Raising cultural awareness in Iranian English language classroom:
Can a tailored course make a difference?

by

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English learners come from a variety of backgrounds and are predominantly taught using teaching methodologies that downplay the importance of culture for teaching. The extra-linguistic side of these courses is mainly limited to discussions of 'culture' in English-speaking countries. Due to the complex relationship between language and culture (e.g., Hua, 2014; Risager, 2007) and the added difficulty in case of English as a lingua franca (Baker, 2011a, 2011b), finding a definite answer to the question of culture representation while teaching language is not a straightforward task (e.g., Kramsch, 2006; Byram, 1997).

Iran, the context of this study, presents a relatively culturally homogenous context, which offers learners little opportunity to experience intercultural interactions. The language learners are exposed to two English teaching systems. English is as an obligatory subject at state schools with the cultural side focusing on Islamic values in line with policy-makers’ wishes. Additionally popular private language institutes follow the dominant worldwide approach. To what extent the learners will eventually be prepared for possible participation in intercultural communication is questionable. The overarching aim of this study is to establish a course to increase Iranian teenage language learners' cultural awareness based on their language learning objectives and within the possibilities of the Iranian context.
This Action Research thesis involved a group of ten students, aged between sixteen and eighteen, studying English at private institutes and state schools in Iran. A general structure of two action research phases was followed. For the first phase, four focus group interviews (overall student number = 17) were conducted and qualitatively analysed. These were designed to gain insight into the cultural aspect of learners' objectives. Additionally, two exemplar English textbooks that are used in the two systems were analysed. The results suggest that students' English 'ideal selves' (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009) mainly involved intercultural communication encounters; however, neither of the textbooks suffices to meet students' learning objectives.

The second phase consisted of a ten-hour teaching intervention with ten students over a period of five weeks, aimed at increasing the learners' level of cultural awareness. Different data collection tools, i.e., classroom recordings and transcriptions, students' reflective writings at the end of each session, and written assignments during the course were used. The findings suggest an overall increase in the language learners' cultural awareness. In addition, individual differences among the learners were found to influence the process of development, an interesting route for further investigation to maximise learners' progress.
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CD containing focus group interviews transcription (in Farsi) and teaching intervention transcription (Farsi and English)
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, YASMINA ABDZADEH,

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

RAISING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN IRANIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: CAN A TAILORED COURSE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: ........................................................................................................................................

Date: ..........................................................................................................................................
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Abbreviations

IC  Intercultural Communication
ICC  Intercultural Communicative Competence
ELF  English as a Lingua Franca
CA  Cultural Awareness
ELT  English Language Teaching
CLT  Communicative Language Teaching
CEFR  the Common European Framework
ICC  Intercultural Communicative Competence
HCCR  High Council of Cultural Revolution
HCE  High Council of Education
20 NV  The 20 Year National Vision
NC  The National Curriculum
E1  English (1) textbook
TEI  Total English (intermediate)
AR  Action Research
FGI(s)  Focus Group Interview(s)
CAQDAS  Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis software
GC  General Culture
NC  National Culture
S-S  Self-stereotypes
O-S  Other-stereotypes
R-C  Relativity of cultural norms
C-N  Culture independent of nationality
Transcription Conventions

()   my addition

XXX   impossible to transcribe
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the thesis

I would like to start this section by writing an anecdote taken from my own experience of living in Southampton as an international student:

During my first year of residing here, when I was looking into moving from university accommodation to private one, I had what I would call a somewhat 'uncomfortable' experience of viewing a place. The unpleasantness did not come from the place itself, as it was indeed a very new and clean building, but from the interaction I had with the landlord when I was there.

Being asked a few general questions about my field of study and campus (which I thought was fine), he then moved on to asking about my nationality.

“Iranian” I said.

The following question was the one which made feel annoyed.

“Can I ask what your religion is?”

I did not expect that question. I had always thought of religion as something private and what I had experienced in my country regarding religion had made me even more sensitive on this issue. I did not expect ‘a Westerner’ to interfere in my privacy.

“I am not religious” I said.

“That is good as we sometime enjoy our wine here” he answered.

Awkward silence was what came next in between us.

So what happened in this situation?

The landlord just stated one of the characteristics he associated with a nationality; an Iranian being a Muslim who does not drink alcohol. He looked confused at my disappointed and surprised look as he could not understand what it was all about.
I, on the other hand, had always thought of 'the West' as the world of freedom, a world where people are far from judging others based on their background. To me, they had always appeared flexible and open-minded. The landlord, however, had just challenged my entire preconception. I left the house shortly after that conversation and decided not to ever live there, something that I would consider an overreaction today.

What I presented here was just an example of a breakdown in an intercultural communication. In fact, neither of us was wrong; we were just behaving based on our preconceptions of who we thought the other interlocutor was. In other words, both myself and the landlord had a ‘stereotype’ of who the other party was in our minds and neither of us actually matched with the picture the other had in their mind. Therefore, holding a stereotypical picture of the other party can be said to have affected this communication in a negative way.

This interaction could have gone better if we had approached it with more openness and preparation from both sides to suspend our beliefs and try to understand each other’s perspectives with more tolerance.

As someone who is residing in a country other than my own, I know this was not the last time that such a thing happened. What is different from when I first came to the UK, though, is my awareness. In other words, I now see myself as someone who is more aware of the differences between individuals and can move beyond the stereotypical picture that I might have based on every person’s nationally. In other words, I think of myself as more culturally aware as compared to when I first came to the UK.

What brought me this awareness is, I believe, living long enough in a context where I had the chance to take part in many intercultural encounters and therefore, gained more experience in managing such situations. Were I to be in a similar situation again, I would have been more understanding towards the landlord’s comment and have negotiated the differences between our perspectives rather than taking them personal. However, what did not prepare me for these encounters were the language classrooms in my home country, many of which I attended as an English learner.

I have to say I did not have any major problems in my linguistic ability when I first came to the UK; I used to teach English myself in a private language
institute. Still, I faced problems while interacting with people from different backgrounds, which suggests that linguistic ability by itself, does not guarantee successful communication. I assume my students would be the same; I was not aware of extralinguistic parameters that count while communicating with others. The English teaching books I was using were mainly focused on stereotypical images of America or Britain. The other source of learning English (for both my students and me) was state schools, where similar to private language institutes, any information about intercultural encounters is excluded. The difference between those books and private language institutes books, however, was that they actually exclude any information on the West and are mainly based on strengthening national identity, in whatever way that is defined.

This was the initial stage that made me think of language classrooms and the role they can play to make the experience of intercultural encounters for students easier when they actually need to put language into practice.

Attending the “Intercultural Communication” module as an MA student at Southampton University was the first point of contact with the field academically. It helped me to explain, theoretically, what happened in the case of the anecdote quoted at the start of the chapter and a few other cases of intercultural encounters. It also reinforced my thoughts on the usefulness of introducing such knowledge to learners of English at early stages. Therefore, I decided to look at this topic in my PhD project.

1.2  **Rational for the thesis and research questions**

Although there are suggestions on the activities one can undertake to improve intercultural communicative competence or critical cultural awareness in the classroom (see for example, Byram, 1997; Tomlinson, 2000; Brander et al., 2004; Masuhara and Tomlinson, 2004; Baker, 2011b) , there are only a few empirical studies on what actually happens in the classroom while implementing these recommendations (see for example, Byram et al., 2001; Feng et al., 2009). Even in these recent studies, there seems to be a lack of systematic assessment of the concept, possibly due to the difficulties this entails (Sinicrope et al., 2007; Lundgren, 2009; Chun, 2011). To my
knowledge, no such studies have been conducted in a monolingual and somehow complex context such as the one of this study.

This, however, is specifically important in the Iranian context due to its somewhat special situation. As will be discussed in detail in chapter 4, on the one hand, there are internally published books that are trying to feed the teenagers with Islamic values, which are the basis of the whole educational system, while teaching English. On the other hand, there are private language institutes, where books published abroad are in use. These books are no exception to what is dominantly in use in the rest of the world, and so are filled with stereotypical images of Britain or the US.

Enthusiastic teenagers (and their parents), who are not happy with what state schools offer them as English learning material, often decide to participate in private language institutes as a complementary resource. These teenagers are often seen as being keen on interacting and communicating with the outside world (see also chapter 7) and frequently come from middle-class, outward-looking backgrounds. To what extent such private language schools prepare these students for intercultural communication, beyond just developing their linguistic ability, is worth further investigation.

Given my aim to better understand these students’ experience of learning English in the Iranian private and state educational settings and specifically to study the potential of fostering cultural awareness and so help students with the future intercultural encounters they might face, I designed and delivered a 10-session intervention. This course focused on improving cultural awareness, following an analysis of two textbooks as samples from the two mentioned teaching settings and four focus group interviews. The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are students’ English learning objectives in relationship to culture?
   1.1. To what extent are these objectives met by state schools?
   1.2. To what extent are these objectives met by private language institutes?
2. What are Iranian teenage students’ perceptions and conceptualisations of culture?
3. In which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through of the teaching intervention?
3.1. How do individual differences affect such change?

4. To what extent did the course encourage the desired attitude(s) for successful intercultural communication?

Addressing these questions aims at shedding some light on intercultural language education in the Iranian educational system, on the potential of fostering cultural awareness through focused teaching interventions and on highlighting the role that intercultural awareness plays in English teaching programs.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

Chapters 2 and 3 give a review of the relevant existing literature, discussing the definition of intercultural communication, different approaches towards culture, and the role that intercultural communication plays in language education.

Chapter 2 starts from definition of intercultural communication plus the common misconceptions around the term, moving on to the different approaches towards definition of culture including non-essentialist and essentialist ones. The emergent nature of culture in intercultural communication brings on a discussion of its definition relevant to discourse and practice. This is followed by a discussion of other approaches towards culture, particularly essentialist ones. Chapter 3 deals with the educational side, showing how intercultural communication is relevant to the field of language education. It starts by a brief overview of the relationship between language and culture leading to the relevance of culture in language education. This is followed by different approaches that have been taken by educators towards the inclusion of culture in language teaching leading to the role of intercultural communicative competence, cultural awareness, and how this can possibly be assessed. What follows next is a review of empirical research on how the discussed theories have been put into practice and how individual differences can possibly affect the result of such studies. This chapter finishes by investigating language motivation, as another factor affected by today’s era of globalisation.
Chapter 1

Chapter 4 presents the context of the study, Iran, and the chequered history of English language teaching in different political periods. It then introduces the two different English learning organisations in the country, i.e. state schools and private language institutes and the approaches towards integration of culture into language teaching endorsed. The chapter finishes by presenting an analysis of two textbooks chosen from the two mentioned teaching settings.

Chapters 5 and 6 serve to introduce the methods to answering the research questions, namely focus group interviews and action research. Starting from a definition of focus group interviews plus their advantages and disadvantages, I provide a justification for the methodological choices made in the current study. Chapter 6 then moves on to provide a summary of the concept of action research and the rationale for its use in this study in addition to its limitations. This is followed by a detailed description of the implemented syllabus including its objectives, further curriculum issues and the data collection during the course. This chapter finishes by discussing the ethical issues of the study, and the data analysis procedure followed in both phases of the study.

Chapter 7 and 8 present the thematic findings from the two phases of the Action Research. Chapter 9 also relates to the findings of the study based on brief case studies of the participants of the course. In chapter 10, which is the discussion chapter, research questions are directly addressed. Finally, chapter 11 presents a full summary of the whole thesis followed by the study limitations, implications, and suggestion for further research.
Chapter 2: Intercultural communication

2.1 Introduction

Intercultural communication (henceforth IC) and its role in language education constitutes the core element of this research. Therefore, I will start by a review of definitions and delimitations of IC before moving on to how culture is viewed in light of such concept. I will finish this chapter with a summary of other approaches, including essentialist ones, towards culture as such a review is deemed necessary considering the research questions, question two specifically (see 1.2). It is worth mentioning, as will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, that both concepts, i.e. culture and IC, defy straightforward definitions (see for example, Ochs, 2002; Risager, 2006; Baker, 2015) and what is presented here aims to present a focused discussion, related to the research study undertaken here, from the wide range of available literature.

IC is a multi-disciplinary field, which, in addition to applied linguistics and education, has been addressed in other subjects such as business and management, politics, or psychology (Lavanchy et al., 2011; Baker, 2015). Although this adds to the richness of the research in this field, it, at the same time, adds to the complexity of establishing a shared and unambiguous definition.

Similarly, the complexity of culture is well established in the literature. Risager (2006: 42) and Ochs (2002: 115), for instance, refer to it as “impossible to lay down an authorised definition” and “abstract”, respectively. The concept of culture has also been referred to as problematic due to its difficulty to be defined (Scollon et al., 2012).

In fact, the complexity of culture itself seems to have contributed to understanding IC. This is supported by Piller (2011) and Scollon and Scollon (2001b), who link some of the confusions within the discussion of IC to the complexity of the term culture itself.
2.2 Defining and delimiting intercultural communication

The anecdote presented in 1.1 is probably one out of millions of such encounters occurring every day. This is because, with the world turning into a global village these days, the likeliness of such occurrences is very high and that is exactly why the concept of IC is becoming more relevant, specifically in relevance with English language education (see 3.2). This section aims at giving an overview of the origin of the term, followed by its definition and common misconception around the concept.

Edward T Hall (1959), an American anthropologist, is generally considered the pioneer in the field and is named “the father” of the field of IC (Lavanchy et al., 2011: 3).

As has been described by Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Rogers et al. (2002), Hall was among a group of scholars who were working for the American Foreign Office Institute after World War II. The reason for this employment was that a considerable number of US American diplomats were travelling all over the world as representatives of one of the most powerful post-war countries without much success in communicating with the foreigners. In light of this situation, scholars were asked to train the officials for IC. Based on expansion of the model “the analysis of culture” developed by Hall and Trager (1953) at the time, Hall (1959) wrote the book *The Silent Language*, which has been described as “the founding document in the new field of intercultural communication” (Rogers et al., 2002: 11). Hall’s (1959) work relies heavily on the close relationship between language and “culture”, thus “emphasis[ing] the differences between national cultures” (Baker, 2015: 19). As will be explained later, this emphasis by Hall (1959) is still the focus of some studies; however, it is not the approach that I wish to take in this research.

In fact, the wide use of the term in different fields has led to various ways of studying what happens in case of communication between people. These have all been referred as IC simply because they all involve culture and communication (Lavanchy et al., 2011). Studies have mainly approached analysing communication in two ways, namely as cross-cultural and intercultural studies. While cross-cultural studies are influenced by the initial work of Hall (1959) explained earlier, intercultural studies have relatively
recently shifted from comparative studies to studying cultures in interaction with each other in applied linguistics (Baker, 2015). The rest of this section has been devoted to giving some detail and evaluation of the two approaches.

Cross-cultural communication refers to “comparative studies of communication pattern in different cultures” (Hua, 2014: 2). In other words, it refers to studying the patterns of communication between people of different backgrounds and finding answers to possible misunderstandings based on stereotypes of national cultures these speakers hold (Holliday, 2011). One well-known example of cross-cultural communication study is the work of Hofstede (1980, 2001), who in order to understand how communication works among IMB employees from different cultural backgrounds, used a questionnaire across 40 countries among IMB employees and categorised these nationalities according to four parameters, i.e. power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity. Later, Hofstede (2001) added a fifth dimension, i.e. long-term orientation. Hofstede's (1980, 2001) link between certain characteristics according to these parameters and specific nationalities has been labelled as “territorially unique” McSweeney (2002: 92). Thus, culture is here distinguished as one trait, which differentiates one nation from another.

One of the most influential works within cross-cultural studies of this kind in the field of applied linguistics is the concept of face, as an underlying element of politeness, as universal suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). In the same way as Hofstede's studies, this work has been subject to criticisms by a number of researchers, notably non-Westerners like Gu (1990) and Matsumoto (1988). They argued for the interpretation of face and therefore politeness as context-dependent, leading to the necessity of studying it during interaction.

Scollon and Scollon (2001a) provide a comprehensive review of the differences between the two concepts. Whereas in cross-cultural communication certain characteristics are presumed regardless of the context, IC aims at analysing communication between individuals in interaction with each other. In other words, culture itself is viewed as an independent entity in cross-cultural studies, while in IC, culture is viewed as an emergent concept without fixed boundaries.
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Looking at the personal anecdote presented in section 1.1 from a cross-cultural point of view, for example, one might relate the misunderstanding to “all Iranians being unwilling to talk about religion” or “all British being curious about the personal beliefs of others”. However, this is a somewhat simplistic interpretation as it was in fact the assumptions made based on national categorisations, which triggered the misunderstanding. Other contextual factors such as power relationship of one participant being a landlord and me being a potential tenant plus the use of English, as the landlord’s native language, should not be ignored. This has nicely been put into words in a short quotation from Holliday et al. (2010: 23):

Communication is about not presuming.

Cross-cultural communication, which is still a dominant approach in some disciplines such as business and organisation (Hua, 2014), has been criticised. Piller (2011), for example, presents an analogy between racism and holding assumption about cultural categories without considering context and other factors involved. Similarly, cross-cultural communication has been referred to as essentialist and reductive (Scollon and Scollon, 2001a; Holliday, 2011).

To summarise, IC focuses on studying communication while individuals are in interaction with each other and trying to understand the complexity of who interlocutors actually are regardless of the nationality they come from (Scollon and Scollon, 2001a; Holliday, 2011; Hua, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the borders of culture in IC are blurred so that it does not necessarily encompass only communication among/between people from different national backgrounds. Thus, following Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009), any individual can be a member of several cultural groupings at the same time. Therefore, IC can be defined as an event “in which the cultural distance between the participants is significant enough to have an effect on interaction/communication that is noticeable to at least one of the parties” (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009: 3).

Several further approaches have been suggested for investigation of IC events, such as critical discourse and interdiscourse analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2001b; Scollon et al., 2012). These approaches are, however, not going to be reviewed here, as analysing IC events is not the focus of this research. This
study is concerned with avoiding the pitfalls of reductivist understandings of human interaction, based on national background only. Human communication is far more complex and it needs to be viewed in light of the context and the time it is happening.

As has emerged from the discussion above, the way culture is conceptualised in the approaches discussed here, i.e. cross-cultural and IC studies, is crucial to understanding their differences and the nature of these approaches per se. The following sections will shed some lights into different conceptualisations of culture.

### 2.3 Non-essentialist views of culture

The different approaches taken by cross-cultural and intercultural studies possibly root from the way culture is viewed in each. Thus, culture is viewed as an independent entity which is fixed, regardless of the context, in the former, but is considered as interpretive in the latter. In other words, culture, within intercultural studies, is viewed as something that can be shaped among a particular group of people regardless of its size for a specific period; therefore, culture is fluid.

Culture from a non-essentialist viewpoint has also been defined as “a movable concept used by different people at different times to suit purposes of identity, politics and science” (Holliday, 2000: 1). In other words, pre-conceptions and pre-definitions based on the nationality of the group members are not seen as constituting culture. The focus of non-essentialist views of culture lies on the social behaviour that is going on within the group as culture. In some research such as ethnographical ones, the concept of culture as the social behaviour of particular groups of any size acts as the methodological device enabling the study (Holliday, 2000).

A significant contribution to non-essentialist views of culture, as Holliday (2000) states, is made in the work of Baumann (1996), who argues for different usages of the word ‘culture’ by different people from different ethnicities as they intend to illustrate their membership in a specific community through cultural artefacts, such as music and politics. As an ethnographer, Baumann
(1996) studied Southall region in London, where many immigrants from different ethnic background live.

Having interviewed a population of both teenaged and adult Southallians, Baumann (1996) realises how they see themselves as members of different cultures depending on the context they intend to talk about. Having criticised the reductionist and simplistic approach towards culture by essentialists, Baumann (1996: 11) emphasises the complex nature of culture and describes it as “an abstract and analytical notion which does not cause behaviour, but summarises an abstraction from it, and it is thus neither normative nor predictive.”

Non-essentialists, therefore, view culture as dynamic, which can change from time to time depending on one’s situation. It is formed within a group and it is not constrained by pre-defined categorisations such as nationality or gender. In other words, the same person can participate in formation of different cultures depending on the group he or she is in. For the purposes of this study, I will adopt a non-essentialist view of culture. It is important not only to try to avoid limiting one person to only the one group, from many cultural grouping they are a member of while communicating with them, but also convey such view to language learners (see chapter 3).

In light of what has been said about the approach towards culture in light of IC until this point, I wish to investigate culture in relationship with the two concepts discourse and practice (Scollon et al., 2012; Baker, 2015).

### 2.3.1 Culture as discourse

Culture can be considered as being constructed through discourse, which in itself is a complex concept, open to diverse interpretations (Baker, 2015). Therefore, it is important to clarify what is meant by the term 'discourse' in the context of this research. Some insight into this relationship is offered in the works of Kramsch (1993, 1998), one of the pioneers of such perspective in applied linguistics.

Kramsch (1998:127) defines culture as encompassing these three aspects:
1. Membership in discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.

2. The discourse community itself.

3. The system of standards itself.

Discourse communities constitute a social group that not only shares a common language, but also the same topic of interest to discuss, and “the ways they pass information, and the style with which they interact” (ibid: 7). Kramsch (1998) highlights the two aspects of culture of social (synchronic) and historical (diachronic) in her definition. It is worth noting that Kramsch appears to embrace an essentialist perspective of culture in her definition.

This is because Kramsch’s (1998) discourse community seems to imply a territorial relationship between culture and language. Firstly, her examples of discourse communities are limited to national groups such as “Americans” or “the French”. Secondly, she highlights a historical dimension, where the shared history of certain communities leads to certain behaviours, considered as natural in that particular community (Kramsch, 1998). This implies a somewhat static nature of culture.

The point which differentiates Kramsch’s (1998) work from more traditional, essentialist approaches towards culture, as has been confirmed by Baker (2015), is the third dimension proposed, i.e. imagination. Adding to the other dimensions of social and historical, she argues that people shape their cultural realities via imagination and imagined communities. Cultural reality, following Holliday et al. (2010), refers to each individual’s understanding of what is going on around him or her, which might be different from that of the others.

Via such an explanation, Kramsch (1998) moves on to highlight the heterogeneity of culture, which is embodied in the different biographies and life experiences of individuals, even if these belong to the same discourse community. In other words, the aspect of imagination in culture contributes to its emergent aspect due to individual differences among people and their different interpretations of cultural reality. The idea of imagination and cultural realities has also been brought forward by Holliday (2013). Criticising the essentialist nature of cross-cultural studies which rely on national cultures as
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key concepts, Holliday (2013) acknowledges that such national cultures are the most common way that culture is defined by lay people. He then emphasises that national cultures are “so-believed constructions” which are “artefacts of cultural realities rather than factual statements about what these realities comprise.” (Holliday, 2013: 164). Thus, we can argue that it is the notion of imagining as one of the characteristics of culture put forward by both Kramsch (1998) and Holliday (2013), which makes the concept of culture both heterogeneous and emergent. In this way, negotiation and creation of culture become key aspects of communication when people, with various cultural realities get together in discourse communities.

Returning to the conceptualisation of discourse in the context of this research, firstly, discourse is considered as “situations of speaking (Gumperz, 2001: 215). This is in line with Scollon et al.’s (2012) view of discourse within oral speech events, such as meetings and conversations.

Secondly, Gee’s (2008: 155) conceptualisation of discourse highlight that they are focusing on “discourse with capital D”. Thus, discourse is defined as a “kit” which includes all related terms and different ways of talking about a certain topic. Therefore, Discourses are not independent boxes with clear-cut borders. Rather, “they are ways of recognising and getting recognised as certain sorts of whos doing certain sorts of whats” (Gee, 2008: 156). Therefore, Discourse constitutes certain possibilities available to the interlocutors to choose from, depending on the context. It is important to note than Discourse is independent of language as different Discourses can be discussed in different languages (Gee, 2008; Baker, 2015). Examples of this include “the discourse of medicine” or “the law discourse” which refers to everything which can be discussed in the mentioned particular domains (Scollon et al., 2012).

A similar conceptualisation underlies the “discourse systems” proposed by Scollon et al. (2012). This has been defined as a “cultural toolkit” including “ideas and beliefs about the world, conventional ways of treating other people, ways of communicating using various kinds of texts, media, and languages, and methods of learning how to use these other tools” (Scollon et al., 2012: 8). In order to clarify this definition, Scollon et al. (2012) go through the experience of participation in yoga discourse system, and how different it can be for an American practising yoga is the US and a Hindu practising in India.
While for an American, for instance, the discourse system of yoga might mix up with discourse of fitness and one practises it for both physical and spiritual purposes, for a Hindu this might be a way of life.

The emergent nature of culture has been emphasised via conceptualisations discussed by Scollon et al. (2012). In line with Gee (2008), these authors highlight the non-deterministic nature of discourse systems (seen as synonymous with culture). In other words, while discourse systems provide communities of practice with tools while communicating, they give communities of practice choice to pick whichever they wish depending on the context and personal preferences.

To sum up, discourse as culture functions as a speech event where communication among people occurs. While communicating, people make choices from the ‘cultural kit’ of the discourse of the conversation topic to encode their perceptions, beliefs, and values. Speaker choices are dependent on the situation and their interlocutors, plus possibly their wishes with regard to self-representation. Such choices make up culture, which thus needs to investigated within its context.

In sum, this section suggests that culture as it is conceptualised within IC is something that is created while communication occurs, as opposed to something which every individual has independent of others. This leads to the second category where culture in IC can be investigated, i.e. culture as practice.

2.3.2 Culture as practice

One of the most influential scholars in the orientation towards culture as practice is Brian Street (1993), an anthropologist, who entitled one of his articles “culture is a verb” (Baker, 2015). This title, as Street (1993) explains, aims to highlight the dynamic, as opposed to static and constant construction of the concept of culture while communication occurs. As an alternative to the unfruitful quest for a clear definition of culture as an abstract construct, usually seen as an attribute of a particular group of people, Street (1993: 25) suggests investigating “how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons”. This is because, “culture is an active
process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own
definition” (Street, 1993: 25). One of the main points of the quoted article is, to
change our perception of culture to be something that we do in different
communities rather than something we have (Scollon et al., 2012; Baker,
2015).

Viewing culture as practice, as Risager (2006) argues, lies at the opposite pole
of structuralist views of culture as a set of cohesive symbols (see 2.4). In other
words, culture is characterised as a subjective concept, where meaning is
shaped in negotiation with others in this constructivist perspective; however,
advocates of structuralist approaches argue for the existence of culture within
individuals homogenously and independently of others (Risager, 2006).

Borrowing the title of the article by Street (1993) as a subsection of their book,
Scollon et al. (2012) explain that people decide to do things differently
depending on the group in which they want to show their membership. The
way things are done is called culture and is usually not part of conscious
awareness. This idea of cultural practices as being enacted subconsciously is
also held by Holliday (2013).

Cultural practices have been defined as “ways of doing something which relate
to particular cultural environments” (Holliday, 2013: 6). Holliday explains
possible differences in different cultural practices of various families as they
each form a “small culture”. These show “cohesive” behaviours among social
groupings, which are not necessarily dependent on a specific nation. In
addition, these are emergent and interpretive, in contrast with national
cultures (Holliday, 1999).

The notion of “Small cultures” shares some features with “communities of
practice” (Holliday, 2013). These are defined as social groupings, independent
of nationality, where some type of common purpose and practice is shared
among its members (Wenger 2000). However, it is the educational purpose as
the common aim of communities of practice, highlighted by Wenger (2000),
which differentiates them from small cultures. Examples of communities of
practice by Wenger (2000) include a group of engineers working together on a
specific type of design whereas a small social grouping who get together with
the purpose of leisure form a small culture (Holliday, 2013).
Holliday’s (1999) notion of “small cultures” has been criticised by Sealy and Carter (2004), who argue that using such a term carries the same risk as reducing culture to an abstract possession of people by a particular location. In other words, Sealy and Carter (2004) highlight the priority of people as creators of culture via interactions rather than culture being owned and restricted by a place. Small cultures, however, refer to the “formation of cultural behaviour and reality at the small level of everyday interpersonal interaction, which relates to whatever is going on at the time” (Holliday, 2013: 163). Such a conceptualisation, therefore, rejects the possibility of a specific geographical place defining culture and instead highlights human beings as participants in the process of shaping culture at the time of interaction.

Having discussed the conceptualisation of culture as practice in diverse traditions, we can see that they all have two points in common. Firstly, these conceptualisations underline the prerequisite of a group of people for the creation of culture. In other words, culture as practice rejects the possibility that culture can be contained in either one individual person or place.

Secondly, conceptualisations of culture as practice emphasise the actions taken by individuals in a certain context at a certain time. A question arising here is the extent to which such practices represent an individual’s own beliefs and wishes as opposed to circumstances imposing certain choices (Sealey and Carter, 2004; Holliday, 2011). Sealey and Carter (2004) give an example of a person, who is an atheist, but decides to go to church or mosque for political reasons.

Holliday’s (2011) model of social action explains the possible conflict between these two factors, i.e. requiring individuals as agents and considering social structures as a major force. Holliday (2011), while acknowledging the dominance of social structures in formation of culture, highlights that personal trajectories and their effects are also equally important. In this view, culture is conceptualised both as a product (dominant discourse) and process (personal trajectories). To be more precise, social action, which at least partly, is guided by one’s own personal trajectories including beliefs and values, act as a medium between the dominant discourse and the formation of culture. The social action can also partly be affected by the dominant discourse. This discussion points to the fact that actions, although observable aspects of
culture in a non-essentialist and concrete way, cannot easily be equated with individuals’ underlying beliefs (Sealey and Carter, 2004).

Before moving on to the next section, which will discuss essentialist approaches towards culture, it is important to clarify the differences and delimitations of ‘culture as practice’ and ‘culture as discourse’ (see 2.3.1). In spite of similarities the two concepts might have, they are different as ‘culture as discourse’ can be considered as the underpinning element which guides ‘culture as practice’. Holliday (2013: 102) views discourses, such as political, professional, or academic, as “powerful means of establishing ideas and forms of behaviour”. Therefore, discourses shape one’s practices in certain situations and “can draw people into adopting and conforming to cultural practices” (Holliday, 2013: 124). An example of this, as Holliday (2013) explains, is a situation when one is with a group of people from a particular professional background and feels excluded. In such a situation, the discourse of that particular profession leads the cultural practices within that group, which might make someone who is unfamiliar with the topic feel excluded. The two features, i.e. discourse and practice, enable us to view culture as fluid, which is desired in IC studies.

2.4 Essentialist approaches to culture

Culture, as mentioned earlier, is a very complex concept and diverse theoretical traditions have defined it in different ways. To provide a broader overview, I suggest that it is important not only to know how culture is defined in the context of IC, but also other approaches, notably essentialist ones. These theories generally look at culture as an independent entity belonging to certain individuals or groups, and so suggest that culture does not have an emergent nature. Essentialist views of culture lie at the heart of cross-cultural studies and Hofstede’s study (1980, 2001) on IBM employees (see 2.2) is one of the best-known examples applying an essentialist approach towards culture.

Another example of is House et al.’s (2004) work on GLOBE (Globe Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Program), which focuses on cross-cultural differences between 62 countries based on nine major
attributes of cultures and six major global leader behaviours. This study suggests that when different cultures come into contact, although they might slightly adapt, the main habits and values of each group are very unlikely to change.

Such approaches towards culture have also affected IC studies. Jandt (2015), for example, defines “competence” in IC based on understanding of “culture” as follows:

To be competent in intercultural communication, individuals must understand the social customs and social systems of the host culture.

This definition views culture as a set of social customs, which presumably are linked to one geographical place. This is unusual within the study of IC, where it is most fruitful to view culture as an emergent concept which is created in interaction (see 2.3).

As will be explained in this section, essentialist definitions of culture conceptualise it in different forms. However, the common point among all of them is that they restrict individuals as followers of a set of pre-prepared regulations, over which they have no control.

Returning to the different forms which essentialist approaches towards culture take, three elements emerge; symbols, interpretive systems, and cognition (see also, Risager, 2006; Baker, 2015). This section is aimed at clarifying the mentioned elements and how they each contribute towards essentialist definition of culture.

It is understood from the literature that Levi-Strauss (1966) is a leading figure in structuralist approaches towards culture (see for example, Badcock and Lévi-Strauss, 1975; Parker and Sim, 2014; Baker, 2015). Culture, in this approach, is seen as a set of symbolic systems including language, religion, or art. While the pattern in which the symbolic systems relate to each other stays the same in every society, what constitute the details of each symbolic system might be different in every society (Levi-Strauss, 1966-see also, Risager, 2006).

Trying to move beyond Levi-Strauss's (1966) definition, Geertz (1973) turned the focus to the meaning, which is embedded in the system. Criticising Levi-
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Strauss’s (1966) symbolic system for interpreting culture, Geertz (1973: 5) characterises culture in a different way:

The concept of culture I espouse...is essentially a semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative in search of meaning.

As compared to Levi-Staruss (1966), who is a universalist, Geertz (1973) sees culture as “public” (p.12), the interpretation of which is not possible independent of the context. To be more precise, Geertz (1973) suggests a “thick description” of language, as a symbolic system, to find out the underlying semantics it includes. Although regarding culture as a concept which should be interpreted with regards to the context and as public resembles similarities with the discussion of culture formation in IC (section 2.3.1. and 2.3.2), the fact that Geertz (1973) has limited culture formation to language used endorses an essentialist approach.

Nevertheless, culture as internal as opposed to public, i.e. human cognition has been extensively discussed in the literature. Culture, in this view, is seen as “what one needs to know in order to behave as a functioning member of one’s society” (Goodenough, 1957: 167 cited in Quinn and Holland, 1987: 4). In a more detailed definition, Goodenough (1964: 36) defines culture as:

A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members and do in any role that they accept for any of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them.
In other words, cognition is seen as a way of organising the meaning system (Quinn and Holland, 1987). Doing a discourse analysis of the interviews Quinn (1987) conducted with 11 couples about their marriages, he developed a “cultural model of American marriage”. This model relies on metaphors, such as marriage as risky, marriage as enduring, or marriage as difficult. Such metaphors, according to Quinn (1987), provide a way for understanding “schematic structure” of Americans about marriage.

Another proponent of this approach is Wierzbicka (1997), who argues that human cognition is encoded in the native language they speak. In order to study the culture of a society, Wierzbicka (1997) suggests, one ought to study everyday discourse, which stands as the “cultural script” of that community. She then moves on to explain how different languages such as Polish, Japanese, or Russian determine the mentality of the people in their countries. A more recent study is Cameron et al. (2009), who suggest doing a discourse analysis of metaphors as a method to find a way into people’s beliefs and attitudes.

