the relationship between the synthetic constructs

Based on the findings in article 1, I proceeded to investigate how lower secondary EL students' engagement with a challenging picturebook might foster their intercultural learning. The ensuing case study provided data for articles 2 and 3.

Article 2, 'Intercultural learning through Peter Sìs's *The Wall*: Teenagers reading a challenging picturebook' (Heggernes, in press), shows that there are multiple opportunities for intercultural learning through working with a picturebook, which provides aesthetic, thematic and cognitive challenges. The shared reading provided a collective experience that was strengthened by the student-centred, dialogic and experiential activities. The chosen approach sparked the students' curiosity of another culture, and the art used to illustrate the book played a prominent role in this respect. The illustrations were starting points for small-group discussions, where students co-constructed knowledge and which were used as a learning strategy to understand the content.

The analysis of the students' intercultural learning revealed that the most salient category was knowledge of another culture, followed by curiosity about other cultural perspectives. Some degree of cultural empathy and critical skills was also apparent. The project faced two particular challenges. The first one regarded the students' perceptions about what content should be learned in the English subject and how to learn it. The majority of the students believed that learning English happened through reading as much verbal text as possible, to learn vocabulary and grammar. A few students persisted in this perception and remained sceptical of learning English through a picturebook. The second challenge revolved around the danger of stereotyping. A curriculum for intercultural learning must include an array of texts with multiple perspectives. *The Wall* (Sís, 2007) presents one perspective on a national culture and should ideally have been complemented by other sources. The limited timeframe did not allow this to happen, and only a minority of the students reflected on the teachers' attempts at introducing other voices. Nevertheless, article 2 shows that challenging picturebooks can contribute to EL students' intercultural learning in secondary education, especially with regard to stimulating curiosity and knowledge of learners' own and other cultural perspectives.

Article 3, 'Opening a dialogic space: Intercultural learning through picturebooks' (Heggernes, 2019), provides an analysis of the dialogic features of focus group dialogues and classroom talk from the same case study. The aim is to illustrate how processes of intercultural learning may be mediated or constricted through dialogues. The results support the findings from article 2 while providing a more in-depth analysis of parts of the data in light of dialogic theory (Vrikki et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2011). They reveal that the small-group discussions in this study contained a higher number of the dialogic features characteristic of educational dialogues than classroom talk (interaction between the teacher and the students). A possible explanation for this is the 'participative ethos' (Vrikki et al., 2019, p. 86); that is, the safe atmosphere of the small group, where all ideas were respected and listened to. This is a requirement for educational dialogues, along with sparking the students' curiosity. The teacher granted the students agency to contribute ideas, an invitation they willingly seized. Other central dialogic features were the students' exploration of one another's ideas, justification of their opinions and constructive challenging of ideas. This process allowed joint construction of meaning and new ideas to emerge through reflection and synthesis. A key feature was what Wegerif (2011) refers to as 'identification with dialogue itself' (p. 184); namely, arriving at the best solution together. The students' willingness to change their mind following a discussion indicates that finding good solutions was more important than being

the one with right answer and that the students identified with the process of the dialogue. Article 3 concludes with the argument that awareness of dialogic features and aims may add to the knowledge of how intercultural learning is mediated through interaction with text, pictures and other readers. This knowledge can help EL teachers foster their students' intercultural learning.

Summarising the results from articles 1–3, an answer to the main research question 'How can interaction with texts foster EL students' intercultural learning?' can be proposed. Engagement with a variety of different types of texts is endorsed by both the intercultural research literature and the English subject curriculum in Norway. However, article 1 reveals that the sampled studies provided a stronger, theoretically based rationale for fiction than for nonfiction texts, and that multimodal texts may be especially beneficial. These findings provided a rationale for the selection of fiction, specifically picturebooks due to their affordances for intercultural learning as multimodal texts, for this thesis.

I argue that increased awareness of the affordances of different types of texts can guide the selection of texts and tasks for intercultural learning in ELT. The affordances revolve around the cultural content and aesthetic aspects of texts that may engage the readers' cognitive and affective capabilities. The thesis has found support for student-centred and experiential approaches but has focused particularly on the role of dialogue. Furthermore, critical approaches are considered necessary to foster intercultural learning. Challenging picturebooks can serve as a leveller between proficient and emerging language learners both in primary and secondary school. They can stimulate curiosity, leading to the co-construction of intercultural learning through educational dialogues in small groups.

An awareness of the dialogic features of educational dialogues can help teachers mediate such dialogues. Students must also be given adequate time to practice this form of conversation. The most salient feature is 'identification with dialogue' (Wegerif, 2011, p. 184), which is crucial for overcoming differences and arriving at shared understandings through a critical, respectful discussion of ideas. For the teacher, this entails fostering a safe atmosphere where students aim to find the best solution together rather than individually. The teacher can scaffold educational dialogues by asking open questions and giving students agency to contribute ideas for discussion. The teacher can also encourage constructive challenging of ideas and withhold 'correct' answers to facilitate the students' co-construction of knowledge. Through this dialogic approach, students can deal with difference in cultural perspectives and advance their intercultural learning. Finally, the thesis also points to two

challenges for intercultural learning through picturebooks: (1) expectations about what content to learn in the subject of English and how, and (2) the risk of stereotyping.

In conclusion, challenging picturebooks can foster EL students' intercultural learning through a dialogic, experiential, student-centred and critical approach. However, there are several issues involved in this, which can be experienced as opportunities as well as challenges. The most salient ones that have materialised throughout my PhD study will be discussed in the next chapter and are related to the following: the role of factual knowledge; dealing with difference; dealing with stereotypes; the affordances of a dialogic approach; the affordances of an experiential and embodied approach; time as an opportunity and a constraint; the importance of a safe learning environment; art and intercultural reading and learning; agency and language learning; expectations; and teacher awareness and availability of challenging picturebooks.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The overarching research question for this PhD study is as follows: How can interaction with texts foster EL students' intercultural learning? To address this question, I pose the following sub-questions:

1. What types of texts and activities may foster EL students' intercultural learning?
2. What are the possibilities and challenges inherent in working with a challenging picturebook to foster EL students' intercultural learning?
3. How may EL students' intercultural learning be enhanced through a dialogic approach to picturebook reading?

In this chapter, I first respond briefly to RQ1. In answering RQ2 and RQ3, I elaborate on some central issues that have materialised throughout the PhD study. Finally, I provide an overview of the contributions of this thesis, suggestions for further research, a conclusion and implications for policy makers, teacher education and ELT of this PhD study.

6.1. What types of texts and activities may foster EL students' intercultural learning?

Chapter 2 has demonstrated that fostering intercultural learning in ELT requires a variety of texts representing a multitude of perspectives and pedagogical approaches that allow the students to engage with the social, physical and symbolic context of the texts (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5). However, based on the discussion of the affordances of different types of texts for intercultural learning in section 2.3. and the findings of article 1, this thesis focuses on fiction. Article 1 shows a strong theoretical rationale connected to engagement with fiction texts for intercultural learning. In addition, the affordances of challenging texts for intercultural learning are highlighted (Bland, 2018b), particularly those of challenging picturebooks. I will return to the role of pictures in supporting intercultural learning in section 6.2.

As for activities, based on the theoretical framework and findings of the articles in this thesis, I argue that student-centred, experiential and dialogic activities, with a critical perspective, are conducive to intercultural learning (Byram et al., 2002; Dasli, 2011; Fenner, 2001; Kohonen et al., 2017; Li et al., 2016; Sercu et al., 2005). These categories are intrinsically connected. Student-centredness entails granting agency to students to co-construct learning.

This may occur by allowing students to draw on their own experiences to relate to others (i.e. an experiential approach). In this way, the students can build identity while increasing their awareness of other cultural perspectives. A dialogic approach provides an ideal setting for these processes to occur, as it involves sharing and engaging with one another's ideas. Dialogic approaches give L2 learners opportunities to engage with the physical, social and symbolic context of a foreign language text (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5). Article 1 shows that student-centred activities are favoured in EL intercultural education, and in-class discussions are frequent in the sampled EL studies. However, the majority of the studies do not comment on or exemplify the discussions, leaving it uncertain whether or not they are of a dialogic nature. As to experiential approaches, they are scarce in the sampled studies. Consequently, the reviewed studies did not provide overall empirical insights on how dialogic and experiential approaches contribute to intercultural learning.

The role of the dialogic approach can be illustrated by the PhD case study, which included student-centred, dialogic and experiential activities. The teacher expressed that he managed to engage more students than usual through the project. Additionally, students reported that the experiential and dialogic activities led to a higher degree of engagement. It is worth mentioning that the observed sessions prior to the picturebook project were highly student-centred but not particularly dialogic. For example, my analysis of classroom talk from these four sessions hardly contained any open questions, whereas they were frequent during the picturebook study. However, there were multiple opportunities for student activity, and the students were accustomed to working in small groups. Hence, the more dialogic approach of the picturebook sessions could be one of the reasons why the teacher felt that he had managed to activate more of the students than usual. Another reason may be the picturebook itself, as the picture–text interaction allowed all the students to engage with the story.

6.2. Possibilities and challenges for intercultural learning through engagement with picturebooks

In the following, I will discuss some crucial issues that materialised through the analysis of data from the case study.

6.2.1. The role of factual knowledge

In terms of the students' intercultural learning, the results show that knowledge was the largest category. Section 2.2.6. accounts for different types of knowledge that can be related to ICC. Much of the data reveals cultural knowledge related to geography and the political system. The teacher, who also taught social sciences, expressed in the final interview that the project constituted a solid foundation for continued work with the Cold War. In the analysis, I distinguished between this type of fact-based knowledge and knowledge of social interaction, where the students showed an understanding of socialisation and drew connections to their own experiences.

Knowledge of socialisation processes also includes fact-based knowledge, which, for example, Broady (2004, p. 69) claims is less relevant to intercultural learning than cultural awareness, specifically the skills of exploring and observing. Learning about socialisation in one specific country, as depicted in *The Wall* (Sís, 2007), could also lead to stereotyping, as will be discussed in section 6.2.3. However, it may also serve as a starting point for exploration and observation of one's own socialisation, facilitating understanding on a more general level. Efforts were made to include a critical perspective of the students' own and other cultural perspectives through decentring. The examples in the data of students who made comparisons with their own cultural perspectives and provided critical reflections attest to the possibilities of fostering cultural awareness through picturebook dialogues.

I would also like to challenge the view that fact-based knowledge is less relevant to intercultural learning than skills of exploration and mediation (e.g. Broady, 2004). Undoubtedly, fact-based knowledge about cultures does not suffice to make one interculturally competent, and the fluidity of cultures must be kept in mind. However, knowledge about political systems and democratic structures can serve as a safeguard for democracy (Council of Europe, 2018). In this respect, the knowledge gained about totalitarian regimes in this study was a step towards democratic and intercultural learning, which is at the core of the new curriculum (Core Curriculum, 2017, pp. 12–13). This may further the students' understanding of democratic structures nationally and globally.

Furthermore, the understanding that education is politically and culturally constructed and entails a form of socialisation can prompt a critical look at one's own educational system. In turn, learners can analyse their own socialisation processes, something which can shape intercultural interaction (Byram, 1997, p. 52; Council of Europe, 2018, p. 55).

6.2.2. Dealing with difference

Picturebooks provide multiple challenges and opportunities for engagement. Physically, both the format of the picturebook and the setting of the story can be considered. I argue in article 2 that Peter Sís's *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (2007) represented a triple intercultural experience through the unfamiliarity of working with the picturebook format, the unknown setting of the story and the foreign language. In this respect, the book was ideal for working with intercultural learning. However, there were also challenges, which I will return to in section 6.2.3. The setting of the story, Prague in the 1950s and 1960s, represented an unknown physical context for the students, but also an unfamiliar social context. This gave rise to an intercultural encounter, where the students met with difference due to 'divergent subjectivities' (Hoff, 2016, p. 53).

Intercultural learning can be manifested through overcoming difference (Byram, 1997). When we manage to view the other from the inside and ourselves from the outside, a fusion of horizons may occur (Gadamer, 1979). In order to bridge the different social contexts, the activities in the case study aimed at making the students aware of similarities between themselves and the protagonist. However, this was only successful to a limited degree, as most of the students did not see any similarities between the protagonist and themselves. The reason for this may be the time constraints mentioned in section 6.2.6. However, there were some students who highlighted similarities in their own personality, which shows that the engagement with the picturebook provided opportunities for overcoming difference.

On the other hand, conflictual encounters can offer strong potential for intercultural learning (Hoff, 2019). Engaging with the social context of the book, that of living in a totalitarian regime, provided many conflictual encounters. For example, one student found it very difficult to understand how children could inform on their parents. On encountering a different way of understanding the world, a different horizon, she experienced a need for interpretation (Gadamer, 1979). This need was fulfilled in a dialogue with her peers, mediated by the researcher. Prompted by open questions, the students considered how totalitarian regimes may shape the citizens' way of thinking, and that children's thinking can be particularly easy to mould. These considerations also relate to the symbolic context of the book, in particular how ideology suffuses the narrative. The students had to exert what Kramsch (2011, p. 355) refers to as symbolic competence, which involves critical questioning of perspectives and decentring. The students showed symbolic competence by questioning whose voices the children in

Czechoslovakia heard through their education and who benefitted from the messages they heard. From the meeting of two divergent perspectives, new perspectives emerged as the students co-created an understanding of seemingly incomprehensible acts.

6.2.3. Dealing with stereotypes

Intercultural learning entails critical engagement with differing perspectives. Simply reading about other cultures does not automatically lead to intercultural development (Acevedo & Short, 2018; Hoff, 2013, 2017). A critical discussion of the text and the readers' attitudes towards it is required to bring forth potential prejudices. Unless potential prejudices are challenged, the reading may reinforce stereotypes rather than countering them (Hoff, 2017).

At the end of my case study, the teacher and I discussed the extent to which the study may have led to stereotyping. As pointed out in article 2 (Heggernes, in press), many students had a very negative perception of Czechoslovakia after the project. Given that the picturebook describes a repressive, totalitarian regime, the students' reactions are reasonable. However, as the aim of the study was to develop ICC, such as the ability to decentre, take other perspectives, openness and respect for others, it was also a challenge. This clearly shows the importance of working with more than one source when dealing with a specific culture, to provide multiple perspectives. Telling the students that *The Wall* (Sís, 2007) was one man's story, which could be challenged, did not seem to make as strong an impact as the story itself. In this respect, it is possible that the book did not provide the easiest starting point for fostering ICC.

Sequencing of activities is another point to consider. As a pre-reading activity, the students in my case study were asked to discuss what they thought of when they heard the words 'USA', 'Communism' and 'Czechoslovakia'. Whereas they had next to no knowledge about Communism and Czechoslovakia, they all had ideas about the USA. However, apart from names of presidents and states, the knowledge consisted mainly of stereotypes, such as guns, fat people and hamburgers. Aiming to stimulate and map the students' pre-knowledge, we may inadvertently have stimulated the students' stereotypes related to a nation culture. This conclusion is supported by Ortells Montón (2017), who found that sequencing of activities significantly affected the degree of students' stereotyping. Conversely, in Brown's (2019) study, the students were less likely to stereotype groups of people they had read a narrative

about than other groups they had seen pictures of. Similarly, the students in my case study distinguished between the political regime and the citizens, showing a degree of empathy towards the protagonist, his family and friends.

6.2.4. The affordances of a dialogic approach

To mediate intercultural reading experiences, teachers need an understanding of how intercultural readers engage with foreign language text in order to scaffold intercultural learning processes (see Hoff, 2017, p. 56). Article 3 (Heggernes, 2019) discusses in detail how this communicative process occurs, considering the interaction between the text, the reader and other readers at various levels, both the teacher and their peers. In this respect, the dialogues in article 3 exemplify van Lier's (2004, p. 158) expanded ZPD. They highlight the need for increased awareness of dialogic features, as this allows facilitation of intercultural dialogues.

I also argue that utilising both qualitative and quantitative research methods can contribute to broadening the understanding of intercultural learning. The analysis of classroom talk between the teacher and the students and the focus group dialogues in Heggernes (2019) shows that there were more conversational turns in the focus group dialogues than in the classroom. The fact that the students talked more in the groups does not illuminate the quality or nature of the dialogues. However, extended contributions are one of the features of educational dialogue (Vrikki et al., 2019, p. 86). Quantitative measures can indicate the degree of participation in the dialogue, and there were more and longer conversational turns in the focus groups than in the classroom. The small groups allowed everyone to contribute, and I argue that inclusion is an essential requirement for intercultural education. Having established a quantitatively higher degree of participation, the dialogic features can illuminate the quality of the dialogic interactions (Vrikki et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2011). As demonstrated in Heggernes (2019), the analysis shows that the focus group dialogues contained a higher number of dialogic features, such as contribution, extension and challenging of ideas. The presence of these features contributed to co-construction of intercultural knowledge through the dialogue.

The analysis of dialogic features contributes important empirical and didactic knowledge on how to mediate intercultural learning through picturebook dialogues. For example, ensuring that everyone has a say is only the first step, albeit an essential one. This leads to cumulative talk, which is useful for gathering ideas (Mercer, 1995). Cumulative talk can also ensure a safe space in which students freely share and listen to one another's ideas (Maine, 2013; Pearson, 2010). Establishing a participative ethos (Vrikki et al., 2019) can lower the threshold for critical engagement with one another's ideas without the participants

losing face. Under these circumstances, the participants identify with the aims of the dialogue (Wegerif, 2011), and intercultural learning may occur. Article 3 contributes didactically by providing guidance to teachers in how to facilitate educative dialogues that may lead to intercultural learning. Teachers can facilitate educative dialogues by asking open questions, granting students' agency to contribute, extend and, in a respectful manner, criticise one another's ideas. Finally, it is important to refrain from providing 'correct' answers before the students have had the chance to contribute and discuss ideas.

6.2.5. The affordances of an experiential and embodied approach

Experiential activities involve an embodied approach to learning that may benefit learners who struggle with English. Allowing the students to draw on their experiences also ensures that everyone is included. Through open questions such as 'What does this picture make you think of?', the students in this case study made connections between the picturebook and experiences from their own lives, the world, reading and seeing other texts.

Moreover, through the Two-corners activity, as explained in article 2, meaning was expressed through bodily movement while stimulating the students' critical cultural awareness, ability to decentre and their language skills. The pursuing discussion allowed ideas to be articulated as a collective rather than placing the strain on the individual.