As can be seen all the approaches including symbolic, semiotic, and cognitive described until this point put language at the centre of understanding culture. The difference lays in aspect of language which has been highlighted. While one takes the structure of language into account to understand culture, the other adds on the meaning the symbols can convey in certain situations. The cognitive one, on the other hand, makes use of discourse analysis to determine one’s ideas, beliefs, and attitudes translated into culture. Another main difference between semiotic and cognitive approach can be said to be the shared versus individualistic nature they have. While one look at culture as something that needs to be interpreted with relevance to context where communication occurs, the other assumes one’s mental concepts independent of context as sufficient to define culture. The final approach can be argued with reference to Gee’s (2008) discussion on the different meanings different words can have for different individuals. This argument has been put into words as “extreme subjectivism being married to extreme formalism” (Geertz, 1973: 11).

Such criticisms on cognitive approaches have led to recent developments in this approach, in attempt to make the link between internal mental
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representation and external shared meaning clearer. Sharifian (2011), for example, highlights cultural cognition (at a group level) as an emergent concept which is shaped in interactions with others. Such cultural cognition, as Sharifian (2011: 5) argues, “may not be reduced to the properties of the individual units.” Such common cultural cognition then, will enable the members of the group to think in a more or less similar ways (Sharifian, 2011).

Nevertheless, all the approaches including cognitive ones are problematic. This is because they all have interpreted culture as an agent controlling human behaviour. In other words, culture is seen as something which is there, because of people’s first language or the structure of the society they come from and has shaped who they are already, and people, whether they want this or not, are to follow it. As it was made clear in 2.3, while talking about culture in IC, it is most productive to think of people as creators of culture as opposed to passive members of a community, who have no power in shaping culture.

2.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter was set out to define two concepts namely IC and culture which play central roles in the context of this research. This is because in order to look at IC in language education, it is important to know what is meant by IC. It is equally important to clarify the concept of culture as a term that is embedded in IC. Both are very complex concepts, which makes coming up with a clear-cut definition a complicated task. The use of the two terms in different disciplines has probably added up to the challenge.

Regarding investigating communication, two main approaches including intercultural and cross-cultural communication were identified. While the former focuses on what is happening at the time of communication and set aside any assumption about the interlocutors, the justification of the latter of the events during communication is based on the categories they have already been assumed as a member. It is undoubtable that cross-cultural communication studies carry the risk of ignoring many other factors, which are involved at the time of communication.

The two approaches which is taken in the two types of studies above comes from the way culture is viewed in each. IC studies view culture as a concept
that is shaped during the interaction. Culture, in this sense, has been characterised as dynamic, fluid, emergent, and without any national territory. Such characterisations are understood via relating culture to discourse, a “kit” which provides people with some choices in different contexts. In addition, it polishes their cultural practices.

Cross-cultural studies view culture as a “container” (Baker, 2015), something that is there and both shaped and leads human behaviour. Different schools of thought existing within such an approach including structuralist, semiotic, and cognitive were also reviewed. Culture in this view has been considered as static and bound to certain places or languages. As much as problematic this approach is, it remains to be the most common conceptualisation of culture, particularly among non-academic (Holliday, 2010; Piller, 2011; Baker, 2015).

In the next chapter, I will move on to how and why intercultural communication is relevant in language education.
Chapter 3:  Intercultural communication and language education

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter mainly dealt with the concept of IC and different approaches towards culture, as the main element involved in its definition. This chapter mainly deals with the educational side of the topics discussed in the previous chapter.

Starting from the relevance of culture in language education, I move on to explain different treatments of culture in language education. This leads to the introduction of widely known theory of intercultural communicative competence (henceforth ICC) by Byram (1997), a discussion of cultural awareness as its core element and possible ways of its assessment. This is followed by a review of some empirical research studies, which have tried to put the discussed issues including intercultural language education into practice and a summary of individual differences that can affect the process of intercultural development.

This chapter finished by a discussion on language learning motivation, where I will argue that the current area of globalisation and the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) 1 should affect not only the way that culture is treated in language educational settings, but also influences motivational side of language learning.

3.2 Why culture in language education?

Language is an inevitable part of culture, in whatever way it is defined. Risager (2007) notes that language always carries a cultural practice with itself, i.e. it is never culturally neutral. The discussion on the relationship between language

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1 “At its simplest, ELF is a way of referring to communication in English between speakers who have different first languages.” (Jenkins, 2008: PowerPoint presentation - JACET 47th Annual Convention)
and culture has a long and complex history and, given the focus of this research on the educational side, this is not going to be dealt with in details (for a full review, see, e.g. Risager, 2006; 2007).

To put it in at its most simple, essentialist approaches see language as a determiner of culture and place culture at the centre of their analysis (see section 2.4). This relates to perhaps the oldest and most well-known view of this relationship, i.e. as the Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis or linguistic relativity theory (Hunt and Agnoli, 1991). The following quotation from Sapir (1933 quoted in Hua, 2014: 180) outlines their hypothesis:

\[ \text{Vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of a people...Languages differ widely in the nature of their vocabularies. Distinctions which seem inevitable to us may be utterly ignored in languages which reflect an entirely different type of culture, while these in turn insist on distinctions which are all but intelligible to us.} \]

Therefore, we can see that Sapir approached culture, regardless of what context it is attached to, as a notion that is encapsulated in the language used, therefore the speakers of a particular language. This corresponds with essentialist approaches towards culture (see 2.4), but, as has been discussed in section 2.3, culture can be viewed very differently, i.e. as mainly shaped in communication with other groups of people, in other non-essentialist, approaches.

Although “language is a vital part of human culture” as shown by Tohidian (2009: 65), culture is not limited to one particular language. Language has a fluid nature, beyond national borders, and its use within different groups of people can lead to a different culture within that group being shaped. This discussion is especially relevant in the era of globalisation and links to Risager’s (2006, 2007) argument that “languages spread across cultures and cultures spread across languages”. To underline this point, I would like to make use of Pennycook’s (2007) analogy of an English rap being performed in a Malaysian nightclub, where evidence of African American influences on pronunciation and syntax is evident. Based on this example, Pennycook moves on to explain the close relationship between globalisation and English as the language which is used worldwide and in various contexts. In fact, Pennycook
(2007: 6) refers to English as “a translocal language, a language of fluidity and fixity that moves across, while becoming embedded in the materiality of localities and social relations”. Based on the idea of translocality of languages, Pennycook (2007: 6) refers to the idea of transcultural flows as “the ways in which cultural forms move, change, and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts.”

To get back to the title of this section ‘why culture in language education’, I would like to mention that considering the debate around the way the two concepts are connected, it appears impossible for the field of language education to ignore culture, and to avoid having an approach towards culture. This became apparent in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) over thirty years ago, with the concept of communicative language teaching (CLT), becoming relevant in ELT and replaces grammar-based pedagogy. On the one hand, CLT, which encompasses communicative competence as one its core elements, often, assumes a one to one correspondence between the language and the culture of the target community (Leung, 2005).

On the other hand, the relevance of IC in today's globalised world calls for a new preparation of language learners to handle intercultural encounters. As Kramsch (2006: 12) puts it:

In the pedagogic imagination of most language teachers around the world, the term ‘culture’ is associated with the context in which the language is lived and spoken by its native speakers, themselves seen as a more or less homogenous national community with age-old institutions, customs and way of life.

This is also reflected in English language textbooks, which are widely in use all over the world and are heavily focused on English-speaking countries like America or Britain (Kramsch, 2006). Detailed example of textbook analysis includes Vettorel (2010) and Gray (2010) (see 4.4, for more on textbooks). This essentialist approach to culture in ELT has led, firstly and unsurprisingly, to viewing the members of the target language communities or ‘native speakers’ as the ideal model in terms of linguistic ability and also the only envisaged language interlocutor of a learner. Thus, the handbook of using the Common European Framework (henceforth CEFR) (Cambridge ESOL, 2011:8), for
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example, describes a language learner at B2 level as having the following ability

Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.

Such a perspective is problematic not only because of the problems with definition of “who a native speaker is” discussed further below, but also the assumption that communication via the medium of English only occurs with native speakers and so an adaptation to their patterns of language use (including culturally specific ones) is deemed necessary for the learners.

Secondly and of more relevance to intercultural language education is the sociocultural context of communication, which has often been assumed to be that of ‘native speakers’. To use Leung’s (2005: 119) words, ELT, in this perspective, focuses on “idealised social rules of use based on nativespeakerness”. As mentioned earlier, with the use of ELF with non-native speakers of English outnumbering its “native” ones (Buckledee, 2010), this seems insufficient for preparing learners for their future uses of English (Baker, 2015; Leung, 2005). Due to these reasons, language learning, particularly of English, has been referred to as an intercultural process (Corbett, 2003; Risager, 2007; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Hua, 2014; Baker, 2015). Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 6) argue that Language learning is fundamentally engagement in intercultural communication.

Having said that, there are other approaches with regards to the content of English language text books which culturally stand at the opposite extreme of what have been explained up to this point. That is, to use Cortazzi and Jin’s (1999) words, where the focus is “the source culture” (p. 204) or learners’ own culture. This, which is often the case where a book is published at national level (Nault, 2006), has advantages and disadvantages.

On the one hand, Tomlinson (2003,2012) names localising textbooks, which he defines as designing the material in a way that students can engage with
and make meaning of their language learning experience, as one of the ways to decrease the gap between the students and the teaching content.

In fact, global English textbooks have been criticised for their exclusion of students' local cultures (Gray, 2002; McKay, 2003; Matsuda and Friedrich, 2011). Therefore, using local culture, which is familiar for students, can arguably be used as one way to increase students' engagement with the teaching material. To use Shin et al.'s (2011: 255) word:

Learners’ English variants and local contexts have legitimacy and should not be relegated to marginal status. Textbook writers and material developers should take this variability into account and help learners to utilise their own life experiences in order to facilitate their identification with different varieties of English and their associated cultures.

On the other hand, limiting the content of English textbook to local cultural only brings about drawbacks. Some consequences have been named as students' inability for natural use of language while communicating, hindering students' intercultural competence development, and students' unfamiliarity with any other culture than theirs (Majdzadeh, 2002; García, 2005; Nault, 2006). Representation of “global culture” including students' own local culture has been suggested (Gray, 2002; Nault, 2006; Matsuda and Friedrich, 2011).

A question that comes up at this point is how one can prepare language learners for successful IC. In other words, the use of English is so wide and the ways communication takes place within every community varies so much that familiarising learners with all the possible contexts almost sounds impossible (Corbett, 2003; Baker, 2015). A suggested answer to this problem is by fostering what has been called Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

What is presented next is a discussion of two of the most influential conceptualisations of language learner capabilities with relevance to ELT and the role of culture; these are communicative competence and ICC, which form the basis of the two different approaches explored in this section.
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3.3 Intercultural communicative competence

The concept of ICC has been developed based on the notion of communicative competence by Hymes (1972) (see for example, Byram, 1997; Widdowson, 2012; Ahmad and Ahmad, 2015; Baker, 2015).

Hymes’s conceptualisation of communicative competence rejected Chomsky’s (1965) views, who defined the ability to communicate to having sufficient linguistic knowledge only. Chomsky (1965: 3) defines a person with such knowledge as “an ideal speaker listener, in a completely homogenous speech community” Chomsky. Hymes (1972) argues that the abstract mental knowledge of a language can never be considered as equal to language ability as such, seeing that a person in real time communication shows more and different abilities, because of others factors including sociocultural ones being involved. Trying to conceptualise his view of language competence, Hymes (1972) devised the notion of “communicative competence” (p.281).

Hymes (1972: 281) brings up four questions in relationship to the actual use of language in the context:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.

While Chomsky’s (1965) view of competence includes the grammatical knowledge needed for formation of accurate sentences only, Hymes (1972) adds three other aspects including its feasibility, appropriateness and its actual performance.

Canale and Swain (1980) adapted Hymes’ concept, which stays at the core of the discussion around ICC (Baker, 2015), to the context of second language
teaching and learning. They propose a theoretical framework including grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Breaking the sociolinguistic competence into two parts, Canale (1983) added a fourth aspect namely discourse competence. While grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence, as Canale (1983) describes, correspond with Hymes’s (1972) notion of possibility and appropriateness, discourse competence (i.e., the ability to produce a coherent piece of writing or speech considering verbal and non-verbal factors) plus strategic competence (i.e., the ability to cope with communication breakdowns) are new. Strategic competence in particular brings in the aspect of successful communication as a language learner, which is relevant in the field of IC.

These influential models of language ability have been subjected to some criticisms, notable criticism addressing the lack of any relationship between different elements being formalised (Baker, 2015). This has added vagueness of the model and the question of how they actually work in the real world remains.

The second criticism, which is probably the most relevant to the concept of intercultural language education, is the assumption underlying these models of a certain group of people as perfect language users, who should stand as a model for other users of the language to follow (see also Baker, 2015). Such a view can be inferred from statements such as “a normal member of community” by Hymes (1972: 276) or in the context of language teaching, Canale and Swain’s (1980) many references to “native speakers” as the group which should be considered as the norm and who should be able to ‘tolerate’ learners level of language proficiency. Such view, which is the dominant one in educational settings particularly with regards to English language textbooks (see 3.2), is problematic. It is not only because of the difficulty in identifying native speakers, given the existing wide variety (Byram, 2008; Widdowson, 2012), but also because such a view puts language learners at an inferior position (Alptekin, 2002; Savignon, 2007; Widdowson, 2012; Baker, 2015). This is especially true in case of the use of ELF with its wide number of users from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds. As Widdowson (2012: 16) puts this:

As far as English is concerned, there are innumerable other people apart from educated native speakers that are finding a way across this
metaphorical field, and there is no reason why they should follow the well-trodden paths of native speaker custom and convention which may well not suit their purposes.

In fact, if language educators consider facilitating communication as one of their aims, conveying such an idea to the learners might in fact hinder communication rather than facilitate it. An alternative approach can probably inform learners of the wide sociocultural context in which English is used and the important role their communication purposes play in deciding their language use. To put it shorter, views of language ability need to highlight the context where the language is in use as a determiner of the social norms (Baker, 2015).

Based on what has been until this point, it can be concluded that the concept of communicative competence, although a very influential starting point to include sociocultural aspect of communication, is not comprehensive enough to enable the learners to deal with the complex nature of communication.

Byram (1997) proposed the alternative view of “intercultural communicative competence”, which not only criticises the native speaker model and replaces it by aiming to help the learning to get to the level of “intercultural speaker”, but also highlights the identity issues for learners of a model focused on native speakers. According to Byram (1997: 18):

To replace this approach with one which focuses on processes and methods of analysing social processes and their outcomes, is to take seriously the issues of social power in FLT, to provide learners with critical tools and to develop their critical understanding of their own and other societies.

According to Byram (1997: 50-53), ICC is comprised of the following components:

1. Attitudes: interest and clarity, willingness to delay one’s beliefs about other cultures and belief about one’s own.

2. Knowledge: of community groups and their outputs and applications in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the common stages of societal and personal interaction.
3. Skills of interpreting and relating: capacity to understand a document or event from another culture, to expound it and link it to documents from one’s own.

4. Skills of discovery and interaction: capacity to get new knowledge of a culture and cultural applications and the capacity to utilize knowledge, attitudes and skills under the restriction of real-time communication and interaction.

5. Critical cultural awareness/political education: a capacity to assess critically and on the foundation of distinct criteria prospects, applications and outputs in one’s own and other cultures and countries.

The most prominent aspect of Byram’s (1997) definition of ICC, in comparison to previous definitions of communicative competence, can be said to be giving equal positions and power to the interlocutors during a communicative event, regardless of being a native speaker or not. In case of such an interaction, both interlocutors practise tolerance of possible differences while negotiating a common ground that is comprehensible for both sides.

Among the elements of ICC, cultural awareness (CA) has been identified as core (Byram, 1997, 2008, 2012). The reason is that “it embodies the educational dimension of language teaching.” (Byram 2012: 9). The centrality of CA in the conceptualisation of ICC has also been highlighted by other researchers, such as Baker (2011a) and Hismanoglu (2011). Hismanoglu (2011: 805), for example, summarises his definition of ICC as “awareness of different values and behaviours of the others as well as skills to deal with them in a non-judgmental way”.

In fact, it can be argued that if a person develops an awareness of existing differences between individuals, of how culture is created between two individuals during IC and the way mutual understanding of that culture can lead to successful interaction, then that person has by default reached attitudes and knowledge encompassing ICC. Due to the centrality of the concept of CA in definitions of ICC and the context of language education, the next section deals a more detailed explanation of it and the ways it has been approached by different researchers.
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Before doing that though, I feel it is necessary to highlight two points about the implications of ICC for the classroom. First of all, although this concept problematizes the focus on a “native speaker model” and moves away from a homogenous representation of national cultures, there has been some controversy over whether or not to include the ‘national cultures’ of target-language countries. Byram (1997), for example, believes in the presence of English-speaking countries’ cultures while teaching. However, this is in a more complex way than simple homogenous representation of one national culture. Byram (1997: 115) states:

The advantage of focusing on an English speaking country where English is the subject rather than the medium for other subjects, is that Western – especially American and British – cultures are so dominant even where learners will have no need or opportunity to interact with native speakers, that a critical study of them and their relationship to learners’ own is likely to be more beneficial than to ignore their presence.

Some other scholars, however, question the relevance of including such cultures with the use of ELF in today’s globalised world. Baker (2011b), for example, emphasises the independence of English from any specific culture, when focusing on its use as a lingua franca. Instead, he calls for a general knowledge of the relationships between language, culture and communication and an ability to apply this to diverse situations.

Regardless of such disagreements, ICC in general aims at giving learners a series of skills rather than some factual knowledge. To use Canagarajah’s (2013: 173-174) words, the focus is on gaining “a form of procedural knowledge, not the propositional knowledge of either grammatical or communicative competence. Their competence isn’t constituted of the what, but of the how of communication.”

One of the implications of such a view is the lack of one single teaching methodology fitting every context (Baker 2015). As Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 2) put this:

It [language teaching] is a thoughtful mindful activity that is not reducible to prescriptions for practice. It is important to think beyond an
understanding of teaching practice as method to consider how the complexity of lived experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity shape both the focus of language teaching and learning and the processes through which it happens in classrooms – what we call a perspective.

Liddicoat and Scarcio (2013) have related this view to Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) idea of “post-method” condition, which encourages empowering teachers with knowledge, skills, and autonomy to decide the best practice for their own particular teaching setting. Due to limitation of space, I cannot here give justice to the full discussion of language teaching approaches, and particularly post-method condition of teaching (but see, e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Richards and Rodgers, 2014). What is of relevance to this research, is to highlight that any syllabus trying to adopt an intercultural approach, including the one of this study, is context-dependent, and as such cannot become a prescription applicable to any other context. This will be discussed in more detail in 11.3.

3.3.1 Cultural awareness

According to Risager (2013), the term CA started to be popular within education in most Anglophone parts of the world in 1980s and 1990s to denote focusing on cultural insight and attitude and identity development while teaching language in a classroom. It has been used in a variety of discipline but has been most widely used in the field of foreign language teaching and learning.

Reflexivity, i.e. gaining insight into cultural practices of others for developing one’s own cultural understanding, is a key term in CA, the development of which is dependent on “a development from ethnocentrism to relativity, including among other things an engagement with national stereotypes, or a development of the realisation that the world can be seen from different perspectives” (Risager, 2013: 161).

Another example of researchers who have considered inclusion of CA in language teaching programs is Masuhara and Tomlinson (2004). From their point of view, CA constitutes “perceptions of our own and other cultures” (p.6).
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Masuhara and Tomlinson (2004: 6) continue to explain the characteristics of such perceptions which are:

- Internal as they develop in our mind
- Dynamic as they constantly being added and changed
- Variable as they change from experience
- Multi-dimensional, in that they are represented through sensory images (e.g. mental pictures), through mental connections, through affective associations, as well through inner voice
- Interactive as they connect with and inform each other

They explain the process of gaining CA as

a gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people’s cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ. Such awareness can broaden the mind, increase tolerance and facilitate international communication. (Masuhara and Tomlinson, 2004: 6)

The definition of CA by Masuhara and Tomlinson (2004) relates to Byram’s (1997) view of ICC including aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (see 3.3). However, the substantial difference between the work of these researchers lies in the position they take towards integrating CA into language teaching; as Baker (2009) has rightly mentioned, it is not as systematic as Byram’s (1997) work since the inclusion of material on rising CA has been recommended as an activity that sometimes can be done in the classroom.

Littlewood (2001), as an example of a researchers who looked into CA in a more detailed way, defines it at four levels including a level of general awareness, a level of detailed awareness, a level of awareness on areas of communication where mismatches can happen and meta-awareness. The different levels have been defined as follows:

1. General awareness as the collective knowledge that every culture has which affects their interpretation of the events (common ground);
2. Detailed awareness as the level of comprehensiveness of the awareness every individual has on common grounds and indexing conventions of particular communities;

3. The third level, as awareness on possible mismatches that can occur as the result of differences in level one and two; a level, which I believe, is very likely one reaches if already reached level one and two;

4. Meta-awareness as the level of preparation one has to deal with the situation when mismatches happen. Skills such as negotiations have been presented an example of this level.

Littlewood (2001) then moves on to explain several episodes in which lack of different levels of CA in between the interlocutors has caused miscommunication. Although the episodes provided by Littlewood (2001) can be used as teaching material (critical incidents\(^2\), see table nine) in order to develop students’ criticality and reflection on assessing different situations, he does not give any direct recommendation on how to integrate CA in language classrooms (Baker, 2009). That is why Byram (1997)’s work can be said to be most comprehensive one as it not only gives a detailed account of ICC including CA, but it also has a systematic approach towards the inclusion of the concept into teaching syllabus with a full list of recommendations on the points that need to be considered in every context.

Although raising CA is a very useful starting point for helping language learners to succeed in IC, it has been criticised for putting the basis of IC in between limited cultural groupings, mainly at national level. Baker (2011a) argues for supplementing the knowledge of specific cultures mainly at a clear-cut level as a basis of comparison with giving learners the awareness of a more fluid and less easily defined cultural groupings, and states that:

> Intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication and an ability to put these conceptions

\(^2\) “Critical incidents are events which involve two or more people […] which require attention, action, or explanation” (Fitzgerald, 2000: 190).
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into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication. (Baker, 2011a: 65)

Baker (2011a: 66) goes on to identify the following components of intercultural awareness:

1. culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
2. the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
3. our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
4. others’ culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs.
5. the relative nature of cultural norms;
6. cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
7. multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
8. individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
9. common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.
10. culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
11. initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through:
12. a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding.

The cited components have been categorised into three groups including basic cultural awareness (1-4), advanced cultural awareness (5-9), and intercultural awareness (10-12) by Baker (2011a).

Baker (2011a)’s proposed model has built on previous literature on CA, and, on that basis, offers very detailed account of the concept which takes us to one
level further than what have already been discussed; i.e. “intercultural awareness”.

Getting to the level of intercultural awareness is, of course, the ideal point to reach in order to succeed in intercultural communication. To what extent it is achievable in a homogenous context, like the context of this study is questionable however. I will get back to this point in chapter 6.

For the moment, I will summarise the development of the concept of CA, which originates from ICC discussed in the previous section. As argued above, ICC emerges from the idea of communicative competence in foreign language teaching evolved by Canale and Swain (1980). Due to the excessive focus of communicative competence on native speaker as an ideal model, which has been criticised, the concept has been further developed to give interlocutors, regardless of their background, an equal role during an interaction. In addition, it aims at enabling them to engage in successful communication by giving speakers mutual understanding of each other’s presumably different cultures. This is very important especially regarding English, thus English teaching, as the language that is spreading all over the world as a lingua franca.

A main component of ICC is CA which encourages learners’ reflection on foundations of their beliefs and values and comparing it with that of the others. Attitudes, as can be seen, is located at the core of both ICC and CA. Developing attitudes such as putting assumptions and judgements aside which can be gained via reflection and understanding relative nature of culture increase the chance of successful IC.

Although CA is a main step towards preparing language learners for successful IC, it has been criticised for its limitation on looking at cultural meanings in between specific cultural groupings only. There are suggestions to replace this term with intercultural awareness, which calls for moving beyond reduced definition of culture among national groupings and puts more emphasis on emergent and hybrid nature of culture.

Now that the relevance of ICC and intercultural awareness and the importance of integrating it in the classroom setting is discussed, it becomes relevant to ask how this can be assessed. In other words, teachers/educators need to be
able to see if their implemented activities for the purpose of intercultural language education meet their aim.

### 3.3.2 Assessing intercultural development

Considering the complexity of the concepts discussed up to this point, it is not surprising that there is no straightforward answer to how an assessment can be done. This has been underlined by Scarino (2009), who relates the challenge on assessment to theoretical and practical difficulties.

Theoretically, the problem lies in the fact that there is seem to be a lack of consensus on who counts as an interculturally competent person (Byram and Feng, 2006a; Dervin, 2010; Fantini, 2012). In order to present this point, Dervin (2010) gives the example of some educational institutes where, despite the aim of promoting intercultural development in the classroom, teachers seem to have misunderstood the concept and words such as “cultural”, “cross-cultural”, or “multi-cultural” are often used interchangeably and mistakenly instead of “intercultural”. Deardorff (2006), who having conducted research among a number of scholars to find out what intercultural competence is and how it can be assessed, notes the variation of terms including cross-cultural competence, global competence, intercultural competence, and global citizenship which were used to refer to the same concept. On the other hand, if one wants to assess such a concept, it is important to be clear about what it is exactly that they want to assess (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2012). Different ideas on what constitutes intercultural development have led to the creation of many different ways to assess it (Fantini, 2012).

Practically, the close relation between ICC, for example, and elements such as skills or attitudes calls for finding a way to address what is going on learners’ minds. A possible mismatch between what learners say and what they actually believe have led to some scholars warning against the assessment of ICC (see for example, Dervin, 2010). Similarly, Byram (2008) views the assessment of elements such as openness in his model of ICC as undesirable as such values can mean different things in different societies.

The third difficulty, as Scarino (2009) describes, relates to the two paradigms of acquisition and participation, within which assessment is located. While the
former refers to the act of gaining knowledge, the latter moves away from concept of ‘having’ and brings in ‘doing’ as a defining feature. Unlike the former, learning is here considered as an ongoing process with no clear end point; also learning is never evaluated independently of context (Sfard, 1998). Finding a method which combines the two paradigms is a challenge (Scarino, 2009). Although the process of learning is not only limited to possessing specific knowledge, but also includes being able to make use of it in different situations (Sfard, 1998), putting it into practice in all contexts, such as the monolingual context of this study, might not always be possible.

Given these challenges, it is not surprising that a range of different ways have been proposed to assess ICC. For the purpose of clarity of discussion, I have divided these methods into three groups including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

Generally, quantitative methods refer to ready-made tests given to students for the purpose of assessment. Examples of this include cultural awareness tests (Valette, 1986), and culture assimilator tests (Cushner and Brislin, 1996). The problem with such methods is that they only take into account the acquisition side of learning described earlier (Scarino, 2009). Dervin (2010) supports this criticism by highlighting that such tests aim to assess “factual knowledge” only.

Another criticism against such a method of assessment is related to the independence of assessment from learning, which has been assumed. Researchers like Moss (2008) and Fantini (2012) argue for integration of learning and assessment and suggest that assessment be viewed as ongoing interactions in the learning environment, rather than an independent set of activities. Related to this view, evidence-based judgements from the classroom have been suggested as means of assessment. Such evidence can be fruitful for further interpretations and issues such as lesson plans or class activities (Moss, 2008). Fantini (2012) goes further in his criticism of external

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1 It is worth mentioning that Byram (2008) has differentiated the two terms including evaluation and assessment. While evaluation refers to quantifiable measurements, assessment refers to qualitative recognition and discussion. In this section, for the purpose of convenience, I have used the term “assessment” to refer to both concepts.
assessments of ICC, underlying the discrepancy that might exist between the

McNamara and Roever (2006) see any aspect related to language testing as a

social action and argue that this is especially true for cases of communication

as social and cultural interaction. Therefore, assessment of intercultural
capability, as a concept in which communication is involved, should be
dynamic and social (Scarino, 2009). This might refer to observing students in
real intercultural encounters, which offers a more reliable assessment tool to
find a way into students’ level of intercultural development. This, however,
might not be always possible for practical purposes.

The preceding discussion suggest that using pre-designed tests for the
purpose of assessment of ICC is insufficient due to ongoing nature of
development and the limited representational ability it provides. This has led
to the proposal of alternative qualitative methods. Examples of this include
self-assessments (portfolios) (Byram, 1997; Zarate, 2003; Deardorff, 2006;
Byram, 2008), peer-assessment or co-assessment between teacher and student
(Byram, 2008), interviews with students, students’ papers and presentations,
and observation of students by the course teacher during the course
(Deardorff, 2006). Some systematic ways of self-observation have also been
suggested to be given to students to guide them in the process of self-
evaluation (see for example PEER model by Holmes and O’Neil, 2012). Among
the proposed methods, self-assessment seems to have got the most approval
among scholars. This can probably be due to the ongoing nature of
intercultural competence development, which calls for the participants to be
given opportunities to reflect upon and assess their own development
(Deardorff, 2009).

In addition to quantitative and qualitative methods which have been discussed,
mixed methods have also been suggested. Fantini (2012) relates the need for a
multimodal method consisting of direct ways such as giving tests and indirect
such as presentations, posters, and classroom activities to the complexity of
the concept. Along the same line, a Delphi study conducted by Deardorff
(2006) among 24 internationally recognised intercultural scholars confirms
that 95% see a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods as optimal for
assessing intercultural competence. Examples of this include case studies, interviews, and self-report instruments. In her study of intercultural development among Hong Kong students during their residence in England, Jackson (2005) also suggests using a mixed method of qualitative methods such as narrative analysis of students’ diaries with quantitative methods such as evaluation forms to triangulate data. However, data presented in her paper focuses on students’ diaries only.

To summarise, in line with the diversity of interpretations of the concept of intercultural development in the classroom context, assessment of this concept faces some theoretical and practical difficulties. In spite of these difficulties, the need to be able to ascertain if educators’ efforts of making students more interculturally competent are succeeding has led to the proposal of some methods including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. While quantitative methods have frequently been evaluated as insufficient in light of contextual complexities, qualitative methods have been given more credit due to the richness of data they offer. In addition, mixed methods enable the researchers to triangulate the data and are thus seen as promising. However, as will be shown in 3.4, the majority of empirical research seems to have made use of qualitative methods only.

3.4 Putting the concept into practice: Empirical research

Before providing a review of the empirical research done in the field so far, it is important to note that, the treatment of culture in any actual setting has frequently remained at a superficial level (see also, Dervin, 2010). Firstly, as mentioned in 3.2, the dominant approach towards culture seems to be based on the assumption of a one to one correspondence between culture and the target language country. Secondly, even when the importance of CA in language teaching has been identified and acknowledged, it has often been approached in an unsystematic and non-prioritised way (Young and Sachdev, 2011; Driscoll et al., 2013; Baker, 2015). An example of this is Tomalin (2008), who has labelled CA as “the fifth skill” which comes after the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Such approaches are in
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contradiction with the aim of ICC described in 3.3, which calls for integration of language education with developing ICC.

There are several potential reasons for this situation, ranging from a lack of support in educational policy and textbooks to teachers' lack of knowledge on how to implement CA in the classroom (Baker, 2015; Young and Sachdev, 2011). There might also still be too few empirical studies, which can possibly act as examples for both teachers and policy makers (Young and Sachdev, 2011). Nonetheless, some empirical studies can be counted as positive steps towards encouraging educators to adopt such an approach, which will be reviewed below. Generally, I found the following groups as the main teaching activities, which have been implemented in the classroom to promote the intercultural side of language learning: drama or theatre, tandem learning, residence abroad programs, and conversation analysis techniques.

Fleming (1998, 2004) suggests the use of drama in language education not only as a way to imitate real-life situations, but also (and more importantly) as a ground to explore the complexities of situations, which is impossible in real life. In other words, drama equips both students and teachers to scrutiny human behaviour through this and with some caution on giving topics and guidelines to avoid failing into stereotypical images, students can explore both their own culture and culture of others. With regards to this method, two relatively recent studies (Gabay, 2014; Truong and Tran, 2014) conducted in American and Vietnamese contexts will be presented and discussed. The studies were chosen to represent two different contexts in terms of English being the first language and a foreign language.

In order to improve intercultural awareness among international language learners who were attending an English immersion program in the US, Gabay (2014) wrote a series of plays including five scenes (on the topics of friendship, first impressions of the US, time and space, university systems, and stereotyping) whose main characters were Iranian, German-Syrian, Colombian, and Vietnamese. By choosing these characters, as she explains, she intended not only to present instances of cross-cultural communication barriers they might face in their daily lives but also highlight the role of media and foreign policy on shaping certain stereotypes among Americans. She then moves on to explain the implementation of this play in her classroom; she spent the first
week (three 90-minute sessions) familiarising students with principles of drama such as tone and stress to express emotion to make students more confident in their reading of plays. The next five sessions were spent on going through the five different scenes: often starting by some warm-up questions about the cross-cultural differences between students’ country of origin, reading out the play by the students, and finishing by some class discussion on what happened during the scene. The sessions also included encouraging students to come up with suggestions for the character(s) facing problems in the given scene. Class discussion during students’ participation and students’ reflective writings have been noted as sources of assessment; however, although the course has been evaluated as positive in “building understanding and respect of other cultures” (p. 166), the found themes have not been discussed.

Truong and Tran (2014) similarly implemented drama into their language teaching setting with Vietnamese students in a language college to investigate if this promotes intercultural learning. In order to show the wide range of available frameworks in the area of intercultural development, I would like to note that the underlying theory of this study was “intercultural sensitivity” by Hammer et al. (2003) which is defined as “being related to students’ capability to recognise and experience cultural differences and intercultural competence as the ability to ‘think and act’ in interculturally appropriate ways” (ibid: 209). The difference with the previous study is that the scenes practised by the students in this college were based on the film “Million Dollar Baby” rather than having been authored by the researchers. Having watched the film, three scenes based on different themes including Friendship, Irishness and Euthanasia specifically were investigated in depth. This was after the exploration of the mentioned scenes in terms of the script and sociocultural context by the teacher.