Experiential activities are not merely beneficial to emerging learners of English. Rather, stimulating multiple senses allows for aesthetic experiences that may lead to the emergence of new perspectives for all learners (Østern, 2013, p. 51). Through an experiential approach, the teacher's role shifts from that of a transmitter of knowledge to mediating potentially transformative learning experiences.

6.2.6. Time as an opportunity and a constraint

The process of building ICC through dialogue requires time for reflection. One of the affordances of physical books is related to time and the possibility of immersion. Immersing oneself in a book provides more time to reflect than various digital formats, which encourage browsing and frequent interruptions. The reader can create meaning by filling in the 'gaps' of the text (Iser, 1978, p. 182).

In an intercultural encounter between two people, we can ask each other questions to clear up potential ambiguities and misunderstandings. This is not the case in the meeting between a reader and a text. The reader can impose her understanding onto the text and thus add another layer, a new horizon to the text, but the text remains unchanged (Hoff, 2016, p. 53).

Consequently, ‘a successful relationship between reader and text’ (Iser, 1978, p. 167) is manifested through changes in the reader’s own thinking. This is akin to an intercultural experience, when decentring takes place.

These points are particularly pertinent in relation to picturebooks. Children love reading the same books over and over again. Taking the time to reread texts offers opportunities for exploring the pictures, discovering new details and engaging with ambiguities in the iconotext. The brevity of picturebooks allows for revisiting, something which otherwise rarely occurs in the classroom due to a lack of time (Arizpe & Styles, 2016). By employing skills related to ICC, such as critical and metacognitive skills, students may co-construct knowledge in a dialogue with the text. In turn, they may develop a more overarching understanding and more sophisticated analyses (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 14; Youngs & Serafini, 2013, p. 193).

In my case study, the students revisited the verbal text and pictures both in class and in the focus group interviews. Manifestations of critical and literary skills appeared mainly in the focus group interviews. One reason for this may have been the opportunity to revisit the story, which allowed the students to detect new details. Additionally, the time elapsed between the first reading in the classroom and the subsequent focus group interviews may have led to more mature interpretations of the story and reflections on the subject matter. This explanation aligns with the findings of Youngs and Serafini (2013), who show that their students move from literal interpretations to paying attention to structural and ideological elements of the picturebooks through repeated readings.

Time is thus both an opportunity and a constraint. In article 2, I briefly discuss teaching approaches that may have led to different results. Due to time constraints, some activities aimed at forging threads between the cultural perspectives of the students and those of the protagonist were cut, such as some experiential drama activities. This resulted in missed opportunities for the students to physically take on the role of another and to potentially see the similarities between teenagers in different contexts.

6.2.7. The importance of a safe learning environment

Another explanation for the more mature analyses offered in the focus groups may be the safety provided by small groups. The data reveal that students perceived student-centred and dialogic activities to be beneficial to their learning. They expressed that learning happened through discussing the picturebook in small groups, as there were no right or wrong answers, which made it easier to contribute their ideas. The group provided a safe setting where they could help each other elaborate their arguments. This shows that the students learned not

learn only from the teacher but also from peers (cf. van Lier, 2004). Moreover, the focus group interviews took place in Norwegian, which may have led to more contributions. Based on the students' language skills, however, it is likely that they would have been able to express themselves in English.

Similarly, in studies in English-speaking settings, students also contributed more sophisticated analyses when revisiting picturebooks in small groups (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 14; Youngs & Serafini, 2013, p. 193). This may indicate that speaking Norwegian was not the main reason why, in my case study, the students' focus group discussions brought forth more contributions and more sophisticated analyses than whole-class interaction. However, the sense of security provided by the small groups might be one of the decisive factors.

6.2.8. Art and intercultural reading and learning

As picturebooks are objects of art, it is pertinent to consider what happens in the interaction between a viewer and an art object. This interaction, as described by Clark (1960), can foster critical thinking and run parallel to processes of intercultural learning (Table 3).

Table 3

The Parallels Between Appreciation of Art and Intercultural Reading Experiences

The four phases of appreciating art (Clark, 1960)	**An intercultural reading experience (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2011; Van Lier, 2004)**
Impact	Curiosity
Scrutiny	Discovery/Interaction
Recollection	Critical cultural awareness/Symbolic competence
Renewal	Emergence of new perspectives

Reading picturebooks involves a pendulum movement between the parts and the whole (Arizpe & Styles, 2016, p. 126). The reader moves back and forth between the details in the pictures and the verbal text to make sense of the story. Similarly, intercultural learning processes are not linear; rather, they can occur in stages, which move back and forth, as visualised in Figure 5 below. In the following, however, the stages will be described consecutively for analytic purposes.

Appreciation of art can be considered in four phases (Clark, 1960, p. 69). The first of these relates to how the work of art *impacts* the viewer in terms of engagement with its form and function. If the viewer does not engage with the work, it has no impact. However, indifference is also a form of response, and art always inspires some form of personal engagement

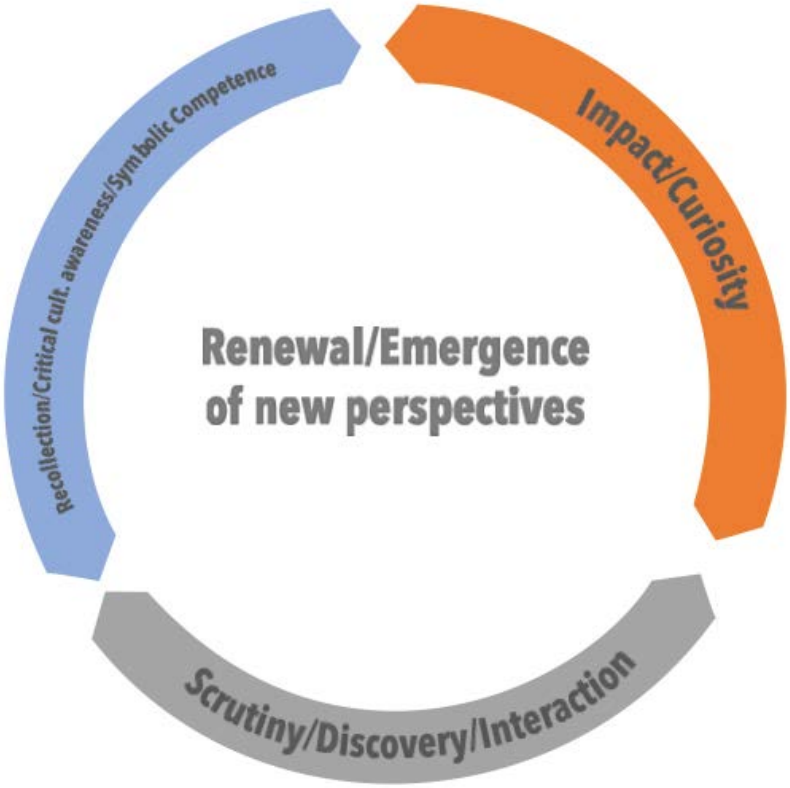
(Perkins, 1994, pp. 3–5). This first phase can be likened to the necessity of stirring the intercultural reader's curiosity. In article 3, I argue that stirring the students' curiosity is required to create an interaction with the text.

Clark's second stage is *scrutiny*. Being impacted by the work may lead to active scrutiny of the work of art, an aesthetic experience involving critical faculties. Scrutiny can be likened to the skill of discovery and interaction in the meeting with texts (Byram, 1997). It leads to employment of one's critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997). Furthermore, symbolic competence, 'an important dimension of intercultural competence' (Kramsch, 2011, p. 360), can be linked to the third stage of *recollection*, where the viewers draw on their own experiences and question the work of art. Symbolic competence comes into play as the reader makes rich connections with the multiple voices generated through space, pictures and verbal text (Perkins, 1994, p. 5).

Clark calls the fourth stage *renewal*, which entails a synthesis with the viewer's preknowledge through a close re-examination involving both affective and cognitive faculties. This final stage may be likened to an intercultural experience in the third space (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359), where the intercultural reader mediates between her own and other cultural perspectives. Clark explains how, in the phase of renewal, the viewer sees his surroundings in a new light as a consequence of the interaction with the work of art (Clark, 1960, p. 17). Hence, new perspectives emerge from interaction with the physical, social and symbolic contexts (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4–5), as 'established categories [are] re- and transcontextualiz[ed]' (Kramsch, 2011, p. 359).

Figure 5

The Parallels Between Appreciation of Art and Intercultural Reading Experiences



In my case study, the impact of the picturebook was evident from the manifestations of students' curiosity, being one of the two most salient codes (see article 2). Both the classroom activities and focus groups provided opportunities for scrutiny of the pictures, which led to recollection. The students frequently made connections between the story and their own lives, events in the world and occasionally to other texts. Some of the students also exercised their critical faculties. Article 3 discusses a dialogue (Table 4) that exemplifies the four stages above. The impact a picture had on a student made the focus group revisit the illustration. Through scrutiny and critical questioning of the image and each other's ideas, new perspectives on the image emerged.

Arguably, this process can occur through interaction with any work of art. What sets picturebooks apart is the democratising effect of the pictures, in that readers at different levels can engage with them (described in section 2.3.3.), which broadens the opportunities for engagement to include all learners. Furthermore, picturebooks invite scrutiny and revisiting, or rereading, which can instigate recollection and renewal.

6.2.9. Agency and language learning

Working with picturebooks through a student-centred, experiential and dialogic approach, the traditional power relations in the classroom can be reversed. This is a way of democratising the classroom and granting agency to the students, with potentially transformative results (Arizpe et al., 2014, p. 315). First, this is because the picturebook itself is an accessible format. A typical picturebook has 32 pages (Mourão, 2014), with pictures that claim more space than the verbal text. The format allows readers at differing levels to engage with the story in meaningful ways (Arizpe & Styles, 2016), as the multimodality may both scaffold and extend learning (Birketveit & Rimmereide, 2017, p. 109). The majority of the students in my case study expressed that the pictures helped them to understand the words and the content, whereas two students preferred reading traditional books. The remainder of the group stated that the fascination of working with a new format was educative and engaging, which underlines that picturebooks can motivate students to read (Birketveit & Rimmereide, 2017, p. 114).

It is commonly held that readers need to understand 98–99% of the vocabulary to grasp the content of a text (Schmitt, 2010, p. 32). However, the picture–text interaction may help readers make sense of stories, even if they understand a lower percentage of the words. *The Wall* (Sís, 2007) includes highly complex vocabulary, such as ‘subordination’ and ‘defectors’. Based on my observations of teaching prior to the picturebook project and the students’ perceptions of language learning, vocabulary learning was less emphasised in this project than what the students were accustomed to. Rather, the students were given multiple opportunities to express what and how they learned, and emergent readers indicated that they understood the story. The students were also seen using the new vocabulary, such as the verbs ‘ban’, ‘jam’ and ‘censor’. Furthermore, the iconotext instigated language play. One example occurred in a focus group interview. A student reflected on why the secret police were drawn as pigs. In Norwegian, a slang word for ‘police’ is ‘purk’, which means ‘pig’, and the student was wondering whether there was an English equivalent. The examples indicate a potential for language learning through picturebooks. The data analysis clearly indicates that the students used the pictures as a learning strategy, which in turn can make them less dependent on the teacher’s explanations and facilitate a more student-centred classroom.

The case study exemplified how students who struggled with reading and writing in English gained a sense of achievement from engaging with the picturebook and contributed sophisticated analyses. Similar results have been reported by Arizpe and Styles (2016) and

Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017). The students also pointed out aspects overlooked by the teacher and myself, hence contributing to our learning and challenging the traditional power dynamics of teaching and learning. In one case, a student noticed factory pipes in an illustration and asked whether there had been a concentration camp in Prague. Consequently, we discovered that Theresienstadt had been situated a few miles outside of Prague and that Peter Sís frequently makes references to the second World War in his works.

Moreover, a dialogic approach values everyone's contributions. As discussed in article 3, granting agency to the students to contribute ideas shows them that their ideas are worthy of discussion. This implies that the teacher must give up some of the control of the content, as a dialogic approach allows students to take charge of the discussions (Reznitskaya, 2012). The more educative dialogues in the case study, where new perspectives emerged, occurred when the students contributed their own ideas and steered the discussion themselves, while the researcher/teacher took a mediating role (Heggernes, 2019).

6.2.10. Expectations

Expectations of what learning English entails and traditional perceptions of learning can be a challenge for teaching and learning. In my study, I was prepared for questions about the relevance of learning about Eastern Europe in the English subject, but not for the fact that the students were largely unaware that the English subject includes a cultural component. Students learned English, according to a unanimous group, by reading large portions of verbal text, learning vocabulary and grammar. This did not seem to detract from the enthusiasm of the majority about reading the picturebook, but a few students expressed that they had not learned much English. However, the same students participated actively in educative dialogues, leading to intercultural learning, as discussed in article 3. The latter point may be the reason why the data suggest that these students did indeed benefit from the project, albeit possibly not in the manner they had expected.

Language learning in this project occurred through reading and practicing English in context rather than by focusing on discrete words. This approach is supported by Sun (2016, p. 96), who found that students' vocabulary retention from picturebook reading increased more from collaborative activities than from explicit vocabulary instruction. Notwithstanding the intercultural and language learning that took place, the students' perceptions of learning should be taken seriously. As pointed out in article 2, students' perceptions may affect their learning (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Consequently, I may have underestimated the need to

consolidate the aims of the study with the students, for example, by discussing curricular aims related to culture and how the students might learn from reading a picturebook.

6.2.11. Teacher awareness and availability of challenging picturebooks

One of the purposes of this thesis is to address the need to raise the awareness of the role of multimodal texts in learning. To this end, visual literacy is required, that is, the ability to 'read' and create pictures and understand how social, cultural and ideologic structures may impact their design (see also section 2.3.3.). The research presented in Chapters 2 and 3 illustrates how multimodal texts can contribute to intercultural learning in ELT. Texts providing cognitive, emotional and/or aesthetic challenges are highlighted in the research literature, and in this respect, awareness of what constitutes visually challenging texts is essential. Visual literacy needs to be a part of teacher education for teachers to be able to engage their students in challenging picturebooks, and such books must be available in the classrooms.

The students' degree of visual literacy influences their perceptions of picturebooks. Birketveit and Rimmereide (2017) found that the majority of the students in their study preferred a symmetrical relationship between pictures and text, although some also said that the pictures should enhance the text. However, if only traditional picturebooks are provided to the students, they are not likely to benefit from the affordances challenging picturebooks offer for intercultural learning. Some of these books may conflict with what the students instinctively find appealing. For example, children often prefer colourful books to less colourful ones, and a counterpoint iconotext may be confusing. Nevertheless, children are not averse to challenges. Arizpe and Styles (2003) consider it likely that children prefer illustrations that are both appealing and challenging. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, challenging readings provide fruitful conditions for intercultural learning, as they invite critical reflection and perspective-taking (Bland, 2018a).

On a final note, the availability of challenging picturebooks must increase. In my experience, challenging picturebooks are mainly distributed online or through independent bookstores. They are rarer in the major bookstores. Availability greatly affects selection, so this is relevant to researchers and teachers searching for appropriate teaching materials.

6.3. Contributions and suggestions for further research

One of the first tasks of a doctoral candidate is mapping the field, in this case the intersection of ICC, ELT and texts, particularly literature and picturebooks. This job revealed a lack of literature reviews, which is addressed in article 1. The thesis also addresses (1) the scarcity of

empirical research within intercultural learning and reading practices in ELT in secondary education and (2) the need for a broader range of research methods in intercultural language learning. Other studies have analysed literary dialogues in L1 (e.g. Maine, 2013; Pantaleo, 2007), but to the best of my knowledge no other studies have studied intercultural picturebook dialogues in ELT through the lens of dialogic theory. In this respect, article 3 (Heggernes, 2019) adds methodological knowledge to the field, showing how the intercultural learning processes can be studied through dialogic features. Furthermore, the case study adds empirical knowledge regarding how to foster intercultural learning in ELT.

In addition to the methodological and empirical contributions, the thesis adds theoretical and didactic knowledge to ELT. Theoretically, the thesis clarifies the affordances of picturebooks for intercultural learning and shows the parallels between the appreciation of art and intercultural reading and learning. Didactically, the thesis provides guidance to EL teachers in three areas: (1) What types of texts can foster intercultural learning in primary and secondary education, arguing that challenging picturebooks have particular affordances in this respect; (2) What types of activities can foster intercultural learning, positing that activities should be student-centred, experiential, dialogic and critical; and (3) Mediation of intercultural dialogues around a picturebook, considering the teacher role and dialogic features. The teacher's role consists of facilitating a dialogic space, where students are given agency to contribute ideas for discussion while listening to one another respectfully. Furthermore, the teacher should refrain from offering solutions to allow students to elaborate on, justify and constructively criticise the suggested ideas. This process can lead to the co-construction of knowledge as ideas are discussed and refined. Hence, intercultural learning may emerge.

While this thesis adds empirical research within intercultural learning and reading practices in secondary ELT, further studies are still needed to expand the knowledge of how picturebook dialogues in ELT can foster intercultural learning. Most research on literary dialogues are undertaken in the students' L1, and while the context of this study was the L2/3 classroom, the students' shared language[43] was used in the focus group interviews. More research is needed on the mediation of literary dialogues in L2 in the ELT classroom, with multiple cases and including primary education. The thesis revealed that most of the relevant literature draws on qualitative methodologies. Synthesising the results of these studies with large-

[43] The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, which all the students spoke fluently.

scale, quantitative and mixed methods studies would enhance the knowledge in the field in terms of how EL students' ICC can be fostered.

6.4. Implications for teacher education and ELT

My thesis has certain implications for policy makers. The national guidelines for teacher education for English 1–7 and 5–10 state that teacher students should gain knowledge of both fiction and non-fiction texts (National Board for Teacher Education, 2016, 2018). However, they do not specify multimodal texts or different formats. The results from my thesis indicate that knowledge of multimodal texts in different formats should be included in the guidelines.

On a final note, my thesis has three implications for teacher education and ELT: (1) Challenging picturebooks are a suitable resource for intercultural learning, not merely in primary school but also in secondary school ELT. Consequently, challenging picturebooks should be included in curricula, along with a varied selection of texts; (2) Visual literacy needs to be included in teacher education to facilitate teachers' ability to mediate picturebook reading; and (3) Knowledge of dialogic features should also be a part of teacher education to increase teachers' ability to mediate educational dialogues.

6.5. Conclusion

This thesis contributes empirical knowledge to an understudied field, both in Norway and internationally: the reading of picturebooks for intercultural learning in lower secondary school ELT. It shows the affordances of challenging picturebooks for intercultural learning and how intercultural learning processes can be studied by focusing on dialogic features. The thesis synthesises previous research on engagement with texts for intercultural learning in ELT and provides guidance for teachers on the selection of texts, design of activities and mediation of picturebook dialogues for intercultural learning.

This thesis started out by studying how EL students' intercultural learning could be fostered through texts. I wanted to explore if there were certain types of texts and activities that were amenable to fostering ICC by asking what the affordances of different types of texts were and the possibilities and challenges related to different approaches to teaching and learning. Could an intercultural pedagogy be detected?

In this process, my own tacit knowledge has been unpacked, challenged and developed. As in any study, searching for answers reveals more questions. My answers are preliminary and tentative. Nevertheless, I venture to propose an intercultural pedagogy that takes a holistic approach to EL teaching and learning. An intercultural pedagogy engages students

both cognitively and affectively. Such engagement can be fostered by providing challenging readings, aesthetic experiences and granting agency to the students.

First, working with EL students intercultural learning, activities must be *student-centred*, providing students with opportunities to take an active part in their own learning. Second, through *experiential* activities students can draw on their own experiences to personally engage with texts and activities. Third, a *dialogic* approach to learning allow students to communicate constructively across difference, constructing knowledge together and allowing new ideas to emerge. In order to facilitate educative dialogues, a dialogic space in which the participants listen to one another with mutual respect is required. In such a space, students are unafraid of volunteering ideas, admitting that ideas might be flawed and changing their mind in the process. Fourth, a *critical* approach is vital to reveal underlying power structures and ensure equal participation in constructive discussions of ideas. A critical approach was not a part of my research from the beginning but emerged as vital for intercultural learning and research throughout the study. The richest learning experiences in my study occurred when the students themselves volunteered ideas, critically examined them and admitted that they were flawed. Accepting mistakes was vital, as this allowed new ideas to emerge, bridging the difference between the cultural perspectives of the picturebook and those of the students.

The focus on multi-perspectivity, however, was a starting point. In this respect, the study has shown that the challenging picturebook is a format with particular affordances for intercultural learning. The reasons for this are multiple and revolve around the following: (1) the interaction of multiple modes to convey meaning, which can foster critical skills; (2) the brevity of the format, allowing for immersion and repeated readings; and (3) the challenges and support provided for readers by the picture–text interaction. Synthesising these factors, the study finds that the challenging picturebook is an inclusive format that can foster EL students' intercultural learning in dialogue with the text, their peers and their teacher. Consequently, the educational sector must ensure access to challenging picturebooks for students of all ages and educate teachers to facilitate intercultural learning through picturebook dialogues. These measures could improve EL students' ability to bridge difference, which is a vital capability in an increasingly intercultural world.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1:

Interview guide – EL teachers

1. Gender:
2. Age:
3. Teaching experience: How many years have you taught grades:
    a. 1 – 4
    b. 5-7
    c. 8- 10
4. Education:
5. Considering EL as a subject, what are the most important things you want your students to learn?

Culture

6. What do you think about, when you hear the word «culture»?
7. In your opinion, do you belong to more than one culture? Which ones?
8. Using a few descriptive words, how would you describe your culture?
9. One of the main areas of ELT is culture, society and literature. In terms of culture, what do you want the students to learn?
10. Can you tell me a little bit about how you work on the cultural aims of the EL curriculum in the classroom?
11. What types of activities do you do to target the cultural aims?
12. What types of teaching resources do you use to target the cultural aims?
13. Do you use any of the following activities when working with the cultural aims, and to what extent?
    a. Discussions
    b. Persuasive writing
    c. Role playing
    d. Other drama activities
    e. International exchange
    f. Pen pals/chatting with young people of another cultural background than the majority of students at your school.
    g. Drawing on the resources of students with a multicultural background

h. Reading factual texts dealing with cultures which the majority of students will perceive as different to their own.
i. Reading fiction related to cultures the majority of the students are likely to perceive as different to their own.
j. Watching films related to cultures the majority of the students are likely to perceive as different to their own.
    i. If yes to questions h, i or j, do you follow up with other activities, f.ex. through discussions, writing, creative activities or other ones? Describe!
k. Other
    i. Briefly describe the activities.

14. Which of these activities are the most beneficial to the students' learning? Why?
15. Does the term intercultural communicative competence mean anything to you?
16. If yes, what do you think of when you hear this term?

The interviewer explains how she defines ICC:

Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability to see your own culture from an outside perspective and other cultures from an inside perspective; walking in someone else's shoes. IC revolves around

- attitudes; curiosity and openness toward other cultures
- knowledge about cultural practices and critical awareness. (Byram, 1997)

The English Language curriculum states that students should learn «to take cultural ways of interaction and cultural conventions of courtesy into account when using the language, […] give insight into other ways of living and cultures where English is the first or official language [and that] insight into cultures can promote increased collaboration, understanding and respect between people with different cultural backgrounds» (EL curriculum 06).

The next questions regard how teachers and students work with IC, in accordance with the definition above.

17. Do you think any of the activities mentioned/that we have talked about might enhance the students' ICC? Describe how.

18. Working towards fostering ICC, what types of texts would you consider to be beneficial?
    a. Factual texts
    b. Novels (target reader: adult)
    c. Young Adult Fiction
    d. Short stories
    e. Poems
    f. Migrant literature
    g. Travel literature
    h. Blogs
    i. Film
    j. Social media
    k. Other. Specify:
19. Why do you think these types of texts might be beneficial?
20. Are your students interested in learning about culture?
21. Approximately how much time do you spend on the cultural aims, compared to other parts of the curriculum, f.ex. working on grammar, pronunciation, writing etc.
22. Do you have any other comments related to fostering ICC, or any other points we have touched upon?

Thank you!

Appendix 2:

Intervjuguide – elever, etter første økt:

Intro:

- Takk for at dere stiller opp!
- Ingen gale svar
- Dere trenger ikke være enige med hverandre!

NB! Husk å stille spørsmål om loggen elevene har skrevet!

1. Fortell litt om dere selv: Interesser, fag/aktiviteter dere liker.
2. Hvordan trives dere med engelsk?
3. Hvordan jobber dere vanligvis med bøker, historier, noveller i engelsktimene?
4. Hva lærer dere av det?
5. På en skala fra 1-5 (5 høyest), hvor godt liker dere å lese? Hva slags bøker?
6. Hvor mye leser du per uke? Norsk/engelsk?
7. Bruker dere noen ganger bilder? Kan dere lære noe av dem? Hva? Hvordan?
8. Er det noe dere synes er vanskelig i engelskfaget? Hva gjør dere for å løse det?
9. Hvordan opplevde dere timen i dag?
10. Fortell om Peter, deres inntrykk så langt.
11. Hvilket inntrykk har dere av Tsjekkoslovakia i denne perioden? Regimet, menneskene.
12. Hva gjorde at dere lærte dette? Noen aktiviteter? Teksten? Bildene?
13. Lærte dere de samme tingene fra bildene som fra teksten?
14. Var det noen forskjeller mellom bilde og tekst?
15. Lærte dere engelsk i dag? Ord, skriftlig/muntlig ferdigheter, kultur, fakta?
16. Hvilke spørsmål sitter dere igjen med? Var det noe som var forvirrende? Overraskende? Interessant?
17. Boka gir innblikk i en annen kultur. Er det interessant å lære om andre kulturer? Fortell!
18. Lærer dere om annen kultur enn deres egen i engelsktimene? På hvilken måte?
19. Har du lyst til å lære mer om Peter/det å vokse opp i Tsjekkoslovakia i denne perioden? Hva er lurer dere på om hvordan det var å leve der?
20. Hvis dere skulle gjort noen endringer på timen i dag, hva ville det vært?
21. Kan jeg få intervjue dere på nytt i storefri på fredag (evt norsktimer)?

Appendix 3:

Interview guide – Final focus group interviews

1. Ask the students to talk a little bit about what it was like working with the picture-book.
2. What was the most important thing you learnt? Why?[44]
3. What did you find the most interesting? Why?
4. What activities did you enjoy? Why?
5. Are these the same activities you learnt the most from?
6. Was there anything you were uncomfortable with or found boring or confusing?
7. Did you learn English? What?
8. Show the house picture and ask the students to talk about what they see and how they interpret it.
9. What did you learn about «reading» pictures?
10. Do you think you can use that in other contexts?
11. What did you learn from the text?
12. In the beginning, I was under the impression that you considered learning English as learning vocabulary and grammar. Is that a correct impression?
13. Go back to when you learnt that you were going to work with a picturebook. What was your reaction? Did you find it strange, childish, funny, interesting, or did you not think much about it at all?
14. Has this project changed your perceptions of what you are supposed to learn from your English lessons?
15. Have your views on how one may learn English changed? How?
16. Has it changed your perceptions of Eastern Europe, communism, the west or your own culture? How?
17. Do you think it may be useful for you to have learnt about this culture? In what way?
18. If I were to carry out this project with another group of students – what advice would you give me? Would you suggest any changes?

Ask follow-up questions based on the texts the students answered during the last session!

[44] Ask follow-up questions if justifications are not provided.

Appendix 4:

Consent form for data collection – Principal's copy

Sissil Lea Heggernes
Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier
Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus
Postboks 4, St. Olavs plass
0130 Oslo

Oslo, dato 2017

Forespørsel til rektor ved skole XX om tillatelse til datainnsamling til doktorgradsarbeid med arbeidstittelen

"Developing Pupils' Intercultural Communicative Competence through Literature"

Takk for hyggelig samtale og møte, og interessen for arbeidet som jeg skal starte opp med. Selv om jeg har fått positiv tilbakemelding angående oppstart av forskningsarbeidet, ønsker jeg å skriftliggjøre denne avtalen med XX skole.

Hensikten med min forskning er å studere hvordan lærere og elever i ungdomsskolen oppfatter interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse og hvilke metoder lærere bruker for å utvikle elevers interkulturelle kommunikative kompetanse i engelskklasserommet. I samarbeid med lærere ønsker jeg å utvikle undervisningsaktiviteter for dette formål som knyttes til bruk av litteratur. Målgruppen for arbeidet er lærere og lærerutdannere.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg kommer til å benytte meg av ulike datainnsamlingsstrategier: Observasjon, spørreskjema, og intervju. Først vil jeg gjennomføre spørreundersøkelser og intervjue lærere og elever om deres oppfatning av hva de skal lære og hvordan de jobber med interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse, som faller inn under formål med engelskfaget og hovedområdet kultur, samfunn og litteratur. Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp. Jeg ønsker så å observere engelskundervisning der man jobber med kultur og litteratur, og ta notater fra det jeg observerer.

I neste fase ønsker jeg å samarbeide med lærere om utvikling av undervisningsaktivitieter. Jeg vil starte opp arbeidet med å forstå mest mulig av skole- og klassekonteksten før skolestart august

2017. Dette innebærer at jeg vil ha jevnlig kontakt med lærerne og elever, og oppholde meg i klasserommet. Kontakten med informantene vil være hyppigst skoleåret 2017-2018. Det vil kanskje være aktuelt å bruke mer tid på skolen også en periode etter dette. Da vil skolen og lærerne få tilstrekkelig informasjon god tid i forveien.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om informantene?
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og oppbevares på kryptert harddisk. Kun undertegnede vil ha tilgang til forskningsdataene. Mine veiledere vil kunne konsultere dataene i samarbeid med meg. Alle elever og lærere vil anonymiseres i publikasjoner.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes høsten 2020. Dataene vil da bli fullstendig anonymisert, og oppbevares på kryptert harddisk med tanke på videre forskning på området. Kun undertegnede vil ha tilgang til materialet.

Prosjektet er meldt inn til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS. Alle opplysninger som kommer fram vil behandles konfidensielt og vil bli anonymisert. Mine tolkninger av data vil bli levert de aktuelle lærerne for gjennomlesning og kommentering. De aktuelle lærerne vil også få et informasjonsskriv hvor de samtykker i å delta i prosjektet. Det samme vil foreldrene til elever som brukes som informanter. Deltakelse er frivillig og informanter kan trekke seg fra prosjektet
når som helst uten å oppgi grunn. Dersom de trekker seg, vil alle opplysninger om dem bli anonymisert.

Jeg håper på et positivt og lærerikt samarbeid. Hovedveileder, professor Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund, har
lest og godkjent ovenstående informasjonsskriv.

Med vennlig hilsen
Sissil Lea Heggernes

Jeg har mottatt skriftlig og muntlig informasjon om prosjektet og tillater oppstart av arbeidet

Dato: Rektors signatur:

Appendix 5:

Consent form for participation in data collection – Teacher's copy

Sissil Lea Heggernes
Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier
Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus
Postboks 4, St. Olavs plass
0130 Oslo

Oslo, 18 October 2017

Request for participation in data collection connected to the PhD study with the working title
"Developing Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence through Literature"

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my project.

In my study, I aim to explore how teachers and students in secondary education perceive intercultural communicative competence, and what methods teachers use to enhance studentes' intercultural communicative competence in the EFL/ESL classroom. For this purpose, I wish to develop activities, in collaboration with teachers, connected to literature. The target group for my study is teachers and teacher educators.

What does participation entail?

The following methods for data collection will be employed: Observation, questionnaires, and interviews. First, I will interview teachers about their perceptions of teaching related to culture, society and literature, and how they work with intercultural communicative competence. In the following, I will interview students about their perceptions of what they have learnt, distribute a questionnaire among the students and observe teaching. The interviews will be recorded. I wish to observe EFL teaching related to culture, society and literature, and take notes from my observations.

What happens to the information about the informants?
All personal information will be treated confidentially and stored on an encrypted hard drive. Only the undersigned will have access to the data. My supervisors will be able to consult the data in cooperation with me. All students and teachers will be anonymized in publications.

According to the timeline for the project, the project will be completed by the autumn 2020. The data will then be completely anonymized and stored on an encrypted hard drive for potential future research. Only the undersigned will have access to the data.

The project has been notified by the NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data, which ensures general data protection and privacy. All information will be treated confidentially and be anonymized. The teachers involved will have the opportunity to read through and comment on my interpretations of data. The parents of students involved will receive an information letter and sign a letter of consent. Participation is voluntary, and informants can withdraw from the study at any point, without disclosing an explanation.

My main supervisor, professor Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund, has read and approved this letter of information.

Kind regards
Sissil Lea Heggernes

I have received information about the project and give my consent to participate

Date: Signature:

Appendix 6:

Consent form for participation in data collection – Students' copy

Sissil Lea Heggernes
Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier
OsloMet - storbyuniversitetet
Postboks 4, St. Olavs plass
0130 Oslo

Oslo, 7.2.2018

Forespørsel til elever og deres foresatte ved XX skole om deltakelse i datainnsamling til doktorgradsarbeid med arbeidstittelen

"Developing Pupils' Intercultural Communicative Competence through Literature"

Jeg heter Sissil Lea Heggernes og jobber ved OsloMet - storbyuniversitetet. For tiden jobber jeg med en doktorgrad i engelsk ved PhD-programmet Utdanningsvitenskap for lærerutdanning. Hensikten med min forskning er å studere hvordan lærere og elever i ungdomsskolen oppfatter interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse og hvilke metoder lærere kan bruke for å utvikle elevers interkulturelle kommunikative kompetanse i engelskklasserommet. Dette faller inn under formål med engelskfaget og hovedområdet kultur, samfunn og litteratur. I samarbeid med lærere ønsker jeg å utvikle metoder for dette formål ved bruk av litteratur. Målgruppen for arbeidet er lærere og lærerutdannere.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg kommer til å benytte meg av ulike datainnsamlingsstrategier: Observasjon av undervisning, feltnotater, spørreskjema, og intervju. I samarbeid med engelsklæreren vil jeg utvikle et undervisningsopplegg som skal gjennomføres i engelsktimene. Dernest, vil jeg intervjue frivillige elever om deres oppfatning av hva de har lært. Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp, og oppbevart på kryptert harddisk.

Opplegget vil bli gjennomført i mars. Det vil kanskje være aktuelt å bruke mer tid på skolen også en periode etter dette. Da vil du/dere få tilstrekkelig informasjon god tid i forveien.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og oppbevares på kryptert harddisk. Kun undertegnede og min forskningsgruppe vil ha tilgang til forskningsdataene. Mine veiledere vil kunne konsultere dataene i samarbeid med meg.

Ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i endelig oppgave, og data anonymiseres innen prosjektslutt 31.12.2020. Dataene vil da bli fullstendig anonymisert, og oppbevares på kryptert harddisk med tanke på videre forskning på området. Kun undertegnede og min forskningsgruppe vil ha tilgang til materialet. Mine tolkninger av data vil bli levert til engelsklæreren for gjennomlesning og kommentering. NN (engelsklærer) har vist interesse og sagt seg villig til å delta i forskningsarbeidet. Rektor har også gitt tillatelse til arbeidet. Deltakelse er frivillig og informanter kan trekke seg fra prosjektet når som helst uten å oppgi grunn.

Dersom du/dere har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Sissil Lea Heggernes, mob: 99 27 99 37 eller mail: Sissil-Lea.Heggernes@hioa.no.

Du kan på neste side krysse av for hvilke deler av prosjektet du/dere samtykker til å la ditt/deres barn delta i. Hovedveileder, professor Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund ved Høgskolen i Sørøst-Norge, har lest og godkjent ovenstående informasjonsskriv.

Med vennlig hilsen

Sissil Lea Heggernes

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og samtykker til at vår sønn/datter ved navn _____ kan delta i følgende deler av studien:

☐

Spørreundersøkelse.

☐ Gruppeintervju.

☐ Å bli observert i undervisningsituasjoner.

(Signert av foresatte, dato)

Til elever: Hvis du kunne tenke deg å være med på intervju sammen med medelever når vi er ferdig med opplegget, kryss av i boksen under. Det er helt frivillig!

☐ Jeg har lyst til å delta i gruppeintervju om hva jeg har lært i engelsktimene.

Appendix 7:
Coding – Example from one of the final focus group interviews

Student quotes in Norwegian from different parts of the interview. References to codes (cf. sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3) in the left-hand column in block letters. Comments from the researcher in the right-hand column.