The investigation stages of the key scenes were divided into two groups namely scene exploration and embodied experience. The former stage simply investigated underlying values, verbal and non-verbal behaviour and the like. The latter stage was allocated to students playing out the scenes with some cross-cultural comparisons. The data collection in the course took the form of video recording the sessions, reflective writings at the end of each session, and interviews with the participants at the end of the course. Analysis of the data
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suggests recurring themes, which include enhancing knowledge about cultural differences, engaging in cross-cultural comparison, breaking cultural stereotypes, immersing students in authentic learning and living in the world of an ‘other’ culture and developing intercultural competence through teacher guidance and embodied experience.

Both the mentioned studies, as they respectively discuss, have some positive influence on raising students’ awareness regarding the effect of stereotypes on challenges students might face while in the US and on moving beyond stereotypical pictures of Americans. The problem is, however, successful IC has been defined in light of being familiar with and adapting oneself to the norms of “American culture”. In other words, both studies seem to focus on cross-cultural communication (see 2.2) and do not go beyond the definition of culture as nation. In fact by considering “American culture” as the one which should be considered as the norm and others accommodating to their expectations, they seem to be more focused on promoting communicative competence (see 3.3).

The second group, which is going to be discussed here, is tandem learning. This traditionally refers to a way of learning were two native speakers of two different languages were helping each other with improving their languages face to face. The idea has also been transferred to email exchanges and where the students get the chance to communicate with someone in the virtual world (Dodd, 2001). This kind of activity is also known as telecollaborative exchanges as in “use of online communication tools to bring together language learners in different countries for the development of collaborative project work and intercultural exchange” (O’Dowd and Ritter, 2006: 623). This type of activity, possibly like any other activity put into practice in in the language learning setting, is not always successful and there are factors which affect either its success or failure (For a full review, see O’Dowd and Ritter, 2006). What is presented next is two examples of tandem studies in the two introduced forms including face to face and computer-mediated.

The first study, conducted by Holmes and O’Neill (2012), involves 35 university students guided to do an ethnographic study to evaluate their own level of intercultural competence. To this end, they were familiarised with PEER model designed by the researchers, which included the following stages: preparation,
engagement, evaluation, and reflection. They were asked to find a student with a different background from that of theirs as their “cultural other” with whom they can meet over a period of at least six weeks (once a week). The purpose of the meetings, as Holmes and O’Neil (2012: 709) put it, was “to experience their communication, culture, customs, attitudes, and behaviour”. Based on the model the students were familiarised with, they were expected to take notes and make sense of their intercultural encounters for each of the meetings. At the end of the six weeks, they were required to write a report presenting four or five meaningful episodes focused on analysis, interpretation, and reflection of them. Analysing students’ final reports, they show how students move from feelings such as fear and reluctance towards realisation of self and others and moving beyond stereotypes. Saying that, Holmes and O’Neil (2012) highlight the non-linear nature of such development.

Another example of such is the study conducted by Dodd (2001). This was a tandem learning activity conducted with students of an elementary school in UK with another school in France. Each English student had a tandem partner from the French school, with whom they had the chance to exchange emails. The purpose of this project was not only to increase language and CA, but also to increase English students’ motivation of French learning. In spite of practical difficulties such as internet access or linguistic difficulties while doing the project, Dodd (2001), who was also the teacher in the English school, assessed the intercultural development side of the project as positive. This was because of having more insight into both English and French cultures. This was through, as she explains, seeing the mistakes in English made by French students “dawning realisation about meaning and communication in different languages” (p. 172) and also gaining first-hand experience insight into lives of students of the same age and exploring similarities and differences with that of their own. This is considered as a starting point to break down pre-conceptions and stereotypes.

The next group of studies which have been discussed extensively in terms of intercultural development is residence abroad programs. There is always a cultural side to residence abroad programs as they give the learners the chance to experience a different country from that of their own (Coleman, 1998; Byram and Feng, 2006a; Ryan, 2009). However, as Coleman (1998) presents via
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A survey, study abroad programs do not necessarily lead to success in improvement of ICC. They can, at times, strengthen the stereotypes related to that particular country (Coleman, 1998). Factors such as psychological barriers and general well-being, for example, have been considered as effective in failure of such programs (Ayano, 2006). Nevertheless, the positive effects of study abroad programs have also been discussed (For a full review of different conducted study abroad programs regarding ICC development, see Byram and Feng, 2006b). What is presented next is the study by Ryan (2009), as an example of a program assessed as beneficial.

Ryan’s (2009) study involves five Mexican female participants taking part in an academic exchange program in the US with focus on evolving nature of intercultural identity during the period of residence abroad. The researcher had the chance to observe an online IC course, which the participants had to attend as a part of their academic program in applied linguistics. This included their course postings, academic discussions, the interactions between themselves and with the professor, and the final assignment (a mini-ethnographic research project to study other students in one of their courses).

In the final assignment, where the presented data in the paper come from, students were required to study “cultural differences” using the data collected from a specific community of practice they attended (i.e., one of the classes they attend) using interviews and class observation and learning more about themselves. The students were free to choose a theme, which guided the assignment.

Presenting and investigating extracts from students’ final assignments, Ryan (2009) shows how students present evidences of evolving towards an intercultural identity using the data they have collected and the theoriesthey familiarised with during the course. Getting back to the factors, which might lead to a residence abroad program success or failure, it can be inferred that the combination of such programs with some theoretical knowledge which guide students towards the right direction, can increase the likeliness of their success. Jackson (2015), who rejects the possibility of individuals becoming necessarily competent after study abroad programs and highlights the importance of a facilitating preparation course to meet this aim, has also confirmed this.
Finally, investigation and analysis of certain speech acts such as apologising in the classroom have been used and considered as a useful tool to promote intercultural language learning in the classroom. Regarding this, two studies focusing on two different groups of learners including learners of Chinese and English is presented.

The first study is that of Wang and Rendle-Short (2013), who argue for the use of conversation analysis to enable the language learners to understand the hidden cultural assumptions in their own talk and that of the others. The aims of the course followed by them in promoting intercultural language education, as they explain, were based on Liddicoat et al.'s (2003) framework, which includes active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility.

In light of this, they conducted a study consisting of two groups, an experimental and control group, of learners of Chinese. The experimental group received intercultural learning via a detailed conversation analysis of telephone openings in Chinese by being given a structured framework for not only analysis of the telephone openings in their books, but also they were encouraged to analyse their own language practice with bearing in mind a contrastive approach between this and that of their target language. The main purpose of the examination was to draw students' attention to different usage of the phrase “how are you” in Chinese from that of some other languages. Whereas it is common in some languages, to use “how are you” before moving on to the main topic of conversation in telephone openings, this is not common in Chinese. Chinese learners often transfer the norm from their L1 to Chinese context and use “how are you”, which is considered as unnatural in Chinese (Wang and Rendle-Short, 2013).

In order to examine the effects of conducted study, students in both control and experimental group were required to call their teacher and conduct a telephone conversation with them as a part of their oral exam. While 7 out of 10 students used “how are you” inappropriately as opening of the conversation in the control group, 23 students out 44 did not use “how are you” before moving on to the first topic of conversation, 16 students used another question-after-you (including expressions such as ‘how are things’, ‘busy or not’) before moving on to the first topic; and only five students used how are
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you in inappropriate way in the opening of conversation based on transferring their L1 norms to that of Chinese context in the experimental one.

Although this can be a good tool on getting the students to reflect on their own cultural assumptions, it raises the question of what culture should be presented as the “target culture” in the context of English, regarding its use as a lingua franca.

The second study which suggested investigating different types of speech acts, apologising in his conducted study, is by McConachy (2013). Having focused the importance of pragmatics in intercultural language education because of qualities such as variation in value systems across and even within languages, McConachy (2013) sees intercultural language education as creating opportunities for language learners in the language classroom “to develop metapragmatic awareness, understood here as a heightened awareness of the cultural assumptions underlying pragmatic phenomena and their relationship to context)” (p. 73).

In light of this, McConachy (2013) conducted a study on four Japanese learners of English taking part in a communicative skills course. During the course, students were presented with a teacher-constructed dialogue to focus on the speech act of apologising in week four of the course (where all the presented data is taken from). This was an exercise in contrastive pragmatics between Japanese and English. The dialogue presented to students formed the basis of three sequential discussions in the classroom including meta-pragmatic, discourse, and intercultural.

This respectively referred to familiarising students with general atmosphere of the conversation via talking about how interlocutors might feel, for example, the sequence of actions structurally in the dialogue, and encouraging students to think of and discuss how the process of apologising will pan out (similarities and differences) if the same scenario had happened in Japanese context.

Presenting classroom discussion data from the different stages of the study, McConachy (2013) highlights the importance of the teacher role by encouraging and elaborating certain ideas, which scaffold intercultural language learning and highlights the potential of pragmatic-based texts for such development.
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This section has outlined the variety of methods employed in the study of intercultural development in the classroom. While some studies were conducted entirely in the classroom, other included settings outside the classroom, such as residence abroad, and others involved tandem partners.

While all the studies presented might have some advantages and drawbacks in terms of capturing intercultural development depending on the implemented method, they share three points. Firstly, while they all have clearly discussed the emerged themes in the students’ performances relevant to their chosen framework for the study, none, with the exception of the research by Holmes and O'Neil (2012) presented earlier, have investigated the developmental process of students’ intercultural level. In other words, to my knowledge, there are rarely any studies which have assessed the process of development qualitatively. The second point relates to the lack of one single framework to be used as the basis for the aims of the course. Thus the framework applied range from Byram's (1997) ICC to Hammer et al.'s (2003) intercultural sensitivity models. This can be due to lack of agreement among scholars on the elements involved in acquiring intercultural competence (Byram and Feng, 2006a). At the same time, it might be due to different interpretation the concept can have depending on the context (Holmes and O'Neil, 2012).

Lastly, only one activity in each study was applied and the researchers assumed that this would suffice for gaining an understanding of intercultural development. While this might be fruitful in terms of investigating such methods in depth, it raises the question of individual differences and that not one activity might suit all the learners. This might be improved by using a variety of activities for encouraging the intercultural side of language learning to develop. Drawing on the issue of individual differences among language learners, the following section will discuss such differences can possibly affect the outcome of learning.

3.5 Individual differences and intercultural development

As mentioned in the previous section, in the same way as other areas of language learning, individual differences might affect the level of development
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learners achieve in every educational setting. However, to my knowledge, there is not a huge amount of literature on the effects of individual differences on intercultural development. Here, I aim to give some insight based on those few studies, which are directly related to intercultural language education, and on some which have potential application for intercultural language education.

The first trait that accounts for individual differences is the possible positive effect of intercultural encounters on intercultural development. Although such encounters do not necessarily and automatically lead to a positive result in terms of becoming interculturally competent, combining them with some formal teaching in the classroom setting increases their likeliness of success in meeting this aim (see 3.4). This has been confirmed by Holmes and O’Neil (2012) and Williams (2005), who see intercultural encounters as an opportunity for the learners to reflect on themselves and their assumption and as one of the predictors of gaining IC skills. This is also in line with Taguchi’s (2012) result of a longitudinal study of Japanese learners attending an English-medium university to assess their pragmatic competence development.

Analysing the developmental trajectories of every individual, Taguchi (2012) names traits such as having a social network of international friends (the openness to go and approach such a group), independent and strategic learning, and being observant as contributors and factors such as being introverted, being quiet in the classroom and limited social networks as barriers against development. As can be seen, in line with the experience of intercultural encounters highlighted earlier, having a broad social network of international friends has been considered as helpful in gaining a series of communication skills. Another factor identified by Taguchi (2012) as effective both inside and outside the classroom is extraversion and introversion. Unsurprisingly, even though extroverts might feel more comfortable while participating in group/social activities in both mentioned environments, introverts might not be willing to do so. Dörnyei (2002) also shows extroversion and introversion to be factors, which might affect the level of

4 It should be mentioned that pragmatic competence in this study was defined in light of communicative competence by Canale and Swain (1980) (see 3.3). However, the results were thought to be applicable to gaining ICC because of the underlying similarities between the two concepts in the sense of acquisition of a set of skills.
anxiety that students experience during a communicative task and thus their attitudes towards a given task.

In addition to a lower level of anxiety that has been associated with extroversion, openness to new experiences has been found to positively correlate with extroversion. In their study of undergraduate students and their level of success in Sussex University, Farsides and Woodfield (2003) argue that openness to experience can be beneficial and contribute to success in educational settings, where original thought is appreciated. On the other hand, students with relatively lower openness to experience (with equal levels of motivation as the other group) will benefit from educational settings which promote “acquisition of received wisdom”. In other words, both educational settings and classroom tasks can vary to suit the needs of learners with different types of personalities. In line with this, Dörnyei (2005) notes that task variables might benefit certain type of personalities and not some others. For example, tasks which involve high stimulation and arousal, benefit extroverts, while the ones which involve less stimulation might benefit introverts more.

Finally, Dörnyei (2002) mentions the challenging nature of the task, which can affect students' level of motivation in a certain situation. This leads us to the dynamic nature of both students' individual traits and motivation.

Taguchi (2012) highlights the nature of the learners' characteristics as dynamic and dependent on situation variations. Similarly, Dörnyei (2009a) names learning situational factors, such as teacher and class size, plus task-related factors, such as expected outcome and level of available support, as elements, which affect motivation during certain tasks. In relationship with this might also be the way groups are arranged (considering that the task is a group work).

In his study of Hungarian learners of English, Dörnyei (2002) explains how learners' performance in the classroom setting can be affected by their groupmate during an activity. Thus, if one student is paired up with someone who is highly motivated or unmotivated, their own disposition towards the task will be affected. In other words, “task motivation will be co-constructed by the task-participants, with the interlocutor either pulling ‘up’ or ‘down’ the speaker” (Dörnyei, 2002: 153).
Finally, Edstrom (2005) names the level of acceptance of cultural differences as one of the factors which helped her 13 American participants towards success in their intercultural encounters with Venezuelans. Although this might not directly be relevant to the classroom setting, especially monolingual ones, it can be interpreted as the level of openness students have to learn about a new topic such as IC, which might challenge their previous assumptions.

What was discussed up to this point in the chapter shows the effect of globalisation and emergence of concepts such as ICC on ELT. The following section is provided to show that globalisation does not only affect the teaching side of language thus teachers’ performance in the classroom, but also learners’ motivation for language learning.

### 3.6 Language learning motivation and intercultural language education

Motivation can be quite generally defined as the force to move someone to do something (Ryan and Deci, 2000). As an important and widely used concept, it has attracted a huge amount of research, which can not be reviewed in detail here (but see, e.g. Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The focus of the discussion below will therefore be quite narrowly constrained to the main concern of the research, i.e. IC and its implication in language education.

The literature clearly suggests that the notion of integrative orientation (Gardner, 1960, 1985, 2001) has the most influential role in L2 motivational studies (see for example, Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Dörnyei and Ushida, 2009; Yashima, 2009; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Gardner (1960) views the desire to be seen as a member of a group as one of the underlying reasons to learn a language. Based on this idea, Gardner (1985) differentiates between the two concepts, namely orientation and motivation. While motivation is comprised of effort and desire plus favourable attitudes towards the experience of language learning, orientation refers to the underlying reason for having the aim. Orientation can be further divided into two types, instrumental and integrative. Instrumental orientation refers to “the practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (Gardner, 1985: 33). Integrative orientation, on the other hand, which has also been referred to as integrativeness, is the reason
for staying in the process of language learning (Gardner, 2001) and has been defined as “sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group.” (Gardner, 1985: 133). The majority of Gardner’s work on motivation focused on the latter as the affective or emotional side of learning. Gardner (2001) argues that learning a language is different from learning other subjects such as history or music in that they are already a part of students’ culture. However, learning a language partly relates to identity as it includes “taking on the behavioural characteristics of another cultural group” (Gardner, 2001: 5).

In terms of language teaching implication, such view corresponds with the idea of communicative competence discussed in 3.3; the learners are considered individuals who would want to be able to be identified as members of the target language community. Therefore, the ability to be able to communicative with native speakers of the language should be prioritised in the classroom. This idea is problematic as has been discussed (see 3.3).

Firstly, culture, in Gardner’s definition, is reduced to some type of knowledge or concept specific to each nationality (see 2.4 for a critique of this view). Secondly, bearing in mind globalisation and the use of ELF, the identification of one particular group as speakers of the language with whom a learner would want to integrate with is impossible in the case of English (see, e.g. Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Lamb, 2009; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Alternative approaches have partly been related to the idea of imagined communities (Norton, 2001; Murphey et al., 2005; Ryan, 2006). It has been argued that considering the era of globalisation and no particular “owners” of the English language, learners seek to gain a global identity in their global imagined communities; i.e. people they have never met but are hoping to be able to communicate with one day. Imagination in this sense does not take its conventional meaning of fantasy but is seen “as a means of reaching out beyond one's immediate environment and experience” (Ryan, 2006: 33).

In addition, the overlap between the two concepts of instrumental and integrative orientation has been so great that some scholars argue that it is impossible to clearly differentiate the two. Lamb (2004: 13), for example, states so as a result of his study on Indonesian language learners:
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Integrative and instrumental orientation are difficult to distinguish as separate concepts. Meeting with westerners, using computers, understanding pop songs, studying and traveling abroad, pursuing a desirable career—all these aspirations are associated with each other and with English as an integral part of the globalization process that are transforming their society and will profoundly affect their own lives.

Most importantly, the irrelevance of integrativeness in justifying students' motivation has been confirmed in empirical studies (see, e.g. Warden and Lin, 2000; Yashima, 2002, 2009; Lamb, 2004).

One of the most influential approaches to take the changes of globalisation into account is the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009b; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011) which is based on the idea of possible selves and ideal selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Higgins, 1987). Thus

Possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. Possible selves are the cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals, and threats, and they give the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. (Markus and Nurius, 1986: 954)

The idea of possible selves as self-regulators has also been applied to educational contexts (see Oyserman et al., 2004; Oyserman et al., 2006). Yet, of more relevance to the L2 Motivational Self System is the idea of the ideal and ought to self, which refer to who one ideally wants to become and what they think they ought to become as a result of responsibilities, duties, and the like respectively (Higgins, 1987). Higgins's (1987) self-discrepancy theory states that having such images in mind, a person makes effort to reduce the discrepancy between who they are and their ideal/ought to selves. Applying this concept to language learning concept, Dörnyei (2005) proposes the theory of L2 Motivational Self System, which is comprised of three elements namely the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. This theory, Dörnyei (2005) argues, is compatible with traditional models of theory including that of Gardner's concept of integrativeness, in the sense that it expands it to learning contexts, where there is no or little contact with L2
native speakers. Ideal self, in such contexts, can be gaining a global identity in today’s globalised world. Ideal self, in this view, also relates to imagined communities discussed earlier (Dörnyei, 2005). The ideal L2 self thus transcends the national borders of English-speaking countries and provides the chance to view English as a language which is learned to communicate with members of a global community using ELF as a tool to communicate (see also, Taguchi et al., 2009; Yashima, 2009).

The concept of ideal L2 self in a global community has been expanded by other scholars. Yashima (2002, 2009), for instance, proposed “international posture”, which is defined as “interest in international or foreign affairs, willingness to go overseas to study or work, readiness to interact with intercultural encounters, and openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude towards different cultures” (Yashima, 2002: 57). While the concept of integrativeness puts a lot of focus on the tendency to relate oneself to a particular L2 community, international posture replaces this with willingness towards the international community (Yashima, 2009). To make the concept clearer, Yashima (2002: 59) divided the concept of international posture into four variables: “a. intercultural friendship orientation\(^5\), b. interest in foreign affairs, c. intercultural approach-avoidance tendency\(^6\), and interest in international occupation or activities”.

Using the L2 Motivational Self-system, some authors have discussed the effect of context on shaping students’ motivation for learning the language (see e.g., Lamb, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Li, 2014). The mentioned studies have respectively linked students’ motivations to students’ backgrounds within a country, learning context depending on the educational policy and the general educational atmosphere of certain countries, and the position of English as either a second or a foreign language.

Although the theory of L2 Motivational Self-system seems to be one of the influential ones in the area of L2 motivation research, it has been, like any

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\(^5\) Intercultural friendship orientation refers to the tendency to learn English to interact with different cultural groupings (Yashima, 2002).

\(^6\) “Approach-avoidance tendency is an individual’s tendency either to approach or to avoid interaction with people from different culture”. (Yashima, 2002: 58)
other area, subject to further development based on ongoing research. Henry (2015), for example, criticises Dörnyei’s conceptualisation of ideal L2 selves as being too static in approach. He then highlights a dynamic dimension towards individuals’ self-guides not only based on their “evolving mind set” but also the changing outside environment.

To sum up, globalisation and the likeliness of English learners being involved in events of IC calls for investigating language learners’ motivation from a new perspective transcending the idea of native speakers as the only owners of the language. Arguably, if language education aims to keep students motivated during the process of learning, it should partly move in the direction of their initial motivation. As learners’ motivation might change depending on the contextual factors, so should the teaching approaches to suit their needs. The development of the concepts discussed in this section and the previous one with relevance to learners’ motivation and classroom implementation including L2 ideal selves and ICC is an example of such relationship.

### 3.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter discussed the role of culture in language education and how the concepts of culture discussed in chapter two have been put into practice in language education. Regarding the era of globalisation and use of ELF, the concept of ICC and CA and their possible assessment methods were introduced. It was made clear that in line with the concept of IC and culture, there is no single method which can equip educators with such tool.

A review of empirical research conducted in the area of intercultural language education was presented. Three points including variety of implemented frameworks, lack of investigation of the process of intercultural development, and singularity of the implemented task to gain such aim were observed to be common among these works. This was followed by presenting individual differences among the learners hoping to clarify how this can affect students’ development and how educators’ use of variety of tasks can benefit different types of learners.

Other areas of education including language learners’ motivation, which have similarly been affected by today’s globalised world were also discussed.
Today's English learners might not necessarily learn English to integrate with "native" speakers of English anymore, but to reach their ideal intercultural selves who is able to communicate globally.

The common points among the conducted empirical studies discussed in addition to a lack of intercultural language education in the Iranian context, have led me to adopt an intercultural education model in a classroom with Iranian teenage learners hoping that will increase their CA.

The main research questions are as follow:

- What are Iranian teenage students’ perceptions and conceptualisations of culture?
- In which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through of the teaching intervention?
  - How do individual differences affect such change?
- To what extent did the course encourage the desired attitude(s) for successful intercultural communication?

Before answering the mentioned questions, gaining some background knowledge of the context of the study is necessary. Therefore, the following questions are designed:

- What are students’ English learning objectives in relationship to culture?
  - To what extent are they met by the state schools?
  - To what extent are they met by private language institutes?

Before moving on to explain how the mentioned questions are answered, I will go into more details about the context of the study in the coming chapter.
Chapter 4: **Context of the study**

4.1 **Introduction**

As noted earlier, this study took place in Iran. In this chapter, I will present a general setting of the country in light of English position followed by some information on the educational system including ELT in state schools and private language institutes. The similarities between these settings, in spite of their many differences, have also been discussed.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will analyse some sample material that is in practice in the two mentioned different settings of English learning in Iran.

4.2 **Setting**

As mentioned in chapter one, this research was conducted in Iran, a largely monolingual country with the official language Farsi. Iran has experienced a chequered history regarding English language policy during the periods discussed. In this section, I will briefly look at Iran’s history before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Before the Islamic revolution, the English language was highly valued as the second language of the country mainly due to the need for communication with the Western world (Riazi, 2005). As Riazi (2005) outlines, this started during Qajar dynasty in the 19th century and lasted for 150 years. In fact, as he (2005: 103) puts it, this added a third dimension to Iranian identity referred to as “Western-Iranian-Islamic”. The Islamic revolution was probably a response to excessive Westernisation policies, from social institutions to educational system, which continued in the 1970s.

The Islamic Revolution, which was led by Ayatollah Khomeini, took place in 1979. The movement behind this revolution started a few years earlier and managed to gain large public support. Reasons for this support can be seen in the general distrust/dislike towards the Western interference in every aspect of Iranian lives, plus the promises of adding religious and moral values to the
lives of Iranians, as well as more basic and tangible issues, such as access to free water and electricity for the general public.

After the Islamic revolution, Islamic authorities put a lot of effort into erasing the effects of Westernisation from all aspects of Iranian people’s lives with the educational system was one of the very first targets (Riazi, 2005). This was probably because of the importance attached to schools in the formation of students’ beliefs and reinforcement of ideology. Arabic, as the language of Quran, became an obligatory subject to be taught after elementary school, challenging the position of English (Riazi, 2005). The level of significance that English has received has also fluctuated during the 34 years of the Islamic revolution’s life, mainly depending on the specific government in power. This is reminiscent of the close relation between language and politics which, according to shaped Shohamy (2006), started to take place at end of 19th century when the concept of nation and distinguishing one nation from another.

The following table, which is adapted from Borjian (2013: 64), presents a history of English language position during different periods after the Islamic Revolution:

**Table 1 English after the Islamic Revolution in Iran**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Government leader</th>
<th>English language position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Revolutionary Period (1979-1988)       | Ayatollah Khomeini | • Negative attitude towards the English language  
• Removal of all ‘cultural’ aspects of English from textbooks  
• Closure of all private language institutions and replacement by state-run institutions |
| The Period of Reconstruction and Privatization (1989-1997) | Ayatollah Rafsanjani | • Replacement of the antagonistic attitude towards the West with a more moderate one  
• Surprisingly, further reduction of the number of English teaching hours both at schools and universities |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Government leader</th>
<th>English language position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Period of Global Outlook (1997-2005)  | Khatami           | • Increased internationalisation  
• The start of British Council in Iran (2001) for the first time after revolution  
• Opportunities for Iranian students to study in British universities  
• Minor changes in terms of state schools’ English textbooks |
| Returning to Revolutionary Roots (2005-2013) | Ahmadinejad       | • Suspension of British Council’s activities in Iran in January 2009  
• All private language institutes to stop any type of collaboration with foreign institutes unless confirmed by Ministry of Higher Education  
• Increase in the overall number of published pirated English textbooks due to the high demand |

As can be seen, English has experienced lots of ups and downs in the country, not only as we compare the situations before the Islamic Revolution, but also within the post-revolutionary depending on the governing power. Thus, the attitudes towards the position of English were at their most positive during Khatami’s presidency, for example, but have not been favoured during Ahmadinejad’s presidency. It has to be mentioned that at the time of writing, which is January 2017, Hassan Rohani, who is associated with a more liberal and reformist party, is in power. Although the country has experienced a
certain amount of openness and an increased number of tourists during his presidency, no change to language policies has, to my knowledge, been made.

Nevertheless, learning English, especially as a lingua franca, that is to say in order to communicate with the outside world in today’s era of globalisation, has remained popular throughout the different phases. This is evident not only by the increased number of pirated English text books but also in the rising number of private language institutes (see 4.3.3).

4.3 Educational System

The structure of Iran’s educational system remained unchanged for 34 years after the Islamic Revolution, i.e. from 1979 to 2013. Compulsory school education lasted for five years. Students entered primary school at the age of seven. Primary school lasted for five years and was followed by a three-year junior high school course. ELT was first introduced in the first year of junior high school, i.e. when students were aged 12. Having finished junior high school, the students started senior high school at the age of fifteen. Having accomplished high school successfully, the students were awarded a diploma certificate. Students aiming at Higher Education needed to attend a one year course called pre-university followed by a university entrance exam. English teaching and learning process used to continue during all the school years, from first grade of junior high school onwards.

Three-year long course of junior high school has been omitted from the educational system since September 2013. In the new system, there are two main levels of primary and high school, each of which last for six years. Moreover, the students now have to enter primary school at the age of six, with education being obligatory during six years of primary school (Hazari, 2015). Similarly, all the textbooks including English have been re-evaluated and gone through some changes. However, the age when students start learning English is 12 in the same way as the previous system. However, as this system affects the children who just start going to school, the participants in this research are being educated in the old system. That is why the examples provided from textbooks belong to the previous system.
It is noticeable that in addition to the English language provision at school, however, a considerable proportion of students start learning English earlier and/or additionally in complementary private language institutes. Such private study opportunities are available to learners of various age groups (see 4.3.3).

As can be inferred from what has been discussed by now, there are two main organisations including state schools and private language institutes which act as sources of learning English in the country. Before going into details about the mentioned organisations, it is important to present an overview of English education policy, which guides the methodology and content of teaching in state schools.

4.3.1 English Education: Policy Making

Curriculum planners in Iran use the following documents referred to as “grand documents” as the general guidelines while designing the course materials (Atai and Mazlum, 2012):

a. Imam Khomeini’s directions, instructions and views

b. Ayatollah Khamenei’s recommendations, instructions and views

c. Iran’s constitution

d. Documents approved by HCCR (High Council of Cultural Revolution)

e. Educational policies set by HCE (High Council of Education)

f. The National Curriculum (NC)

What is noticeable is the lack of one single document specifically designed for foreign language education (Kiany and Navidinia, 2011; Atai and Mazlum, 2012), which leaves us with the question of the importance that foreign language education receives in such a system.

What will be presented in the following section are extracts from The 20 Year National Vision (20 NV) (designed by Ayatollah Khamenei) and NC. The reason for choosing these documents lies in them being documents of macro strategies, which is an indicator to the importance they receive in setting every
in institutional involvement (Kiany and Navidinia, 2011), as well as their accessibility.

Some of the general policies that should be followed in cultural and scientific issues, according to the 20NV (2005: 2), are outlined below:

1. Improving and deepening religious wisdom and insight based on Quran
2. Strengthening Islamic Revolution values in thought and action
3. Strengthening national identity and unity based on Islam and the Islamic Revolution and sufficient awareness about Iranian-Islamic history, culture, civilisation and art
4. Confronting cultural invasion

Unsurprisingly, according to the NC (p.12), the content of the lessons must be in accordance with cultural values and religious and Qur'anic lessons. Moreover, every lesson plan must be designed following principles, such as a focus on religion and strengthening national identity (NC, p.10).

As can be seen, the common points between the extracts are over-emphasis on religion (specifically, Islam), Islamic Revolution, and national identity. Moreover, the view of culture is implied as a) national/religious and b) as potentially a threat. What seem to be missing is guidelines on how to apply such principles in any lesson of any subject and the extent to which they meet students’ needs and their aims of education.

There is a section that has been allocated to foreign language education in NC; in this some attention is given to culture in line with the position above of re-enforcing local and Islamic values.

Teaching of foreign languages has to go above the limited circle of theories, approaches and methods designed in the world and has to be used as a ground for strengthening national culture and beliefs and values. (NC: 39)

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7Extracts from the 20NV and NC are my translation.
At initial stages, the teaching content will be chosen and organised around local topics and needs such as hygiene and health, daily life, surrounding environment, and the society’s culture and values in attractive forms. (NC: 40)

Having a look at the curricular policy, which has to be followed in foreign (and in the majority of cases English) language education, we can arrive at the conclusion that it does not seem to be exempted from the general ideological force of other subjects; likewise, national culture and identity is placed at the centre, around which the lessons should be designed. This is, however, in contrast with the use of English in today’s world, where it is not going to be used among Iranians themselves but to communicate with other nations. Therefore, focusing on local culture might not be enough to prepare them for this end.

Related to this is the anecdote in section 1.1, where I, as a person who was educated in Iran, faced problems in an event of IC in spite of my relatively good level of English. To be more precise, rather than entering into any possible negotiation of the issue I could probably have done at the time, I was disappointed by the stereotypical comment made by the landlord and thus, decided not to choose the room in his accommodation. This breakdown, which was caused by lack of CA from both my side, whose reaction was affected by the stereotypical picture I used to hold of “Westeners”, and his side, could have been resolved given that I would have been aware of different perspectives every individual, independent of their nationality, might hold. This knowledge was only brought to me with my growing familiarity with the concept of IC as an MA student and I believe that exclusion of the concept from the language education curriculum can cause similar problems for language learners. My experience of the possible problems a lack of intercultural language education can bring about as an insider, who is familiar with the Iranian educational context, combined with the knowledge concluded from my attendance in a British university and a particular module, made me realise the change such situation calls for.

Although no policy of internationalisation has explicitly been expressed in these language educational documents, cultural interactions have been named as one of the aims of learning a foreign language in NC (p. 38). Similarly, the
20 NV (p.1) pictures Iran as a successful country in international relations and predicts it to be the foremost country in the region in all the developmental aspects by 2025.

Embracing such aims on the one hand while narrowing down the culture to the local one only, and thus depriving students from familiarising themselves with a wider perspective of cultures on the other hand, creates a paradoxical situation. What makes this more complex is the fact that some macro-policies remain unchanged as they are believed to be set by highly qualified people according (see Deputy of Organization of Research and Educational Planning (2012) as cited in Atai and Mazlum, 2012). The extent to which such qualification guarantees the awareness on educational issues especially with the passage of time and without constant needs analysis of students remains under question.

Now that a general image of the policy leading foreign language education in Iran has been set, I will move on to present a general atmosphere of ELT both in state schools and private language institutes.

### 4.3.2 ELT in State Schools

In this section, I will look at issues that seem to affect the success or failure of every educational program including the syllabus content specifically the focus of teaching program and the teaching approach.

English is taught as an obligatory subject from the age of 12. Teaching is focused on improving grammar and reading skills as well knowing a greater number of words (Riazi, 2005; Pishghadam and Mirzaee, 2008; Hayati and Mashhadi, 2010), an approach which has been named as focus on language usage rather than language use by Hayati and Mashhadi (2010) and Riazi (2005).

The first thing that catches attention is the absence of other skills from the curriculum. This can again be investigated in policy-makers’ mentality and their picture of English use by English learners in the future. Based on the focus of teaching, it is likely their assumption is that the need for the English language would be limited to reading and comprehending English texts. According to HCCR (2002 cited in Atai and Mazlum, 2012: 3), this is because
of the need for self-sufficiency in industry, economy and agriculture prioritise this skill over the others. This, however, is in contrast with the possible motivation of students for learning of English, which is in line with its use as a lingua franca (see 3.6). Moreover, it fails to satisfy students’ needs in contexts where English is needed to be used a global language (Hayati and Mashhadi, 2010).

What makes the situation more complicated is the failure of state schools to meet the stated objectives. The reason for this has been attributed to factors such as inconsistencies between language textbooks content and the purposes, lack of proficient English teachers and lack of equipment in the classrooms (Hayati and Mashhadi, 2010).