CODES	SELECTED STUDENT QUOTES	COMMENTS
VISUAL: **Visual literacy: How does the picturebook contribute to the students' learning?**	Meerah: Eh, liksom, noen av bildene, så skjønte jeg liksom skikkelig godt hva det handlet om, men noen av bildene skjønte jeg ikke helt. For eksempel, det var liksom på hvert bilde, så var det en gris, som du tenkte: Okei, gris! jeg er ikke helt sikker hva han skulle gjøre, eller noe. Så jeg skjønte liksom ikke hvorfor han var i hvert eneste bilde. Lan: Eh, jeg er litt usikker, men det jeg lærte, i hvert fall, er å lese bilder. Lan: Det amerikanske og britiske flagget er på toppen da, så hvis du drømte i det, det er liksom på toppen der er huet, og det er på toppen av hele kroppen, liksom det er en kropp og det er kanskje drømmene dine. Du har lyst til å gå dit. Nils: Jeg synes det var litt sånn rart at, eh, han, Peter, da, fløy på et hjemmelaget fly til USA. Siden det hadde jo ikke gått Susann: [*Det er kanskje ment*] litt metaforisk Lukas: Kanskje at når han tegner, så har [*er?*] han fri. Kai: Ellers så kan det være sånn han følte at det var, noen ganger. At han følte seg sånn fri Nils: Ja, for man ser bak her (peker på fabrikkpipe). Det her minner meg litt om sånn jødeforfølgelsen. At, siden, hvis dette her hadde vært i Tyskland, da, på, i andre verdenskrig, så hadde det jo vært jøder som hadde blitt drept her sånn, eller brent. Så kanskje det var en konsentrasjonsleir der også	*Cf. classroom discussion on "the pig man".* *Nils comments on one picture after the other and offers his interpretations. The other students comment, clarify and build on his ideas (dialogic).* *From discussion on the picture of the house. Discovery of societal knowledge.* *Nils objects to the illustration* ("it's not right to draw yourself in that way!") *Kai interrupts Nils (engaging topic!).* *Historical knowledge is created, based on schema from WWII – we find out that Theresienstadt was situated near Prague. Reversal of roles (interviewer lacks knowledge about the concentration camps).*
WHAT did the students learn? **The students' perceptions of what they have learnt.**	Kai: Hvordan de hadde det, da, på den tida. At liksom det med kommunisme, at det kanskje ikke er så greit. At barna opplever så mye krig, da, på en måte. Og militære i hverdagen. Barna tegner tankser og missiler og våpen og sånt. Men, jeg tenker at det er viktig da å høre, eller lære litt om hvordan det var, og ikke bare om hvordan det er nå. Eller, hvordan det var 300 år tilbake, men også hvordan det var for bare et par år sida. Nils: Det var egentlig sånn som Kai sa. Det var egentlig ikke så mye å lære. Det hadde vært mere å lære hvis man	*Have the students learnt English? Discussion about words they have learnt. Lukas and Kai now understand that culture and history is a part of ELT.*

	hadde hatt en ordentlig bok. For da kunne man sagt mer. Siden, ja, man klarer jo ikke å lese årstall og sånn, datoer og sånne ting ut av bilder. Men det går det an med tekst. da kan man lære mer, liksom om samme historien, men mere grundig om det (osv.) Lan: Eh, jeg er litt usikker, men det jeg lærte, i hvert fall, er å lese bilder.	
HOW did the students learn? **The students' perceptions of how they learn and what activities they preferred.**	Nils og Lukas: Two corners. Lukas: At man kunne liksom vise hva man mente alle sammen på en gang, liksom. Kai + Lan: Da kan man, på en måte, bli enige sammen, da. Så hvis man ikke mener det samme, så kan man komme fram til en lik mening. Nils: hvis det er noe man ikke hadde kommet på alene, så kan andre si det. Så, da kan vi liksom hjelpe hverandre. Lan: Du burde beholde den der du spør den som lagde boka Lukas: Kanskje noen flere aktiviteter som man er med på? (alle er enige). Nils: I stedet for å sitte stille på en stol. Nils: Jeg synes du, at dere bør ta dere lenger tid med den [boka], sånn at man kan komme litt mer grundig i det. Og så kanskje at man bør komme på gruppe sånn fem og fem og sånn, med en lærer eller et eller annet sånn.	*Experiential, student-centred and dialogic* *Teacher in role as Peter, experiential* *Interesting that these perspectives come from students who manage well to sit still and work quietly, even express the wish for more text*.
EMPATHY: **Understanding of someone else's situation.** **Relating to the other.**	Kai: det kanskje ikke er så greit. At barna opplever så mye krig, da, på en måte. Og militære i hverdagen. Barna tegner tankser og missiler og våpen og sånt. Lukas: Ehm, jeg har liksom sett det for meg. Det så ikke så veldig greit ut. Meerah: hvis man hadde en familie og barna kunne liksom, liksom hvis familien, hvis faren sier noe om kommunismen, som de ikke likte, så kunne liksom barna si det til de, eller politiet, sånn at han kunne komme til fengsel. Ja, jeg syntes at det var skikkelig rart at barna ville gjort det. Fordi, ingen ville at noen skulle gå i fengsel.	*Once again, Meerah comments that children were encouraged to inform on family members, which she finds incomprehensible. Lukas offers an alternative interpretation* "maybe they were told that they would be alright."
CURIOSITY:	Meera: Jeg synes det var skikkelig gøy første timen. Fordi vi skulle liksom stille spørsmål til Peter, eller The Wall, da, eller selve boka og sånn, og ja, gjøre sånne ting og svare på spørsmålene og sånne, alle de greiene, så det var liksom litt morsomt.	*Experiential, activates the students*
CRITICAL CULTURAL AWARENESS	Kai + Susann: Eller var det sånn, eller kanskje det var sånn at de som levde, da, på den tida, følte at de alltid ble sett, at de alltid ble overvåka. Nils: Men jeg føler jo at det er litt viktig å vite hvordan det har vært før, så du passer på at det ikke skjer igjen, da. Du	*From discussion of the relevance of the book.* *What can we learn from history?*

	vet hvorfor det ikke funka, så det blir liksom, kan forbedre ting i framtiden. Nils: This is not relevant Susann: Kanskje det er sånn, når man vokser opp med noe, så er det liksom det man er vant til og man vil ikke endre det.	 *Reading picturebooks, not relevant to ELT* *Socialisation*

Appendix 8:

Examples of frequency counts based on the students' texts

Based on answers to questions summing up the project, cf. sections 4.2 and 4.6.5

What did you learn?	
Words	7
Chech existed	2
Chech culture/about C, live there	15
Bad, horrible, gloomy, not good	8
Strict rules + lack of freedom and democr+surveillance	2
Educational system	5
Communism	3
Peter and family	1
Drawing	1
Objects/facts, red flags, names of dict., physical surroundings	6
Free hospital and education, something good too	3
How did you learn?	
Pictures supported understanding of words	3
Pictures supported understanding of content	11
Methods, the teacher	1
Methods, group work	1
Fascination with a new medium (PB)/pictures	9
Visual competence	
Colour use, shows feelings	4
Colour use, interesting	5
Communism + red	1
Objects, tanks, pigs/secret police, surroundings	2
Peter's creativity/love of drawing	2
Nothing	1
Culture/living conditions	2

Empathy/Curiosity	
Interest in living conditions/culture	2
Concern for the other	4
Relating to the other/common trait: Will power	4
Relating to the other/common interests, likes/dislikes	10
Relating to the other/curiosity	11
Decentring	5
Colours/pictures express feelings	4
Nothing in common	5
No questions about the story	10

Appendix 9:

Permission from NSD to undertake the study

NSD

Sissil Lea Heggernes
Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus
Postboks 4, St. Olavs plass
0130 OSLO

Vår dato: 07.02.2017 Vår ref: 51953 / 3 / BGH Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 06.01.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

51953	*Developing Pupils' Intercultural Communicative Competence through Literature*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Sissil Lea Heggernes*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2020, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Belinda Gloppen Helle

Kontaktperson: Belinda Gloppen Helle tlf: 55 58 28 74
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS Harald Hårfagres gate 29 Tel: +47-55 58 21 17 nsd@nsd.no Org.nr. 985 321 884
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY Faks: +47-55 58 96 50 www.nsd.no

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 51953

FORMÅL
Prosjektets formål er å studere hvilke metoder lærere bruker for å utvikle elevers interkulturelle kompetanse.

INFORMASJON OG SAMTYKKE
Utvalget (skoleelever og lærere) informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse.
Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

BARN I FORSKNING
Deler av utvalget i prosjektet er barn og unge, og det er foreldrene deres som samtykker til deltakelse. Likevel bør barna få informasjon om prosjektet som er tilpasset deres ordforråd. Det er også viktig at barna og ungdommene får informasjon om at de kan velge å ikke delta i prosjektet hvis de ønsker det, selv om foreldrene har samtykket.

FORSKNING I SKOLEN
Mens skole er en obligatorisk arena for barn, foreldrene og ansatte, skal deltagelse i forskning være frivillig. Forespørselen må derfor alltid rettes på en slik måte at de forespurte ikke opplever press om å delta, gjerne ved å understreke at det ikke vil påvirke forholdet til skole hvorvidt de ønsker å være med i studien eller ikke. Videre bør det planlegges et alternativt opplegg for de som ikke deltar. Dette er særlig relevant ved utfylling av spørreskjema i skoletiden.

SENSITIVE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER
Det behandles sensitive personopplysninger om etnisk bakgrunn eller politisk/filosofisk/religiøs oppfatning.

INFORMASJONSSIKKERHET
Personvernombudet legger til grunn at dere behandler alle data og personopplysninger i tråd med Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus sine retningslinjer for innsamling og videre behandling av personopplysninger. Ettersom det skal behandles sensitive personopplysninger, er det viktig at dere krypterer opplysningene tilstrekkelig.

DATABEHANDLER
Nettskjema er databehandler for prosjektet. Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus skal inngå skriftlig avtale med Nettskjema om hvordan personopplysninger skal behandles, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se Datatilsynets veileder: http://www.datatilsynet.no/Sikkerhet-internkontroll/Databehandleravtale/.

PROSJEKTSLUTT OG ANONYMISERING
I meldeskjemaet/informasjonsskrivet har dere informert om at forventet prosjektslutt er 31.12.2020. Ifølge meldeskjemaet skal dere da anonymisere innsamlede opplysninger. Anonymisering innebærer at dere

bearbeider datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjør dere ved å slette direkte personopplysninger, slette eller omskrive indirekte personopplysninger og slette digitale lydopptak.

Vi gjør oppmerksom på at også databehandler (Nettskjema) må slette personopplysninger tilknyttet prosjektet i sine systemer. Dette inkluderer eventuelle logger og koblinger mellom IP-/epostadresser og besvarelser.

Part II

The Articles

Article 1:

Heggernes, S.L. (2021). A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. *Educational Research Review*, *33*, Article 100390, 1-12.
DOI: **https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390**

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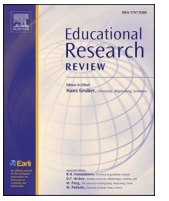

Review

A critical review of the role of texts in fostering Intercultural Communicative competence in the English Language classroom

Sissil Lea Heggernes

Department of Primary and Secondary Teacher Education, Oslo Metropolitan University, Pb. 4 St. Olavs Plass 0130, Oslo, Norway

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Fiction texts
Nonfiction texts
Intercultural communicative competence
English language teaching
Review

ABSTRACT

This review maps and critically evaluates 36 empirical studies from English language teaching (ELT), focusing on the role of texts and activities in intercultural learning. The rationale for this review is the call for theoretically-based recommendations for English language (EL) teachers and researchers on the selection of texts and the design of activities for intercultural learning. It draws on principles from Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS), and the studies were gathered from systematic searches of databases, supplemented by manual searches of relevant journals. The results show that fiction texts are more widely used and more strongly rationalized for use than nonfiction texts. There is also a strong focus on dialogic and student-centred activities, and less focus on experiential teaching. It argues that an awareness of the affordances of different text types can assist teachers in mediating EL students' intercultural learning and recommends a greater variety of research and teaching approaches to identify intercultural learning processes. Furthermore, the review calls for more research on intercultural learning in primary and secondary ELT.

1. Introduction

Theoretical research has posited a strong link between reading fiction in a foreign language and developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (e.g. Bredella, 2000; Delanoy, 2008; Hoff, 2017; Matos, 2011). However, research is still called for to investigate how theory is translated into practice (Byram, Holmes, & Savvides, 2013; Duncan & Paran, 2018). Consequently, the focus of this review is on empirical research on reading for intercultural learning in English language teaching (ELT). Due to the increasing focus on ICC in ELT, it is pertinent to map and critically analyse empirical studies to detect what they reveal about the processes of intercultural learning through students' engagement with texts, both fictional and nonfictional. Furthermore, the review aims to discuss how the selection of texts is justified, to what extent rationales are theoretically grounded and what activities are connected to the reading of texts. The rationale of this review is the call for theoretically-based recommendations for English Language (EL) educators and researchers on the selection of texts and activities for intercultural learning (Moeller, 2018). This review draws on the principles of Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006; Harden & Thomas, 2010). CIS allows the inclusion of methodologically diverse studies, while being "sensitised to the processes of conventional systematic review[s]" (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006, p. 1).

One criterion for selecting ELT texts is text type, and the suitability of fiction versus nonfiction in second language teaching is a frequent debate. One argument is that nonfiction texts represent more relevant models for students' future reading and writing skills

E-mail address: silehe@oslomet.no.

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(Morgan & Vandrick, 2009, p. 521). Other voices advocate the role of fiction in developing traits and skills related to ICC (Bredella, 2000; Hoff, 2017; Kramsch, 1993; Matos, 2011; Nikolajeva, 2013, 2018). In this case, it is pertinent to consider what type of texts are represented in ELT and why. Consequently, this is the focus of the first part of this article.

The second part addresses the types of activities used with the texts. Research on intercultural education advocates a focus on dialogic, experiential and student-centred approaches (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Deardorff, 2019; Fenner, 2001; Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen, & Lehtovaara, 2017; Li et al., 2016; Sercu, Bandura, & Castro, 2005). These approaches are addressed in section 3, which defines relevant terminology, and outlines the principles of intercultural education. The section further discusses the affordances of different types of texts for intercultural learning, which can be defined as their potential for action, interaction and meaning-making (van Lier, 2004). In conclusion, this article argues that an awareness of the affordances of different text types can be a tool when selecting suitable texts for intercultural language learning.

2. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this review is to map and critically analyse studies on texts, as well as teaching approaches related to these texts as a means to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students' ICC. Its overarching aim is to learn if the available literature may illuminate the processes of intercultural learning and how these may be facilitated. With this objective in mind, the following research questions were generated:

1. What types of text are represented in EFL/ESL classroom studies concerning students' intercultural learning?
2. How is the selection of texts justified?
3. To what extent are text-based activities student-centred, experiential or dialogic?
4. To what extent do the research designs of the studies serve to illuminate the students' intercultural learning processes?

3. Conceptual framework

This section includes an overview of the principles of intercultural education, a definition of text and a discussion of the dialogic opportunities in using fiction and nonfiction texts.

3.1. Intercultural education

Definitions of intercultural competence or intercultural communicative competence typically include the attitudes, skills and knowledge required in appropriate communication "when interacting across difference" (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5). The process of developing these attitudes, skills and knowledge is understood in this review as intercultural learning (Heggernes, 2019, p. 38). Furthermore, intercultural education aims to provide learners with the competences required to "operate effectively as citizens" in diverse societies (Council of Europe, 2020, para. 2).

This review does not discuss the theoretical distinctions between overlapping, albeit non-identical, fields such as multi-, trans- and intercultural competence or the different EFL and ESL contexts. Rather, it presumes that teaching approaches from each can be mutually beneficial to developing traits related to ICC, such as curiosity, openness, knowledge, skills of mediation and perspective-taking, critical skills and empathy (e.g. Byram, 1997, 2009; Deardorff, 2006; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989).

Intercultural education may involve dialogic, experiential and student-centred approaches (e.g. Byram et al., 2002). A dialogic activity is one where students engage in a dialogue, not only with physical texts or people, but with the multiple voices represented in texts (Bakhtin, 1981). Students co-construct meaning by exploring, extending and constructively challenging one another's ideas (Alexander, 2008; Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Dialogue requires a respectful atmosphere and sincere interest in others' perspectives, something which can foster ICC (Byram et al., 2002; Delanoy, 2008; Matos, 2011; Vrikki, Wheatley, Howe, Hennessy, & Mercer, 2019).

Experiential activities allow students to draw on their own experiences (Kohonen et al., 2017; Kolb, 1984), for example through kinaesthetic experiences, such as drama and game-like activities. Further, this activity type stresses learning through textual, real-life or virtual meetings with others (Sercu et al., 2005). However, meeting other cultures is no guarantee for ICC development, but the ensuing reflection can lead to learning (Kohonen et al., 2017). Advocates of critical pedagogy highlight the transformative potential of reflecting on "lived experience" through a critical but also empathic lens, which may lead to intercultural learning (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell, & McAdam, 2014, p. 315). Finally, student-centred activities aim to transform students from passive recipients of knowledge to active constructors of their own and others' knowledge (Kohonen et al., 2017). Both dialogic and experiential activities meet this criterion.

3.2. Text

This study employed an open definition of *text* as a semiotic entity which carries meaning, open to interpretation. Hence, studies relating to printed texts, digital texts and visual texts, such as film and images, were included. Texts communicate through a range of modes, for example verbal text, pictures and sound. When these are combined, texts are called multimodal (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The modes, and by extension texts, have differing opportunities and constraints for meaning-making and interaction, also known as affordances (van Lier, 2004), which may vary in differing cultural and social contexts (Kress, 2010).

ICC consists of both cognitive and affective facets. Research from different fields, such as experimental psychology, neuroscience,

linguistics and literature, indicates that fiction plays an important role in stimulating readers' cognitive and affective faculties. For example, based on longitudinal data from 45,160 students reading different types of texts, Jerrim, Lopez-Agudo and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2020) found that the students' literacy skills increased more by frequently reading challenging fiction than any other type of text, including nonfiction. Studies from neuroscience and experimental psychology have also shown that areas of the brain related to empathy are stimulated by reading literature, something which may reduce prejudice (Berns, Blaine, Prietula, & Pye, 2013; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2015). These findings support the studies from literature and language learning, positing the role of fiction in fostering ICC (e.g. Bredella, 2000; Hoff, 2017; Matos, 2011; Nikolajeva, 2013). Fiction can serve as a "means of self-affirmation" by mirroring readers' cultural perspectives (Bishop, 1990, p. ix). Moreover, exploring one's own cultural perspectives through literature can enable readers to relate to those of others' (Matos, 2011), as the mind is "tricked" into seeing the world through the eyes of the protagonist. This "enables readers to live other lives – by proxy" (Kramsch, 1995, p. 85), fostering empathy and perspective-taking skills (Berns et al., 2013; Nikolajeva, 2013; Vezzali et al., 2015). As a multitude of perspectives may be represented in a work of fiction, these texts offer "opportunities for […] dialogic negotiation of meaning" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 131).