There is not much literature on the current language teaching methodology in the country. Riazi (2005) explains it as grammar-translation in which grammatical rules are explicitly explained to students. Classes are relatively crowded for a language class and are teacher-centred (Pishghadam and Mirzaee, 2008; Hayati and Mashhadi, 2010). As an expected consequence of teacher-centred classes, there is a lack of self-discovery and self-dependence activities in the classrooms (Hayati and Mashhadi, 2010).

The mentioned factors including lack of communicative skills namely writing and speaking and teacher-centred classes have led to private language institutes gaining popularity among language learners and students choosing to attend such extracurricular evening courses. The following section provides an introduction to this teaching setting.

4.3.3 Private Language Institutes

Although the activities of private language institutes were banned and they were all turned into state-run ones at the start of the revolution and during Ayatollah Khomeini’s government, their number has drastically increased since Ayatollah Rafsanjani’s government when they were allowed to reopen (see table one). In fact, the number of private English institutes continued to increase and it was estimated about 2200 throughout the country in 2003 (Borjian, 2013). The popularity of these institutes can be seen as evidence that they are (or at least perceived to be) successful in their job of teaching English.
This can partly be related to failure of state schools in meeting students' needs argued in the previous section. In contrast to state schools, private institutes attract students by making use of foreign books and curricula and the majority of them focus on communicative skills including speaking and listening leading to a more balanced syllabus. Moreover, they tend to adopt a more communicative approach towards language teaching.

Compared to state schools, there is lower number of students in the classroom and students are encouraged to do more group work in such institutes. Additionally, the classes are relatively student-centred which leads to more self-discovery activities.

Due to the fee that such private institutes have as an extracurricular activity, the students who choose to attend their lessons often come from middle-class families, whose parents are both able to afford the course and consider knowing English as beneficial for their child. Additionally, such institutes are more likely to be found in cities, as compared to smaller towns.

4.3.4 Similarities and differences between state schools and private language institutes

A striking similarity between private institutes and state schools in terms of teaching methodology is that neither leaves any space for teachers' agency. In order to get a position in a private language institute, a teacher needs to pass the written and oral language exam plus the teacher training course, where the applicants are required to teach some lessons to show their competence. Then, they are expected to follow the steps they have been told during the training in their own classrooms. Similarly, state schools environment leave no room for the teacher's voice. This is caused not only by the educational policy (4.3.1) which teachers ought to follow closely, but also by the exam-centred nature of the modules at schools. As the success or failure of both students and teachers is evaluated by the results of the final exams at the end of each semester, teachers, unsurprisingly, prefer to stick to the textbook syllabus.

State schools nationwide must use the textbooks published by Ministry of Education and frequently these act as the *de-facto* syllabus, which leads to a fairly homogenous ELT provision in state schools all over the country. Private
institutes, on the other hand, are free to choose their teaching materials and make use of books published abroad. This can also be counted as one of the reasons for the private language institutes' success in attracting many learners of English, who are already studying the language at school. In order to give more insights into the mentioned educational settings and clarify more detail about the teaching content of each, an analysis of two samples taken from the two settings will be presented.

4.4 Textbooks in state schools and private language institutes: an analysis

In order to address the research questions 1.1 and 1.2, i.e. “to what extent are students' learning objective related to culture met by state school?” and “private language institutes?”, it was deemed necessary to analyse and evaluate one course book from each of these educational organizations. This acknowledges the primary importance of the textbooks as the determiners of the content taught in the classroom and of the methods used by the teachers (Akbari, 2008). They have also been referred to as “the basic medium of education” (Dendrinos, 1992: 13). Given the reduced agency allowed to teachers in the Iranian context, the importance of the textbooks in these educational contexts seems paramount. Therefore, this section has been devoted to looking into two course books in an attempt to have more insight into the content of teaching.

4.4.1 Unit of analysis

As mentioned above, two books from both educational organisations were chosen in order to enable a comparison between the two. The chosen books are firstly English (1)\(^8\) (referred to as E1 hereafter), which is used nationally in first grade of high school, and secondly Total English (intermediate) (referred to as TEI hereafter)\(^9\), used in one of the most popular language institutes in the city where the study was conducted. While the former is published locally by

\(^{8}\) The format of the local textbooks during all three years of high school is the same.

\(^{9}\) This is the book that was also used by the participants in two of my focus group interviews.
the Printing and Publishing Company for Iranian School Books, the latter is published by Pearson.

In terms of the extent of analysis, I decided to focus on the material a student is typically exposed to in a period of one year, assuming they are a high school student also attending evening language courses. The academic year in Iran lasts nine months and during one year the entire course book \( E1 \), which consists of 9 lessons, is taught. Seven units of \( TEI \) are covered according to information from participants and teaching institutions. Thus, this section will analyse the course materials of one academic year (nine months), in which students are taught nine lessons of \( E1 \) and seven units of \( TEI \).

4.4.2 Framework

Before going into details of the analysis itself, I would like to introduce my chosen framework. Considering the wide body of research on textbook analysis (see, e.g. Taki, 2008; Gray, 2010; Gray, 2012; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2012; Forman, 2014; Hilliard, 2014; Tajeddin and Teimournezhad, 2015), this decision is not a straightforward task. This section will aim to give an overview of existing frameworks and justify the choices made. Before doing that, however, it is important to note that any analysis can be done for different purposes, including pedagogical ones (see, e.g. Littlejohn, 2011) or gender representation (see, e.g. Ansary and Babaii, 2003). Considering the aim of this research, the analysis presented seeks to investigate the cultural side of the books.

Regardless of what aspect of textbooks is being analysed, some of the frameworks only consider the text itself (see, e.g. Majdzadeh, 2002; Aliakbari, 2004). Some, on the other hand, take both images and text into consideration (see, e.g. Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Gray, 2010; Hilliard, 2014). Considering both images and text while analysing is defined as multimodal text analysis in which both language, as well any further means of communication, including photography and artwork are studied. In other words, a multimodal text addresses communication in all its existing forms (ÓHalloran and Smith, 2012).

In a similar way, Kress and Leeuwen (2001) discuss the generation of meaning not only through the text (as this has traditionally been the case), but also
through every sign and image. This phenomenon has been termed representational repertoire by Gray (2010), in which the meaning is represented by language plus the use of photographs, line drawings, and charts. Considering images as well as text seems to offer a more comprehensive method for giving a general picture of the book, I decided to follow this approach. This is in line with Kullman (2003), who argues that the cultural stand of a textbook is implied through its images as well as topics and situations.

The second point, which should be taken into consideration, is to decide between the two methods including checklists (see, e.g. Risager, 1991; Byrd, 2001; McGrath, 2002) or the less structured means of describing the chosen aspect of a textbook depending on the research purposes (see, e.g. Majdzadeh, 2002; Gray, 2010; Littlejohn, 2011; Hilliard, 2014). Checklists can take different forms, namely quantitative, qualitative, or in a form of a given outline (for a comprehensive review, see Mukundan and Ahour, 2010). Advantages of checklists are that they are convenient, cost effective, explicit, and provide a useful guidance (McGrath, 2002; Littlejohn, 2011). However, checklists have been criticised for being too superficial and for reflecting their designers’ beliefs regardless of the contextual factors they are being used in (McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003; Gray, 2010; Littlejohn, 2011).

An alternative approach is an in-depth analysis of the material, which, as the name suggests, aims at detailed analysis of certain features such as language descriptions or “underlying assumptions about learning or values on which the materials are based” (McGrath, 2002: 27). The purpose of such a framework, as Littlejohn (2011) describes, is to reveal the internal nature of the material. It should be mentioned, however, that regardless of how much effort one puts into objectivity of such an analysis, it will be affected by the analyst(s)’ personal beliefs (Tomlinson, 2003). Rather than providing a set of themes or questions to follow while analysing the material, such approaches often provide the analysts with a set of criteria to consider while analysing the material. Littlejohn (2011), for example, suggests a three-section framework including “objective description”, “subjective analysis”, and “subjective inference” while investigating the book pedagogically. Similarly, Tomlinson (2003) provides educators with a set of questions to use while checking the
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reliability of the criteria they brainstormed depending on factors such as educational context and students’ age.

Regarding a cultural analysis of textbooks, a considerable body of research has looked at representations of inner, outer, and expanding circle of countries by Kachru10 (1992) (see, e.g. Murayama, 2000; Shin et al., 2011; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2012). This is often an attempt to find out what type of culture, including source, target, or international culture, has been represented (see, e.g. Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Aliakbari, 2004; Abdullah and Kumari, 2009; Forman, 2014). Gender representation, as a way to reveal hidden ideologies (Hilliard, 2014), has also been analysed and discussed (see, e.g. Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Cheng and Beigi, 2012; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012). Although such analyses are positive steps towards presenting different aspects of teaching material, none is inclusive of all the diverse aspects that make up the cultural representation of textbooks.

To my knowledge, the only framework aimed at a comprehensive in-depth analysis of textbooks from a cultural point of view is the descriptive analysis presented by Gray (2010). This framework, inspired by Du Gay’s (1997) theoretical model of “circuit of culture”11, focuses on two main components, that is to say, linguistic choices and images which are involved in the process of meaning-making (or representation of meaning) throughout the book (Gray, 2010). The important role of images in conveying meanings in textbooks has been discussed above. Linguistically speaking, Gray (2010) considers not only situations and topics (Kullman, 2003), but also language systems (i.e. grammar, lexis and phonology) and the texts for developing the language skills (i.e. reading, listening, speaking and writing). The analysis of each book studied, for example, starts by discussing its objectives, followed by the general structure of each unit and the level of attention each skill has received. In line with the previous discussion on the limitations of checklists, Gray

10 “The Inner Circle refers to the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English. The Outer Circle represents the institutionalized non-native varieties (ESL) in the regions that have passed through extended periods of colonization [...] The expanding Circle includes the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL contexts.” (Kachru, 1992: 356 and 357)
11 Du Gay (1997) provide a model labelled as “the circuit of culture”, which is comprised of five elements including regulation, representation, identity, production, and consumption. Using this model, Du Gay (1997) aims at analysis of Sony Walkman, as a modern cultural artefact of the 90s.
(2010) highlights the importance of not limiting oneself to a list of specific items and calls for consideration of any relevant issue in different circumstances.

Due to the space limitations in this research, I decided to focus on the commonalities in the two books for the analysis. These include the objectives of the books, structures, communication sections, reading topics, and artwork. These elements, taken together, were thought to give a comprehensive insight into the cultural analysis of the books. As mentioned earlier, these elements, individually, have also been discussed by other researchers. Baleghizadeh (2011), for example, looks at the topics discussed in textbooks and discusses the relevance of them to learners’ own contexts. Similarly, García’s (2005) analysis of textbooks in a Spanish context investigates the topics, situations, and objectives of reading and listening section of textbooks to shed light on their cultural content. Objectives of the books have also been counted as crucial by Heinrich (2005) in finding a way into publishers’ ideologies. Additionally, artwork has been included in line with the important role of images in conveying meanings generally (multimodal analysis described earlier) and their important role in cultural messages specifically (Kullman, 2003).

### 4.4.2.1 Objectives of textbooks

In order to find out the aims each book is trying to achieve and shed some light on the ideologies behind the textbooks, I will describe the introduction presented by each followed by their evaluation and some possible implications.

TEI has no explicit reference to what type of English, whether “native” or lingua franca, it is trying to represent. However, it states “it provides solutions to the challenges teachers and students face every day” with a comprehensive package of resources. It also aligns its objectives with CEFR and it aims at taking students from B1 to B2 level, as stated on the book cover.

What has been presented below is a screenshot of CEFR, which claims not to be language or context specific. Therefore, it has been suggested that “users adapt its use to fit the language they are working with and the specific context” (Cambridge ESOL, 2011: 4). The purpose for developing this framework has
been to facilitate communication and cooperation between different education institutions, particularly in Europe (ibid, p5).

While the TEI has not specified what type of English it is aiming at, the target B2 focuses on the ability of a language learner to communicate fluently with a native speaker. This might be seen to embrace an ideology of seeing native speaker as superior to non-native speakers of the language. This view is problematic in case of English due to the number of non-native speakers outnumbering native ones and most of the communication occurring in between non-native speakers (Buckledee, 2010) (see 3.3).

What is more, CEFR aims at improving a number of competences among which intercultural awareness is one element. Within CEFR, this has been defined as follows:

Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relationship (similarities and distinctive differences) between ‘the world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’ produce intercultural awareness…It is also enriched by awareness of a wider range of cultures than those carried by the learners’ L1 and L2. (Verhelst et al., 2009: 103)

While having “the world of the target community” as the ideal sample might be true for learning other foreign languages, it is problematic in the case of English which is increasingly used as a lingua franca. Intercultural awareness, in this case specifically, is not only about finding the differences and similarities between oneself and the target community, but also the awareness of the role of speakers’ backgrounds on shaping who we and others are and of
appreciating the similarities and differences, regardless of nationality (see 3.3.1).

E1, on the other hand, starts with a quotation from the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, to emphasise the importance of English.

There was no need to learn the language (English) in the past. Today there is a need. Living languages of the world must be in schools’ curricula...Today is not like yesterday, when our voice could not be heard by the outside world. Today, we can be in Iran and advertise (Islam) everywhere in the world with another language.\(^{12}\) (p II)

Ayatollah Khomeini still enjoys a lot of respect and influence as the leading personage of the revolution for people in charge and his words are seen as guidance on planning everything in educational policy. It is not clear what is meant by “advertising” in this quotation so I will move on to the more detailed explanation of the introduction so that it sheds some light on this quotation.

A section entitled “English teaching perspective” describes that the teaching approach culturally consists of Iranian-Islamic values. It also states, “learners are not only the consumers of some given facts in the class but they themselves can be critical and analytic of the teaching content “(ibid, p v).

It terms of the actual language, the book aims to pay attention to productive skills (speaking and writing) as well as receptive skills (listening and reading) so that “human beings’ traits (reflection, science, faith to God, doing good, and good ethics) based on Quranic perspective flourish” (ibid, p v).

As can be inferred, a lot of focus has been put on Islam and Quran, which is the basis of Iranian educational policy (see 4.3.1). On the other hand, the book seems to be aiming at encouraging students towards reflection and criticality, which sounds promising. Therefore, one would expect to find student-engaging activities in the book. To what extent this purpose has been met is an issue which I will deal with in the coming sections.

\(^{12}\) Extracts from E1 are my translation.
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In the same way as the previous book, there is nothing on what type of English the book is aiming at presenting; however, “accurate” pronunciation, writing, reading, and speaking has been emphasised under different subsections of “word to teachers” section, which aims at giving at overall picture of the textbook including the aims which should be followed to the teachers. What is interesting is that there is a lot of focus on “natural” use of language and avoiding the use of the first language in the classroom. This is in contrast with my personal experience as a student in these classes (and using the same book) where teaching tended to be completely in Farsi and limited to grammar-translation method.

In short, while the objectives of TEI seem to lie exclusively in improving communication, especially among Europeans with the focus on the language used among the target community, E1 appears to emphasise Islamic values and the purpose of learning English can be inferred to be advertising such values via English. Thinking of English as a lingua franca, by which learners seek to move forward towards reaching their ideal selves (see 3.6), the extent to which each of the textbooks/organizations facilitate their objectives is questionable. This brings us to the research questions 1.1 and 1.2, which is discussed in detail in 10.2.1 and 10.2.2.

4.4.2.2 Structures of textbooks

E1 is comprised of nine lessons (for a sample lesson, see appendix A). Each lesson follows exactly the same structure; it starts with a ‘New Word Section’, in which the words are presented in two different sentences (section A). This is followed by a reading text in which the new words are used (Section B). After a set of comprehension questions on the reading text (Section C), a section called “Speak Out” is presented (D). In contrast with what is inferred from the title, the exercises in this section are limited to substitution exercises in which students are given a model sentence and are expected to substitute one part of the sentence (subject, for example) with the given words. In other words, there is no room for students to be able to produce “natural” language as stated in the books’ objectives. The “Write it Down” section (E) in which the learners are similarly given a model sentence comes next. The difference between these exercises and the previous section (apart from former being oral and latter
written) is that this section can be said to be slightly more personalised. To be more precise, although a model sentence is often given to the students, in four out of nine lessons, they are free to produce sentences related to themselves and their personal lives. The next section (F) is “Language Function”, in which one to two brief decontextualized dialogue(s) are presented and students are asked to practise these with a friend. This section is the only one in the lesson which is presented in the form of a dialogue. The final educational purpose of them is said to enable the students to “speak with each other in different roles based on the presented sentences” (ibid, p iii). This section is followed by ‘Pronunciation practice’ (G) in which one to two phonetic symbol plus some sample words are presented. This is followed by some True/False sentences checking the knowledge on the meaning of words, called ‘Vocabulary Review’ (H) and finishes by a list of new words named ‘Vocabulary’ (I).

TEI, on the other hand, contains 10 units, of which 7 will be discussed here. Each unit contains three sub-units. In contrast with E1, not all units follow the same structure. However, they comprise the following skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking, as well as a vocabulary section. In addition, each unit consists of one to two section(s) called “person to person”. The learners are given a task in this section in which they are asked to produce sentences (orally or in writing) relevant to their own lives and personal experiences. Having done this, the learners are asked to share this with their groupmate or whole classroom. As mentioned before, each unit is different from the other one in terms of structure. The common point between all the units though, is that there is a one-page section called “Communication” in which often a number of group activities relevant to the theme of units have been given to the students.

Having compared the general structure of the books, a number of differences can be observed. Firstly, the speaking and listening skill seem to be absent from E1. Although there is a section called “speak out” and “pronunciation”, they both lack the feature of giving the students the chance to freely produce the language (i.e., all the production is controlled based on some model sentences). The pronunciation section is limited to some words with one common phonetic symbol followed by students being asked to listen to their teachers. On the contrary, learners are asked to give their personal idea or
share their personal experience in many tasks in TEI. Such exercises give students the chance to use English to express themselves, which can help towards the linguistic development and is more in line with a meaning-focused communicative approach. This concurs with Majdzadeh’s (2002) research who concluded that Iranian English textbooks prevents the students from freely and creatively production of the written assignments or conversations. The paradox is the book itself stating having “critical and analytic” students as one of its objectives (see 4.4.2.1). Meeting such a purpose is arguably impossible while students are rarely given the chance to use and produce language to voice their thoughts and feelings.

In terms of the presented skills, TEI seems to focus noticeably more than E1 on the productive skills of speaking and writing. This is in line with TEI objectives including facilitating communication between nations, specifically EU countries. E1, however, lacks this feature and seem to be focused overtly on reading, vocabulary, and grammar. This is in contrast with what has been said in the instruction of the book; that “it has integrated all the four skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (ibid, page ii). In addition, “the growth and improvement of social-humanistic communication of the global society” (ibid, page ii) is noted as one of its objectives. This is in line with the educational policy in which cultural interactions has been emphasised (see 4.3.1).

In order to evaluate further the extent to which each book prepares the students for the type of communication they are likely to be involved in the future, i.e., IC, I have chosen two sections including “language function” from E1 and “communication” from TEI to discuss in terms of cultural content. I have picked these sections specifically because, as mentioned earlier, language function is the only section in which a dialogue is presented followed by students being asked to “practise with a friend”. The communication section, as the name suggests, aims at “revising the language from the unit in a freer, more communicative context” (TEI, p7). Therefore, in an attempt to gain a deeper insight into the approaches of the books towards communication via English, the next section is allocated to discussing the named sections.
4.4.2.3 Communication representation

As mentioned above, two sections, i.e. “language function” and “communication”, were found in E1 and TEI respectively, which are aimed at communicative purposes. This section presents an in-depth analysis of these textbook elements to investigate the extent to which they prepare learners for possible encounters of IC. The analysis will be conducted via presenting items, which imply any kind of cultural association to specific countries, including interlocutors’ names (in the case of dialogues), celebrities’ names, and the names of countries themselves, which will be referred to as cultural references hereafter. This is in line with Kullman (2003) and Gray (2010), who consider the presented “situations” of textbooks as determiners of cultural content and with Naji Meidani and Pishghadam (2012), who highlight the situation where the dialogue takes place, celebrities and their nationalities as tools to investigate how English has been represented.

In order to evaluate “Language Function” in E1, I will firstly present the context where the dialogue seem to be taking place, followed by a discussion on the extent this can increase students’ intercultural awareness.

Table 2. English Book 1 - “Language function” sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Cultural references</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Asking someone’s name&lt;br&gt; • On the phone &lt;br&gt; • Introducing a friend</td>
<td>• Henry&lt;br&gt; • John&lt;br&gt; • Ali Kabiri&lt;br&gt; • Mr. Amini&lt;br&gt; • Reza&lt;br&gt; • Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Finding out about people</td>
<td>• Japanese teacher residing in Iran&lt;br&gt; • A Turkish student living in Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Asking about someone’s family</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The dialogues start and finish in an abrupt way and there is no activity beforehand to contextualise them. Generally speaking, specific names of interlocutors from the presented dialogues are not given in the presented lesson dialogues and they are simply referred to as A and B. However, three cases were found in which it is possible to infer the names based on the conversation or the names have been given. The first case is lesson one (E1, p16) in which Henry and John (as typical English names) introduce each other. The second case is lesson 2 (E1, p30) where the conversation seems to be taking place between an Iranian and Japanese. Finally, lesson five (E1, p66) includes a conversation between Ali and Reza (typical Iranian male names), who are talking about a friend’s appearance. Having a look at table two, it can be seen that eleven out nineteen cultural references refer to Iran. The limitation of Iranian English textbooks to local culture has been confirmed by previous studies (see, e.g. Majdzadeh, 2002; Aliakbari, 2004; Cheng and Beigi, 2012).

The exercises in this book are limited to controlled following of model, which has been given to students. Therefore, I would argue that no evidence of (inter)cultural awareness can be seen as there is no chance for cultural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>• Granting/rejecting a request</th>
<th>Unclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 | • Identifying by appearance and dress | • Mrs Rasouli  
• Mrs Akbari  
• Mr Amini  
• Ali  
• Reza |
| 6 | • Talking about appearance | • Babak |
| 7 | • Requesting Politely | • Mr. Karimi |
| 8 | • Asking about other people | • John (Canadian)  
• Carl (German)  
• Ramo (Indian) |
| 9 | • Shopping | • Rial (Iranian currency) |
exploration which can either familiarise students with the concept of culture or encourage criticality and possible comparisons between their own culture and that of others (see Baker, 2015: 194-197). Additionally, the exclusion of the names undermines a presentation of the role of ELF. From the three lessons mentioned where the speaker names were inferable, only one can be considered as an example of IC (lesson two, Iranian and Japanese).

Unlike “language function” in E1, different skills are focused on in different “communication” sections in TEI. Table three presents these skills in order to show how communication is viewed, in addition to presenting the cultural references in the discussed units.

Table 3. Total English (intermediate) - “Communication” section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit and title of sections</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Cultural references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, Tree of friends</td>
<td>• Speaking</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, The front page</td>
<td>• Reading</td>
<td>• Brad Pitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speaking</td>
<td>• Princess Diana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bill Gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, Your dream house</td>
<td>• Listening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speaking</td>
<td>• US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing</td>
<td>• Titanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Van Gogh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nicole Kidman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, What a waste!</td>
<td>• Speaking</td>
<td>• Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing</td>
<td>• Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, What are you good at</td>
<td>• Listening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speaking</td>
<td>• London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, London in a day</td>
<td>• Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen, both speaking and listening are focused on most often compared to the other two skills, showing an emphasis on oral communication. This oral orientation has helped make private language institutes very popular among Iranian learners (see 4.3.3). Culturally speaking, I would like to argue that the given exercises meet the first level of intercultural awareness model proposed by Baker (2011a) (see section 3.3.1). To be more precise, the concept of culture is mainly treated in an essentialist way, which is limited to some factual knowledge (e.g., p30, p58, p86). In addition, there are cases (e.g., p44, 58, 72, 100) where students are asked to think and discuss their own experience regarding the topic. Considering the first level of the named model, we can think of such exercises as a basis for comparison, which might make students aware of the differences between themselves and “others”. This might lead to a deeper reflection on the possible origin of similarities and differences. “Others”, however, is limited to inner circle countries, England and the US specifically. The cultural information contains different types from celebrities, such as Brad Pitt and Nicole Kidman, to London’s tourist attraction.

In order to give more insight into the cultural content of the books, the next section is devoted to evaluating the reading texts in the two books from a cultural point of view. I chose readings specifically because reading is the only skill focus present in both textbooks.
4.4.2.4 Reading situations

As noted earlier, investigating the representation of countries based on Kachru’s (1992) model is one of the most common ways to find a way into the cultural content of the books (see, e.g. Murayama, 2000; Baleghizadeh, 2011; Shin et al., 2011; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2012). Unsurprisingly, this proves as a fruitful method to investigate the representation of English in today’s globalised world (see, e.g. Shin et al., 2011).

Hoping to gain some insight into the cultural references of the readings presented in both books, I have categorised these in terms of the countries targeted based on Kachru’s (1992) theory of inner, outer, and expanding circle countries. To achieve this purpose, I went through the reading texts and took note of any country that has been referred to in the text\(^{13}\). The results are presented in table four below:

Table 4. Cultural representation in English book (1) and Total English (intermediate) – “Reading” section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural references</th>
<th>TEI</th>
<th>E1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner circle countries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer circle countries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding circle countries</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the outer circle countries in TEI were limited to India (2) and South Africa (2), the expanding circle countries consisted of Germany, Holland, Japan (2), France (2), Spain (2), Vietnam, Thailand, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Congo, Iran, and Egypt. As can be seen, out of 16 countries, nine are European, which shows the book’s Eurocentricity. This leaves us with the question of whether this book is suitable for Iranian learners at all or not. Another point which should be mentioned is that although some factual account of each of the mentioned expanding circle countries has been given in the majority of cases,

\(^{13}\) Total number of readings in E1: 9
Total number of readings in TEI: 21
there are a couple of times where the information is limited to very brief description such as “Vietnamese immigrant” (p 27) or “Egyptians” who invented the bread (p91).

Inner circle countries mentioned in E1 include Britain, Scotland, and the US and the expanding circles countries are Spain, Germany and Saudi. As can be seen in table four, there is no reference to outer circle countries.

As can be inferred, the number of cultural references in E1 is noticeably lower than the cultural references found in the readings texts in TEI. Aliakbari (2004) came to a similar result from the content analysis conducted of different sections of four high school English textbooks in Iran including reading texts. He concluded that the cultural content in these books is “extremely limited and basic” (p 11). It is noticeable that in contrast with TEI in which generally some sort of factual knowledge is provided on the countries discussed, cultural reference in E1 does not go beyond the name of the country, in which an often-imaginary story takes place. It is worth mentioning that this is not to say that the cultural content of the reading texts in TEI is very challenging or deep, as it is often limited to some facts about these countries. This is in line with Shin et al. (2011: 253) who concluded that, “[t]he cultural presentation of international books still largely remains at the traditional knowledge-oriented level and does not engage learners in deep levels of reflection”. In other words, the concept of culture does not seem to go further than the essentialist approach (see 2.4). Having said that, however, TEI probably still stands at a more appropriate position compared to E1 in which the stories presented are largely imaginary and probably at a superficial level compared to the age of the learners.

4.4.2.5 Artwork

The final section of this analysis is allocated to investigation of images, gender representation specifically, in the two textbooks. This is because, in the same way as the objectives of the books, they reveal the hidden ideologies by the publishers (Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012; Hilliard, 2014). Additionally, the messages of the books are conveyed not only through texts, but also through the artwork including images and line drawings (Gray, 2010).
Before going into these details, it is worth mentioning that there is a noticeable difference between the two books in terms of the presentation. While TEI is mainly comprised of colour photographs, E1 contains only black and white line drawings. As well as the fact that this might well make E1 look less attractive, specifically considering the age of the audience, there is another point, which is worth mentioning. According to Gray (2010), using colour and actual photography makes publishing the book more expensive. This means that Pearson, as a widely known publisher, is able to afford to spend more on a book compared to a national one, whose work is much more limited. Therefore, apart from how culturally effective a book is, the money spent on a book can be one of the important factors in attracting or losing audience.

As all the artwork in E1 is in shape of line drawing with no actual photography, it was not possible to evaluate them in terms of race representation. Therefore, I have only looked at gender representation\textsuperscript{14} (Gray, 2010; Cheng and Beigi, 2012; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012), not only in images, but also in texts and tasks (Gray, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of represented participants</th>
<th>Texts\textsuperscript{15}</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the number of male appearances is all the three categories is noticeably higher than females. This is in line with previous studies of gender representations in textbooks, which confirm male dominance and low visibility of females in current textbooks (see, e.g. Ansari and Babaii, 2003; Gray, 2010; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012). This is reinforced by the occupational roles that both genders have been given (see the table below). As can be seen, females have appeared in a noticeably fewer occupational roles that males.

\textsuperscript{14} This also included the female/male pronouns while they have been presented as the main subject. Repetitions have been excluded.

\textsuperscript{15} Reading and New Words section
Chapter 4

Table 6. English book (1) – Genders’ professions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational roles</td>
<td>shop assistant, school founder, police, farmer, teacher, doctor, scientist, snowplough driver, waiter, inventor, mechanic</td>
<td>teacher, servant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the possible ideologies underlying such representation, there seem to be the assumption of men and women unequal roles with men having more capacity of taking role outside the home compared to women. What is more, male and female characters are used in very stereotypical gender roles in textbook sentences, such as in the examples below:

A young man can work hard (p64).

What is your mother doing in the kitchen right now? (p64)

She washes the dishes every day. (p96)

This is in line with Gharbavi and Mousavi’s (2012: 46) discussion who point out the “untrue” stereotypical roles in which women have appeared. Another point worth mentioning is that all females appear wearing the Islamic hijab throughout the book (also see Cheng and Beigi, 2012). This is regardless of the name that particular character has been given. For instance, a woman called Mary (which is not a common Iranian name) is presented dressing a little girl, while she herself is wearing hijab (p90). In this respect, it can be argued that the book is largely limited to local culture in the most general sense with respect to Islamic tradition (Majdzadeh, 2002).

Moving on to TE1, I went through the same process of gender representation in unit 1-7. The result is presented in the table below. I only included actual photographs (as opposed to drawings) in this analysis as the artwork as they comprised the main part of the book.

Table 7. Total English (intermediate) - Gender representation
As can be seen, in the same way as the previous book, females still stand at a lower proportion compared to males. Saying that, the discrepancy between the two genders seems to be lower compared to E1. Additionally, in contrary with E1, which only allows two occupational roles for females, women appear in a greater variety of roles in TEI:

Table 8. Total English (intermediate) - Genders’ occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational roles</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>company founder, TV/news presenter, journalist, inventor, film director, artist, chef, actor, taxi driver, musician, company director, astronaut, company co-founder, FBI man, salesperson, businessman, waiter, engineer, author, film writer, musician, statesman, teacher, composer, scientist, investor, chairman, athlete</td>
<td>artist, computer consultant, secretary, business executive, museum employee, journalist, TV presenter, salesperson, politician, fight attendant, bank employee, waitress, film maker, teacher, headmistress, athlete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in table eight above, a few of the occupational roles given to both genders are common which shows the authors’ ideology of the equal role they have.

Although the focus of the book in terms of content seems to be mainly on inner circle countries (see 4.4.2.4), it has gone further in terms of race representation in the photos. This is in line with Gray’s (2010: 91) evaluation of *Cambridge English 2* in which he concluded that the book represented a

\[16\] Reading and Grammar boxes
Chapter 4

multi-cultural approach, for example, by presenting photos of black and white couple.

TEI starts by showing a group of friends in which both black and white people are present (p5). This can also be seen on p10, where there is a reading about two best friends who met online through other friends, whose picture show them to be of different races, although they both reside in inner circle countries including England and Canada. Unit two starts by representing a black man as TV presenter of the British ITV news. There are also pictures of black males and females as winners (p29 and 98); however, their nationality is unidentified. Other examples of black people include the American jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong (p62), and a black woman presented as a teacher of a classroom, in which students also seem to come from a mixed background (p94).

4.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter started by an introduction to the fluctuating history the English language has experienced depending on the period and the policy favoured by different governments in Iran. Following this, I outlined that the English education policy, which is followed in state schools, favouring the use of English as a means to strengthen national identity and promote religious values via language education. Additionally, the analysis of a textbook from this setting shows a focus clearly limited to local culture at a superficial level and a failure to present the role of ELF, but also an emphasis on the skills of reading and grammar. I would argue that investigating elements such as textbook structure and gender representation paves the way for analysing the publishers’ ideologies, which seem to be in line with governmental English education policy in the case of the textbooks used in state schools.

This chapter also addressed the complementary English provision offered by private language institutes, as another teaching setting, which seems to be favoured by language learners who are not satisfied with the approach followed in state schools. In contrast with state schools, private language institutes can freely choose their books, which are not locally produced. To give more insight into the textbooks used, one used by the one of the most
popular language institutes was analysed and presented. The results suggest that in line with the literature on the assumptions of a one to one correspondence between language and culture (see 3.2), this textbook is mainly focused on inner circle countries. Having said that, it should be mentioned that compared to the textbook from state schools, this textbook was found to call for a deeper level of cultural engagement by involving students in activities which require sharing their personal experiences and comparison with what has been given in the textbook. However, this is only limited to target language countries.

Now that the context of the study has been discussed, I will move on to present the two phases of study namely focus group interviews and teaching intervention, which shape the action research in this study.
Chapter 5: Methodology - Phase 1

5.1 Introduction

Arguably, Iranian language teaching education suffers from the exclusion of intercultural education in both state schools and private language institutes. Due to the position of English as a global language and interactions with non-native speakers becoming the more realistic target for English language learners, an introduction of a syllabus to raise students’ CA seems advisable.

To this end, this study employed a 10-session teaching intervention aimed at increasing students’ CA and investigated the effects and potentials of such a teaching intervention. By doing so, this study embraces many elements of action research, which will be discussed in details in the following chapter.

At this point, it suffices to say that in action research (referred to as AR hereafter), the researcher (who is also a practitioner) identifies a problem in the context; reflects upon it, makes a plan and finally takes action in attempt to improve the situation. The researcher will then evaluate the situation and based on their understanding, will try a new method, which might or might not lead into a better result (Burns, 2010; McNiff and Whitehead, 2011).
Therefore, in order to identify and highlight the problem, I conducted focus group interviews with some participants who had the experience of learning English in both state-school and private settings (for more information about the participants, see 7.2). This was to establish the general background in terms of students' experience of English learning plus investigating their motives for learning the language in light of their cultural perceptions and practices in the two language teaching settings (discussed in 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). The first stage of research aims also to shed some lights on answering research question one (see 1.2).