Another point for consideration is the combination of modes in texts. Eitel and Scheiter (2015, p. 153) hold that learning is more effective through texts that include both pictures and verbal text. One explanation is related to the Picture Superiority Effect (Hockley & Bancroft, 2011), which stipulates that the brain processes pictures more rapidly than verbal text. Whereas verbal text leaves a semantic imprint on the brain, pictures leave both a verbal and a semantic imprint (Hockley & Bancroft, 2011), indicating that they have other affordances than texts relying on one mode alone. In picturebooks, for example, pictures and text can overlap, expand or even contradict one another (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). The picture-text interaction provides both a cognitive and an aesthetic experience, and multiple opportunities for meaning-making and interaction. However, this work necessitates the ability to see other perspectives and critically engage with the text (see, for example, Kramsch, 2011).

With respect to nonfiction texts, their affordances can be linked to the conveyance of clear and thematically relevant information. They are considered to be univocal and convey meaning rather than generating meaning dialogically (Lotman, 1988). Iser (1978) concurred that there are fewer ways of interpreting a factual text than a fictional one, leaving fewer possibilities for dialogic interaction. Nevertheless, considering the differing affordances of texts and modes presented in this section, engagement with a range of fiction and nonfiction texts, media and modes may facilitate students' dialogue with multiple perspectives. Furthermore, personal, social and cultural factors may determine engagement with text types (Aamotsbakken & Knudsen, 2008). For example, there are different preferences for accessing information, through physical newspapers, online or orally. This, too, should be taken into account when selecting texts for intercultural education for the inclusion of all learners.

4. Methodology

This review scrutinized peer-reviewed articles reporting on empirical research on classroom practice from English-language journals. The selected articles examined the development of EFL/ESL students' ICC upon using text as a stimulus.

4.1. Critical Interpretive Synthesis

This review corresponds with CIS in that "the aim is to develop a *synthesizing argument* [emphasis added]" from the sampled qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies (Harden & Thomas, 2010, p. 755). CIS is an approach rather than a rigid procedure, but shares some traits with systematic reviews (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). CIS can start out with systematic searches, but other relevant studies may later be added. Some assessment of the quality of the studies is normally included, but relevance to the synthesizing argument is prioritized over scoping the field for all relevant studies (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). Initial research questions may also develop as a result of the review process, as opposed to conventional systematic reviews, where research questions should be clearly defined in advance (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006).

Systematic reviews also utilize integrative constructs derived from theory to frame the analysis to "minimize […] any interpretation on the part of the reviewer" (Harden & Thomas, 2010, p. 749). This review used an integrative approach to summarize, compare and contrast the types of texts and activities represented in the studies.

Unlike systematic reviews, CIS allows the researcher to interpret how salient aspects of the studies under review can illustrate the synthesizing argument, consisting of synthetic constructs and their relations (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). Synthetic constructs are developed as a result of the way the literature is constructed: for example, by questioning how a phenomenon under research is conceptualized and constructed (Harden & Thomas, 2010), rather than as a criticism of approaches. This review took a critical interpretive approach to question how the rationale for the selection of texts is or is not "conceptualized and constructed [and] develop [ed] [the] argument' of the review" (Harden & Thomas, 2010, p. 752). Finally, the review aimed to "map out and categorize" studies to detect present research gaps that future research can fill (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 94).

The Council of Europe's work informs the development of curricula across Europe. Their *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* states that students require awareness of a diversity of text types (Beacco et al., 2016, pp. 59–60). Consequently, an awareness of the affordances of text types may aid the selection of texts for intercultural learning and form a part of a rationale. Rationales matter, as they specify in what way certain "texts and tasks would be suitable to achieve a particular purpose" (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019, p. 19). Information about the affordances of text types and the rationale for selection can accordingly assist both teachers and researchers in designing studies and activities that foster intercultural learning. Consequently, the two synthetic constructs (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006) *affordance* and *rationale* were

generated to guide the analysis of this review.

4.2. Data collection, search and selection

Systematic database searches were combined with manual searches of two reputable journals: *Language and Intercultural Communication* (LAIC) and *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (LCC). These two journals were chosen because they hold the highest ranking in linguistics (Journal Impact Factor, 2016) among journals focusing on both language and intercultural learning, to ensure the scientific and academic quality of the journals.

A search string of keywords was constructed based on the thesaurus of ERIC, a comprehensive database of education research, SocINDEX, Scopus and Oria. SocINDEX is the authoritative bibliographic database for sociology research and was chosen due to the interdisciplinary nature of ICC. The searches in ERIC were complemented by searches in SocINDEX, Scopus and Oria. As neither of these searches produced new results beyond the ones retrieved in ERIC, they are left out of the overview in Table 3.

The search consisted of three constructs and their synonyms (see Table 1). The searches aimed to identify peer-reviewed articles published prior to August 2020, at the intersection of the three core elements of the review:

1. Fostering ICC
2. Working with different types of texts
3. EFL/ESL teaching

The search also focused on capturing teaching approaches from ELT which might foster ICC. Furthermore, general terms and frequently used text types in teaching were included.

The search results were checked against the selection criteria revealed in Table 2.

A systematic search of the ERIC database yielded 898 results, of which 200 were screened. Details about this search and manual searches are provided in Table 3.

In the first stage, the titles and abstracts of the first 100 results from the search in ERIC were screened. Following a close reading using the criteria featured in Table 2, 16 of these articles were included in the review and analysed.

In the second stage, 14 volumes, dated from 2007 to August 2020, from the journals LAIC and LCC were scanned. First, the journals' tables of contents were scanned to identify titles referring to intercultural competence and EFL/ESL. Second, the abstracts of potentially relevant studies were read, which led to the inclusion of 9 articles from LAIC and 5 from LCC. Third, the selected articles were read carefully and checked against the selection criteria.

In the third stage, the same procedure was repeated with the next 100 results from the search in ERIC, leading to the inclusion of 6 more articles. CIS allows the use of "the principles of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation" guiding qualitative research (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006, p. 3). As the analysis of the second group of 100 articles corroborated the analysis results from stages one and two (16 articles from the first screening of the database results, in addition to the 9 articles from LAIC and the 5 from LCC), it was decided that the saturation point had been reached at 36 articles (Grant & Booth, 2009). The inclusion of representative studies was prioritized over the inclusion of all relevant literature, providing a sampling frame which allowed the researcher to work with a manageable sample (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The results are accounted for and the data from these 36 articles is discussed in sections 5 and 6 (see Appendix 1 for an overview of the articles).

4.3. Data analysis

In alignment with a critical interpretive approach, the analysis was an ongoing process (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). This review started by reviewing the text types and main findings of the studies on the development of EFL students' ICC. The striking difference in rationale for the selection of texts led to a revision of the second research question and the development of rationale and affordance as synthetic constructs to guide the analysis, and the consideration of how texts were utilized led to the inclusion of the third research question.

Feature maps (Hart, 2001) were used to record the aims, theoretical frameworks, methods, results and texts used in the studies. In the analysis, several detailed rubrics were created to analyse the types of texts described (fiction/nonfiction), the authors' rationales for their choice of text and the types of activities. In alignment with intercultural language teaching theory (Byram et al., 2002;

Table 1
Search string.

Constructs	Concepts
#1 Intercultural and competence	((intercultural OR 'inter-cultural' OR transcultural OR 'trans-cultural' OR crosscultural OR 'cross-cultural' OR multicultural OR 'multi-cultural' OR cultural) AND (competence* OR awareness OR skill* OR communication OR training OR literac* OR education OR program*))
#2 Text	(literature OR fiction OR nonfiction OR 'non fiction' OR 'non-fiction' OR stories OR story OR novel* OR article* OR 'fairy tale*' OR (('multi-modal' OR 'multi modal' OR multimodal) AND (text*)) OR 'picture book*' OR picturebook* OR film* OR movie* OR video)
#3 EFL/ESL teaching	'English as a second language' OR 'English as a foreign language' OR esl OR efl OR eal
Search	#1 AND #2 AND #3

Table 2
Selection criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Rationale
Peer-reviewed studies	Editorials, duplicate texts, chapters in edited volumes, conference proceedings	Ensure scientific quality Accessibility
English language	Other languages	Published for an international audience
Empirical studies	Theoretical/conceptual studies, recommendations for classroom activities	Contribution to the research and practice field
EFL/ESL context	Other contexts (e.g. general education)	Relevance to the article's guiding questions
Texts used as stimuli to foster ICC	**Other foci (e.g. developing linguistic skills, teachers'/ students' perceptions of ICC)**	**Relevance to the focus on the affordances of fiction/ nonfiction texts to foster ICC**

Table 3
Search results from ERIC, LAIC and LCC.

	Results	Potentially relevant	Included in the review
Screening of the first 100 results from ERIC	100	29	16
LAIC	348	17	9
LCC	256	11	5
Screening of the next 100 results from ERIC	100	10	6
Total	804	67	36

Deardorff, 2019; Fenner, 2001; Kohonen et al., 2017; Li et al., 2016; Sercu et al., 2005), the integrative constructs *dialogic*, *experiential* and *student-centred* served as the analytical tools for the activities in the present review study.

5. Results

This section presents an overview of the theoretical frameworks, education levels, research designs and methods of the studies reviewed, in addition to the types of texts, rationales and activities represented. While all the studies form a part of the quantitative analysis, those illustrating salient points elucidating the aims of the review are emphasized (Harden & Thomas, 2010).

5.1. Theoretical framework and educational level

The first step in the literature analysis was to consider the fields and theoretical frameworks of the studies. The results of this preliminary analysis are shown in Appendix 2, which shows that 26 articles draw on intercultural theory, four on multicultural theory, four on critical literacy or pedagogy and two articles employ transcultural theory.

18 out of the 26 articles that fall within the field of interculturalism rely on Byram's (1997) model explicitly or implicitly. Thus, these articles all form part of a discourse drawing on Byram's (1997) theory of ICC. Another common denominator is the focus on dialogic approaches to develop ICC, as in Forsman (2010) and Penz (2001). Dialogic approaches are also highly relevant to reader-response theory, on which Arizpe et al. (2014), DeStigter, Aranda, & Eddy, 1997, Muthusamy, Marimuthu, and Sabapthy (2011), Lee and Gilles (2012) and Shin and Riazantseva (2015) rely. Additionally, Hayik's (2011) article on critical literacy draws on readers' responses to texts. All the articles show results from intercultural education through student-centred, socio-constructivist and dialogic approaches, though their focus, theory and methods differ. The majority of the studies (21) are from higher education. Primary and secondary schools are represented by four and 11 studies, respectively (see Appendix 3).

5.2. Research design and methods

Only one quantitative study is found in the sample (Muthusamy et al., 2011), whereas Akiyama (2017), Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2017), Juan-Garau and Jacob (2015), Prieto-Arranz, Juan-Garau, and Jacobs (2013), Liaw and Bunn-Le Master (2010), Shie (2013) and Tseng (2017) use mixed methods. The remaining 29 studies are qualitative. Whereas some state a specific approach, such as case study (Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015; Stewart & Santiago, 2006; Truong & Tran, 2014), action research (Forsman, 2010; Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017; Moya, Ortiz, & Díaz, 2016; Porto, 2014) or both, most studies leave their approach undefined.

The vast majority of the studies collected documents, mostly verbal texts in the form of logbooks, summaries, essays and online forum entries, but also visual representations (Arizpe et al., 2014; Hayik, 2011; Porto, 2013; Porto & Zembylas, 2020). One study used only interviews to collect data (Yang & Fleming, 2013), but the general tendency involves a combination of data collection methods. Other methods of data collection are semi-structured interviews (16 studies), structured interviews (Oakley, Pegrum, Xiong, Lim, & Yan, 2018), video-recorded classroom observations (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009; Truong & Tran, 2014), classroom observation (5[1]) and

[1] Most of the studies include classroom observations, but only 5 studies specify this as one of their data collection methods.

questionnaires (5). Three studies include some form of pre- and post-test, -interview or -survey (Akiyama, 2017; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Muthusamy et al., 2011). As for analysis, varieties of qualitative analysis to search for themes are the most frequent (e.g. Dasli, 2012; Forsman, 2010; Moya, Ortiz, & Díaz, 2016; Porto, 2014; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2012; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015; Su, 2011; Truong & Tran, 2014). However, the theoretical approach varies (e.g. grounded theory and phenomenography) and is not always specified. There are also examples of discourse analysis (Akiyama, 2017), visual discourse analysis (Hayik, 2011), content analysis (7), assessment according to specific standards (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009; Zoreda & Vivaldo-Lima, 2008) and statistical analysis (Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017; Muthusamy, Marimuthu, & Sabapathy, 2011; Tseng, 2017). Other studies specify analytic tools, such as the Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes taxonomy (Moya et al., 2016) and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (Liaw & Bunn-Le Master, 2010). However, there are few common denominators in this regard, making comparison based on analytic approach difficult. Additionally, some studies include very brief descriptions of their data collection or analysis methods. These were nevertheless included due to their relevance to the research questions of the review (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006).

5.3. Text types and rationales

Most of the articles describe the type of text that was studied. However, the extent to which the text type and related activities are mentioned varies. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the studies on fiction and nonfiction texts, respectively. Only one study does not define the type of texts the students read (Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017). All but two studies involving fiction provide a rationale for their choice of text, these exceptions being Forsman (2010) and Tseng (2017). This contrasts with 80% of the studies on the use of nonfiction texts that do not comment on the choice of text (see Table 4). The cultural content of the texts is the most frequently mentioned reason for choosing factual texts (Dasli, 2012; Liaw & Bunn-Le Master, 2010; Penz, 2001), though another common reason is developing critical literacy (Morgan & Vandrick, 2009).

The studies related to fiction present a rationale for text selection in the following manner: The majority of these articles first introduce the text type (e.g. fairy tales, picturebooks, films or short stories) rather thoroughly. Secondly, they present theoretically founded rationales for how exploring the particular text type, or fiction in general, is conducive to skill development, such as writing skills (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009; Stewart, 2015), in addition to fostering ICC, multicultural awareness and critical literacy (Arizpe et al., 2014; Hayik, 2011; Morgan & Vandrick, 2009; Muthusamy et al., 2011; Porto, 2013; Ruiz-Cecilia, 2012; Stewart, 2015; Truong & Tran, 2014; Zoreda & Vivaldo-Lima, 2008).

Reader-response approaches are also prevalent in several of the studies with the most thorough theoretically founded rationale for their choice of text (Arizpe et al., 2014; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Muthusamy et al., 2011; Porto, 2013; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015). The dialogue between reader and text is additionally supported in the case of multimodal texts through pictures and sound (Chao, 2013; Yang & Fleming, 2013). Both Arizpe et al. (2014) and Hayik (2011) viewed the potential of visual texts and approaches to foster students' intercultural or critical literacy. Drawing on a reader-response methodology, they exposed their students to cognitively, emotionally or visually challenging picturebooks, focusing on intercultural encounters.

A third reason, to some extent also apparent in the studies on nonfiction, is that texts are considered culturally relevant. Culturally relevant texts can serve either to increase the ability to see others' perspectives or explore one's own cultural identities (Bishop, 1990; Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Both aspects are central to intercultural education, which highlights awareness of one's own cultural perspectives to understand those of others (e.g. Byram, 1997). This awareness might influence the selection of texts for intercultural learning activities. Recognizing one's own cultures in texts can increase both students' motivation and appreciation of their own cultural background (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). In addition, it can enhance their overall cultural understanding (Muthusamy et al., 2011; Oakley et al., 2018). Leaving out discussions of students' motivation, Muthusamy et al. (2011) still showed significant results from using a reader-response approach related to a story rooted in the students' local culture. In Oakley et al. (2018), students rewrote traditional tales to mirror modern day life, which helped them learn about their own cultures and relate to that of past generations. Stewart and Santiago (2006) also deliberately chose a story to which their bilingual students could relate. Films were additional media used to help students "engage […] with the 'other' culture' and become 'aware […] of their own cultural biases' (Truong & Tran, 2014, p. 208), in addition to focusing on authentic linguistic input, motivation and stimulated discussion (Yang & Fleming, 2013). Arizpe et al. (2014) relied on Freire's *generative theme*, defined as a theme that reflects students' own experiences to support the development of intercultural awareness, similar to Hayik (2011) and Stewart (2015). Porto and Zembylas (2020), meanwhile, focused on texts that challenge students and stimulate engagement with other perspectives. Porto and Zembylas (2020) also advocated a pedagogy of discomfort to foster "action-oriented empathy and solidarity" through students' artistic responses to texts from other contexts (p. 368).

5.4. Type of activities

There are great differences in what the reports of activities reveal about the processes of intercultural learning. Whereas descriptions of classroom procedures are detailed in some studies, others do not include this type of information.

5.4.1. Dialogic and student-centred activities

Discussion, potentially a dialogic and student-centred activity, is the most frequently reported activity, featured in 25 studies. However, few of them report details or use methods that show the nature of the discussions. One exception is Liaw and Bunn-Le Master (2010), who employed tools to explore the linguistic features of the discourse, patterns and types of interaction, such as linguistic interaction patterns analysis and word frequency software. In this way, the researchers demonstrated how intercultural learning transpired (2010, p. 21).

Table 4
Text type and presence of a rationale for selection of texts.

Text type	Number of studies	Rationale for text selection
Fiction	17	17
Nonfiction	11	2
Both	5	3
Not mentioned	1	0
Total	**34**[a]	**22**

[a] Juan-Garau and Jacob (2015) and Prieto-Arranz, Juan-Garau, and Jacob (2013) reported results from the same study and are thus counted as one study, as are Porto (2014) and Porto (2019). For this reason, the total number of studies in this table is 34, rather than 36 (the total number of studies in the review).

All the studies report activities which can be categorized as student-centred, except Dasli (2012), where students were not given the means to personally relate to the course, which largely involved the transmission of "fact-based knowledge" (p. 186). Su (2011) studied the effect of the cultural portfolio. She described how students take charge of their own learning and seek knowledge by consulting different nonfiction resources, such as online sources and undertaking interviews, to test their hypotheses about other cultures, all while supported by a teacher who is careful not to impose her views on the students. This student-centred approach granted agency to the students and helped them move from ethnocentric views to a greater understanding of diversity within their own and others' cultures. Su (2011) might then exemplify how the approaches used to foster ICC matter more than text type.

5.4.2. Experiential and student-centred activities

Approximately half of the studies describe activities that allow students to draw on or create experiences, which potentially allows the students themselves to construct knowledge (Kohonen et al., 2017). An open and curious attitude to both one's own and others' cultures is key to fostering ICC (Byram, 1997). Accordingly, it is recommended that ICC modules start with learners' explorations of their own identities and cultural backgrounds (e.g. Byram et al., 2002). Based on the findings of the present review, this is an underused strategy. Shin and Riazantseva (2015), however, explored how readers' multiple identities influence their interpretations of a text. Furthermore, both Stewart (2015) and Oakley et al. (2018) showed how students express their voices by using their own experiences to draw connections to a culturally relevant text. This educated the students and the teacher alike. The next step could be reflecting on meetings with other cultures: for example, by using the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (Porto, 2016, 2019; Porto & Byram, 2015) or the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media (Lindner & Méndez Garcia, 2014; Porto, 2019), which highlight the students' own experiences.

The latter are examples of experiential activities. Meetings with texts or people combined with dialogic or critical approaches enhance the opportunities for fostering ICC (Byram et al., 2013). Hayik (2011) and Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2017) described projects where Israeli and Palestinian students discussed literary texts. These dialogues highlighted their personal experiences, a student-centred approach that led to increased intercultural awareness. Similarly, Arizpe et al. (2014) argued for drawing on students' experiences in dialogue with texts, in particular visual texts, in the critical pedagogy context.

Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2017) developed a tool for assessing reading and intercultural development in tandem, which is reminiscent of Matos's (2011, p. 12) claim of connections between the dialogic reading process and intercultural learning. Other studies report on collaborations between students from different cultures, discussing and responding to literature and meeting physically, as described in Forsman (2010) and DeStigter, Aranda, & Eddy, 1997, or virtually (Porto, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019; Akiyama, 2017; Juan-Garau & Jacob, 2015; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Liaw & Bunn-Le Master, 2010; Lindner & Méndez Garcia, 2014; Oakley et al., 2018; Porto & Byram, 2015; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2013). According to Boye and Byram (2018), role-play and drama are classical approaches to further students' ICC. However, drama activities, which can be defined as both student-centred and experiential, are underrepresented, with only three studies (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009; Truong & Tran, 2014; Zoreda & Vivaldo-Lima, 2008) leaving the kinaesthetic potential largely unexplored. In summary, these studies featured teachers aiming to engage students, encourage intercultural learning and create a level playing field through dialogic explorations of culturally relevant texts.

6. Discussion

To address the four research questions, the type of text, their possible affordances and the rationales for their selection are discussed in section 6.1, followed by a discussion of the picturebook format. Then the activities and research designs are discussed in sections 6.2, 6.3. and 6.4.

6.1. Type of texts and the importance of rationale

The first two research questions ask what types of texts are represented in intercultural EFL/ESL teaching and how these are justified. The focus on rationale emerged due to the differing affordances of texts (van Lier, 2004). Whereas nonfiction texts provide factual information that appears to have one mode of interpretation, fictional texts can be open to a multitude of interpretations (Iser, 1978). For example, narratives might stimulate empathy to a higher degree than factual texts (Nikolajeva, 2018), while a factual text can provide knowledge on everyday habits and social and political structures. The results of the review show that the rationale

provided for the selection of fiction texts focus on their role in fostering ICC and, in some cases, critical literacy. Culturally relevant texts are highlighted, and the rationales for fiction texts are mainly anchored in reader-response or critical theory. All but two (Forsman, 2010; Tseng, 2017) of the studies involving fiction provide a theoretically founded rationale for their choice of text. The two exceptions used both fiction and nonfiction texts, but the type of texts is not the focus of their studies.

The reason why 80% of the studies on nonfiction fail to include a rationale for their text selection may be that their relevance is not debated by educators, policy makers or academics. The writer-reader contract of nonfiction texts stipulates that the content of the text conveys the truth. Thus, it is seemingly logical to select these texts when teaching students about other cultures (Løvland, 2018). The discourse on false facts (Duffy, 2018), however, serves as a reminder that there is no such thing as an objective account of truth. Accordingly, all texts must be examined critically to ascertain what perspectives are included and excluded, and in what way content is conveyed (Kramsch, 2011). Furthermore, considering how different texts can accommodate possibilities for engagement (van Lier, 2004), and foster different elements of ICC, can increase the robustness of a study.

For these reasons, it is noteworthy that a mixed-methods study on the development of students' reading comprehension and ICC does not include what types of texts are read (Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017). Interestingly, the results show that the developments of both ICC and critical reading skills correlate and interact. Furthermore, students who were resistant to employing strategies for critical engagement with the texts in dialogue with peers, struggled with reading and scored low in ICC. Future studies might include the role of texts in students' development and provide insight into "the dialogue [that] developed among students of diverse cultures" (Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017, p. 325) and the teacher's role as mediator, points not addressed by Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2017).

Only two of the studies on nonfiction texts comment on the choice of text. These two studies clearly show how their chosen type of nonfiction text is suitable for fostering ICC and critical literacy. The first one, Shie (2013), involved a largely unexplored phenomenon: allusive intertexts in article titles of a magazine. This warranted a thorough description of what allusive intertexts are, how they are selected and how they can foster students' "motivations to learn intercultural intertexts" (Shie, 2013, p. 416). The second one, Morgan's account of his ESL class in Morgan and Vandrick (2009), well illustrates the differences between the fiction and nonfiction studies in terms of rationale. Their classes aimed at developing students' critical literacy, and to this end it was valuable "to read texts for multiple perspectives and for multiple purposes" (Morgan & Vandrick, 2009, p. 516). In this study, Morgan provided a theoretically grounded rationale for the selection of nonfiction texts that are thematically relevant and may develop students' critical literacy by engaging their own experiences and perspective-taking skills (2009, pp. 516–517). Still, Vandrick's rationale is far more detailed. Her rationale includes a discussion of why war-related literature ought to be read in ESL classes, the intersection of linguistic and critical literacy, selection criteria, the relevance of topics and their links to identity work and challenging stereotypes (2009, pp. 521–525). Similarly, Porto (2013) provided a detailed, theoretically grounded rationale for the selection of fiction texts, highlighting their authenticity, suitability for understanding otherness and stimulating the readers' imagination. The latter, she held, is significant in developing perspective-taking skills and "cultural understanding" (Porto, 2013, p. 287). However, in Porto (2014) and (2016) no specific rationale is provided for the selection of nonfiction texts, other than stating that the students engaged with a range of thematically relevant texts presenting different perspectives (see also Porto & Byram, 2015).

The format of texts, i.e. the literary text type, is another point for consideration. Arguably, the picturebook is a format with affordances rendering it particularly suitable for ICC development (Burwitz-Melzer, 2014, p. 63), whether they be fictional and nonfictional. Picturebooks are objects of art, ideology and sources of cultural knowledge (Hayik, 2011; Stephens, 2018), and their multimodality makes for a more complex reading experience. The studies on picturebooks deem them suitable for developing students' cultural and social awareness and analytic and critical thinking skills (Arizpe et al., 2014; Hayik, 2011; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Stewart, 2015). Reading and exploring picturebooks in dialogue with peers provide an aesthetic and affective experience, ideal for exploring identities, cultural perspectives and fostering empathy with others (Hayik, 2011; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Stewart, 2015).

6.2. *Dialogic and student-centred activities and approaches*

Detailed activity descriptions serve to demonstrate the processes of students' intercultural learning, and discussion is the most frequently mentioned activity. However, the lack of detail in some of the reports makes it difficult to determine to what degree the discussions were dialogic (Dasli, 2012; Moya et al., 2016; Singh, Marsani, Jaganathan, Karupiah, & Abdullah, 2017; Tseng, 2017). Explanations of classroom procedures could also lead to increased insight in how students' intercultural learning might be facilitated. Nonetheless, this requires a more varied range of research methods to shed light on the execution of activities and the processes of intercultural development. For example, methods that analyse classroom talk could illuminate the nature of discussions and illustrate how intercultural learning unfolds. Prieto-Arranz et al. (2013) drew on discourse theory and used content analysis. They showed how their students' language style contributed to "the construction of a collective identity," which promoted the development of transcultural awareness (2013, p. 27). Another example is discourse analysis in combination with quantitative methods, such as measuring student talk time (Liaw & Bunn-Le Master, 2010), which could indicate if activities are student-centred. Notwithstanding the potential pitfalls of using a quantitative mindset to interpret qualitative data, using numbers in qualitative studies can contribute to "the *internal generalizability* of qualitative researchers' claim" (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478; emphasis added). Arizpe (2017) called for "a consideration of the overlaps between singular case studies and larger quantitative surveys" of reading (2017, pp. 132–133), an argument which could be extended to text-based practices for intercultural learning.

Some studies suggest a search for right answers, rather than dialogic explorations (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009; Dasli, 2012). For example, the activities in Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009 study on multicultural fairy tales focused on finding factual knowledge about cultures, rather than knowledge related to socialization processes (Byram, 1997). The aims of the sessions, which included to "read, accurately comprehend and present folk tales", are valid aims for language learning, and may have been a starting point for

intercultural learning. However, critical approaches are required to "challenge, overcome and subvert the common beliefs, laws, values and norms of a culture" (Akpinar & Öztürk, 2009, p. 76), which the study presented as one of the affordances of folktales. In Dasli's (2012) study of a British studies module for international students, texts were presented as "a non-negotiable set of facts" (2012, p. 186). Dasli (2012) held that a lack of opportunities for affective engagement with the texts resulted in stereotyping the host culture on the part of the students, which supports the need for a dialogic approach to develop ICC.

6.3. *Experiential and student-centred activities*

Engaging with one's own experiences is central to experiential learning (Kohonen et al., 2017; Kolb, 1984), and allows the students to take charge of their own learning. Yet, the extent to which students are invited to reflect on their own cultural perspectives and how these are mirrored in their reading is largely unspecified in the sampled studies. An exception is Shin and Riazantseva (2015), who explored three readers' identity work.

The lack of tools to personally engage with curricula can lead to stereotyping, even in intercultural education. This point is exemplified by two studies of nonfiction texts. Dasli (2012) (see section 6.2.) serves as a reminder of how teaching facts through factual texts can reinforce stereotypes about a "national" culture, even when some degree of comparison with home countries is made. Dasli (2012) wrote that some students adopt an identity of being the victim of racism, ignoring evidence to the contrary. Since the students' personal experiences in Britain were not made a part of the course, they were not given the means to interpret these experiences and create a third space (2012).

Akiyama's (2017) examination of turn negotiation in American-Japanese telecollaboration was an interesting parallel: some knowledge of Japanese communication patterns led to stereotyping on the part of American speakers and missed communication when the Japanese speaker did not fit the stereotype. The teacher then needed to facilitate the intercultural dialogue (Akiyama, 2017). Considering the potential of fiction texts to engage readers' emotions (Nikolajeva, 2013), culturally relevant fiction texts might have better mediated these students' intercultural learning.

Experiential activities may also entail meetings with others, physically or through computer-mediated communication. Several studies saw students discussing texts online with peers in other countries (Akiyama, 2017; Juan-Garau & Jacob, 2015; Lee & Gilles, 2012; Liaw & Bunn-Le Master, 2010; Lindner & Méndez Garcia, 2014; Oakley et al., 2018; Porto, 2013; 2014; 2016; 2019; Porto & Byram, 2015; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2013). An important finding in these studies is that the digital environment allowed a sense of global community to evolve, an indication of a student-centred approach. Prieto-Arranz et al. (2013) in particular argued that the possibility of face-to-face interaction and informal "netspeak" contributed to the development of their students' transcultural awareness.

6.4. *Critical approaches*

Intercultural scholarship in the 1990s focused on reconciling differences between cultures (Dervin, 2016; Ferri, 2018; Hoff, 2014). The last decade, meanwhile, has seen a rise in critical theory in intercultural language learning, highlighting the need for a critical analysis of the discourses which construct and maintain social structures (Ferri, 2018; Kramsch, 2011). Critical approaches emerged as a theme through the analysis, and are advanced in several studies on both fiction and nonfiction. These studies also include an array of texts from multiple perspectives (Arizpe et al., 2014; Hayik, 2011; Hellerstein-Yehezkel, 2017; Morgan & Vandrick, 2009; Porto, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019; Porto & Byram, 2015; Porto & Zembylas, 2020; Zoreda & Vivaldo-Lima, 2008). Porto and Zembylas (2020) expanded the critical approach through the pedagogy of discomfort, advocating engagement "with 'difficult' issues that promote critical intercultural citizenship values" to foster "empathy, solidarity and transformation" (pp. 357, 359).

Arizpe et al. (2014), Hayik (2011), Porto (2013) and Porto and Zembylas (2020) all include careful explanations of the strategies that facilitate the development of students' critical literacy skills. The data contain students' multimodal texts in response to both verbal and multimodal texts. Furthermore, the thorough theoretical rationale of these studies for their pedagogical approach and the analysis of responses testify to how individual students developed ICC through visual methods. Altogether, this gives some understanding of intercultural learning processes. As no quantitative analysis methods are employed, it is not possible to know if the approaches were effective for the majority of the students. However, studies like these show possibilities for intercultural learning by engaging with texts. Considering the apparent objectivity of nonfictional texts, and the potential of fiction texts to affect readers' emotions, critical awareness is equally important to reading both fiction and nonfiction.

7. Concluding remarks and the way forward

This review study mapped and critically analysed studies on fiction and nonfiction texts represented in research aiming to foster EFL/ESL students' ICC, and considered how the sampled studies may illustrate intercultural learning processes. The first research question asked what types of texts were represented in these studies, and the analysis showed that fiction is more frequently represented than nonfiction in the surveyed studies.

The second research question asked how the selection of texts was justified. The authors who provided theoretically grounded rationales for their choices of texts and activities share several commonalities. First, they worked with fiction. Second, the rationales provided revolve around the affordances of fiction, as opposed to nonfiction texts. Third, drawing on reader-response and critical theory, the authors viewed the possibilities of engaging the reader in interactions with texts that mirror their own cultural perspectives or those of others. Consequently, there is a strong focus on culturally relevant texts where readers can recognize their own cultures or learn about those of others, which is also the most frequently mentioned reason for choosing nonfiction texts. Fourth, cognitively,

emotionally and linguistically challenging texts are favoured.

The selection of fiction is more strongly rationalized, whereas the vast majority of studies on nonfiction fail to do so for their text choice. The cultural content of the texts and development of students' critical literacy are reasons provided for selecting nonfiction texts. This is not to suggest that nonfiction texts are not a valuable resource in intercultural language teaching, but that their affordances in fostering ICC need to be considered through a critical lens.

The studies on multimodal texts, such as films, videos and challenging picturebooks, in addition to computer-mediated communication, give theoretically grounded accounts of the affordances of these media in fostering students' ICC. In alignment with critical theory, this might indicate that a range of media and text types should be a part of an intercultural education, to allow for the representation of multiple voices and perspectives.

The third research question asked to what extent the studies featured text-based activities that are dialogic, experiential and student-centred. The results showed that the activities are generally student-centred, with frequent reference to dialogic theory and use of discussions, but without illustrating to what extent the discussions are dialogic. Nearly 50% of the studies involve experiential activities, but drama activities are marginalized. Moreover, the analysis of the sampled studies reveal that critical approaches are an emerging theme in intercultural language learning.

The fourth research question asked to what extent the research designs serve to illuminate the students' intercultural learning processes. With a few notable exceptions, the chosen designs provide limited insight into these processes, the focus being rather on the outcomes of intercultural education. Consequently, this review suggests a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse classroom talk as one approach to illuminate the students' processes of intercultural learning. As the present review has shown, the majority of the studies are conducted in higher education. Consequently, more research on primary and secondary education is required to study potential differences in how intercultural learning processes unfold across age groups.

This review highlights how theoretically grounded rationales for selecting texts clarify their affordances in fostering intercultural learning. Consequently, the synthetic constructs *affordance* and *rationale* served to develop a synthesizing argument: an awareness of the affordances of text types and the rationales for their selection can be a tool that assists teachers and researchers in designing studies and activities for intercultural learning. Furthermore, discourse analysis or quantitative approaches to research and evaluation can supplement qualitative dialogue analyses to illustrate the intercultural learning processes in the EFL/ESL classroom. The potential of experiential approaches in this respect is also an area for further exploration.

This review study is not exhaustive, as it excluded conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations and chapters in edited volumes, as a rigorous peer review process is not guaranteed in these instances. Because the analysis stopped at the saturation point, other databases and journals may have produced additional results as well. Geographically, the studies span all continents except Africa. This may be due to the review's inclusion and exclusion criteria, or a lack of African studies in the field. In limiting the search to certain keywords, potentially relevant results may have been overlooked. However, this choice was made to systematize the search and consider the most readily accessible literature.

In conclusion, an awareness of the affordances of different types of text and media might facilitate intercultural teaching and learning. An array of text types, media and activities that engage students with multiple perspectives is essential to the emotional and cognitive transformations necessary to foster ICC. There is also potential for more research that considers the mediation of intercultural learning through experiential activities. A wider range of research approaches and methods can increase our understanding of the processes of intercultural learning as well.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390.

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Opening a Dialogic Space: Intercultural Learning through Picturebooks

Sissil Lea Heggernes

Abstract

This study discusses how knowledge of dialogic features can inform intercultural learning. Intercultural learning is highlighted in educational policy as a means of managing cultural diversity (for example, Council of Europe, 2018). Furthermore, intercultural dialogue is a frequently employed term. However, the features and aims of intercultural dialogues often remain vague. To help elucidate them, secondary-school students' conversations about a picturebook in the ELT class are analysed through the lens of dialogic theory (Alexander, 2008; Mercer & Howe, 2012; Vrikki, Wheatley, Howe, Hennessy, & Mercer, 2019; Wegerif, 2011). Through engaging with the pictures, a dialogic space emerged, allowing the students to display curiosity about another culture and contribute ideas. Their willingness to actively listen, explore conflicting ideas and change their minds led to joint meaning-making and the co-construction of knowledge of another culture (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). The study adds to the scarce empirical literature on reading for intercultural learning in English language teaching (ELT) (Hoff, 2017) through its novel approach, applying dialogic theory to intercultural learning, mediated by picturebook dialogues. I argue that knowledge of dialogic features can serve as a tool for teachers aiming to foster students' intercultural learning in ELT.