This stage is specifically important not only for giving a clearer picture of learners' expectations of language courses, but also for highlighting any underlying problems to be addressed in the second phase of the study (see chapter 6).

**5.2 Focus Group Interviews**

In this section, I will provide a definition of and background information on focus group interviews (referred to as FGI s hereafter) and present the reasons they have been considered suitable for this project.
There is a general consensus that Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton were the pioneers in using FGI (see, e.g. Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Bloor et al., 2001; Kruegar and Casey, 2009). In the 1940s, Lazarsfeld and Merton were jointly doing a project funded by the United States’ government in which they had to explore audience’s responses to the government’s own war-time radio propaganda programmes. To start with, they sat a group of 12 people in a room where they were asked to press a green button when they felt positive and a red button when they felt negative towards what had just been said. Dissatisfied with just having a set of quantified positive and negative responses, they decided to develop an interviewing procedure to get the respondents’ subjective explanations about how they felt (Bloor et al., 2001). It should be mentioned, however, it was only in the 1980s that this research method started to gain popularity as an academic research method (Bloor et al., 2001; Kruegar and Casey, 2009).

As the name suggests, FGs consist of a group of people, usually between five to ten, who share some relevant characteristics and are selected as a group by the researcher (Kruegar and Casey, 2009). The term “focus” suggests that the on-going conversation among the members is targeted on a specific topic, on which the researcher seeks the group’s views, and there is a clear agenda as opposed to a freewheeling conversation (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990).

FGIs are considered particularly useful for exploratory studies and have actually been referred to as a tool for discovery and exploration (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Morgan, 1998; Kruegar and Casey, 2009). As the researcher discusses a series of topics with a set of participants, the discussion of the participants’ thoughts go beneath the surface and so contracts with numeric nature of quantitative data (Gaskell, 2000).

Kruegar and Casey (2009) also note gaining insights into organisational concerns and issues as one of the aims of FGs. In the present study, interviewing a group of students who have the experience of learning English in both state schools and private language institutes seems a suitable way to investigate what is involved in terms of culture in the process of language teaching and learning in every organisation plus any possible further issues that are involved from students' perspectives. More importantly, it provides a useful tool for an in-depth analysis of students' learning objectives for
Chapter 5

choosing private language institutes as an extracurricular program (see 1.2, RQ 1).

FGIs provide an appropriate way to establish customers’ views on organisational strengths and weaknesses and plan and set goals based on these ideas (Kruegar and Casey, 2009). Taking a view of the language learners involved in this study as ‘customers’ of private language institutes who have spent long time in such environments is one of the reasons why the students seemed more suitable group to target in FGI, rather than, for instance, language teachers. These students can be seen as the most directly affected group by the content and quality of education they are being offered. In addition, the insights gained into students’ educational preferences are vital for the second phase of this study, i.e. developing a syllabus aimed at improving students’ cultural awareness that takes into account their preferences, objectives and motivation for learning English. This not only serves as a kind of need analysis, but will also keep students interested during the teaching intervention process.

A potential alternative method to FGI would have been individual (in-depth) interviews. Indeed, it was not easy to decide which of the methods was most suitable, given that both allow participants to express their opinions at length using their own words (Gaskell, 2000). However, there are minor differences, which determine the use of one over the other one depending on the research objectives.

Despite the justified criticism that FGIs allow less time to each individual to express themselves (Morgan, 1998, Gaskell, 2000), they do give the researcher the chance to address a range of opinions and beliefs in an efficient way (Kruegar and Casey, 2009). This enables capturing a general picture of a certain topic that exists among a group of people, created by sharing and contrasting experiences of the participants, which give way to their common interests and concerns (Gaskell, 2000). This was exactly the kind of information I sought at this stage in my research: an investigation on the practices and beliefs in the research context in order to familiarise myself with learners’ views before moving on to the next stage. This aligns with suggestions made in the literature on AR, discussed in chapter 6.
A further advantage of FGI is that the participants are more likely to be more comfortable in honestly expressing their opinions in a group of people with whom they share some similarities (Gaskell, 2000; Kruegar and Casey, 2009). This is especially relevant to the participants of this study, 15-18 year old teenagers, who are more likely to find their comfort zone while chatting in between a group of students from their own age group rather than a one to one question and answer session with me, who they will not see as a peer but an outsider.

Given these factors, I considered FGI to be the most suitable method for the objectives of this study, since they will provide me a better chance to find a general picture of the context. This is because of the possibility of a greater number of students being involved compared to individual interviews. This is not to say the depth is ignored in such interviews. Rather, I tried to go as deep as possible with the use of follow-up questions such as “why” or “how” when appropriate. This was supported by the flexibility of questions because of the nature being semi-structured (for the list of interview questions, see appendix B- version two). Choosing FGIs as one of the main methods, there are two other issues, i.e. group size and interview location, which need to be taken into consideration.

While there are no hard and fast rules on group size, studies with sensitive topics or the ones consisting of children or elderly people, for example, tend to be smaller (Bloor et al., 2001). While Kruegar and Casey (2009) and Bloor (2001) respectively suggest five to eight and six to eight people, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggest eight to twelve people. Both smaller and bigger groups have their own advantages and drawbacks.

It might be harder to control the discussion in bigger groups and the participants might not have enough time to express themselves (Bloor et al., 2001; Kruegar and Casey, 2009). On the other hand, they seem to be more efficient and give the researcher the opportunity to familiarise themselves with a wider range of beliefs and experiences. Smaller groups, on the other hand, provide a more comfortable environment for participants to talk but they might limit the range of experience addressed (Kruegar and Casey, 2009). However, there is a risk of the interview being cancelled due to one or two participants not turning up in smaller groups (Bloor, 2001).
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For the purpose of this study, I aimed at six participants as an average number for every session. This decision was made with regards to the following points:

a) the group not being so big that is difficult to control in terms of equal time allocation to every participant,

b) the group being so small that does not allow any discussion to come up within the group.

This number, however, was reduced in the actual study (more information is provided in 5.4).

Regarding the interview setting, the convenience of participants both in terms of distance and familiarity with the place have been suggested, as such a place does not only make expression of thoughts easier for participants psychologically, but also makes them more eager to attend (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Given the young age of the participants, the choices of location were reduced and finally, all interviews in this research took place in the educational setting, either their school or language institute, from where the participants were identified.

To put this in a nutshell, FGI s, i.e. interviews with a group of 5 to 10 people, depending on the research objectives, who answer and discuss a series of pre-designed semi-structured questions were deemed suitable for this study. These interviews provide a general picture of a topic in a specific context and are more efficient as a greater number of people are involved and the participants might be more willing to talk. The general consensus is that participants should not know each other since this might encourage more discussion. Moreover, the researcher should carefully consider the location where the interview being held depending on the preference and convenience of the group members. As suitable as this method is for purpose of the study, it has some limitations which will be addressed below.

5.3 Challenges and limitations of the method

My first lesson in my journey of data collection was that the real world and fieldwork are different from the literature, where everything is ideal and perfect. There are factors, such as site access or reluctant participants, which
are beyond the researcher’s control. The only thing that should be done, in my  
experience, is to have a backup plan (see 5.4).

Similar to any research method, FGIs have been the target of some criticisms.  
The ones relevant to this study are as the following: a) the possibility of  
dominant individuals affecting the results b) limitation in generalisation due to  
the small number of people (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990).

Regarding the first criticism, it should be emphasised that it is the researcher’s  
role to make sure that time is allocated almost equally among all the  
participants. In case of the interviews in this study, for example, I made sure I  
interfered in the discussion in two conditions. Firstly, if one participant was  
very dominant in the discussion to the extent that they were stopping others  
from expressing their opinions. I tried to involve others by asking some  
questions. Secondly, when the discussion was going in the wrong direction and  
the topics were completely irrelevant to the focus of the interviews. Concerning  
the second point, it is noticeable that generalizability has always been an issue  
in qualitative research, probably due to its divergence from traditional type of  
research, i.e. quantitative (For a full account on this, see Lichtman, 2013). As  
as has been noted by Tracy (2010), qualitative data involves some rich data  
gained based on the cultural setting and this is what differentiates it from  
quantitative data, the result of which is often generalised without considering  
the context. This is further discussed in 11.3.

5.4 Focus Group: Pilot Study

In order to conduct a pilot study and find the organisations willing to  
cooperate in the process of finding participants and conducting focus group  
interviews, I travelled to Iran in December 2013.

The plan was to visit three specific language institutes, which are currently the  
biggest and most popular ones in the city I based my research in, and to  
conduct two sessions of FGI with two different designs: a) students coming  
from the same institute b) students coming from different institutes. The  
target was to involve two participants from every institute. This pilot was  
planned to decide on the best design for the main study. However, this original
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plan had to be adapted in a number of ways to account for unexpected changes.

The percentage of participants willing to cooperate was generally lower than what was expected. This might relate to two reasons including the time of the trip clashing with high school students' final exams and institutes 'unwillingness to take part in the study.

Out of three intended language institutes, I could only access one class in one institute. However, no student in that class agreed to participate due to their intense timetable of exams. Getting access to the classes in the other two organisations was impossible because of their managers' disagreement to cooperate.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that most of such language institutes in Iran have a supervisor, often with a master degree in an English-related major, who is normally willing to help and cooperate, mainly because their academic background ensures familiarity with the concept of conducting such research. However, there is often a manager, who holds the license for starting an institute and has a higher position than the supervisor, and is not necessarily familiar with research. My experience showed that these managers were the ones to oppose research taking place at their institutes and their students being contacted by an outsider. The fact that, despite being Iranian, I am affiliated to a British university made the situation worse due to their conservative attitude.

After failing to find any participants from these institutes, I contacted several other language institutes, where there was sadly no interest in taking part in the study. Reasons given varied from problems in the past to the institute's capacity for research being full due to other researchers already using their learners.

Therefore, I had to change my initial plan and obtained access to a high school, with the help of a relative who introduced me to the high school principal beforehand. Finally, I could conduct my pilot study with six students.

As there were no classes at the school at the time of the research due to exams, the method that used for finding participants for the FGI session was
snowballing. Thus, through one student I was introduced to by the school principal, others were found and joined. In the end, this one FGI was the only one that took place during this trip due to the reasons that have been discussed.

This pilot study took place in a classroom of the school, after the students’ exam had finished. Although this is in contrast with literature which suggests using a place not associated with the research topic to give participants a psychological break and might encourage them to provide more information (Carey and Asbury, 2012), practical constraints, importantly the age of the students, did not allow for a different venue to be chosen.

The students were all very friendly and cooperative, although four of them tended to participate more actively than the other two. As the interviewer, my feeling was that those two quiet students were being overshadowed in spite of my efforts for a fair time allocation among everyone. Given this situation, I decided for the main study to limit the number of participants to four to five.

The other change I made after conducting the pilot study was in terms of question structure. Some questions were merged into one either to make the atmosphere more friendly (Q1-3 in version one to Q1 in version two) or to avoid the repetition of answers by students (Q 6 and 10 to Q2) (See version one and two of the question lists in Appendix B).

In order to address the problem of finding participants for the actual study, I designed a poster to advertise my study (see appendix C). With this poster, I also aimed to attract students from a wider range of settings, and so to provide the opportunity to design groups with individuals who do not know each other in one group, and to have the flexibility to choose an interview venue without being dependant on the organisations’ time limit. The poster was distributed to the following people:

a. Two high school students, who I got to know through relatives, to pass it to their friends
b. Two language institutes that agreed to pass it to some classes with suitable subjects
c. Three out of six subjects of the pilot focus group interview who sounded more enthusiastic in the interview and were in touch with me on Facebook

d. A relative who had a connection in the high school where pilot study was conducted.

5.5 Language and focus group interviews

It is worth mentioning that I decided to conduct the FGIs in Farsi, as the first language of the participants. The reasons for this choice lies in the fact that, considering the purpose of the interviews explained in 5.2, it was the content of the interviews which mattered most. Therefore, my intention was to diminish any possible worries that students might have regarding their language level and give every participant an equal chance to express themselves comfortably.

Although the process of transferring between languages might not be straightforward, it is becoming more and more common considering internationalisation and the role of English as the global research lingua franca (Hudson et al., 2014; Oxley et al., 2017). It is often the discrepancy between the language of the research and the language of output which calls for translation (Kussmaul and Tirkkonen-Condit, 1995). This, which was the case for this research, led me to translate FGIs from Farsi into English.

As Hudson et al. (2014) explain, translation can be done at the different phases of the research including during data preparation, i.e. translating the interview transcription into the target language prior to analysis, during data analysis, i.e. translating chunks of data after being categorised into different codes, or at the finding stage, when results are finalised. The decision to translate the data at each of the mentioned stages can be beneficial depending on each individual research. For the the reasons listed below, the initial analysis of the data was conducted in Farsi.

On the one hand, translation is not just a neutral process and it is actually the participants’ worldview and beliefs which are embedded into their utterances and the process of meaning-making (see also Oxley et al., 2017). On the other hand, the fact that I shared the same first language with the participants,
defined as being a linguistic insider by Cormier (2017), meant that I had a good understanding of their comments regarding English use and English learning objectives due to our shared socio-cultural background (see also Cormier, 2017). Therefore, in order to avoid the loss of any information, I saw it most fruitful to code the data in the same language where the utterances initially made.

In spite of the benefits that being a linguistic insider has, there are disadvantages, i.e. the possibility of being ‘subjective’ (Kanuha, 2000) or ‘biased’ (Bilecen, 2013). As will be discussed further in 6.2.1, subjectivity is qualitative research is inevitable considering the role of the researcher in interpreting meaning. In order to avoid any biased translation into English, all the coded data was also translated by another Iranian friend prior to finalising the findings and was compared against my own translation. There was a general agreement between the two versions of translation and minor differences were discussed and adopted.

### 5.6 Summary and conclusion

This section discussed the use of FGI in the first phase of this study. The criteria for choosing this method related to the research itself and the participants. In terms of the research, FGI are important as a tool to investigate research question one (see 1.2) in addition to making sense of the general atmosphere regarding students’ attitudes towards their current experience of language learning. Although comments such as their preference in a classroom environment have not been systematically analysed and presented, I took them into account in the syllabus design in order to maintain students’ motivation (see 6.2.3). In terms of the participants, FGI were considered as the most appropriate in case of this study due to the comfort they might provide by keeping the participants among their peers while answering the questions. This, in turn, is likely to provide the research with richer set of data as the individuals might find the environment safer to share their information.
Chapter 6: **Methodology - Phase 2**

6.1 **Introduction**

As has been said previously, the whole study was designed as an AR. In this chapter, I will look at the definition of the term, the justification for its use in this study and its limitations. Then I will address the practical side of the research including aims of the syllabus, curriculum issues, and data collection during the course.

The chapter finishes by describing the ethics of the study and process of data analysis related to both phases of the study.

6.2 **Action research**

The general understanding is that the term AR started to be used in the 1930s in the work of John Collier, a commissioner for Indian affairs, followed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. Lewin, who was a social psychologist in the US, believed that people will find more motivation at work if they are involved in making decision about how their workplace is run and conducted research into the effects of getting people involved. The starting point of AR being used in an educational context, specially teaching profession, was the 1950s, with the work of Stephen Corey and his book “Action research to improve school practices” in 1953 (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011).

Although the use of AR is not limited to educational contexts (see, e.g. the work in nursing), education remains the dominant source of AR (Stringer, 2007). Whether AR is used in an educational context or not, it is, as it will be clarified later in this section, a form of educational research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011; McNiff, 2013). According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the number of AR dissertations, as opposed to traditional types, started to increase with higher number of working professionals willing to undertake a doctorate research and at the same time, investigating and making a difference in their own context.
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Stringer (2007: 8) refers to AR as “a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problem”. There are three key features of AR that can be derived from this definition. Firstly, AR is collaborative, i.e., it involves more than one person. Secondly, it is systematic, i.e., it needs planning. Finally, it addresses a problem.

Collaboration, as one of the features of AR, is probably the main point of its differentiation from traditional type of social science where the researcher is positioned as a neutral, value-free operative who only observes, gathers data, and supports evidence for their findings. In contrast, the researcher has the full responsibility of having influence on the research process, on both the researcher’s own learning and other people’s learning in AR (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011; Herr and Anderson, 2015). Two points are brought up in this explanation; one is the influence that the researcher has on the process of the research and the second point is learning, not only related to the participants, but also to the researcher themselves.

The direct influence of the researcher on the research in AR methodology comes from the fact that researcher also plays the role of a practitioner (and vice versa); which is referred to as insider research. In other words, an action researcher sees themselves as a part of the context they are investigating and constantly evaluates and reevaluates his plans as he goes along in the research (McNiff, 2013; McNiff and Whitehead, 2011). Therefore, it is important not only to play the role of an active participant, but also the role of a participant observer (Osborn, 2000). In order to meet this purpose, keeping a diary, where the researcher-practitioner records their observations of the class and possible actions to be taken accordingly has been suggested (Mills, 2006). In line with this, I made entries of my observations of noticeable events after each session. This helped me not only to improve the syllabus and my practice in the classroom to fit a wider range of students, but also made me more aware of my activities as a teacher, both on what I already have done and what I should do to improve (also see, Moon, 2006) (for examples of my reflective journal entries, see appendix K).

As was mentioned in 5.1, AR refers to a type of research where the researcher aims at solving a problem by taking an action based on the problem they have
identified in a particular context. In the case of this research, for example, the issue identified was the lack of intercultural awareness in current Iranian ELT, including both state schools and private language institutes (see chapter 4). Aiming to address the gap and to highlight the role of culture in English learning, a 10-session intervention teaching course was designed. The classes were initially going to take place once a week (about 90 minutes each session), but due to participants' busy timetable, this was changed to incorporate two sessions per week (see 8.2).

While AR is considered insider-research, it should be mentioned that positioning oneself as either an insider or outsider is not an easy task as the criteria for doing so are not clear-cut (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010, 2011). As a researcher-practitioner in this research, for example, I saw myself as an insider, because I actively took part in the research and tried to make an influence. I also viewed myself as an outsider, however, as I often needed to consider the phenomenon and process it from an outsider perspective, in order to evaluate the process, including both my own and the other participants' learning.

Additionally, as an Iranian who was brought up and educated in Iran, I viewed myself as an insider. This is due to sharing similar cultural background including knowledge and understanding of the way educational system works, possible restrictions on what is offered as the teaching material, and dress code. At the same time, my role as researcher from a British university enabled me to view the situation from an outsider perspective and therefore, have more insight into possible ways that language educational system can be improved. Thus, my designed syllabus was inspired by the knowledge which was brought to me from both sides, i.e. my insider and outsider identities. My Iranian identity empowered me with the tool to implement a syllabus which, based on my experience and awareness, suited the context. Examples of this include exclusion of topics which are controversial and are considered problematic according to values of Iranian educational system (see section 4.2) and dressing suitably when acting as the course teacher.

Another approach towards the definition of AR has been focusing on the two elements of action and research; the first word refers to what one does to improve one's practice. The second item 'research' refers to the way one
understands what he does by offering description and explanations for what is happening (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011; McNiff, 2013).

The action part of the process requires the researcher to investigate the situation carefully and think of the underlying reasons for this situation. It might also involve revising one’s own thoughts in light of what is discovered in the investigation (McNiff, 2013). In line with McNiff (2013), Stringer (2007) believes that AR will be ineffective unless social, cultural, interactional, and emotional factors of the specific context that is under investigation are taken into consideration.

This justifies conducting the first phase of data collection in this research (see chapter 5). The FGI s allowed me to familiarise myself with Iranian teenage life and beliefs nowadays and to get an idea of students’ likes and dislikes about the two different teaching ideologies they have experienced. This led me to include specific material and activities in line with students’ preference to increase students’ enthusiasm towards class participation, which is undoubtedly very important (see 6.2.3).

Returning to McNiff’s (2013) lexical division of the term AR, the second word of the phrase ‘research’ refers to data collection and making sense of the data by reflection and finally drawing conclusions based on the data gathered. In case of this research, data will be gathered throughout the sessions using class discussions and students’ reflective writings in the classroom, as well as their assignments (see 6.2.4).

To summarise, we can say that AR is one of the relatively new methods of research, which can be used in almost all disciplines involving human beings. Undoubtedly, what a researcher seeks to find out is a leading factor of in choosing a specific methodology. Therefore, if a practitioner-researcher is to enhance a situation by implementing a certain action that they think will work, they do this action after a thorough investigation of the whole context. They play the role of both an insider and outsider during the whole process as on the one hand, they are involved in the context in order to make a difference; on the other hand, they constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their own learning and other people’s learning. The discrepancy explained between AR and traditional type of social research has led to some criticism against AR. The
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The following section will address these and will explain some of the limitations using such a method brings about.

6.2.1 Limitations of Action Research

The first issue that arises from the dual role of researcher and practitioner is the extent to which analysed data reflects any objective “truth”. This has led to discussions over the subjectivity of such data; the extent to which the presented data is affected by researchers’ own personal ideas (Ladkin, 2005; Stringer, 2014). In response to this criticism, it is worth mentioning that Ladkin (2005) refers to finding “the truth” in answering the questions sought by practitioner-researcher as impossible without the researchers’ own personal ideas. Ideally, the research endeavour aims at finding a balance between researchers’ own stance and objectivity, which can be gained by either questioning others or trying to move beyond one’s own assumptions and preconceptions for judgement (Ladkin, 2005).

Stringer (2014) refers to objectivity of data in AR as not being the main concern of the research, unlike traditional type of researches. Rather, AR aims to reveal the subjective experience of participants. However, he emphasises the importance of objectivity while gaining information from the participants. In other words, the importance of not incorporating one’s personal beliefs and ideas while working with participants has been highlighted. This has led to discussions on generalisation and validity of research, which is discussed further in 11.3. For now, suffice it to say that in this study, I aimed at arriving at a “balance” between subjectivity and objectivity of data (Ladkin, 2005) obtained by checking the consistency of my coding with other PhD fellows and my supervisor (see 6.4).

AR has also been criticised for lack of rigour in its research methods (Burns, 2013). In line with the previous criticism, this is related to the divergence of AR from more conventional type of research. The following quotation by Mertler (2011: 340) makes this issue clearer:

[...] action research does not conform with many of the requirements of conventional research which you may be familiar-it is therefore less structured and more difficult to conduct. Finally, because of the lack of
fit between standard research requirements and the process of conducting action research, you may find it more difficult to write up your results.

In other words, AR only provides a general framework on the process of doing the research. It is the researchers themselves who decide on the methods to be implemented and the ways in which the findings are presented (Burton et al., 2008).

6.2.2 Aims of the syllabus

With the aim of raising Iranian teenagers’ CA, at the heart of this study lies a ten-session intervention teaching and an analysis of its effects on students’ level of CA development.

In order to achieve this goal, I decided to follow the listed objectives adopted from Baker’s (2011a) work described in 3.3.1. The reason for this decision lies in the fact that, to my knowledge, Baker (2011a)’s article of the concept of CA is its most detailed account of its components which both builds on and elaborates previous definitions and takes it one step towards “intercultural awareness”. Baker (2011a: 66) divides his account of the concept into three levels, i.e. basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness and intercultural awareness (see 3.3.1).

The level of intercultural awareness places more emphasis on the emergent nature of culture while having IC, and is, undoubtedly, of great importance in IC. Nevertheless, it has been excluded from the aims of this class, given the fact that these students barely have a chance of participating in IC inside the country (see 1.2 and 6.2.3). Thus, due to its abstract nature, the participants’ age, and their limited (if any) experience of IC reaching this level was not considered achievable.

Instead, I decided to place increased emphasis on developing students’ attitude towards openness and tolerance. As can be inferred from the previous definition of CA (see 3.3.1), attitude is an element of great importance in the conceptualisation of CA. One might argue if one develops the attitude to approach every culture with openness and far from judgement, they will
subsequently develop an awareness of relative nature of culture, individuality of members of a social group or potential danger in stereotypes.

Within this framework, the aims of this course are defined as following:

**Basic cultural awareness**

1. The students can recognise culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values.
2. The students can understand the role that culture plays in interpretation of meaning by every individual.
3. The students can recognise the role that culture plays in inducing certain behaviours, values, and beliefs both in oneself and others.

**Advanced cultural awareness**

4. The students can view the nature of cultural norms as relative.
5. The students can identify individuals as being members of several social groupings at the same time.
6. The students can appreciate possible heterogeneity in any cultural grouping in spite of their belongingness to seemingly one cultural grouping.
7. The students can understand the potential danger laid in stereotypes and have the ability to move beyond this.

**Attitude**

8. The students are tolerant and able to suspend their own beliefs in order to understand someone else’s.
9. The students have the openness to revise their own beliefs if required in light of the understanding of relativeness of cultural norms.
10. The students are able to accept the differences between oneself and others without judgement.

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17 Please note that there is a slight change between the first and final draft of objectives (for the first draft, please appendix D).
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6.2.3 Curriculum issues

In this section, I will briefly go through some curriculum issues as discussed by Byram (1997) while designing material for integrating ICC (thus CA as a main component) into ELT. These are discussed in light of the Iranian context, where this study is conducted.

A. The geo-political context: Teenage learners of English in Iranian society live in a homogenous environment, where the possibility of engaging in IC is limited. Unsurprisingly, language classes in both state schools and private language institutes are homogenous. However, the students who have chosen to learn the language in private language institutes as a complementary resource are generally enthusiastic towards communicating with the outside world and see English as an obligatory tool for reaching this aim.

B. The learning context: For a detailed explanation, please see chapter 4.

C. The developmental factor: As mentioned earlier in 6.2.2, it was decided to exclude level of intercultural awareness (Baker, 2011a) considering the lack of readiness students might have considering their age (16 to 18 years) and their lack of experience in IC, originating from the country’s political situation. This suggests that it might not be an easy task for learners to grasp abstract concepts on culture and it might be helpful to start with more concrete aspects of culture and move on to abstract ones later on in the syllabus.

Considering these points, I designed the following syllabus with the purpose of increasing CA among Iranian teenagers. While designing the syllabus, I tried to incorporate students' preferences based on the data from FGIs (see chapter five). For instance, students clearly stated that their favourite skills to practise in the classroom are speaking and listening. Therefore, as can be seen in table nine, almost all classroom activities call for classroom discussion, and so practising speaking. Additionally, students showed interest towards research-based activities and learning about the traditions of different countries, which I also integrated in the syllabus (see table nine, assignment-session seven and activity 2- session nine, for example).
Please note that the syllabus below is the one enacted in the classroom during the course and includes some adaptations to the original syllabus (see appendix E) due to practical issues (see 8.2).

Table 9. Designed syllabus based on sessions and objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>1. Group discussion on definition of culture</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Videos played: (available on YouTube); each followed by class discussion about a summary of the video.</td>
<td>2, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. “Intercultural Communication: Adventures with Little Pilot”</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. “What kind of Asian are you?”</td>
<td>8, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Working on hand-out (appendix F1, activity A)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Do you agree/disagree?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. What problems do you think this might cause while commutating with non-Iranians?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Reflective writing:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What do you think you have learned this session?</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>1. Follow-up discussion from previous session:</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a. How big/small a cultural group is?</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Is culture dynamic or static?</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Discussion on students’ interpretations of the presented images (appendix F2, activity A)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Do you think the interpretation would be the same with students from a different background than yours?</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Objective</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. How do you think this matters when communication takes place in between people from different backgrounds?</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>“An understanding supervisor” handout (appendix F2, activity B) given to students to study in the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Relevant vocabulary explained.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Reflective writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>For next session:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reading the story “in the gutter” (appendix F9) and think of the following question:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What issues do you think one person might face when he/she first immigrates to a country?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• three</td>
<td>1. Summary of the story “an understanding supervisor” followed by the discussion of given question both in groups and whole class:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What do you think went wrong?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. How does Jabu see herself?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>c. How does Jeremy see her?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Summary of the story “in the gutter” (appendix F9) as a whole-class activity with revising new vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Discussion on the following questions about the story in group:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Family plays a huge role in Firoozeh's family. Is this role as strong in your family?</td>
<td>4 5 6 7 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. How do you think this is different in other countries?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Session Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Who was the most recent immigrant in your family? Are you aware of anything they have done to come to grip with the target country culture?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Reflective writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• four</td>
<td>1. Revising the stories “an understanding supervisor” and “in the gutter” and their main points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Working on the hand-out in groups (Afghan student) (Appendix F3, activity A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a. Share comments as a whole-class activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Working on your hand-out in groups (Abadooloo) (Appendix F3, activity A)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Sharing comments as a whole-class activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Working on “New comer” activity (Appendix F3, activity B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Sharing comments as a whole-class activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Reflective writing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Next session: Read the story “Save me, Mickey” (appendix F9) and think of the following question: What role do television and media play in shaping our assumptions of different societies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Reflective writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• five</td>
<td>1. Summary of the story “Save me, Mickey” and discussing the following questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
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# Chapter 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What was Firoozeh's father biggest fear when moving to America?</td>
<td>9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Where did that come from?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. When you see negative events about another country in the news, what assumptions, if any, do you make about the people of that country?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Has anyone made an assumption about who you are and where you are from based on your appearance?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Have you ever made an assumption about someone else? To what extent did that turn up to be true?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reflective writing</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- six

1. Revising the story “Save me, Mickey” with the class and highlighting the role of media

2. Reading the hand-out (Appendix F4, activity A) and discussing the questions in groups and whole-class

3. Working on the short story “Moments of embarrassment” and discussing the questions in groups and whole-class (appendix F6, activity A) (adapted from Byram and Zarate, 1995)

4. Reflective writing

5. Assignment: Think of a country (wherever you like) that you need to reside in for a year with your parents. What problems do
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seven</td>
<td>you think you might face? How would you deal with them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Revising “moments of embarrassment” and working on question C and D as time ran out in the previous session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Watching the video “studying in the UK: pros and cons” (available on YouTube) and taking notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Would you choose to study in the UK? Why or why not? (group and whole-class discussion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Where do you stand” activity (appendix F7, activity A) - (there was only enough time to go through the first sentence) (adapted from Brander et al., 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assignment: Do a research on different aspects of family life in the UK (for example, family structure, family gatherings, wedding ceremonies, etc) using the internet (or any other resource you think that is valid) How are your findings similar/different from your culture as an individual?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reflective writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Presentation of findings on the previous assignment by a student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Division of the students into groups to discuss the following question:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How similar/different are your findings to hers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To what extent do you think this information is helpful if you travel to the UK?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Whole-class discussion about the questions above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Students’ group discussion about two to three themes that came up in the questions above within their own families (followed by whole-class discussion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Reflective writing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Assignment: Write the following letters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. You are staying with a British family as a university student in London. Write a letter to your friend in Iran and explain your experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. You are a Brit staying with an Iranian family as a university student in Tehran. Write a letter to your friend in the UK and explain your experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(adapted from Duffy and Mayes, 2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Summary of previous session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Working on critical incidents hand-outs (appendix F8, activity A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What has happened/ has gone wrong? (Group and whole-class discussion)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Sociogram activity as a basis for class discussion (multiple entities, codes of behaviour, culture at group level, and instances of inappropriate behaviours in different occasions)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Session 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(appendix F5, activity A) (adapted from Hall and Toll, 1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reflective writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Revision of the discussed by eliciting from the students the covered</td>
<td>1. Brief summary of all listed objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topics during the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students are divided in two groups. Each group will be given the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following books:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A: Saudi Arabian Schools’ English, American Headway 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B: Senior English for China, Top Notch 2A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students discuss the following questions in their groups:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Looking at the images and skimming through the content:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What do you think the cultural focus of every book is?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To what extent do you think they are useful for preparing students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for their future use of English (including communication)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Class discussion about the given books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Final reflective writing based on all previous reflective writings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on all previous reflective writings given to each student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Class discussion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What did you like about the course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What did you dislike about the course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. How do you think it could have improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.4 Data collection during the course

A key aspect while gathering data for AR is to keep accurate records of learning of both oneself and others as they go along in the project; this is to show the developmental nature of the work (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). In the case of this research, I gathered data in two ways and for two purposes.

The first type of data, which was in line with McNiff and Whitehead's (2010) suggestions, was collected with the purpose of documenting my own learning and consisted of journal entries I made at the end of each session by myself. In this journal, I noted any striking events, which I observed in that particular session related to students' personalities, behaviours, or reactions to certain tasks. Where possible, I tried to take action based on these points for the following session. Examples include trying to involve less active students in the classroom discussion and adapting the language used in the classroom to students' level. Additionally, this journal helped me in making sense of the data I collected from the students, especially in comparing my notes on students' personalities with their development during the course (see chapter nine) (see appendix K, for examples of journal entries).

The second type of data, which comprises the main body of data for this research, is the evidence collected from students. Possible methods of assessing intercultural development were discussed in 3.3.2, where I showed that the existing methods include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. For the purpose of this research, qualitative data was collected due to the richness it can provide. For the purpose of triangulation (see 3.3.2), data was collected in three different forms including audio-recordings of the sessions, reflective writings of students at the end of each session, and written assignments. In doing this, I aimed to capture the ongoing nature of assessment by including both classroom observation and students' self-assessment.

It should be mentioned that the initial plan was to video-record the classes as well as audio recordings. That was mainly for the purpose of transcription facilitation plus the possibility of noting verbal indications of agreement and
disagreement, and of students’ engagement. However, this plan was vetoed by institute regulations.

6.3 Ethics of the study

In line with the regulations of the University of Southampton, ethical clearance was obtained before commencing this study. The relevant forms were filled in for both phases of study, submitted and approved by Ethics Committee, with Ethics ID 6253 (See appendix G).

All the potential participants were given an information sheet (see appendix G) prior to their agreement to take part. Additionally, I ensured the comprehensibility of the information sheet by oral explanation in Farsi. This is in line with Abott and Sapsford (2006) and Dörnyei (2003) discussion on meeting ethics during a research with participants having sufficient information prior to data collection. In order to guarantee students’ anonymity, they were all given pseudonyms and the pseudonyms will be used throughout during the data analysis.

Regarding the first phase of study, FGIs were all conducted in participants’ first language to ensure the maximum level of comfort in providing a non-judgemental and non-threatening environment, where they can express their ideas with no worries about their language. This was facilitated by my attitude towards the participants, where I tried to show myself as friendly and genuinely interested in their ideas.