Keywords: dialogic education; intercultural learning; picturebooks; English language teaching; lower-secondary level; *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*

Sissil Lea Heggernes is a PhD candidate at Oslo Metropolitan University with extensive teaching experience from primary and secondary schools. In her research, she explores how challenging picturebooks can foster English language students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

Introduction

Dialogue is a term that has gained much currency over the last decade, frequently preceded by the adjective 'intercultural'. Its usages can be divided into two strands: (a) intercultural dialogue as a response to globalization in order to manage increased cultural diversity (for example, Council of Europe, 2008; UNESCO, 2013) and (b) dialogue as an approach to intercultural learning through dialogic activities, and/or readers' dialogue with text representing the readers' own or another culture (Byram & Wagner, 2018). It is the latter usage that is of interest in this paper. The terminology of dialogue can vary, with the word sometimes used interchangeably with words such as 'discussion', 'interaction' and 'talk' and often used loosely, leaving the specific features and aims of dialogue undefined. This paper will focus on what makes classroom talk *dialogic* and how dialogues can foster intercultural learning. To this end, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What features of dialogue seem to be conducive to intercultural learning?
2. How might teachers facilitate students' intercultural dialogues?

These questions are explored through the lens of secondary-school students' intercultural dialogues about a picturebook in the ELT class, applying insights from dialogic theory (Alexander, 2008; Mercer & Howe, 2012; Vrikki et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2008, 2011; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997). I argue that knowledge about dialogic features and aims can advance our understanding of how students' intercultural learning is mediated through interaction with text and with other readers. Little empirical research has been done on reading practices for intercultural learning in ELT (Hoff, 2017, p. 2), especially related to learners in lower-secondary education. Hence, this study adds to the scarce literature on the topic. It can also provide support for teachers' development as intercultural educators.

Theoretical Background: Intercultural Learning, Dialogue and Picturebooks

Intercultural learning can be defined as the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective and appropriate communication and behaviour 'when interacting across difference' (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5). Some commonly agreed-upon elements include curiosity and discovery, cultural knowledge, perspective-taking skills, critical cultural awareness, listening skills, empathy and adaptability (Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

According to Delanoy, dialogue encompasses interculturality. His concept of dialogic competence shares similarities with models of intercultural competence, such as curiosity, critical awareness and perspective-taking skills (Byram, 1997; Delanoy, 2008). Dialogue involves recognition of and sincere interest in the others' perspectives. Wegerif translates the Greek 'dialogic' into 'meaning emerging from the interplay of different perspectives' (2011, p. 180). We need others' perspectives on us to see ourselves more clearly and to develop perspective-taking skills and empathy (Dysthe, 2013). Through dialogue, in the Socratian sense, the participants may be moved from expressing their *doxa* – their beliefs and perceptions – to expressing *episteme*, knowledge tested through questioning and justifying (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, pp. 34-39). Both forms of knowledge are relevant to this qualitative study. In practice, a dialogic classroom culture entails giving students agency to contribute and explore ideas and constructively challenge and build upon those of each other (Alexander, 2008).

Fiction is suitable for intercultural learning, as literature may help readers engage with conflicting perspectives (Hoff, 2014). Readers engage in their own and other cultures through literature, and this engagement may foster intercultural learning (cf. Bredella, 2000; Bredella & Delanoy, 1996; Fenner, 2001; Hoff, 2017; Kramsch, 1993; Matos, 2005). Picturebooks may add another layer to the intercultural reading experience. According to Hallberg, a picturebook is a book that has a minimum of one picture per double spread (1982). The pictures can replicate, expand and contradict the verbal text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). Through readers' engagement with the semiotic meaning of the picture-text relationship (Evans, 2013), they can discover and critically analyse the multiple voices and ideologies represented in the narrative (Stephens, 2018).

The Features and Aims of Dialogues

Wegerif and Mercer divide student-student talk into three types: *disputational*, *cumulative* and *exploratory* (2013; 1997; italics mine). *Disputational talk* entails competing to find the correct solution in order to win an argument. In *cumulative talk*, students build on each other's ideas. Though all voices are heard, ideas are not challenged and explored. Differences in opinion might be glossed over or ignored in order to maintain the harmony of the group (Wegerif, 2008, 2011). The most educationally productive talk occurs when

groups share ideas, which are explored, constructively criticized and built upon, especially when students are willing to change their mind if they are wrong (Wegerif, 2008, 2011). These are the characteristics of *exploratory talk*. Considering studies of student-student and student-teacher talk, Wegerif finds that it is not merely the characteristics of exploratory talk that help groups develop their thinking, but also identification with the aims of the dialogue itself (Wegerif, 2011, p. 184). Therefore, he prefers the term *dialogic talk*, which entails 'an openness to the other and respect for difference' (2011, p. 184). These are also elements of intercultural learning.

Summing up the most prominent research on dialogue, Vrikki et al. conclude that the 'participative ethos […] with participants respecting and listening to all ideas' (Vrikki et al., 2019, p. 86) is essential for productive classroom dialogue. These qualities are fundamental to student 'identification with the dialogue' (Wegerif, 2011), and require a supportive and inclusive classroom culture. Furthermore, the teacher plays an important part in facilitating student dialogues. This includes helping students co-ordinate and synthesize ideas, activities which are lacking in many classrooms (Vrikki et al., 2019).

Intercultural Dialogue

If intercultural dialogue involves 'interacti[on] across difference' (Deardorff, 2019, p. 5), what is the aim of dialogic interaction? Outlining a theoretical dichotomy, the aim of dialogue can be:

1. reaching agreement and/or mediating contrasting views

or

2. learning to tolerate ambiguity and live with conflict.

Littleton and Mercer hold that attempts to reach agreement are an important feature of educational dialogues, as they can push the students to explore each other's ideas more carefully even if they do not manage to reach agreement (Littleton & Mercer, 2013, p. 38). Similarly, Byram (1997) stresses the ability to mediate different perspectives as essential for intercultural communicative competence.

Wegerif, for his part, states that agreement is only one point on a fluid continuum (Wegerif, 2011, p. 182). According to Delanoy, 'irritation and contradiction' may enhance one's reflective skills (Delanoy, 2008, p. 177). Hoff (2014) takes up this thread when she

criticizes Byram for focusing too strongly on harmonizing contrasting views. She reads his model as reminiscent of Hegel's dialectic: thesis – antithesis – synthesis, in which difference is overcome in a dialectic dialogue and the ultimate goal is to understand the other's position. In today's pluricultural world, we should rather learn to tolerate ambiguity, as '[c]onflict, ambiguity and difference [are] not solely […] challenging aspects of the intercultural encounter, but […] potentially fruitful conditions for profound dialogue between Self and Other' (2014, p. 208).

This study will exemplify not only how exploration of conflicting views may lead to intercultural learning but also how other dialogic features serve to drive dialogues forward. I argue that this may happen when a dialogic space is created, a 'dynamic continuous emergence of meaning' in which students solve problems through listening, requesting help, 'changing their minds [and] seeing the problems as if through the eyes of others' (Wegerif, 2011, p. 180).

Previous Research

Studies from a range of fields have considered how dialogic education might develop students' cognitive and emotional skills, which have been seen as constituent skills of intercultural learning (Maine, 2013; Rojas-Drummond, Mazon, Fernandez, & Wegerif, 2006). However, the link between such development and intercultural learning is not necessarily targeted, and dialogic approaches to intercultural learning in primary and lower secondary ELT is an understudied field. In this section, I will comment on a few studies relevant to my own, concerned with either literary dialogues (talking around stories) and/or intercultural learning from first- and second-language classrooms.

Mourão (2013), Yeom (2019) and Hoff (2017) studied secondary-school ELT classrooms. Mourão (2013) reveals the potential of discussions about multimodal texts for developing student vocabulary and critical engagement through interthinking (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Yeom (2019) discusses visual grammar in teenagers' discussions of picturebooks. Through a thematic analysis, she shows how the teacher facilitates the discussion and how 'aspects of global awareness' are developed (2019, p. 1). Hoff's (2017) concern is how teachers can foster intercultural readers. She offers a theoretical model to capture 'the communicative processes [of the] "intercultural reader"' (Hoff, 2017, p. 4). Nonetheless, Hoff recognizes that teachers require a high level of intercultural competence

to transform conflictual encounters into intercultural learning experiences (2019, pp. 106-109).

Wiseman (2011) and Pantaleo (2007) analyse the discourse features of literary dialogues in first-language primary classrooms, and Maine shows how empathy stimulates children's dialogues (2013). The studies above exemplify how dialogic transactions with literature, including multimodal texts, may foster skills conducive to intercultural learning, such as empathy and critical engagement. The present study adds to this research. Applying insight from dialogic theory to intercultural dialogues, I aim to link knowledge of dialogic features to intercultural learning through picturebooks in secondary-school ELT. I suggest that knowledge of dialogic features and of how to mediate them might help teachers transform student reading experiences into intercultural learning.

The Intercultural Picturebook Project

The Learners and the Teacher

The dialogues are collected from a case study in a small Norwegian town, where an eighth grade ELT class read Peter Sís' graphic memoir, *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (2007). The group comprised twenty-three 13- and 14-year-olds. Norwegian students study English in class for one to two hours per week from first grade, increasing to two hours from eighth grade. The students' language skills ranged from A2 to B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). According to the teacher, the students were accustomed to small-group discussions, and the whole-class discussions that I observed were carefully guided by the teacher. In preparation for the project, the teacher and I discussed the importance of allowing the students to make their own interpretations. Accordingly, I encouraged the teacher to use open-ended questions and to emphasize that there were no right or wrong answers.

The focus on intercultural learning entailed targeting both cognitive and emotional skills. Through triggering the students' curiosity, the aim was to increase their knowledge of another culture, encompassing both historical learning and understanding of social interaction and fostering perspective-taking skills – all significant elements of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Wagner, Perugini & Byram, 2018). Moreover,

tolerance of ambiguity came into play, as reading this book represented a threefold intercultural experience for the students:

1. The picturebook represented an unconventional choice of text. None of the students had read a picturebook since early in primary school, and they considered this as literature for small children only.
2. The book represented an unknown culture. The class had almost no knowledge of communism, and several students were unaware that Czechoslovakia had existed as a nation state.
3. Reading literature in a foreign language is in itself an intercultural experience (Bredella & Delanoy, 1996; Fenner, 2001; Hoff, 2017).

The Picturebook and the Activities

The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain

This book (see Figure 1) is a hybrid picturebook/graphic novel. It utilizes a combination of media and modes, such as illustrated double-spreads, maps, photos, panels, journal excerpts, and factual and narrative text to relate Sís' story of growing up during the Cold War in Czechoslovakia. He describes how he and his peers were, in his words, brainwashed by the system, but also how, as he grew older, 'Western music made a crack in the wall' and he began to question what he had been taught (Sís, 2007, unpaginated).

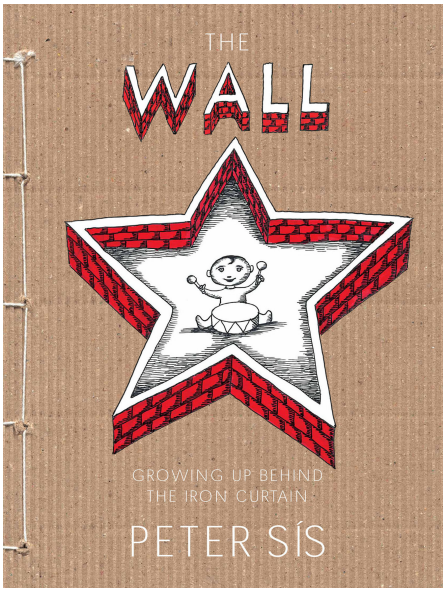

Figure 1. Cover, Peter Sís (2007) *The Wall*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Activities

The students worked with the book over five sessions. I created activities aiming to foster their intercultural learning, which were subsequently approved and carried out by the language teacher. Starting with pre-reading activities, the students built up schemata about the geographical and ideological setting. Then followed a shared reading of the historical introduction and the captions at the bottom of the page, narrating Peter's story, including time to discuss the pictures. Through open-ended questions, the teacher encouraged the students to share their perceptions. An activity with the teacher-in-role as Peter Sís allowed the students to ask 'the author' questions. Furthermore, the post-reading activities focused on whole-class and small-group dialogues about their interpretations of the book, allowing them to draw on their own experiences.

Researcher Role, Data Collection and Analysis

I observed four sessions but had to teach one due to the teacher's absence. Hence, I alternated the roles of outside and participant observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). In the focus group interviews, I talked to 12 students in total, all of whom, and their parents, had signed consent forms. Table 1 illustrates the sequence and forms of data collection. While this project is part of a larger study, this article focuses on focus-group dialogues and examples of classroom talk, analysed through the lens of dialogic theory (Alexander, 2008; Vrikki et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2011). These serve as illustrations of intercultural learning through picturebook dialogues, without making any broad generalizations.

Data Collection

Phase	How?	Sample	Duration
Prior to the picturebook project	Observation, field notes	4 sessions	4 hours
During	Observation, field notes	5 sessions	5 hours
During	4 focus groups	13 students	95 minutes
End	2 focus groups	12 students	80 minutes

Table 1. Data collection

The focus groups gathered after every session. The focus group was chosen to accommodate an exchange of multiple viewpoints and gain deeper insight into the students' learning than was possible through classroom observation alone (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 150). A semi-structured interview guide was used, consisting mainly of open-ended questions to encourage dialogue. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim using a transcription key modelled on the Jefferson (1984) notation. I told the students that there were no right or wrong answers and that my only concern was to glean what they had learned and their opinions about the book and the activities. The interviews took place in Norwegian. This was the shared language mastered best by everyone involved and allowed the students to relax and express themselves more easily.

The students both applauded and criticized the project, indicating that they felt comfortable sharing their true opinions. However, as an adult, I should not overlook the unequal power relations in conversations with minors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 94) and how my presence might have affected the students' engagement (Steen-Olsen, 2010). The students came to know me as an observer in the classroom but quickly came to treat me as a second teacher. In the focus groups, I took on a dual role. As a researcher, I asked questions to capture the research object: examples of dialogic interactions and the students' intercultural learning. However, I also considered it my ethical obligation to give something back to the participants by facilitating their learning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 94). Hence, in the example dialogues, I often took on the role of teacher, aiming to facilitate students' educational dialogues. As such, the focus-group interactions can serve as examples of what could have happened in the classroom.

In the following sections, I will analyse dialogues from two focus groups, each with six students, and examples of classroom talk from the same project. They have been sampled according to the following criteria:

- *Chronology*. The dialogues took place in focus groups after the final session. They are compared with classroom talk from the first session. This allows a contrast between the first session in a large group, when the students had little or no background knowledge, and dialogues about familiar content in a small group and might indicate progression in the students' learning.

- *Length*. The longest dialogues about illustrations were selected to allow analysis of the development of the students' ideas.

- *Consideration of dialogic features*. Dialogues containing multiple features of educational dialogue were chosen to illustrate the possibilities of fostering intercultural learning through dialogic reading of picturebooks and contrasted with classroom talk.

The analysis focuses on the features below, from my review of dialogic theory. The features closely resemble the overview of dialogic features (Vrikki et al., 2019) shared by the most prominent research in the field. However, through an abductive process, I have adjusted Points 3 and 5, excluded points irrelevant to the dialogues in this study and included relevant points (2 and 6, respectively) from Alexander (2008) and Wegerif (2011).

1. Invitations that provoke thoughtful responses, such as authentic questions, requests for clarifications and explanation.
2. Agency, students initiating discussion through contributing new ideas.
3. Building on each other's ideas, through adding new points (extending).
4. Challenging ideas constructively.
5. Justifying ideas.
6. Change of mind.
7. Attempts to reach consensus.
8. Display of a participative ethos, such as recognizing/valuing each other's contributions.

In the following sections, I will first discuss some examples of classroom talk from the first session of this project. Second, I will carefully analyse one dialogue, then give a briefer account of two others, all from the final focus groups.

Classroom Talk

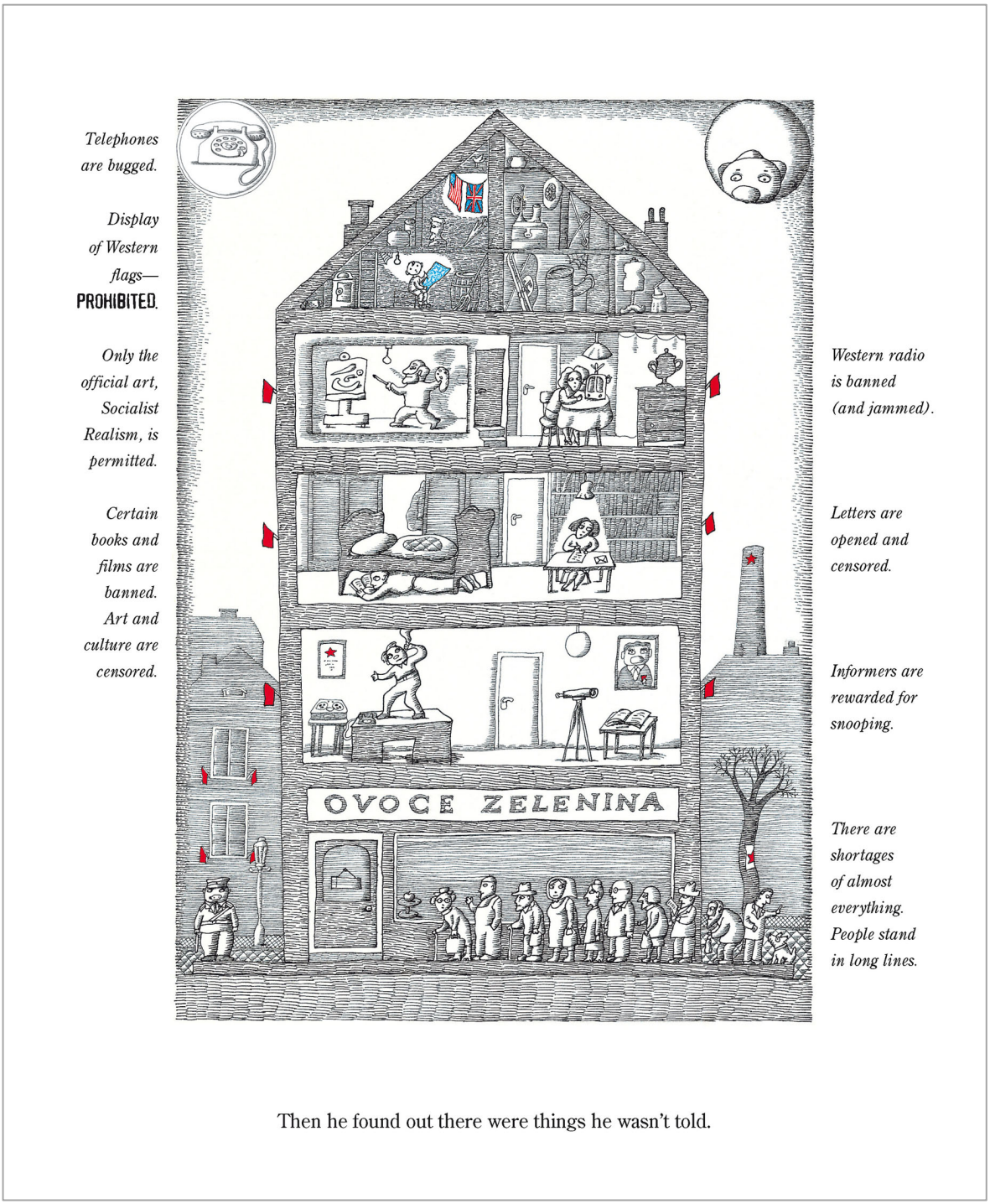

Figure 2. Illustration from Peter Sís (2007) *The Wall*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Reprinted with permission of the author, © Peter Sís.

The following examples of classroom talk illustrate some of the challenges of whole-group dialogues in which the students have limited background knowledge on the topic. Following

my instructions, the teacher read the book to the students and tried to ask open questions about the pictures, allowing everyone to share their perceptions. While looking at the map on the endpaper, the teacher (T) asked the students:

1	T: What do you see?
2	S: A map!
3	T: Be more specific!
4	S: Russia is red!
5	T: What is magnified?
6	S: Prague in Czechoslovakia.

Table 2. Classroom talk about the front endpaper

The teacher's question (1) opened the floor but received a matter-of-fact response. Accordingly, he probed for more information. His invitation elicited further factual information, and the interaction did little to expand the students' thinking.

Cumulative talk is frequent in classrooms (Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997), and this was demonstrated when the teacher asked the students what they saw in a picture and the students took turns to answer: 'red flags', 'star', 'cards', 'drawing on the ground' and 'a kid'. Cumulative talk allows everyone to participate and can be useful to get many ideas on the table. However, to expand the students' thinking, the use of an open *why*-question can be more fruitful, as seen when the teacher asks the class to comment on a picture of a house (Figure 2) in Table 3.

1	S6: There is an American and a British flag.
2	T: Why are they there?
3	S5: Maybe so the government wouldn't find it!
4	S7: He dreams of a free land and everything he can do there. Here, he's told what to do.
5	S8: There's a sign from the Second World War [a swastika].
6	S9: In every picture we see, he's always holding a picture.

Table 3. Classroom talk about the picture of the house in Figure 2

The teacher's invitation first elicited merely factual information (Table 1). However, when he invited the students to reflect on reasons, several thoughtful responses emerged, reflecting knowledge of another culture (3 – 4). It should be mentioned that Student 7 (S7) was the only student in the class with pre-knowledge of communism. It is reasonable to presume that he drew on this knowledge in his response (4). S9 noticed a recurrent feature, but the comment was not followed up, and the shared reading resumed.

Inviting thoughtful responses, the teacher's question (2) allowed some students to move beyond literal interpretations (3, 4), and opened up the discussion for more active participation. Still, the dialogue ended after six turns. These examples illustrate the challenges of facilitating intercultural dialogue in larger groups with students with limited background knowledge and limited time to develop the dialogue. However, an open *why*-question elicited more responses than the closed *what*-questions in the first example in Table 2, and more of these might have moved the dialogue from cumulative to the exploratory or dialogic.

The Bike with Wings: An Intercultural Dialogue

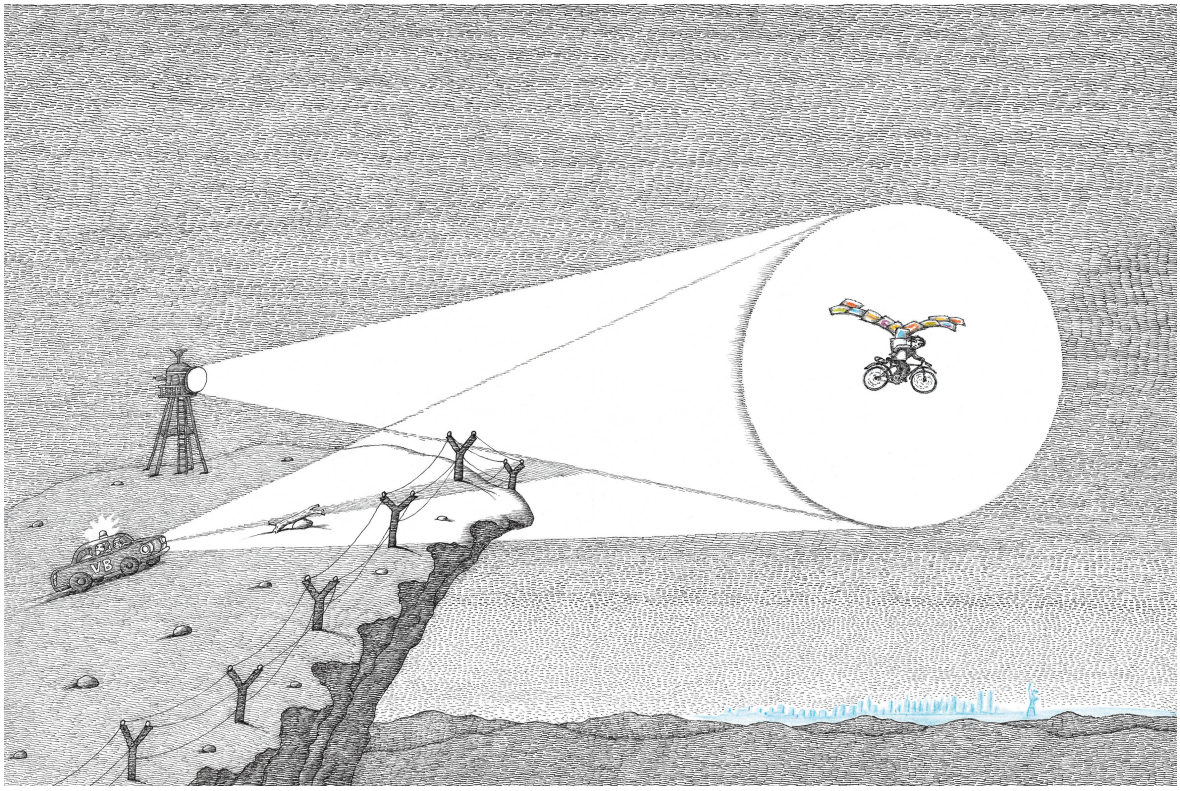

Figure 3. Illustration from Peter Sís (2007) *The Wall.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Reprinted with permission of the author, © Peter Sís.

In the following dialogue in Focus Group A around the illustration in Figure 3, S1 – 5 are students, whereas I am the researcher/teacher (R/T). The dialogue arose after the students had been asked if anything had confused them about the book. Following a brief discussion, Student 1 (S1) exclaimed:

1	S1: I think it's a bit weird that, eh, eh, Peter, you know, flew on a homemade plane to the US. Because that wouldn't have worked! [And he couldn't get food up there, and he would have just crashed immediately! It's a bike! With wings [and in addition, why would he go to the US, when it's on the other side of the planet, when he could have just gone to a neighbouring country! [R/T: No! (repressed laughter) [S2: With books!
2	R/T: Mmm. Good point!
3	S2: [But, like if he had gone to a neighbouring country, it would have been easy to come and get him again! [S3: Yeah, that's a really good point!
4	S1: But still, it's way easier to just fly to a neighbouring country! And then you can just fly on, rather than, you know, yes.
5	S4: But maybe it's a bit metaphorical, and, because, really, the wings – they are his drawings.
6	R/T: Mmmm. It could be a metaphor, yes. That's really good thinking! What do you think the metaphor might represent? Like, what could it mean?
7	S4: (unclear) I think (laughter)=
8	S5: =when he's drawing, he's free.
9	R/T: Yes! Mmmm.
10	S1: But I still think it's somewhat silly, to write, that a homemade plane could fly to, could fly halfway across the planet! Without stopping! [Because it's not written that he stopped [anywhere]. Or, really, nothing is written in the US. [R/T: Yes!
11	R/T (to the group): Eh, do you think that's how he got to the US?
12	S1: Nooo, [I think it was more like that he came, he smuggled himself onto a real plane, so he could fly with soldiers, or something along those lines. [S3: No…

Table 4. Focus group dialogue about Figure 3

In the discussion in Table 4, S1 shows *agency* through initiating this dialogue. This is one of several instances where students raised questions they had pondered, indicating that the content had stirred their curiosity. He *elaborates his point* to justify why it would not have worked (1, numerical references to Table 4). Not only is his contribution self-initiated, it is also more extended than many other contributions. S2 adds 'with books', as the wings may resemble books, *building upon* S1's initial *idea*. Subsequently, he *challenges* S1's view: '[…] it would have been easy to come and get him again!' (3). At this point, the dialogue could have developed into disputational talk, with each student trying to win the discussion, or the difference in opinion could have been glossed over, leading to cumulative talk. Instead, both S3 and I show that we *value the contributions* by saying 'Good point!' (2-3), helping the dialogue to proceed.

All the participants *listen* to each other, and I repeatedly utter 'mmm' or 'yes' to show that I am *listening with interest*. The laughter, relaxed atmosphere and overlapping comments (indicated as [in the transcription) underline the *participative ethos* of all the participants, encouraging the student to continue and *elaborate*. S1 *justifies* his argument (4) and makes a counter-*challenge* to S2's contribution, maintaining a very literal interpretation of the picture, typical of an early stage of reading development (Appleyard, 1991, pp. 28-29).

However, now he is *challenged* by S4, who sees a metaphor (5). I recognize S4's contribution and *invite her to explain* what she means (6). The next comment (7) is difficult to hear. S4's hesitant laughter prompts S5 to *build upon* her contribution: 'when he's drawing, he's free' (8). My response (9) shows that I *value this contribution*. Nonetheless, S1 still struggles to let go of his original idea. He now refers to what is 'written' (10), when in fact this is his literal interpretation of a picture (the verbal text has no mention of planes). Then it strikes him that the verbal text on these spreads do not mention the US. The allusions to the US are only visible in the pictures. Subsequently, I *challenge* the group, but implicitly S1, querying: 'Eh, do you think that's how he got to the US?' (11). His answer shows a *willingness to change his mind* (12), indicating identification with the dialogue (Wegerif, 2011). He recognizes that the protagonist probably travelled to the US by other means and offers another, more realistic interpretation.

Inviting thoughtful responses was not always successful. Following the dialogue above, I invited more reflections on what might have happened by showing the students Sís' illustration of various ways to escape (2007, np) and asking an open question: 'What do you see here?' When the students failed to relate the illustration to Peter (the author), I explained how Peter Sís really came to the US. This was a missed opportunity for a dialogue about the events and indicates that I was probing for one specific answer all along. It is also possible that my attempts at valuing the students' contributions through utterances such as 'Good point!' and 'Good thinking!' (2 & 6) were interpreted as evaluative statements by the students. Consciously or not, this might have led to a search for 'correct' answers, making the dialogue fit into the pattern of a dialectic dialogue: thesis – antithesis – synthesis, rather than dialogic talk (Wegerif, 2011, p. 184).

Nonetheless, the dialogue displays all the signs of an educational dialogue indicated in the previous section. The group moved from a literal interpretation to a metaphorical understanding of the image, co-constructing cultural knowledge. This process requires co-ordination of ideas, synthesizing the knowledge of the culture and the individual, gained through the narrative, to arrive at a metaphorical interpretation. These dialogic forms can lift the students' reasoning to a higher level (Vrikki et al., 2019) and be conducive to intercultural learning.

Elements of intercultural learning such as curiosity and discovery, cultural knowledge, listening skills and adaptability (Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) are intertwined with the italicized features of dialogue in this excerpt. The student's curiosity about the picture prompts the dialogue to proceed through challenges, justifications and elaborations, which allows for discovery and creation of cultural knowledge. Furthermore, S1's willingness to change his mind indicates an ability to see other perspectives. The teacher can facilitate this process by inviting thoughtful responses and asking open questions which require justifications, while resisting the urge to provide answers.

Intercultural Dialogues about the House Picture

At the end of the project, two focus groups were invited to look at the picture in Figure 2 again. It is beyond the scope of this article to include these two dialogues in their entirety, but the excerpts and discussion below exemplify how a smaller group can facilitate a higher

degree of participation and more extended contributions. Table 5 shows that Group A's dialogue was longer than Group B's (a-b).

	Group A's dialogue	**Group B's dialogue**
a) Duration	6:20	4:15
b) Number of turns	49	40
c) Number of times other students add to the dialogue	7	3
d) Longest student-student interaction	7 turns	4 turns

Table 5. The dialogues of two focus groups about the house picture in Figure 2

An analysis of the turn-taking pattern shows that one of the reasons for Group A's longer dialogue is that the discussion was more student-centred (as shown in c-d). Furthermore, it contained more dialogic features and more ideas. Nonetheless, students from both groups were seen to move from a literal to a metaphorical understanding of the pictures, and the dialogue in Table 6 shows how the researcher/teacher's open question facilitated this process:

1	S:	Then, there's an American and a British flag in the attic. And it's in colour.
2	R/T:	Yes! Why is it in colour?
3	S:	All of his drawings are in colours. They have been like, red, his dreams, […] so maybe it's a dream that he wants to go away to the USA or Great Britain.

Table 6. Excerpt from focus group B's dialogue about the house in Figure 2

In Group A, a student expanded this metaphor by stating that the house is like a body, where the attic is one's head, and that is where one's dreams are.

Both groups managed to synthesize information and construct new knowledge about how growing up under a totalitarian regime might lead to idealization of other cultures and dreams of escape. In this case, knowledge construction took place without explicitly challenging one another's ideas. The salient features contributing to intercultural learning in these dialogues are agency, a participative ethos and identification with the dialogue itself (Alexander, 2008; Vrikki et al., 2019; Wegerif, 2011).

In Group A, the students offered alternative interpretations and added to each other's points. Their curiosity about Czech culture was shown through their multiple questions about the picture. However, rather than waiting for my response, they answered each other's questions. Hence, they showed agency (Alexander, 2008, p. 28) and created knowledge of another culture (Byram, 1997, p. 51; Deardorff, 2006, p. 254), such as through their discussion of informers and the dream of escaping to the West. As in the 'bike with wings' dialogue, S1 was willing to change his mind, this time without being explicitly challenged but seemingly after having considered the multiple interpretations offered by the group. The dialogic space where students ventured ideas appeared to make it safe to reconsider one's initial interpretation and offer a new one, through comparing and evaluating the contributions (Vrikki et al., 2019).

In contrast, the turn-taking pattern of Group B's dialogue was dominated by question-answer sequences, similar to the whole-group discussions in the classroom. It contained fewer dialogic features and was less student-centred. Analysing the forms of interaction, focusing on the teacher role, might illuminate why. Adopting the traditional role of a teacher, I explained and volunteered information, rather than asking the group for their opinions. This resulted in missed opportunities for student participation. Hence, posing open questions, withholding evaluative statements and allowing students to find the answers themselves are ways for the teacher to facilitate intercultural dialogues. On the other hand, careful transitions between teacher- and student-centred forms of interaction are important to build content knowledge (Vrikki et al., 2019). Despite the second dialogue being less student-centred, intercultural learning became manifest as the dialogic features become more prevalent. When the students took consecutive turns, built on each other's ideas, and displayed agency, their curiosity about the other culture became visible.

Conclusion

The first research question asked what features of educational dialogues seem to be conducive to language students' intercultural learning. The analyses of dialogues in this paper exemplify how dialogic features are employed in an ELT class. Through *invitations that provoke thoughtful responses*, the students are granted agency to contribute their ideas. These ideas, highlighting their curiosity, are *extended*, *justified* and constructively *challenged*, illustrating that facing conflicts might mediate intercultural learning. Facing

conflicting ideas, the students' *doxa* are tested through questioning and justifying, leading to *episteme*. However, a *participative ethos* and identification with the dialogue are equally salient features, resulting in respectful exploration and reconsideration of initial ideas and a move from a literal to a metaphorical understanding of the picturebook narrative. This process entailed a co-ordination of ideas, which expanded the students' thinking and led to co-construction of cultural knowledge.

The second research question asked how teachers might facilitate students' intercultural dialogues. In alignment with Delanoy's conception of dialogue as encompassing intercultural communication, I would argue that knowledge of dialogic features and how to mediate them is part of a teacher's intercultural competence. This knowledge can help teachers transform conflicting encounters into intercultural learning experiences (Hoff, 2019, pp. 106-109). In this study, the students' curiosity was aroused by their reading of a high-quality picturebook from another culture, and the open-ended activities facilitated intercultural learning. Furthermore, the small group setting of the focus group accommodated more extended contributions than the whole-group discussions of the classroom and provided an arena for dialogue. This is visible from measuring not only the length of the dialogues and the turn-taking patterns but also, more importantly, the evidence of dialogic features. Finally, in the two longest dialogues, the students themselves are the ones who drive these dialogues forward. The fact that the students are capable of assuming agency suggests that teachers should be careful of giving 'correct' answers before asking students for their opinions. Careful consideration of teacher- and student-centred forms of interaction allows students to contribute and share responsibility for the dialogue. The use of open questions is a starting point, but students may need practice seeking answers within the group rather than from the teacher.

Seasoned teachers know that giving up the front seat is not enough to make students conduct educational dialogues leading to intercultural learning. Many factors contribute, and some, such as the social dynamics of the group and student identity, are left unexplored in this article. The role of teaching materials – in this case, the picturebook – appears to play a role in prompting the students to talk and move beyond literal interpretations (Yeom, 2019).

A safe atmosphere, combined with knowledge of dialogic features, can contribute to a dialogic space where exploration of conflicting ideas can contribute to intercultural

learning. Teachers who grant autonomy to their students signal that students' ideas are worthy of discussion and lead to learning. This can incite students to co-construct knowledge about other cultures and make classes more student-centred. Incorporating the dialogic features displayed in these intercultural dialogues in ELT may allow students to carry out dialogic talk in small groups autonomously. Finally, the study shows the potential of a high-quality picturebook to foster intercultural learning, when its pictures spark the students to move beyond literal interpretations and open up a dialogic space.

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Errata

Side	I manuskript	Endring
3	Heggernes, S.L. A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. ***Status:*** Resubmitted to Educational Research Review 10 November 2020 with minor revisions.	***Status:*** ….with minor revisions. Tilleggsopplysninger: Heggernes, S.L. (2021). A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. *Educational Research Review, 33*, Article 100390. doi:10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390
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