One might argue, in case of the second phase of study, that the gap between the current practice in Iranian educational setting and the designed course content might lead to students’ discomfort during the lessons. Although this is particularly different from state schools’ syllabus, these participants had already been exposed to a very different type of material via attending classes in private institutes. This can be interpreted not only as their interest in improving their language, but also their possible curiosity and openness to experience something different from what they are often exposed at state schools. It should be noticed that students’ interest to know about different countries internationally appeared as one of the most salient codes when they were asked to describe their favourite topics in the focus group interviews.
Although their expectations were limited to essentialist picture of culture such as different countries' histories or foods, this can be interpreted as students' curiosity and willingness to learn about new topics. As explained in 5.1, one of the purpose of the interviews, in addition to investigating their objectives for learning English (research question one), was to investigate the setting and students’ attitude towards the experience of learning English.

In my experience of teaching in the course, the students generally appeared comfortable. Moreover, they were given the chance to withdraw at any time as stated in the consent form (appendix G).

### 6.4 Data analysis

Given the explanatory nature of the study, data collected in both phases of the study were treated as qualitative. Both data sets were transcribed as soon as possible after each session, while the information was still fresh in my mind. Students’ assignments and reflective writings were also transcribed to facilitate further analysis. The next step was to import them to NVIVO. Due to the huge amount of data, this software proved to be very useful in data storage and arrangement (see also Baker, 2009).

It should be stated that they are currently a number of CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative analysis software) including Atlas, MAXqda, and NVivo available for analysing qualitative data. As Gibbs (2007) notes, all the mentioned software have similar features. However, as the most powerful tool for searching functions (Gibbs, 2007), NVivo was chosen as the main software for the purpose of study. To be more precise, NVivo enables its users to conduct matrix searching (Gibbs, 2007), which proved to be very useful for comparison purposes among focus group interviews in phase one and individuals in phase two respectively. The only shortcoming of this software is its incompatibility with right to left languages like Farsi, which made me transliterate all FGIs transcripts, which were initially written in Farsi. Like any other software, NVivo does not do the work of analysis and that can differ from one study to the other depending on the research concerns and researchers. Therefore, the rest of this section has been allocated to clarifying the concept of coding and how they are developed in this study.
In the same way as for most types of qualitative data, coding was the next step. Codes, which have been defined as “topical markers” for the purpose of locating places where specific issues come up in the data, are of two main types including inductive and deductive (Hennink et al., 2011; Miles et al., 2014). Inductive and deductive codes have also been referred to as data-driven and concept-driven (Gibbs, 2007). For the purpose of this research, I made use of a mixed method of both inductive and deductive codes for both sets of data.

In terms of FGIs, for example, I started by a set of deductive parent codes based on the interview scheme and the research questions. This included English learning Objectives, Cultural experience, Present use of English, and Their preferences in an ideal classroom setting. These were subdivided into a series of descriptive codes, and put under the relevant parent node. This embodies the most common process in any first cycle of coding (Gibbs, 2007; Miles et al., 2014).

The process of analysis is not a straightforward one and it often requires going through the texts repeatedly to find out the possible links between the segments of data plus the underlying meanings (Rampton, 2006; Saldana, 2013). As Richards (2003) puts it, qualitative analysis is made in a step by step process. I re-read and restructured my codes as I progressed in the process of data analysis, trying to find links between inductive and deductive codes, links between my codes and theory and merging overlapping codes. It was also at the final stages of coding cycle of FGIs, for example, where I incorporated ideal-selves’ theory (see 3.6) as the one which suited my bottom-up codes most and served my research question best. This stage can be considered the one of creating theoretical constructs. These are made after putting a group of relevant codes together, which is path to understanding themes more deeply by taking them to a more abstract stage (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

If we consider the first and final version of the code book, it can be seen that certain codes such as Preferences in a curriculum initially contained some descriptive codes with no particular order. This was changed into a more systemic categorisation of such opinions in the final draft. Additionally, parent nodes such as Learning Motivation and Learning Objectives were merged in the final draft because of the big conceptual overlap both the parent node labels and the sub-codes had. They were both captured under the theory of possible
Chapter 6

selves in the final draft (To see the first and final draft of the scheme code for FGIs, see appendix H).

A similar process applied to analysing data in the second phase of study. My first codes were driven by the initial set of objectives in my teaching framework. In order to avoid imposing a series of pre-defined codes on my data and to keep myself open to emergent data (Baker, 2009; Saldana, 2013), I also coded any interesting pieces of information I came across while analysing data. This resulted in a set of mainly descriptive (or In Vivo) codes.

In the long process of data analysis in this phase of the study, my main parent nodes stayed the same as my framework (basic and advanced cultural awareness plus attitudes). However, the details (child nodes) went through several changes. Through this process, I made sure to keep track of any changes in a separate word document. In this process, I was inspired both by my supervisors’ feedback and that of some fellow PhD students. Their guidance did not only help me in furthering my analytic depth (Gibbs, 2007; Richards, 2015), but also contributed towards the reliability of the analysis. (For the first and final draft of scheme of codes, see appendix I).

As can be seen in appendix I, the main changes that the codes underwent through the process relate to moving from the more descriptive level of simply putting relevant codes under relevant objectives based in the framework towards a more abstract level of realising how these categories could be structured to reflect levels of development. In other words, it was through the process of re-reading and re-structuring the codes that I realised the ambiguity and overlap of some of my codes and decided to more clearly define and/or to merge codes. In addition, I developed detailed research questions under the general question I had in mind “can a course make a difference in developing students’ level of cultural awareness?”

Reliability, which has been defined as consistency (sustainability) in coding, can be checked in different ways (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003; Richards, 2015). Before going into details, it is important to note that such checks do not reduce the subjectivity of qualitative analysis based on an individual’s interpretations. Rather, they seek to ensure that different chunks of data are coded in the same way all the way through the analysis. Therefore, their
purpose is to make a robust rationalisation criterion for coding (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003; Joffe and Yardley, 2004; Richards, 2015).

For the purpose of this research, I followed Richards’s (2015) suggestion of asking a fellow PhD researcher to code some transcripts using my coding scheme (i.e., code definitions and examples) (see appendix I-final draft of the scheme of codes). I tried to include a wide range of documents including classroom transcripts, reflective writings, and assignments. The codes document was compared against my coding and the differences were discussed. Generally speaking, a high number of similarities were found. As mentioned earlier, I also made use of both my supervisors’ and other PhD researchers’ feedback through the process of data analysis to check consistency. All mentioned factors helped me in producing the final draft of the scheme of codes, based on a robust operationalisation criteria (see 8.5).

6.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter was presented in attempt to clarify the second phase of this study in details, as well as discussing AR in more general terms, including the rationale for its use and its possible limitations. In line with this, the implemented syllabus in this research based on the framework adapted from Baker’s (2011a) was discussed. The methods chosen to collect data which allows the assessment of CA in this research were described.

The final sections of this chapter discussed research ethics of this study and data analysis, which relate to both phases of studies. The latter leads me to describe the findings of the two mentioned phases, which were brought about by application of the mentioned data analysis procedure.
Chapter 7: Findings - Phase 1

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at answering RQ1, i.e. “what are students’ English learning objectives in relationship to culture?” In the previous sections (see section 2.2; 3.6), I have discussed the relevance of culture as a core concept in IC, to language learners’ motivation, as well as the process of moving beyond Gardner’s idea of integrative motivation in the current era of globalisation. In line with this, Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system and within this the theory of L2 ideal selves were introduced and I have argued that this theory seems to fit the nature of English language learning, which is not limited to communicating with “native speakers” of the community anymore. As Ryan (2006: 40) summarises

Instead of describing motivation in terms of a desire to integrate externally, this model is based on the learner as a social being, as a real member of an imagined community attempting to square hopes and aspirations with perceived responsibilities and obligations as members of that community.

Due to the reasons mentioned above (also see 3.6) and the nature of RQ1, I chose to apply the theory of ideal selves. The suitability of this theory lies not only in being able to present a comprehensive picture of students’ learning objectives, but also in reflecting a clear picture of students’ possible uses of English in the future. This enables me to discuss language use in relationship with culture and IC. Having this theory in mind, two main themes including PRIVATE and PROFESSIONAL selves were identified while analysing data. Before going into more details about the themes established in this area, I will provide some more information about the FGs, i.e. on participants, number of groups, and the research site. This will be followed by a detailed analysis of themes and emerging patterns established through a content analysis of interview data of the conducted FGIs. I will end this chapter by giving a summary of what the themes establish signify in light of intercultural language education and the context of this study.
Chapter 7

7.2 Focus Groups: Main Study

I visited the research site for the main data collection in March 2013. As plans do not always go as expected, no one except one student contacted me by the deadline noted in the poster (see 5.4). However, sharing the poster on my Facebook account and asking for participants, the supervisor of one private institute (a previous colleague of mine) contacted me to offer help. Thus, she advertised the research again in the language institute and arranged for two of the interview sessions to take place there.

The other two interviews took place in two different schools; one of which was the one where pilot interview had been conducted, and access to the final school location was made possible through a connection who introduced me to the school principal, who agreed to granting me access.

I would like to point out that I decided on the total number of sessions as four, as this is where previous studies place the saturation point, i.e. the point where no new information is gained through more interviews (Bowen, 2008). There were several practical restrictions that made using the teaching settings the only viable option; most notably were the concerns of parents and school principals regarding the students' whereabouts. One interview had to be dismissed from the data collection as several students left before the interview was complete; the reason for this was that the session had taken longer than anticipated and students needed to catch their buses to go home.

The following tables are provided to present the demographic information of the participants involved in every group. All the participants in the all groups were female. Additionally, all were students of English in private language institutes, as well as attending state schools, at the time of the interview.

Table 10. Focus group one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laleh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahshid</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooneh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name (Pseudonym)</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>English level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morvarid</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Upper-intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Focus group two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sima</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golnar</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Upper-intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leila</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarina</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Focus group three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zahra</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7

Table 13. Focus group four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azar</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shima</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roza</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that the theoretical framework underlying the data analysis, as well as the information regarding FGI participants have been established, I will move on to clarify the themes established through content analysis of the FGI data.

7.3 **Ideal selves: Private**

I established the theme *IDEAL SELVES PRIVATE* to capture those views that the participants have of themselves in the future regarding the use of English in their private aspect of lives. In total, the number of references to this theme outnumbered the ones to the theme *PROFESSIONAL IDEAL SELVES* (see 7.4) by a ratio of 50/43. We might speculate on several reasons for this difference. Firstly, as Dunkel et al. (2006) explain, possible selves evolve in adolescents along with their identity highlighting the choice they envisage for their futures. In other words, the notion of possible selves equips adolescents with tools to explore their (future) identities. Considering ideal selves, as a sub-group to possible selves, it is not surprising for the identity formation in teenagers to mainly involve private than professional aspects. Secondly, as Dörnyei (2009b) explains, films and TV can also affect the shaping of possible selves. Considering the background of FG participants, i.e. middle class families who can afford private language courses, it is very likely that they have access to satellite TV, which gives them a view to the outside world. This might also contribute towards some of the sub-themes established under the node of *PRIVATE IDEAL SELVES*, such as *INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP* and *TRAVELLING ABROAD* discussed in 7.3.1 and 7.3.3.
Three child nodes including INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP, EMIGRATION, and TRAVELLING ABROAD emerged while analysing the data related to this code, each of which is introduced and discussed below.

7.3.1 Intercultural friendship

In line with Yashima (2002), this sub-theme can be best defined as the participants' eagerness and interest to communicate with people from a different nationality than theirs; i.e. the willingness to get to know other people from a different national background without any overt pressure to do so.

Among the three sub-themes mentioned, INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP had the highest number of references, i.e. 20/50. However, the references were distributed unevenly among the four FGI s. While FG3 had the highest number of references (10), no reference at all to INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP was made in FG1. As will be discussed later in this chapter, participants in FG1 overall appeared to be the least intrinsically motivated and thus least active FG. This trend continued through all the other existing sub-themes.

To be precise, the sub-theme INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP was brought up by 7 out of 17 participants in total, who were distributed in FG 2-4. Although this issue was not brought up by all the participants in FG 2-4 (N=12), the frequency of references which was brought up by the ones who did mention this stands as the highest rate of frequency between the existing child nodes as mentioned earlier (ratio: 20/50). This is suggestive of the importance of this sub-theme for these participants. In order to exemplify what is meant by this category, some extracts from the participants will be presented below:

Extract 7.1

Well, their (the foreigners’) culture is interesting for me. At first, when chat rooms used to be accessible, I used to chat very often...but now

---

18 The ratios are representative of the number of the sub-theme under discussion in relationship to the number of references in the parent theme (e.g., intercultural friendship/private selves).

19 All extracts presented in this chapter are translated as the interviews were conducted in Farsi for sake of participants’ convenience.
that they have been filtered, the only way to chat (with them) is via Facebook.

(Golnar, FG2)

There are two issues worth discussing in this extract. Firstly, we can see Golnar’s interest in getting to know people from a different culture than hers. This interest extends far enough for her to use the internet to go online and make some virtual friends. The second issue raised relates to current censorship in Iran. The reason why access to these chat rooms is banned is an issue which might be traceable in the country’s political situation (for more on context, see chapter 4). It is worth noting that access to Facebook itself is also banned in Iran; however, based on my personal experience and observation, the majority of people still use and access it through a different software.

The second extract is from Zahra who explains this as one of the activities she would have included if she were an English teacher:

Extract 7.2

….having video chat with English learners all over the world…this would be very interesting.

(Zahra, FG3)

Although this extract does not directly imply Zahra’s intention herself to use English in the future, proposing this activity as something she would add in her class if she were an English teacher is an indicator of her own interest to be in touch with people from different countries as a language learner. This can be confirmed while she mentions the extract below in a separate part of the interview:

Extract 7.3

I really enjoy when I can communicate with a foreigner- even at a basic level.

(Zahra, FG3)
The final extract is representative of another aspect of INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP and was taken from FG4:

**Example 7.4**

*English is needed often, like Farsi. Generally, if you go on a trip abroad, which has increased these days, you need to know it. And then, if you want to communicate with a friend or someone, you need to know it.*

(Sara, FG4)

*Sara* describes her process of language learning as a “need” rather than an “interest” in this interview. However, the fact that she equates the necessity of knowing English to that of knowing her L1, Farsi, and follows this up by references to “travelling abroad” and “communication with friends”, could be interpreted as reflecting her desire to overcome language barriers to connect to people with a different mother tongue than hers, and thus as establishing for herself a global identity.

After the discussion of the concept of INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP and what it meant for the participants, I will now move on to introduce the sub-theme EMIGRATION.

### 7.3.2 Emigration

This was the second most frequently occurring sub-theme among the discussed parent node (ratio: 16/50). Again, its prevalence might be related to the participants’ educated, fairly affluent, middle class background which in the Iranian context seems to support being critical towards society’s events and atmosphere. On the other hand, as has been shown by Zentner and Renaud (2007), parents have a crucial role in shaping adolescents’ ideal selves. Therefore, embracing emigration as an option for the future might have been affected by the families’ environment.

In contrast to the previous sub-theme, this one was brought up in all the FG interviews, with all 4 participants in FG2 mentioning this as the maximum and only one participant from both FG1 and FG3 bring this issue up as the minimum. Thus, the total number of participants who referred to EMIGRATION as
an objective for their language learning is nine. What follows next, is a few extracts from the participants:

**Extract 7.5**

*I registered (for language institutes) because I want to emigrate in the future. I am not that interested (in learning English) but I have no way; I need to learn.*

(Mahshid, FG1)

*Mahshid* appears to be least intrinsically motivated due to her lack of interest in learning English and stating her intention to emigrate as the only reason which forces her to do this. She probably does not have a clear idea of where she would like to move to in the future; yet, she sees English as an asset to pave the way for her realising her intentions.

**Extract 7.6**

*Anywhere you go you need to be talking in English. Because you can't speak in Arabic, for example. English is spoken in almost all the countries.*

(Mona, FG3)

In line with what was described by *Mahshid* in the previous extract, *Mona* is also referring to the importance of knowing English due to its use as a lingua franca. In order to make herself clearer, she compares English with Arabic, which is also taught along with English as a foreign language in the schools. However, based on my experience and observation, students do not show much interest towards its learning due to the limited use they see for it in their future and little cultural appeal it has to them compared to English. Although *Mona* did not refer to Arabic anywhere else during the interview, my understanding of example 7.5 was she meant to highlight little use of learning Arabic for their future.

Having discussed emigration leads me to the final part of this section **TRAVELLING ABROAD**, which stood at the lowest number of frequency within the discussed parent node (ratio: 14/50). The point of similarity to **EMIGRATION** lies in participants’ openness to experience a country other than their own, but the
important difference lies in the fact that they are not willing to leave their country permanently or for a longer stretch of time. This might have various reasons including higher levels of satisfaction with their home country, compared to the ones who do want to emigrate, and emotional dependence on family members.

### 7.3.3 Travelling abroad

While the participants did not specify what countries they would like to visit, they perceived English as a useful tool to facilitate meeting this future objective.

In a similar way to emigration, this sub-theme came up in all the FG interviews (ratio: 14/50). Interestingly, the highest and lowest number of participants who brought this up per group is the same as for the previous discussed sub-theme; i.e., all four participants in FG2 assumed English to be important while travelling abroad in the future, whereas only one participant out of the five and four participants in FG1 and FG3 respectively saw this important. What is more, those individual participants who brought travelling abroad up in FG1 and FG3 are the same ones who mention emigration as one of their English learning objectives, i.e., Mahshid in FG1 and Mona in FG3. Another point of similarity between emigration and travelling abroad is their close frequency of occurrence rate (16/50 to 14/50). Whether this implies a correlation between willingness to immigrate and willingness to travel abroad is an issue that might need further investigation, but for now, I will move on to present some extracts:

**Extract 7.7**

*If we couldn’t go for studying abroad, we must travel abroad often. We need to know English.*

(Shima, FG4)

As can be seen, Shima refers to travelling abroad as an alternative option for not being able to pursue further education abroad. This, again, implies the possible link between travelling abroad and emigration: preferably, Shima likes to experience living and studying abroad; but if she could not do so for any
reason, she would instead like to travel abroad often. Although Shima’s primary reference is studying abroad, the fact that she mentions frequent abroad trips as a way to compensate her possible inability to do this is an indicator that she values the experience of living abroad at the same level as (if not higher than) educational value, linking this also to a willingness to – at least temporarily – emigrate.

**Extract 7.8**

*Well, English is an international language. In almost every country, it’s either second or maybe the official language. It’s very useful for communication.*

(Sarina, FG2)

*Sarina* does not specify where exactly she would like to use her English but her references to the use of English in different countries makes TRAVELLING ABROAD as one of the possible interpretations. She also mentions the wide use of English all over the world, which refers to the issue of ELF.

Now that the concept of private selves plus its sub-themes have been discussed, I will move on to introduce the second main theme created in relationship to theory of ideal selves as participants’ English learning objectives: PROFESSIONAL SELVES.

### 7.4 Ideal selves: Professional

As mentioned in 7.3, this parent node stood at a lower rate of frequency compared to PRIVATE SELVES (ratio: 43/50). Due to the participants’ age, it is probably understandable that their PROFESSIONAL SELVES are less developed than their private ones (see 7.3). Context might also be an important factor in developing this self-image and the directions it takes.

In some countries, for example, it is very common for teenagers to have a summer job or take part in an internship during their school time. As expected, such an experience is useful in helping the students establish their likes and dislikes for future jobs and introduce them to the professional work sphere. In the context of this study, the tendency is for students to be sent to
some extracurricular classes rather than practical jobs in middle class families and even more so in the case of girls. Other than social factors beyond the scope of this discussion here, this can also be due to university entrance exam at the age of 18, in which achieving a good grade is very important to enter a highly-ranked university. It is noticeable that according to the 2011 census, of the ten million Iranians considered as highly educated aged 17-31, the majority (i.e. 3,160,000) are female, compared to 2,740,000 highly educated men (Khabaronline, 2013). This, again, might root in different social reasons, including men’s eagerness to find a job and earn money at an earlier age due to rate of unemployment among educated people.

What is important is a similar trend emerging from the FGI. Between the two sub-themes including EDUCATION and JOB, which belong to PROFESSIONAL SELVES, the number of references where EDUCATION was brought up was almost twice as high as the references of bringing up JOB (ratio: 27/16). Overall, 11 participants talked about EDUCATION compared to eight participants mentioning JOB issues.

The following sections will provide more detail on these two sub-themes, i.e. EDUCATION and JOB.

7.4.1 Education

This theme refers to references where participants name English as a way to succeed in education. This includes either getting a scholarship and going abroad, studying in Iran itself, or pursuing language as a field of study at the university.

As mentioned in 7.4, 27 references out of the 43 references in PROFESSIONAL SELVES were allocated to EDUCATION. EDUCATION was mentioned by the majority of participants (11 interviewees with one participant from FG1 and four from both FG2 and FG3), which might refer to the importance of higher education among Iranian girls, explained in 7.4. In order to give a clearer picture of how important participants see English for their further education, I will present some extracts below:

20 my translation
Chapter 7

Extract 7.9

*These days the level education has gone up; being literate is not knowing $2 \times 2 = 4$ anymore.....literacy is knowing a few foreign languages.*

(Golnar, FG2)

*Golnar* refers to two issues here. Firstly, the generally higher level of education, specifically among girls. Secondly, she also seems to value how she is seen in the society; namely as ‘fully literate’ in her definition. To be more precise, in contrast with studying abroad, for example, where the drive seems to be mainly intrinsic among the participants, *Golnar*’s picture of her educated self seems to have also been affected externally; she would like to be seen as an educated person in the eyes of society.

Extract 7.10

*...A lot of reference books in the good majors, like medicine, of our field (natural science) is in English. We need to know English because of them.*

(Susan, FG3)

Picturing herself studying in her favourite of her field in the future, *Susan* sees English an obligatory tool in order to expand her knowledge and be successful in her major.

Extract 7.11

*...it has also been a last choice as a university field for me....if I cannot get to study in any other subject there, I can study English.*

(Laleh, FG1)

Apart from her personal interest of studying English, which *Laleh* mentioned earlier in the interview, she also referred to her alternative choice of English as a university field if she could not get in her favourite major at the university. This refers to the issue of university entrance exam and the existing competition in order to have a good place at the university (see 7.4).

Students also see English as a subject, which would help them to have a better score at the university entrance exam:
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**Extract 7.12**

*We can be successful at university entrance exam.*

(Mona, FG3)

English is among the many other subjects that students are tested on at this exam and having a high score in this will help the students to have a better overall score.

The presented extracts all discussed the use of English in participants’ education inside the country. Some other references refer to English being involved in their educational side of life if they go abroad:

**Extract 7.13**

*If possible, I would like to go abroad for postgraduate study; I would need it then.*

(Azar, FG4)

Whether doing a degree inside Iran or abroad, Susan sees English as a tool enabling her to present her work outside Iran:

**Example 7.14**

...*English is spoken in a lot of international conferences because it is a global language. If I want to be successful in the future and want to attend a good conference, I need to know English. If I want to present something, I need to know English.*

(Susan, FG3)

As can be seen, Susan does not mention whether she would like to continue her education inside or outside the country. What she pictures herself doing though is presenting at good international conferences, for which she will need English. Considering the age group of participants, this is an advanced picture of PROFESSIONAL SELF, which might be due to the participant’s background. It is not very common for a participant of that age to know about international conferences, never mind imagining themselves at one, unless they hear of them from someone around either in family or at school.
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Having explained the picture of educated selves described by the participants leads me to the last section of this chapter, which is devoted to the second and final sub-theme, brought up under the parent node of PROFESSIONAL SELVES.

7.4.2 Job

This theme had a lower rate of frequency compared to EDUCATION (ratio: 16/27). Likewise, it was mentioned by fewer participants; while educated selves was mentioned by eleven participants in total, the use of English for a future job was brought up by eight participants.

Participants seem to see English being involved in their future job in two possible ways. Firstly, they are looking at the use of the language practically in the position they would like to have; this was the case for the majority of participants who brought this up. Secondly, they see knowing English as an advantage to have in their CVs, even though they are not sure how exactly they are going to make use of it. The examples below aim to clarify this categorisation further:

Extract 7.15

*For me, it’s for my job.*

(Roza, FG4)

Roza mentioned earlier in the interview that she would like to be an English teacher in the future. In fact, she was going to take the university entrance exam for languages so that she can do English at the university. Therefore, she sees improving her English as a must in order to be successful in her job.

Extract 7.16

*You can teach (English) abroad, if you at least have CAE certificate.*

(Golnar, FG2)

In the same way as Roza, Golnar is also thinking of the practical use of her English in her job as language teacher and the possibility of living abroad.

Extract 7.17
The majority of reference books which we want to read in the future is in English; we need to know the language to read them ….a medical doctor who knows English is better (than the one who doesn’t).

(Mona, FG3)

Seeing herself being a general physician as her favourite job in the future, Mona discusses the importance of language in order to be able to expand her knowledge (thus use the language practically) in order to be a successful person in her profession.

As mentioned earlier in the section, there were also examples of seeing English as positive point for having a better CV:

**Extract 7.18**

*It is good to have this so that we promote our CV.*

(Sarina, FG2)

Sarina clearly mentions the importance of having English in order to have a better CV without really mentioning how she would like to use it. When asked if she thinks there is any other use in her job rather than CV she explained:

**Extract 7.19**

*We would be engineers and knowing English would be very useful in getting in touch with other abroad and setting contracts with them. That would promote our position a lot.*

(Sarina, FG2)

In the same way as Mona (extract 7.17) who relates knowing English to having a better position in her favourite job “medical doctor”, Sarina sees herself being a more successful engineer if she knows English.

The discussion of findings up to this point shows the themes emerging under the analysed codes and highlights what they mean in the context of this study. In the final section of this chapter, I will present a summary of the pattern found per focus group, followed by an interpretation of these findings with regard to research questions.
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7.5 Summary and conclusion

As mentioned in 7.3.1, FG1 had the lowest number of contributions to the discussion of all the groups. Reasons for this might lie in the way that the interview was arranged; the students in this group were prompted by the principal of their school to take part. Moreover, while only two participants in FG1 related their English learning objectives to their images of future selves, all participants in the remaining three groups had at least two objectives which related to their ideal selves, either PROFESSIONAL or PRIVATE.

![Figure 3. Summary of focus group interviews](image)

As can be seen in the graph and explained in 7.3, the majority of references reflected the participants’ PRIVATE SELVES. While three sub-themes were identified for PRIVATE SELVES, only two appeared to be mentioned as participants’ PROFESSIONAL SELVES. This might be because of participants’ young age, when possible PROFESSIONAL SELVES are not yet fully developed. In fact, the only group where the number of references to PROFESSIONAL SELVES outnumbered PRIVATE ones was FG3, in which many references to EDUCATION can be observed. Due to the high importance and value of education in Iran (see 7.4), many participants, i.e. 11 out of 17, related English to their picture of their own educated selves in the future. This varied from knowing a foreign language as
an asset or a form of knowledge in itself to the practical use of it in university entrance exam in order to obtain a higher grade.

Getting back to the first research question i.e. “what are students' English learning objectives”, we can say that objectives seem to vary from PRIVATE to PROFESSIONAL SELVES in this sample; PRIVATE SELVES seems to have a more highlighted role. Among PRIVATE SELVES, INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP followed by EMIGRATION both play important roles. While EMIGRATION showed a lower number of references, it was brought up in all the interviews. INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP, on the other hand, had the highest number of references, yet no participant in FG1 mentioned it.

In line with the increase of the value of education in the country, participants also seem to be seeking to reach their images educated selves. In order to do that, they considered knowing English as a must. The mentioned RQ is discussed in detail in 10.2. For now, I will move on to describe the findings related to the second phase of the study, i.e. teaching intervention.
Chapter 8: Findings- Phase 2: General themes

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results found in the main phase of the fieldwork; i.e. during the teaching intervention. I will start by giving some details on the setting including the access process and some details on the participants.

Having done this, I will provide my operationalised definition of basic and advanced cultural awareness, which builds the basis of my coding while analysing data. The rest of the chapter presents the found themes according to the research questions. This consists of definition of culture at basic and advanced levels and attitudes towards IC.

In short, this chapter attempts to shed some light on RQ 2 to 4 after giving some insight into the setting of the study, participants, and the operationalisation system for the created codes:

2. What are Iranian teenage students’ perception of culture?
3. In which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through the teaching intervention?
4. To what extent did the course encourage the desired attitude(s) for successful intercultural communication?

8.2 Research site

As can be inferred from the general atmosphere dominant within the educational system of Iran (see also chapter 4), finding access to an organisation where I could conduct my course was not easy. Due to the limitations governmental organisations or state schools understandably have in following the syllabus that has been approved by the Ministry of Education, I decided to approach private language institutes. This was because from my experience, they seemed to be more flexible in the syllabus they implement and also, because all students at private language institutes also attend regular
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English classes at schools, which meant a more advanced level of English. At first, however, the result was not promising. Having contacted several language institutes via emails and phone calls about the possibility of conducting such a course in their organisation, I did not receive many responses. The ones I did hear back from generally withdrew after finding out that I was planning to use a syllabus other than their own.

As a result of not succeeding in conducting the course in any of my contacted organisations, I had started thinking of a backup plan, i.e. to run the course privately without it being set in any official institute. It was during that time I contacted an organisation known as “semi-governmental” as the last resource. I was asked to send them my CV and a proposal of the course. I also included a letter of recommendation and endorsement from my supervisor. To my surprise, the school got back to me after a week saying they were interested. Whether it was the recommendation letter, the fact that this organisation lists “research work” as a part of its aims, or a combination of both, I was extremely happy and relieved after I found the suitable setting after searching for about five months.

I was offered to run the course with a group of upper-intermediate teenagers (as I had asked), who were already doing a course related to the institute itself. This meant that I had to share the class with the main teacher. Due to students’ busy timetable, it was very unlikely to get them to come to the institute on days other than their main course. Additionally, I had to finish my course before their final exam because of the likelihood of many students going away on holiday after the course finished. Due to these limitations, it was agreed that I run the course in five weeks (two sessions per week as their main class) in which I was given sixty minutes.

In short, some adaptations to my original research plan were necessary. While I was initially planning to have ten sessions of ninety minutes during ten weeks, the length of the course was reduced to five weeks due to reasons mentioned above. Additionally, the time for each session was sixty minutes due to the main teacher and I splitting the time of the class into two slots of one hour. Overall, however, despite these changes my intended curriculum could be successfully adapted and implemented.
8.3 Teaching approach

During all the sessions, I adopted a student-centred approach and reduced my own talking time to give the participants as much chance as possible to speak and express their opinions. This is in reaction to the fact that situational factors are important for students' willingness to talk in the classroom, i.e. students are more active in student-centred classes (Cao and Philp, 2006; Lee and Ng, 2010; Riasati, 2013). Giving students many opportunities to participate in the sessions' discussion was of great importance to me; not only to keep my participants' interest during the sessions, but also to keep my collected data to the maximum.

The interpretations of what includes a student-centred approach differ in the literature (Loyens and Rikers, 2011) but what I focused on in this context is encouraging students to “actively engage with the learning material” (Severiens et al., 2015: 2). I tried to fulfil this aim using the following strategies (see also Baeten et al., 2013).

1. Using teaching material which engages students in constructing knowledge rather than reproducing knowledge (Struyven et al., 2006). The examples of such an approach include session one, where I asked students to come up with their own definition of culture, session five, where students were encouraged to reflect on and share their personal experience of making assumptions, and session eight, where students were encouraged within their groups to find out the differences on different genres among their families (For details on the syllabus, see 6.2.3).

2. Using authentic assignments which involve active participation of learners in the learning process by browsing and incorporating data from the outside resources (Struyven et al., 2008). Examples of this include session seven, where students were given a task to do a research about different aspects of family life in the UK (see table nine).

In order to create a non-threatening and secure environment for students to maximise their participation in the discussion (Peng, 2012), I included many pair and group activities in the syllabus. Different researchers have highlighted the importance of such activities in increasing students’
willingness to participate (Cao and Philp, 2006; Riazi and Riasati, 2007; Riasati, 2013), but it is worth noting that in the majority of Iranian schools, a teacher-centred is adopted, with not much chance for students to interact. This is one of the reasons why many students choose to go to extra language evening classes (see chapter 4). Therefore, as was shown in some students' feedback (e.g., ex. 9.21) the reaction to group activities during the lesson was generally positive.

Another strategy I made use of in an attempt to create a relaxed environment in the class was my own attitude towards the students. Considering that the students already knew each other as classmates, I did not need to put much effort in creating a familiar environment among them; however, I needed to earn their trust as an outsider they had never met in their institute before. In order to familiarise the students with myself and what I am going to be doing and also for myself to meet them and assess their language level, I went to meet them in their main class one week before my course started, where I was given the chance to introduce myself, my role, and give out the consent forms. I clearly explained the process of data collection to them and the audio recording of the sessions and assured them the confidentiality of recorded data. I also highlighted the voluntary nature of participation. Although this information was outlined in their participants' information sheet, I explained it all in Farsi to ensure comprehensibility (for ethics of the study, see 6.3). I stayed in the class as an observer that session, which gave me some idea of students' personalities and language level. Thanks to the main teacher, at the end of that session we played the ‘hot seat game’, where students were given the chance to ask me any questions they liked. This contributed to breaking the ice between the students and myself and increasing our level of familiarity.

Inside the classroom, I tried to adopt a role of a person who is genuinely interested in their ideas rather than a teacher who is only interested in their language development (Cutrone, 2009). I assured them that their performance in this class did not have anything to do with the course they are doing with their teacher. Additionally, I tried to keep error correction to the minimum in the classroom, unless some major error affected intelligibility, not only because I saw my role as teaching content rather
than language, but also to create a safe and encouraging environment for students to speak (Kang, 2005; Cutrone, 2009). It has to be mentioned that the main class teacher was present during the first thirty minutes of my classes in order to comply with the institute regulations. Although he acted as an observer with no interference in the classroom process as students saw him as their main course teacher and might have been anxious about making mistakes. The exceptions to this were session seven and ten, where the main teacher was off sick. The general atmosphere of the class seemed more relaxed during these sessions and students seemed to participate more actively in the class discussions.

Finally, I would like to note that while the course itself was conducted in English, students were free to use their first language, Farsi, if they needed to. Use of L1 in foreign language classroom is a controversial topic; however, it has been shown that if used properly, it can support students’ process of learning (Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Afzal, 2013). This was of great importance to me to not only support students’ process of learning, but also ensure the comprehensibility of students’ utterances via leaving them the option of using Farsi. In line with this, students were free to write their reflective writings at the end of each session either in Farsi or English. In footnote, extracts that were originally in Farsi and have been used in this chapter are marked by specifying they have been translated.

**8.4 Participants**

Another diversion from the initial plan, other than the length of the sessions and course, was the gender of the participants. While I had initially planned to have girls only in my class for the purpose of homogeneity with FGI’s sample, the group I was given consisted of six girls and six boys. Two of the female participants were eventually disregarded from the data set due to their withdrawal from the study. The table below is summary of the participants, giving their pseudonyms, gender, and age. In order to provide an insight to the participants’ level of activity during the sessions, the number of the verbal contributions they made and the number of sessions they were present at is given.
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The number of contributions refers to the number of references linked to them during the sessions using NVIVO. There is a margin of error here due to the limitations in the possibilities of full transcriptions of ‘messy’ classroom data (see 6.2.4). Thus, the numbers given are indicative.

Table 14 Teaching intervention participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of sessions present</th>
<th>Number of contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omid</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erfan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashem</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehrdad</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faranak</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zohre</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazanin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katayoun</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the participants had an upper-intermediate level of English, according to the institute’s syllabus. Only one of the students had any experience of living abroad; the participant, Erfan, had lived in Bangladesh with his parents for two years.

Looking at participants’ level of activity in the classroom in the table above, we can see that Erfan and Elyas’s level of contribution stands at a noticeably higher level than that of the others, which aligns with my observation that they were extremely eager and active during all the sessions. One possible reason could be more interest in the topic. In Erfan’s case, his experience of living abroad appears to have contributed both to his interest and topical knowledge.
(see also Kang, 2005; Peng, 2012). Other possible factors include higher level of confidence in language proficiency (Yashima, 2002; Riasati, 2013) and more extrovert personality traits (Cutrone, 2009) (for more on individual differences, see 3.5).

In contrast with Erfan and Elyas, Hadi is at the other extreme of being least active during the sessions. Similarly, his passivity can come from lack of interest in the topic, lack of knowledge about the topic, or lack of confidence in language proficiency (Yashima, 2002; Kang, 2005; Cutrone, 2009; Peng, 2012; Riasati, 2013).

In order to give more insight into participants’ personality, specifically their level of openness, I decided to also present the participants’ answers to a handout on their willingness to agree on an Afghan student sitting next to them in the classroom (see appendix F.3, activity A). I gave this to students in session four as a part of a class activity (see 6.2.3 for the syllabus).

Openness as a desired attitude in IC has been highlighted in many different ways. Byram (1997) sees it as one of the elements of his ICC model, Barrett (2011) notes it as one of the existing core principles after a wide review of the relevant literature in intercultural competence, and Kudo and Simkin (2003) refer to it as one of the effective factors while developing intercultural friendship (see 3.3.1). That is, in order for a person to succeed in intercultural communication, it is desirable for them to approach the possibly unknown world of new culture with openness.

The following table presents the participants’ order of choices in the handout, from their most likely reaction (i.e. 1) to the most unlikely (i.e. 4) one. The left column presents the sentences given in the handout followed by every student’s ranking of them (from one as the most likely to four as the least likely).
Table 15. Students’ self-reported levels of openness\textsuperscript{21}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. You like meeting new people; you happily say yes and try to make friends with her.</th>
<th>Omid</th>
<th>Erfan</th>
<th>Elyas</th>
<th>Hashem</th>
<th>Hadi</th>
<th>Faranak</th>
<th>Zohre</th>
<th>Katayoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. You like meeting new people, not from a different country though. You still yes to be polite because you feel sorry for her.</th>
<th>Omid</th>
<th>Erfan</th>
<th>Elyas</th>
<th>Hashem</th>
<th>Hadi</th>
<th>Faranak</th>
<th>Zohre</th>
<th>Katayoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. You like meeting new people, not from a different country though. You say no.</th>
<th>Omid</th>
<th>Erfan</th>
<th>Elyas</th>
<th>Hashem</th>
<th>Hadi</th>
<th>Faranak</th>
<th>Zohre</th>
<th>Katayoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. You are shy and you do not feel comfortable interacting with new people, no matter where they come from. You say no.</th>
<th>Omid</th>
<th>Erfan</th>
<th>Elyas</th>
<th>Hashem</th>
<th>Hadi</th>
<th>Faranak</th>
<th>Zohre</th>
<th>Katayoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table, three of the students, \textit{Erfan}, \textit{Hashem}, and \textit{Faranak}, have the same order of choices; ranging from the most possible level of openness in the choices (happily meeting new people, no matter where they come from) to a level of shyness (an obstacle which stops one from communication, regardless of their nationality).

\textsuperscript{21} Two of the students including \textit{Mehrdad} and \textit{Nazanin} were absent in this session so this piece of information about them is unfortunately missing.

\textsuperscript{22} unspecified
What is interesting are three other students, Omíd, Elyas, and Zohre, who made their final choice 'no interest in meeting new people due to their nationality rather than shyness'; thus showing evidence of openness in every situation with nationality not being an issue. To be clearer, if shy, they will be shy in every situation (their third choice) rather than objection due to nationality (their fourth choice). Considering this, it would make sense to assume that such students' first choice would be sentence 'a' since they seem to have a high level of openness. Omíd, however, chose sentence 'b' as his first possible reaction; i.e. saying yes due to his politeness rather than interest. However, he chose 'c' as his last choice contrasting his own idea of he is not interested in meeting new people as his first choice suggests. As English was a foreign language for all the participants, this might be explained with the comprehension problem using English might have caused.

Katayoun's first two choices are the same as Omíd's with regard to her first two choices; her agreement for an Afghan student to sit next to her due to her politeness rather than her willingness. This is logically followed by sentence 'c' and 'd' as her third and fourth choices. If one is not very interested in meeting people from a different country (although they refuse to say no to them because of politeness), it makes sense for the third choice to be rejection of the person.

Hadi is the only participant whose order of choices were considerably different from the other ones. Sentence 'a', which was either the first or the second choice for the rest of the participants, stood as his last choice, showing his strong reluctance to meet anyone from another country. As the opposite end to this, sentence 'c', rejection of any interaction with the person from another country, stands as his first choice. This first choice is followed by sentence 'b', the possibility of agreeing the person sitting there due to his politeness or sorrow, rather than willingness. Getting back to Hadi's passivity during the sessions stated earlier, lack of openness and consequently lack of interest in the topic can be mentioned as one of the possible reasons. This has further been discussed in 9.4.1.
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8.5 Operationalisation criteria

The main purpose of this phase of the study is to investigate any possible development in students' level of CA that might occur during the course. In other words, I aim at investigating students' possible development from a basic level of cultural awareness to a more advanced one (See 6.2.2 aims of the syllabus).

In order to do that, I consider it necessary to provide clear operationalised definitions of basic and advanced levels respectively. In the context of this research, I considered basic cultural awareness as instances where culture is referred to as a relatively fixed and less emergent concept (see 2.4). This includes references to culture either at a general or a national level. Stereotypes or generalisations, in which culture has been reduced to a nation are also counted as elements of this level of cultural awareness.

Advanced cultural awareness, on the other hand, is operationalised as an understanding of culture at a level beyond essentialism. To be clearer, students at this level view culture as a more emergent concept, which is independent of geographical borders (see 2.3). As will be explained in detail in the coming sections, this includes references to possible heterogeneity within nations, in addition to an awareness of the different social identities every individual has. Additionally, instances where students show understanding of relativity of cultural norms, even at national level, are also counted as advanced cultural awareness. This is because, although culture is viewed at national level, students show understanding of its relativity as opposed to a fixed concept.

8.6 Definition of culture

In line with the first research question addressed in this phase of the study, this section aims at presenting the conceptualisation of culture by the students. I would argue that conceptualisation of culture stands at a centre of the course. Given the elements of cultural awareness and the objectives sought to be achieved in this course (see 6.2.2), viewing culture as more of an essentialist or non-essentialist concept can affect the way other cultural elements are viewed by the learners. Due to the close ties between the
conceptualisation of culture per se and the focus of the course, references to this came up at different stages of the course.

What I will present in this section and following ones is the discussion of conceptualisation of culture in a chronological order; i.e. based on which session they occurred in. I would like to point out that the absence of a certain sub-theme in the discussion of a particular session does not necessarily mean that it was not brought up in that session, but that there is a lack of a representative example. In order to provide readers with an overall, clear picture of the sub-theme, the number of all sessions in which the sub-theme under discussion is referred to during the course is provided.

8.6.1 Basic level of cultural awareness

As mentioned earlier, the basic level includes references to culture at either at general or national level. In order to find a way into students' basic level of understanding culture, I identified and presented three different sub-themes.

**GENERAL** and **NATIONAL** both include definition of culture as a set of shared **BEHAVIOURS**, **BELIEFS**, or **VALUES**. What distinguishes them from each other is the group to which culture has been associated. While in **GENERAL** there is no specific reference to any group, **NATIONAL** refers to instances where culture is defined within a nation. The last category includes **STEREOTYPES** including the ones related to participants' own country and other countries. This has been respectively labelled as **SELF-STEREOTYPES** and **OTHER-STEREOTYPES**.

8.6.1.1 General definitions of culture

As mentioned in 8.5, any occurrences which referred to culture as a less emergent and more static concept have been interpreted as representing a basic level of cultural awareness. **GENERAL DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE** is one such theme which has been identified as basic cultural awareness.

This sub-theme refers to “showing understanding of culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values” following Baker’s (2011a) model of intercultural awareness. It is important to note that, as explained in 6.4, I conducted this analysis of data in a bottom-up as well as a top-down manner. This was to avoid the danger of forcing any pre-defined sub-theme on the
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themes. In case of this theme, the pre-defined sub-themes, including 
BEHAVIOURS, BELIEFS, and VALUES, happened to agree with bottom-up sub-themes.

What differentiates this theme from the upcoming one in the same level is no 
specific group has been included in students’ definitions:

Extract 8.1

*Culture is traditional habits which comes from the basic values from the past*

(Zohre, Session one)

As can be seen in the extract above, culture is approached in a rather static 
manner, with no particular group being addressed.

A pattern could be observed in that such conceptualisations occurred at the 
early stages of the course (especially, in week one). There are two potential 
reasons for this; firstly, an effect of specific tasks used in these sessions, and 
secondly, the development of a more differentiated view of culture over the 
course of the intervention. Regarding the task effect, session one was mainly 
devoted to the concept of culture and what students made of it and so to draw 
students’ attention to the focus of the course. This was to gain some insight 
into students’ views on culture and evaluate their level of awareness towards 
culture. A fairly large number of student quotations, i.e. 47 in total, referring 
to this type of cultural representation were made at this point in the course

Table 16 below shows the frequency of references being made to the various 
types of conceptualisation of culture at a general basic level of awareness. The 
table is sub-divided according to the three sets of data, i.e., classroom 
interactions, reflective writings, and assignments.

As can be seen, no references of this type were made in students’ assignments 
during the course. The sub-theme VALUES which contained references to 
clothing, food and customs had the highest number of occurrences in both 
classroom interaction and reflective writings. The reason for such a 
categorisation is that the way people dress or the diet they follow can be 
representative of their values in a more or less explicit way, and often is a 
quite tangible aspect for students. An explicit example of this can be someone
who wears hijab or follows a vegetarian diet. This can be less explicit in someone who does not follow any specific way of dressing or eating; however, it can be argued that it is likely that there is some underlying value on what people decide to wear or eat.

Table 16. Basic cultural awareness at general level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC(^{23}) as behaviours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC as beliefs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC as values</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is noticeable is that while BEHAVIOURS has almost twice the number of occurrences of BELIEFS in classroom interaction, with 17 and 8 references respectively, no reference is made to BEHAVIOURS in students’ reflective writings. Similarly, no reference to BEHAVIOURS was found in students’ assignments. Unlike BEHAVIOURS, BELIEFS appeared in students’ reflective writings with three references. This was in spite of the lower number of recurrences in classroom interaction. I would like to mention that while occurrences of classroom interaction for both BEHAVIOURS and VALUES happened only in the first session, references to BELIEFS in reflective writings occurred also in the last session, suggesting a more long-term presence of this type in students’ minds.

As mentioned earlier and can be seen in table 16, VALUES including food, clothes, and customs occurred most frequently during classroom interaction.

\(^{23}\) general culture
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One instance of relating culture to a set of customs is Elyas, who made an analogy between culture and customs:

Extract 8.2

I think it's something like our customs.

(Elyas, Session one)

Similarly, as a part of their written definition of culture in the first session, Hadi and Faranak stated:

Extract 8.3

Something shows the culture of area, like food, drink, clothes.

(Hadi and Faranak, session one)

Although clothing has been categorised as values in this research, it was viewed as a type of behaviour by some students:

Example 8.4

(Culture) refers to our behaviour such as clothing.

(Erfan, Session one)

It is understood that due to the nature of qualitative data, some extent of fuzziness is unavoidable. Clothing, for example, can also be interpreted as a type of belief or behaviour. Wearing a hijab, for example, can not only be counted as an underlying value but is also a belief, the manifestation of which is the outfit itself. One can argue, at the same time, that it is a behaviour as habitual wearing of any outfit can be. My attempt in this research was to firstly choose the closest category based on my justification and rationalisation, as was explained earlier in case of clothes as value, for example, and secondly to stay consistent in my own interpretation of concepts all through the analysis.

Other types of general definition of culture included behaviours and beliefs. Both categories can be observed by the example given by Katayoun:

Extract 8.5
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Culture shows behaviours of people of area, people's minds.

(Katayoun, Session one)

Katayoun, in the example above, refers to culture as a concept indicating both people’s BEHAVIOUR and their way of thinking or BELIEFS. The fact that she sees certain BEHAVIOURS as indicators of the mentality of people in a certain geographical area makes it likely that culture is being viewed in a static manner, where the area borders determine its meaning.

As noted earlier, culture at a general level was a major topic in the first session. Saying that, it did also come up in three more sessions, i.e. session 7, 9, and 10. In order to avoid repetition, I will only present an extract from a reflective writing related to session ten, which was the last session:

Extract 8.6

And generally myself, I have changed my mind about the definition of culture. Culture is a big word that includes all people’s beliefs, backgrounds, clothes, costumes, etc.

(Omid, reflective writing ten)

As can be seen, Omid believes that he has changed his mind in terms of what culture is; however, judging from what he has stated in the quotation above, this change seems to be more on the breadth of the elements that culture includes. His statement sums up two of identified sub-categories of general definition culture namely VALUES and BELIEFS. The other identified sub-category BEHAVIOUR did not occur in any session except for session one.

Now that the main sub-themes related to general definition of culture have been presented, I will move on to present the NATIONAL ones, which proved to have a more highlighted role than the general conceptualisation in students’ perceptions.

8.6.1.2 National definition of culture

The second group identified as representing a basic level of awareness is labelled as NATIONAL DEFINITION OF CULTURE. In the same way as general definition of culture, this theme refers to a rather static set of traits. The difference is,
Unlike general definition of culture in which no group has been addressed, nation has been named as the group among which such traits homogenously exist. A clear example of this sub-theme is:

**Extract 8.7**

*They shook me hands and I refused to shake hands.*

(Nazanin, assignment nine)

In her assignment on two different letters as British student and Iranian student living in Iran and England respectively which was handed in session nine (see table nine), Nazanin refers to her habit of “not shaking hand” as an Iranian student who lives in England. This reveals her perspective on viewing culture both as a series of BEHAVIOUR, i.e. “not shaking hands” and a series of BELIEFS, i.e. religion.

As with general definitions of culture, the three-pronged identification of national culture as BEHAVIOUR, national culture as BELIEFS and finally, national culture as VALUES were found with twelve, two and three quotes respectively. However, within this conceptualisation of culture, further sub-groups could be identified, relating to national culture as

- REGULATIONS
- GOVERNMENT
- SHARED HISTORY
- STATISTICAL FACTS
- GEOGRAPHICAL BORDER
- LANGUAGE

I would like to point out that culture as national was found to be the most salient code among the basic level of cultural awareness. It was mainly

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24 Please note I have provided the students’ writings as is, i.e without correcting any errors.
25 These numbers refer to the session where the assignment was handed in throughout the whole chapter.
26 In Islam, it is considered inappropriate for men and women, who are stranger to each other, to shake hands.
27 In terms of number of quotes, stereotypes are indeed more frequent. However, a lot of references of self-stereotypes occurred in the first session, where students were given stereotypical true-false
brought up at the first half of the course and more precisely, with a clear focus on sessions one and four with 22 and 24 references respectively. However, a noticeable number of references on this theme, i.e. 20 quotes, was also brought in session eight. Task effect is suggested as a factor affecting such a result. Before going into details about what type of task triggered which type of national culture, I will present a table showing the frequency of each mentioned sub-category:

Table 17. Basic cultural awareness at national level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NC as behaviour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as beliefs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as values</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as regulations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as government/regime</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as history</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as statistical facts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC as geographical borders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sentences about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A). Therefore, this refers to the salience of ‘national’ sub-theme qualitatively.

28 National culture
As discussed in 8.6.1.1, session one was mainly devoted to a discussion around the concept of culture. As well as the previous theme discussed, a noticeable number of references of this type are brought up in session one. Culture as GOVERNMENT OR REGIME along with REGULATIONS was highlighted most in this session with seven and six references respectively. This, as discussed in 10.6.2, suggests the effect of context and the current situation of the country on shaping the definition of culture on students' minds. The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, which led to a change of regime from a kingdom to a republic, affected the country both socially and politically (see 4.2). Regulations such as the obligation to wear hijab for women and banning the use of alcohol were implemented as steps towards creating an Islamic society.

Relating culture to a country without mentioning any set of traits labelled as GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS was the third most frequent type of national culture in the same session with five quotes. This clearly relates to essentialist views of culture discussed in 2.4.

As a part of session four, students were asked to do the “new comer activity” (see appendix F3, activity B). This was to evaluate their perspective on a new environment and their possible solutions to differences they might face. This also triggered diverse opinions on how they view culture at national level. Among the types of national culture identified, the one relating national culture to REGULATIONS was highlighted most frequently with 12 references. This activity also led to making many examples on different actions interpreted as BEHAVIOUR, i.e. seven references. This made it the second most frequent theme for this session.

REGULATIONS with seven references was also frequent in session eight, when the assignments on the research on different aspects of UK society and the comparison with the Iranian one (see table nine) were submitted. I would like to point out that these assignments were discussed in the classroom as well and the number of references given includes the classroom interaction too. Another aspect of similarities and differences, which was highlighted in students’ assignments and classroom discussion in this session was religious BELIEFS with six quotes. Religious BELIEFS also became a theme in other
assignments including the ones given in session six and eight with four and five references (please see table nine for the assignments).

As can be seen from table 17 and discussion above, REGULATIONS with 27 references was found to be the most salient conceptualisation of culture within this national theme. Particularly high occurrences of this theme are in session one, four, and eight. Culture as BEHAVIOUR, which mainly refers to different actions, stands at the second place in term of frequency of occurrences after REGULATIONS, i.e. 24 references. This was highlighted at different stages of the course, particularly in session four. Seeing national culture as a set of BELIEFS (mainly religious ones) was the third most frequent type among the others with overall 17 references. This mainly came up in students’ assignments. In order to give more insight into this theme and highlight the most frequent identified sub-themes, some examples given by students have been given and discussed.

GOVERNMENT and REGULATIONS were widely referred to in session one. For the purpose of clarification, the quotation below includes both elements:

**Extract 8.8**

*If a government, make some rules for the country and people have to follow it. So maybe government can make a culture... For example, we have to wear cover in Iran. For example, Rohani [religious men] have to wear something different from others because of what they study and their minds. But for example, the clerks wear suits and you can understand in our culture, what people do from their wearing.*

(Zohre, Session one)

Zohre sees culture as a series of rules. She relates this to the regulations set by a government. She then moves on to give an example about the current rules in Iran relating to clothing. By that, it is likely that she implies wearing the hijab, which was initially prescribed by the current regime, and has now become a part of Iranian culture. She also referred to sheikhs (clergymen) whose type of clothing is different from that of others due to their personal beliefs. She ends her statement by concluding that whatever one wears can be representative of who they are in the society. Zohre sounds a little ambivalent on whether such regulations are currently imposed or embraced in the society.
Anyhow, what is clear is the highlighted role REGULATIONS play at least initially in creation of culture.

Unlike Zohre, Erfan clearly sees regulations being embraced by the society to the extent that people’s reactions to different events are the same as that of the government’s:

**Extract 8.9**

*For example, by my idea, the government’s culture is the same as people’s culture... For example, how the governments, for example, react to things which happen in the society is the same as how people react.*

(Erfan, Session one)

GOVERNMENT in this extract is also identified as an effective factor in creating culture. This time, however, this is not seen as happening through REGULATIONS imposed by a government, but through the positions they take in different social events.

REGULATIONS are not always seen as set by the GOVERNMENT. Faranak, for instance, sees them as coming from the tradition:

**Extract 8.10**

*I think different countries have a different culture and it’s a rule people should follow these rules and pay attention. And I think Iran sometimes have a tradition culture and teenagers don’t like it...But most of the time teenagers should accept these rules and do it.*

(Faranak, Session one)

In extract 8.10, Faranak not only limits culture to the geographical borders of a country, but also defines it as a series of traditional REGULATIONS that people should conform to. The use of the word ‘rule’, rather than ‘norm’ arguably suggests a stronger obligation. The fact that Faranak mentioned teenagers’ possible dislike of these rules shows the extent of homogeneity she assumes for the concept of culture within a nation. In other words, she sees culture as a
series of imposed rules on different segments of society rather than something in which participants themselves are co-creators.

Session four also showed a relatively high number of references of national definition of culture. Having revised what was done in session three, I got students to fill in the handout on their possible reaction if an Afghan student asked to sit to next to them (see appendix F3, activity A). That was when some references to behavioural aspect of national culture were made by Zohre, including the following comments, justifying her choice of happily agreeing for the Afghan student to sit next to her. Having explained that she sees no difference between them and Iranians, she continues:

Extract 8.11

*I think they do their culture better than us, even in Iran.*

(Zohre, Session four)

What we might infer from extract 8.11 is Zohre’s view of culture as a set of behavioural actions, which is defined by people’s nationality. For her, practising a “better” culture possibly equates following some traditions, which relate to national values. That became particularly clear when she was asked to clarify what she meant:

Extract 8.12

*For example, rather they live in Iran, but they do as they are in Afghanistan.*

(Zohre, Session four)

In addition to customs or traditions, which was possibly one of Zohre’s intentions while commenting on Afghans practising a better culture than Iranians do, she also refers to their spoken language:

Extract 8.13

*And some of my friends says to me we just talk in Persian with you but when we are family, with relatives, we speak Afghani.*

(Zohre, Session four).
Another activity in session four was that of the “new comer” (see appendix F3, activity B), where students were asked to write down in their groups what they thought they should and should not do if they were to emigrate to another country with their parents. Arguably, because of the focus of this activity, the comments made revolved around the concept of culture at national level. In line with session one, REGULATIONS were highlighted during this activity. *Hashem*, for example, stated:

**Extract 8.14**

> You should try to learn the rule, to respect (them).

(Hashem, Session four)

Possibly, because of the highlight of REGULATIONS in this session, *Omid*'s reflective writing includes this concept:

**Extract 8.15**

> The rules help us adapting to new environment and getting used to a new place easily.

(Omid, session four)

Although adapting to a new environment might be more complicated that what is stated in *Omid*'s reflective writing, he sees REGULATIONS as a tool facilitating one’s adaptation to a new place.

*Behaviours and Beliefs*, which were respectively the most frequently highlighted sub-themes after REGULATIONS, were both highlighted in assignments handed in session seven, eight, and nine.

*Nazanin*, for example, wrote about her ideal imaginary land named “Narnia” and its dos and don’ts on her assignment handed in session six (problems students may face when in a different country-see table nine). Although she did not go into what problems she might face there, her assignment still consisted of some noteworthy points:

**Extract 8.16**
All the people in there are real Shias. All the people devote themselves to their unique God, because of that qualities such as effort, fair, honesty, kindness, clean, cooperation, sympathy, helping others, getting on well with others, bravery, generosity, devotion are considered pretty and very good.

(Nazanin, Assignment seven)

For Nazanin, religion seem to be an essential factor in shaping culture of a place. In fact, holding certain beliefs have been considered as leading to certain behaviours that are desirable for Nazanin. Being a Muslim and specifically Shia, which is the mainstream in Iran, in her idea can promote qualities that she identifies as important in making an ideal society. Noticeably, all qualities brought up by Nazanin are the ones considered as desirable in Islam.

Similarly, beliefs seem to act an important role for Elyas. He refers to them as an element that might be problematic when moving to a new country:

Extract 8.17

In one side, you may have problems with the new culture and their religion.

(Elyas, assignment seven)

Another activity providing some insight into students’ definition of culture was an assignment in session seven, in which they were asked to conduct research on different aspect of family life in the UK and compare this to the culture of their own (see table nine). Going through the assignments, I found that students did not go far (or not at all) into the comparison with their own culture. Different reasons might account for this, such as difficulties in expressing themselves in English or simply not spending enough time to do the assignment. However, what students chose to present as their research on family life in the UK could give some insight what they considered as culture.

In the same way as Nazanin and Elyas in extracts 8.16 and 8.17, Omid chose to look at beliefs in this assignment:

Extract 8.18
Sundays used to be very special day of the week for worship and rest and most people are at home or church.

(Omid, assignment eight)

Erfan was the only student whose research for doing this assignment contained some statistical facts. An example from his assignment has been given:

Extract 8.19

The percentage of families that have just one dependent child increased from 42% in 1996 to 47% in 2013.

(Erfan, assignment eight)

When asked what this information tells him and how it would help if he is to travel to the UK in the classroom, he explained:

Extract 8.20

Means for example people who like you think like you is very little by this I found.

(Erfan, Session eight)

In Erfan’s case, the statistics he has found has given him a way to reach a conclusion that there are little similarities between him, as an Iranian, and British society because of the way they think or their beliefs.

The way of thinking or beliefs independent of religion was also brought up in another assignment:

Extract 8.21

UK society is different, has different people with different minds, different culture. But totally they don’t judge and they don’t judge you by appearance.

(Katayoun, Session eight)
Katayoun did not discuss Iranian society in this respect in her assignment. However, referring to the word “different (from us)”, followed by “non-judgmental people” gives us a way to think that she considers UK society more open than Iranian one due to the way people think.

Until now, I have identified the patterns identified regarding the basic definition of culture including GENERAL and NATIONAL. In the coming section, I will discuss the stereotypical statements either about Iranians or non-Iranians during the course.

8.6.1.3 Stereotypes

Stereotypes make up the final group of themes identified as being the basic level of cultural awareness, due to the static view towards culture based on national borders. Stereotypes have been defined as “traits applied to a whole group of people….they are in all cases over-generalised and take little or no account of individual differences” (Gallois, 2004: 359). Following Gallois’s (2004) categorisation of stereotypes, I have divided the examples of stereotypes into two groups including SELF-STEREOTYPES and OTHER-STEREOTYPES. As the name suggests, while SELF-STEREOTYPES refer to occurrences of stereotypical statements about Iranians, OTHER-STEREOTYPES include statements about other nationalities. In order to gain more insight into this theme, I divided both SELF-STEREOTYPES and OTHER-STEREOTYPES into three groups namely POSITIVE, NEUTRAL, and NEGATIVE ones. To make the definition clearer, an example is given below:

Extract 8.22

In Iran family environment is warmer and more intimate than in the UK. It mean British parents spend most of their time in work. And rest of them when they are at home everybody goes to their own bedroom for resting.

(Faranak, assignment eight)

In the assignment about a research on different aspects of family life in the UK and making a comparison with Iran given in session seven (see table nine), Faranak gave examples of both SELF- and OTHER-STEREOTYPES. In her point of
view, Iranian families have a stronger family relationship leading to a warmer environment. This counts as a POSITIVE SELF-STEREOTYPE versus a NEGATIVE OTHER-STEREOTYPE about British society.

There were also statements, which I interpreted neither as POSITIVE nor as NEGATIVE. While discussing the concept of culture, Erfan, for example, made the following statement:

**Extract 8.23**

*(As) Iranians, we do Moharam*[^29] *ceremonies.*

(Erfan, session one)

Erfan, in the example above, generalises having the religious ceremony “Moharam” to all Iranians. While the majority of Iranian population are Muslim and this ceremony is respected and conducted by some Iranians, generalising it to the whole population is a kind of stereotype. As this did not carry either a POSITIVE or a NEGATIVE evaluation about Iranians, it was categorised as NEUTRAL.

A pattern could be observed with SELF-STEREOTYPES being more frequent at the start and end of the course including session one, eight, and nine. This can partly due to the effect of the given task in the classroom. In session one, for example, a handout with some stereotypical statements about Iranians was given to students, who were then asked to discuss whether they agree or disagree with the given statements in their groups (see appendix F1, activity A). This resulted in many examples of SELF-STEREOTYPES (31 references). Assignments due in session eight and nine (on doing a research on different aspects of family life in the UK and making a comparison with Iran and two letters as Iranian and British students respectively—see table nine) also produced some examples of this type, i.e. 16 and 7 references respectively. The references in session eight were not limited to assignments only and they were also produced while having a discussion in the class around the topic of this assignment.

[^29]: Moharam is a Shia religious ceremony.
OTHER-Stereotypes mainly appeared in the middle and end of the course including session four, eight, and nine. In line with the previous themes explained, task effect might play a role in such result. In session four, for example, students were asked to do ‘new comer’ activity in their groups to list what they should and should not do when residing in a new country (see appendix F3, activity B). While two of the groups made more of general statements, which can be counted as applicable to any new environment, one of the groups chose a country and made examples based on their assumptions about that country. This led to some stereotypical statements about others, i.e. nine references.

In line with SELF-Stereotypes explained above, assignments submitted in session eight and nine also produced some examples of OTHER-Stereotypes, i.e. 30 and 11 references respectively.

In order to give more insight into occurrences of SELF- and OTHER-Stereotypes, I have provided the tables below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-S 30 as positive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-S as neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-S as negative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in table 18, the number of POSITIVE SELF-Stereotypes stands at a higher frequency compared to the other two types with 30 references. In fact, such examples were also made by a higher number of students. NEGATIVE
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STEREOTYPES, on the other hand, have the lowest number of occurrence, with 10 references. This is slightly different in the other type of stereotypes, i.e., OTHER-STEREOTYPES (see table 19 below). Both POSITIVE and NEGATIVE statements occurred at an equal number of 16 references each. This can partly be due to a nationalistic bias the participants might have hold about their own country.

Another point is the frequency with which the two types of stereotypes were brought up. Students seem to hold more stereotypical opinions about others compared to those of themselves. This can be justified via Holliday’s (2013) othering theory, which refers to reducing people from different backgrounds to less than who they really are. This is further discussed in 10.5.

Table 19. Basic cultural awareness on other-stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O-S as positive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-S as neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-S as negative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below I will present some extracts from both SELF and OTHER-STEREOTYPES from the sessions they were most prominent in.

As mentioned earlier, SELF-STEREOTYPES were highlighted in session one, where students were given some stereotypical statements about Iranians to discuss in their groups (see appendix F1, activity A). The majority of students either agreed or disagreed with the statements at this stage leading to a number of stereotype statements about Iranians while discussing them in the class, i.e. 31 references.

31 Other-stereotypes
While discussing the first statement, i.e. “Iranian men treat women like property”, Hashem, for example, made the following comment:

**Extract 8.24**

> You know it’s something general about Iranian men, **Iranian men care about their property but not includes for women. We disagree with that. It's not just like this.**

(Hashem, Session one)

The example above contains two stereotypical sentences about Iranian men; firstly they care about their property and secondly they do not treat women like property, even though they do care about their property.

In the same way, Zohre includes everyone regardless of their gender while making a comment about sentence number five, which concerns females only, of the same handout:

**Extract 8.25**

> **Iranian people, all of them, generally are organised and they care about tidying, planning.**

(Zohre, Session one)

Session four, as a part of which ‘new-comer’ activity was conducted (see appendix F3, activity B), contained some **Other-Stereotypes** statements. This is because one out of three groups working in the class, namely Zohre, Katayoun, and Faranak chose a specific country, England, and decided to write about its dos and don'ts. Stereotypical statements such as “look into eyes directly” as dos and “call people with last name” as don'ts were brought up in their handouts.

Assignments due in session eight and nine brought up some stereotypical statements about Iran and the UK, partly due to their nature, which included a kind of comparison between the two countries making it likely to get into the somehow common assumption of countries as equal to cultures (see table nine).
Saying that, when introducing the assignment in session seven, for example, it was emphasised that the comparison should be between their findings about England and their culture as an individual. Although holding culture as an individual is a controversial topic due to the possibility of its creation in groups, this was to encourage students to transcend the national concept of culture. However, all submitted assignments either excluded the comparison section with their own culture or the comparison was not beyond the national stereotypes. Some examples have been presented below:

**Extract 8.26**

*British people are more friendly and more approachable with their colleagues and even boss in the work because they call each other by first name.*

(Faranak, assignment eight)

Based on extract 8.26, *Faranak* expresses a difference between Iran and the UK. The difference, in this example, refers to a more positive picture she holds about working environment in the UK compared to Iran. This is probably because in Iran, colleagues often call each other with last name and she sees the different norm in England, i.e. addressing each other with first name, as a positive trait towards friendliness. *Katayoun*, on the other hand, expresses a similarity between the two countries in her assignment:

**Extract 8.27**

*Iran and UK both know politeness and know how to respect to each other.*

(Katayoun, assignment eight)

Extracts 8.26 and 8.27 both reveal students’ assumptions of traits people have based on the country where the come from and so imply an essentialist view of culture.

In session eight, students were asked to write two letters as their assignment, one from a British student in Tehran and one from an Iranian student in London (see table nine). This task brought forward some more example of
both SELF- and OTHER-STEREOTYPES. When writing the letter as a British student, Mehrdad made the following comment:

Extract 8.28

_They eat less fast foods and they prefer to eat homemade foods instead of fast foods. Iranians are not concerned with their environment. They cut their trees and they waste their energy._

(Mehrdad, assignment nine)

Mehrdad refers to two points including eating habits and environmental care as cultural differences between Iran and the UK. In line with the other instances presented, he has generalised a specific habit of eating or attitude towards environment to a whole nation.

As can be seen, references belonging to the basic level of cultural awareness did also come up towards the end of the course. This supports the notion of improvement of levels of cultural awareness as a non-linear process confirmed by Holmes and O'Neil (2012) (see 3.4). In fact, references belonging to either basic or advanced level of cultural awareness, as will explained in the following sections, occurred at both the start, middle, or end of the course.

Now that the concept of basic cultural awareness and the references belonging to this group have been presented, I will move on to introduce the second level, advanced, followed by the categories which were counted as advanced level.

### 8.6.2 Advanced level of cultural awareness

As explained in 8.5, based on the operationalisation criteria of my coding, I have categorised any instance which shows understanding of possible heterogeneity within a nation and moving away from stereotypes as advanced (cf. Baker, 2011a). In other words, transcending the definition of culture either at a general, national or stereotypical level has been categorised as advanced understanding. Within this overarching definition, coding showed four sub-themes including RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS, CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION, and SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES
OF BEHAVIOUR to emerge which fit into this category of advanced cultural awareness.

As the name reveals, RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS refers to instances where students show understanding of different meanings cultural norms can have in different context. Although the cultural norms themselves might relate to national level in such statements, the fact students show evidence of understanding the effect of context in interpretation of such norms led me to categorise this as advanced cultural awareness.

The theme labelled as CULTURE INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY encompasses references to definitions of culture, where the independence of this concept from nationality is acknowledged.

As the label suggests, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION includes instances of acknowledgement and examples of various possible perspectives within a nation, which shows an understanding of seeing heterogeneity within a nation. In the same way, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR consists of references to both acknowledgement and examples of individuals’ participation in different cultural groupings at the same time. In addition, this category includes references to the behaviours which members of these groups are expected to follow.

8.6.2.1 Relativity of cultural norms

In line with Baker’s (2011a) elements of advanced cultural awareness, this theme refers to instances where students show awareness of different interpretation of the same concept in different contexts. This was interpreted as students’ ability to move beyond seeing certain norms from their own point of view only and their capability to the see one concept from different perspectives. Thus, this was interpreted as advanced cultural awareness despite their occasional references to the concept of culture at national level. A typical example of this theme is:

Extract 8.29
In Bangladesh, they have a custom that when they give the food when you are at someone’s house and you eat the food and if the food is good, they burp.

(Erfan, Session seven)

This extract was followed by his comment on how rude this act is considered in the Iranian context.

Overall, this code was mainly put forward in the second half of the course including session six, seven, and nine. This, arguably, can be suggestive of students’ moving towards a more advanced level of cultural awareness. Similar to the other themes explained so far, the task effect should not be ignored. Stories discussed in the classroom including “moments of embarrassment” in session six (see appendix F6, activity A) and critical incidents in session nine (see appendix F8, activity A) triggered many examples of this type in these sessions with respectively 18, 15, and 10 references in sessions six, seven, and nine. Having said that, there were two students including Erfan and Nazanin who showed evidence of understanding of culture as relative in the first session with no explicit trigger (see extracts 8.30 and 8.31).

The table below is presented to give more information about this theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R·C(^{32})</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, all students mentioned this theme at least once. The fact that this came up in classroom interaction as well as reflective writings and

\(^{32}\) Relativity of cultural norms
assignments can be suggestive of a relatively long-term effect on students’ minds.

This theme was mentioned by two students including Erfan and Nazanin in the first session. In the first session, I showed students a video trying to clarify the concept of IC, which focused on what is meant by being an intercultural communicator (see table nine). Having done that, I asked students what their understanding of the video was. However, I did not get many responses back. One possible reason can be that having played the video, I moved on to the whole class discussion as opposed to most other activities in which students were given time to do pair/group work beforehand. This and the fact that it was only the first session and thus students were less familiar with the topic could be considered as possible reasons for their reluctance to take part in answering. Erfan was one of the few students who volunteered a response:

**Extract 8.30**

> At first, I think it showed that for example, the man saw, one person is standing behind them and one person thinks that he is poor in his culture by the values of his culture and the other person thinks that he is a rich man.

(Erfan, Session one)

As can be seen, Erfan interpreted the brief image shown in the video by referring to RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS individuals might hold and how this can affect different meanings individuals make out of a same picture.

Nazanin’s only evidence of advanced cultural awareness in the first half of the course was when she indirectly pointed at RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS when defining the term ‘culture’:

**Extract 8.31**

> I think culture is a group, is a part of, people’s ideas or people’s opinions about something that for example, shows that something is good or bad depends on their ideas.

(Nazanin, Session one)
Although Nazanin does not give any explicit example of relativity of culture, her reference to the concept of culture as a series of ideas or beliefs based on which people’s judgement of good or bad is shaped refers to her understanding of culture as relative.

The second half of the course including session six, seven, and nine included many references of this type triggered by a series of task. In session six, for example, we went through the story “moments of embarrassment” (see appendix F6, activity A), where students were given the story in three different parts and were asked to guess the rest of the story before being given each section of the story. During a group discussion of the possible misunderstanding that might have happened between Zuuldibo and anthropologist Barley, in an account of toasting, Omid says:

Extract 8.32

He said his name in a toast. I think they regard this as an uncommon behaviour among the tribe.

(Omid, Session six)

Omid, in this instance, successfully related the moment of silence and shock described in the story to the behaviour displayed by Barley, saying Zuuldibo’s name while toasting. This is an evidence of Omid’s understanding of some behavioural norms in different cultural groupings.

As a follow up activity of this story, I gave students some questions to discuss (see appendix F6, activity A). That is where more examples of this type came up. When trying to come up with ideas of different interpretations that different events can have in various contexts, Hadi, for example, referred to the meaning of certain hand gestures:

Extract 8.33

In Iran it’s OK but if you do it in America or European countries, it’s not legal.

(Hadi, Session six)
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Hadi refers to the concept of acceptability or unacceptability of some gestures in different countries by being legal or illegal. What is clear is his understanding of different meanings they can suggest depending on the context.

As the time ran out and there was not enough time to discuss all follow-up questions in the class in session six, session seven was partly allocated to whole-class discussion of the questions. During this, students gave more examples:

**Extract 8.34**

Wearing black in the funerals. I think they think it’s not good to wear black. They wear white for the funerals because they think it may happy the soul of the dead person.

(Elyas, Session seven)

In the extract above, Elyas refers to the common custom “wearing black” in Iranian funerals. He then mentions the custom of “wearing white” somewhere else, which differs from the Iranian one due to the belief behind it. It does remain somewhat ambiguous who he referred to by “they”.

As a part of session nine, students read and discussed a handout on critical incidents (see appendix F8, activity A), focusing on what had possibly gone wrong. The purpose of the activity was to identify the possible misunderstanding that having different backgrounds might cause while communicating. When trying to figure out what had gone wrong in the first scenario, Faranak states:

**Extract 8.35**

Maybe in her culture, when somebody wants to respect to teachers.

(Faranak, Session nine)

Faranak successfully related Usa’s behaviour, by which Linda was confused, to her background. Therefore, she shows her understanding of different ways of showing respect towards others depending on backgrounds people come from.
Similarly, the second scenario in the same handout led to some examples of this type. Katayoun, for example, made the following statement in her group discussion:

**Extract 8.36**

*Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Chu to call him Andy but Mr. Chu used the title “Mr” for him...I think in Mr. Chu’s culture, it’s a way of respecting Mr. Richardson*

(Katayoun, Session nine)

Although Katayoun seems to have missed the point of Mr. Chu’s frustration because of him being called by his Chinese first name, she clearly has shown understanding of different social norms and preferences of Mr. Richardson and Mr. Chu because of the different backgrounds they come from.

Now that the concept of RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS and the pattern and the activities which triggered such ideas have been made clear, I will move on to introduce the second most frequent theme in advanced cultural awareness level, i.e. CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY.

### 8.6.2.2 Culture as independent of nationality

This theme refers to a definition of culture, which transcends a general or national view of it. In other words, students show their understanding of culture as independent of nationality. A typical example is:

**Extract 8.37**

*What I learned is cultural differences do not only exist among countries, but also at a smaller scale such as families.*

(Mehrdad, Reflective writing eight)

In the same way as the previous theme, this theme mainly came up in the second half of the course, specifically from session seven to session ten.

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33 my translation
34 my translation
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Exception were the comments by Erfan and Elyas on this theme in session one and two.

The tasks which encouraged statements on this theme were a group discussion about finding the differences within students’ families as suggested by Baker (2011a) (session eight- see table nine) and “sociogram activity” (session nine- see appendix F5, activity A). Saying that there were statements such as those of session one, two, and ten where no specific task prompted such statements.

The table below has been presented to give more insight into this theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-N\textsuperscript{35}</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This theme was brought forward by all the students except Zohre and Hadi. While being asked to share their views on what culture is in the first session, Erfan and Elyas appeared to be the only students whose level of awareness seemed to be beyond general or national conceptualisation. While sharing his idea in his groups, Erfan said:

**Extract 8.38**

*By my idea, culture is a group of behaviours which some group of people do. But for example, it XX one person has the culture or many people have the culture.*

(Erfan, Session one)

\textsuperscript{35} Culture independent of nationality
Having defined culture as a group of behaviours, he then shows understanding of seeing people who belong to a certain group as not necessarily being homogenous, but as individuals who can be different from each other. Although the idea of existence of culture within one person, as discussed in 2.3.2, is controversial, the fact that Erfan mentioned the possible existence of culture independent of nation is indicator of his advanced level of cultural awareness.

Interestingly, although Elyas appears to conceptualise culture as equated with a nation while trying to define culture in his group in the first session, he did express a different idea while discussing the handout on stereotypical statements about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A) in the same session. After a groupmate simply disagreeing with the first sentence, Elyas expressed his diverse viewpoint:

**Extract 8.39**

_I think it’s somehow true, somehow false- I think there are a lot men and humans on the earth and especially Iranian men are different from each other and I think one can treat women like property and one can’t treat like this and I think there are a lot of, depends on the person, depends to the man._

(Elyas, Session one)

As can be seen, Elyas clearly shows his understanding of people’s individuality regardless of their nationality. His emphasis on the difference people have as individuals clearly fits this extract as an evidence of advanced cultural awareness. However, while I found two other instances in this handout in which Elyas argues for not every Iranian being the same, there are also instances where he simply agrees or disagrees. This can be either due to the effect of his groupmate, who insisted on his opinion and that they have to decide on a general answer, or to the content of each sentence, and Elyas’s stronger or weaker opinion about it.

In the second session, I was trying to draw students’ attention to the fact that not everyone coming from a nation is the same. Therefore, I started the session by asking them to elaborate on the idea that how big they think the
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cultural group can be. In order to do that I started with an eliciting question
“Can we say all Iranians are educated?”

At this moment, the answer was “no” coming from the class as whole. However, Erfan was the only student who gave a further explanation on this issue:

**Extract 8.40**

*I think the place affect on the culture but it’s not dependant on the culture. For example, a person who lives in Iran, for example, could have the culture of American people.*

(Erfan, Session two)

Considering Erfan’s level of understanding demonstrated in the first session (see extract 8.38), it is expected that he would show a higher level of awareness when asked such question.

It has to be mentioned although Erfan’s relatively higher level of awareness kept the class active on many occasions, it felt at times that it stopped the other students from expressing their opinions. Although I, as the teacher, tried to keep the balance between giving the chance to all the students to talk and not discouraging Erfan’s active role, it proved not to be easy all the time. In this instance, for example, Erfan’s immediate answer probably prevented other students to think further about this point and stopped the discussion in a way.

As the sessions continued and the class activities moved toward more complex ones, references to more advanced level of cultural awareness were observed in more students. Session eight, for example, was partly spent on students’ discussion on finding the difference among their families and those of their groupmates. This is in line with Baker’s (2011a) suggestions of classroom activities, which proved to be very helpful in attracting students’ attention to possible heterogeneity within a nation. Nazanin, for example, commented in her reflective writing that:

**Extract 8.41**

*I learnt in this session that as well as many existing similarities within one nation, there are also lots of differences in many areas.*
Nazanin pointed at similarities within one nation. Although the extent to which the similarity is valid is arguable, she rightly mentioned differences, which shows that she does not view culture equal to the nation state.

As a part of session nine and in an attempt to introduce cultural groupings smaller than a nation to students, I started asking the students whether it would be appropriate for myself to dress in the same way as I would inside the classroom when I go out. Having made some further examples, I asked them what they think each of these groups have. In the same way as session two noted earlier, Erfan was the first person to answer what I was seeking for—“culture”. When I asked him to explain further why he thought so, he said:

**Extract 8.42**

*We defined the culture that we for example that some culture is the circle […] things we for example how we dress, how we eat, how we practise is culture and this is the same.*

(Erfan, Session nine)

Erfan’s immediate identification of what I explained as culture is further evidence of his advanced level of awareness, which he demonstrated from the start of the course.

Omid’s reflective writing on this session shows some influence of the class discussion explained above:

**Extract 8.43**

*And also we are at the same time participating in different groups in which we should consider the manners.*

(Omid, Reflective writing nine)

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36 my translation
37 People are often required to dress in a more formal way when at work in Iran. This includes stricter rule for having hijab for women.
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At the end of session ten, students were given all the reflective writings they each had done during the course and were asked to write a summary of the possible knowledge they have gained through the course. What is presented below is some extracts from the reflective writings that relates to the discussed theme:

**Extract 8.44**

*Every society’s culture is different and even families’ culture differ from each other and depends on their beliefs.*

(Faranak, Reflective writing ten)

Having related the concept of culture to beliefs people hold, *Faranak* relates the possible cultural differences within families in a society to their beliefs.

*Katayoun* refers to a similar topic:

**Extract 8.45**

*In this course, I learnt in different situation we have different codes of behaviour. Culture is relative and depends on people and the group we are in.*

(Katayoun, Reflective writing ten)

While *Katayoun* in extract 8.45 relates the cultural differences within a nation to behaviours which can differ from one cultural grouping to another, *Faranak* identifies the same issue by possible ideological differences among families in extract 8.44. The common point is they both show understanding of elements such as beliefs or behaviours which can differ from one cultural grouping to another in an independent manner from nationality.

**8.6.2.3 Different perspectives within a nation**

As the name reveals, this section includes instances where students talked about the existence of a variety of perspectives within a nation. This is line with Baker’s (2011a) model of intercultural awareness (see 3.3.1) and was

38 my translation
expressed in two different ways. Firstly, they explicitly referred to the existence of such issue; this was labelled as ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, viz.:

**Extract 8.46**

*Each person holds a specific perspective, which is different from that of the other one. Sometimes, such differences can be very big.*

(Mehrdad, reflective writing two)

*Mehrdad*, in this example, clearly acknowledges the distinguishability of an individual from the others based on their perspective. However, no exemplification on the issue itself is given.

The second way with which students expressed their understanding of the possibility of different perspectives within a nation was via the examples they gave. As a part of session eight, for instance, students were put in groups and encouraged to think of possible differences which might exist either among their own families or those of the others (see table nine). *Faranak*, for instance, states that:

**Extract 8.47**

*In some families wedding ceremonies men and women are mixed but in some families they are separated. And about the for example get divorced, in some family they don't accept it.*

(Faranak, Session eight)

In the extract above, *Faranak* brings up two issues including wedding ceremonies and divorces; one of several topics where people hold different views. Some families, for example, prefer to separate men and women during wedding ceremonies due to religious reasons. Some others, though, are not concerned with this issue since they are not religious. In addition, divorce is still considered as taboo in some families, but not others.

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I hope the above examples help clarify the two distinct types in which this theme was put forward. The table below gives more detail about the two explained types:

Table 22. Different perspectives within a nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of different perspectives within a nation occurred at a lower frequency than INSTANCES of this type. Both of these sub-themes were brought up by seven students each, although slightly different—not the same ones. Omid did not produce any reference for this theme. From the nine remaining students, Nazanin and Zohre did not explicitly acknowledge the existence, and Hadi and Mehrdad, on the other hand, seemed not to make any example of this type.

This overarching theme of DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION, including ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and INSTANCES, occurred primarily in sessions two and eight, with six and eleven references respectively. This was facilitated by specific tasks in these sessions; thus, one of the starter activities in session two involved showing students two ambiguous pictures and getting them to guess what they could be showing (see appendix F2, activity A). As each student’s guess was different from that of the other, this activity proved to be very useful in bringing students’ attention to possible differences of interpretative frames within a nation.

In session eight, students were asked to discuss and find out if there are any differences among their own families (see table nine) in a follow-up activity on
their assignment on family life in the UK. This also prompted some instantiations of this theme.

Another important point about this code is the exact manner in which the sub-themes, i.e. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and INSTANCES, were introduced. The majority of references made to ACKNOWLEDGEMENT were self-initiated and tended to come up in students’ reflective writings, where creation of themes can be said to be less affected by the topics discussed in the classroom. The sub-theme INSTANCES, on the other hand, was probably triggered by the classroom discussion, such as getting the students to discuss the possible cultural differences within their families (session eight). What is presented next is some of the examples selected from the mentioned sessions.

References to this theme occurred also in session one by Elyas and Erfan. As mentioned in 8.6.2.2, Elyas was one of the students who made some comments on rejecting stereotypes in the first session and expressed this in different ways. When discussing sentence number two in the handout on stereotypical sentences about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A) with his groupmates, for example, he made the following comment:

**Extract 8.48**

*But this actually depends on the person, if a person can hate the USA.*

(Elyas, session one)

Trying to decide whether they agree or disagree with the sentence in the handout, Elyas raises an important point by stating that nationality does not necessarily determines one’s opinion on something and every individual might form a specific view regardless of where they come from.

As mentioned earlier, students were shown some ambiguous pictures which triggered examples of both types of sub-themes. When asked if they think another group’s answers would be different, the answer as a whole class was positive. Erfan’s comment is:

**Extract 8.49**
Because I think from the experience of each person, different from others. Each person have his/her own life. This means this affects a lot on the idea of the people.

(Erfan, Session two)

Erfan, in the example above, rightly relates the background of people to their current perspectives. This shows his awareness of the unique personality that each person, within the same nation, might have.

Similarly, Katayoun mentioned the following point in her reflective writing:

Extract 8.50

You showed us some pictures that were not clear and everyone in this class had different ideas.

(Katayoun, Session two)

Although Katayoun does not explicitly refer to the possibility of different perspectives within a nation, she takes this class activity as an example affecting her way of thinking about the likelihood of a variety of ideas and perspectives on other issues occurring within the same nation.

Another session where featuring this theme came up was session eight, where I put the students into groups and got them to discuss possible heterogeneity in different aspects of either their own family lives or that of others, as suggested by Baker (2011a). This was an attempt to show them that nationality does not necessarily determine different practices. At the start of the activity, some objection to the idea was expressed:

Extract 8.51

There is no difference between Iranian families.

(Faranak, Session eight)

Having been given some clues about what topics they could possibly consider, Faranak, herself, produced some good examples on this issue (also see example 8.47):
In the extract above, Faranak refers to some families who discriminate against their children because of their gender. This behaviour can be interpreted as reflection of what they believe. Faranak also explicitly acknowledged the existence of different beliefs in different families within a nation in her reflection writing of session ten.

In line with Faranak, Katayoun also mentioned an example of different beliefs within Iranian families:

Extract 8.53

*I know someone the daughter is very well-educated but they don’t let the daughter to work.*

(Katayoun, Session eight)

Katayoun, in this case, refers to one of her personal observations on a family who has discriminated their daughter because of her gender. This is likely to be different from what she has experienced in her family and that is why she has referred to it as an example of different perspectives within a nation.

Next, I will present the final theme that was identified as a level of advanced cultural awareness.

8.6.2.4 Social identities and codes of behaviour

In line with Baker’s (2011a) model of intercultural awareness, I included materials in the syllabus that encourage students’ understanding of their membership in different social groupings at the same time.

This was manifested in three different ways. Firstly, students simply named some of the social identities they own, defined as membership of individuals in different groups (Ellemers et al., 2002). These mainly followed after some
examples I gave about myself (sociogram activity of session nine, see appendix F5, activity A). An example of this type is:

**Extract 8.54**

*I am as student, friend, cousin, sister, classmate.*

(Zohre, Session nine)

In the extract above, Zohre refers to different roles she has when she attends different groups she is a member of. This type has been labelled as EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY in table 23.

Another type is where students go one step further is making reference to different codes of behaviour participants should follow in each of their social groups, which at times differ from that of the others. This occurred primarily in session nine during follow-up activity for “sociogram activity” (see appendix F5, activity A), where students were asked to think of any situation where they had behaved inappropriately in any of their social groups. This has been labelled as EXAMPLES OF CODES OF BEHAVIOUR in table 23. A clear example of this is:

**Extract 8.55**

*You know, it was for this year of school. Every student was on class and the teacher was on class and I didn’t know that. I attended to the class and I started singing loudly. Then, I saw my teacher at the bottom of the class. I was embarrassed.*

(Elyas, Session nine)

In extract 8.55, Elyas shows understanding of different behaviours that are considered as unacceptable depending on the situation.

The final sub-theme of SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR is ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. An example of this sub-theme is the following:

**Extract 8.56**

*We are at the same time participating in different groups in which we should consider the manners.*
In the extract above, *Omid* clearly acknowledges his membership in a few social groups at the same time, in which the manner of behaviour is important.

Before I move on to provide more detail about the three sub-themes introduced above, the table below will provide more information about their frequency:

Table 23. Social identity and codes of behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of social identity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of codes of behaviour</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in table 23, references to both examples of social identity and codes of behaviour occur in almost equal numbers; however, they were produced by different students. Thus, *Nazanin* and *Hadi* did not mention any of the three presented sub-themes. In addition to *Mehrdad, Hashem* and *Omid* also did not provide any examples of social identity. *Zohre* and *Erfan*, on the other hand, were the ones who did not provide any examples of codes of behaviour. *Acknowledgement*, which had the lowest frequency, was mentioned by four students (*Mehrdad, Kimiya, Erfan, and Omid*).

The majority of references for all three types came up in session nine with 6, 11, and 4 instances respectively for examples of social identity, codes of behaviour, and acknowledgement. The following rank positions in terms of frequency of occurrence were session five with three references of examples of
SOCIAL IDENTITY and session ten with respectively one and two references to EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. In line with the previous theme in 8.6.2.3, the majority of instances of ACKNOWLEDGMENT occurred in reflective writings while the other two types mainly came up during classroom interaction. I will now present examples of all three mentioned sub-themes:

As a part of session five, students were asked to discuss the follow-up questions on the story “Save me, Mickey” (see table nine). While trying to think whether they had ever made any assumptions about people in their groups, Katayoun stated:

Extract 8.57

*We had a teacher, just for summer, he is a clergyman but he teaches maths... We used to think that we need to talk about religion when we are with him; he never advise something and he just teach maths and he’s cool.*

(Katayoun, Session five)

Katayoun, in this example, transcends the concept of stereotypes by reflection on her personal experience. That shows not only her openness to overcome her stereotypical picture of a clergyman (specifically in the context of the study), but also her understanding of one’s belonging to different groups at the same time. One might appear to be talking about and making a pitch for religion as a clergyman, however; as a teacher, they will be teaching the subject.

In the group discussion of the follow-up questions of the story “moments of embarrassment” (see appendix F6, activity A), Omid mentioned a similar issue:

Extract 8.58

*But maybe we can have it in a for example, different groups of people. We (attend) a different groups of people and we do something that is for example not common among that group of people.*

(Omid, Session six)
As can be seen, Omid refers to the norms that exist between each group of people, which might be different from that of the others. Although he has not clarified what he meant by “groups of people”, it seems to be implying an independent group from a nation.

Session nine, in which the sociogram activity was done (see appendix F5, activity A), also brought up many extracts of this type. Mehrdad made the following comment:

**Extract 8.59**

*I learned in this session that each person is a member of different cultural groupings in which different practices exist. We have to consider avoiding behaviours which are uncommon in each of these groups.*

(Mehrdad, reflective writing nine)

In a similar way to Omid (extract 8.58), Mehrdad also mentions the existence of different groupings, in which some types of behaviour are common, which may not be shared in other groups.

When asked to discuss their different social circles in their groups in the same session, Faranak said:

**Extract 8.60**

*For me, it’s different the way I even talk to my friends and classmates.*

(Faranak, Session nine)

In the extract above, Faranak refers to two of the social circles including classmates and friends she thinks she belongs. She also clarifies one of the norms, i.e. talking, which, according to her, is different in each group.

When making examples of the social circles they see themselves as a member in their groups, Erfan stated:

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Extract 8.61

*My parents, my family, my friends, my neighbours, my relatives, my teachers, my acquaintance, I'm a member of sport club.*

(Erfan, Session nine)

_Erfan_ in this example shows his understanding of what is meant by social circles and multiple identities by making some relevant examples of such.

Finally, _Katayoun_ brought up the discussed theme as one of the outcome of the course in her reflective writing of the last session:

Extract 8.62

*(I learned that) culture is relative and depends on people and the group we are in.*

(Katayoun, Reflective writing ten)

_Katayoun_, in extract 8.62, refers to a key issue, i.e. relativity of culture depending on the group we are in at a certain moment. This arguably shows her awareness of possible membership in several groups at the same time.

The overview presented here has provided information on the conceptualisations of culture, and the sub-themes emerging within the data, related to both basic and advanced level of cultural awareness. This corresponds to research questions 2 and 3, i.e. “what are Iranian teenage students’ perception of culture?” and “in which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through the teaching intervention?" respectively discussed in 10.3 and 10.4.

The following section presents the attitudes, promoted in the teaching intervention. This is linked explicitly to research question four, i.e. the extent to which such course can encourage desired attitudes for successful IC.

8.7 Attitudes

As discussed in 3.3 and 3.3.1, attitudes in IC play a substantial role in either its success or failure. Therefore, an aim of the teaching intervention was to
promote desirable attitudes including openness and tolerance throughout the course (see 6.2.2).

In total, I identified three themes relating to attitudes; these are REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENTS, (AWARENESS OF) MEDIA INDUCING STEREOTYPES, and PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON STEREOTYPES. These themes are discussed in turn in the following sections.

8.7.1 **Refraining from judgements**

Quotations clustered under this theme are those where students talk about the inappropriateness of forming judgements before getting to know someone. Although this is only a belief and it is hard to predict how the students would act in real situations, the fact that students are referring to refrain from judgement is positive step towards being successful communicators in the future. As such, unfounded judgements have been identified as elements from which stereotypes root (Holliday, 2013) and so avoiding them and taking part in communication with others with an open mind seems essential for successful IC. A clear example of this is:

**Extract 8.63**

*I learned not to judge others by appearance.*

(Kimiya, Reflective writing three)

The following table presents more information on this theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Number of quotations overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refraining from judgement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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As openness is one of the core concepts involved in CA (see 3.3.1), this theme came up at different stages during the course. The only session where no reference occurred was session seven. Despite this ubiquity, this theme did occur more frequently in some sessions than the others, such as session four. This is arguably a task effect since in this we reviewed the story “an understanding supervisor” (see appendix F2, activity B) in addition to “new comer” activity (see appendix F3, activity B). This theme was brought up by all students at least once. Erfan with 19 references made the highest number of instances while Hadi and Nazanin with one reference each had the lowest number.

Given the frequency of occurrence of this theme, several examples are given in chronological order here.

Extract 8.64

The previous view of a country or culture must not make us to judge (when having a conversation).

(Omid, reflective writing one)

Omid, in this instance, clearly refers to the inappropriateness of judgement. This comment is likely to be inspired by watching a video clip on IC in the classroom (see table nine). This comic video clip illustrates the miscommunication between an American and a Korean-American as a result of the American’s judgmental perspective on the Korean-American.

As a part of session two and as a follow-up activity from the ambiguous pictures I showed them at the start of the class (see appendix F2, activity A), I tried to elicit the concept of openness and having a wider perspective while participating in an instance of IC. Therefore, I got them to think what would happen if some people from different backgrounds entered a conversation with no understanding of the others’ perspectives. As one of the responses to this question, Hashem noted:

Extract 8.65

We have to first respect others’ perspective. And you know, do not judge everyone by their culture.
As can be seen, Hashem points out two important points including mutual respect and refraining from judgement, both factors contributing to successful IC.

As mentioned earlier, many instances occurred in session four, possibly due to the task effect. In the “new-comer” exercise, where students had to come up with a list of things they should and should not do when residing in a new country (see appendix F3, activity B), for example, students were divided into three groups of three. Two of the groups, namely Erfan, Elyas, Omid (group A) and Zohre, Faranak, Katayoun (group B) noted JUDGING OTHERS/NATIVE PEOPLE in the ‘should not’ column while writing down their ideas.

Another instance occurred in the same session when Hashem justified the group’s choice of order on who they would choose to sit next to in the classroom in an unfamiliar environment within the framework of a task (see appendix F3, activity A). Before giving the answer of whom they chose in their groups, Hashem stated:

**Extract 8.66**

*You know it would be nice if you contact with new people and no matter where they live and where they come from.*

(Hashem, Session four)

Although Hashem does not directly refer to the concept of inappropriateness of judgement in the example above, he clearly expresses his openness to be in contact with anyone, regardless of their background. This suggests his non-judgemental attitude. In fact, I would argue that this occurrence might be indicative of a slightly more in-depth engagement with this attitude because, unlike in the other references, Hashem actually goes one step beyond a verbal acknowledgement of judgement as negative to express his openness and non-judgemental attitude. He then moves on to express their first choice “Adele” because of the same first language they share. What he probably intended to express before explaining their choices was them being made according to the common first language rather than prioritising certain nationalities.
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Similar instances came up in other sessions. In session five, for example, we revised the story “Save me Mickey” followed by some questions (see appendix F9 and table nine). In his reflective writing of the same session, Hadi noted:

**Extract 8.67**

*I learned that it is important not to judge anyone before we get to know them during a conversation. It is important not to judge by appearance.*

(Hadi, Reflective writing five 41)

The quotation above, probably triggered by class discussion around personal reflections on stereotypes (see 8.7.3), shows Hadi’s awareness of a need to avoid judgements before knowing someone personally. How this stated belief would pan out in any real situation is, of course, unknown. Hadi also mentioned some contradictory notions; for instance, when he gave some examples of stereotypical ideas in the same course (see 9.4.1).

At times, students expressed the concept of **REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT** by referring to the relativity of different norms. In session six, for instance, when a handout on media and the story “moments of embarrassment” (see appendices F4, activity A and F6, activity A) were discussed, Katayoun wrote the following as her learning outcome(s):

**Extract 8.68**

*Today I learnt don’t judge the other culture. Maybe one action isn’t good in my idea but it is the best for non-Iranian.*

(Katayoun, Reflective writing six)

As can be seen, Katayoun, in this example, justifies her opinion on avoiding judgements by pointing at different norms that people from different backgrounds have.

Another reasoning for avoiding judgements was brought forward by Elyas. In his reflective writing, he noted:

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Extract 8.69

Countries differ from each other. The differences are at country, society, or even individual level. Therefore, it is best not to judge a whole country or society after meeting one person from that country or society.

(Elyas, Reflective writing eight)

In the example above, Elyas shows awareness of the concept of culture as independent from nation and also highlights the underlying reason for not generalising from one instance to a whole nation.

Finally, Mehrdad points out at a possible solution to avoid stereotypes in his reflective writing of the last session:

Extract 8.70

We need to look at different topics from others’ perspectives while communicating so that we avoid cliché images.

(Mehrdad, Reflective writing ten)

In a similar way to Elyas (example 8.69), Mehrdad introduces his justification of avoiding stereotypes. He refers to various perspectives existing among different individuals and the importance of flexibility and openness during communication.

8.7.2 Media and stereotypes

In line with Baker’s (2011a) suggestion of classroom material for developing intercultural awareness, a discussion of media was included in the syllabus to give the students the opportunity to explore cultural representations critically (Baker, 2011a) (see appendix F4, activity A). This was in attempt to develop awareness of the role of media in creating images, which, in turn, can lead to

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desired attitudes for successful IC. Table 25 below presents the frequency of occurrences and the spread of instances discussing this theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>media and stereotypes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, this theme came up in the second half of the course including session five, six, eight, and ten. The majority of references of this type occurred in sessions five (10 references) and six (21 references); i.e. the teaching events when the story “Save me, Mickey” (see appendix F9) and the handout on media (see appendix F4, activity A) were discussed. The majority of references in sessions five and six occurred during classroom interaction, accounting for 27 references in total for both sessions; however, in sessions eight and ten this theme mostly came up in students’ reflective writings with a total of four references. This can be explained by a task effect. There was no material in session eight and ten to immediately trigger such statements whereas in sessions five and six, there were direct references to the role of media in classroom material namely “Save me, Mickey” and hand-out on media. Thus, we can say that statements on the role of the media in sessions eight and ten were mainly self-initiated.

MEDIA AND STEREOTYPES was brought up at least once by seven students. Erfan had the highest number of references with 16 quotes while Hashem stood at the lowest with one reference. Hadi, Zohre, and Mehrdad did not discuss this theme at all. The extracts below are taken from the sessions where this concept was mainly brought forward.
In session five, during the follow-up group-discussions of “Save me, Mickey” (see table nine), Omid made the following comment:

**Extract 8.71**

Yes, kidnapping. When coming to America, there watch XX news and they see America as a dangerous country.

(Omid, Session five)

In this extract, Omid not only refers to the fear that the family discussed had while living in the US (kidnapping), but also refers to the media as source of this fear. Thus, he shows understanding of creation of fear by the image broadcasted by the news.

In a similar way to Omid, Elyas gives an example of how media can affect the images people create of different countries:

**Extract 8.72**

I think when I watch the news in the television, all the news show demonstration. The TV news show there is a demonstration in USA. When we are in the Iran in here, we think there is no security.

(Elyas, Session five)

Elyas in the example above refers to the picture often presented by Iranian national TV of the West, specifically the USA, probably an effect of the political relationship between the two countries. Elyas goes on to explain what “thoughts” this could provoke about the US, and so implies his awareness of the possibility of the incorrectness of such an image.

In the same session, Katayoun noted the importance of media in her reflective writing:

**Extract 8.73**

Today, I understood how important media is. We can’t judge a different nation by the things we hear from different news and sources.

(Katayoun, Reflective writing five)
As can be seen, Katayoun pointed at media as a source of judgments. Her reference to “avoiding judgements” and “hearing from different news sources” is an evidence of her understanding that not everything one hears from different sources of news is necessarily true.

As mentioned earlier, session six contained many references of this type. This was mainly triggered by a task on Bahrain’s recent demonstration with extracts discussed from two different news agencies (see appendix F4, activity A). The students were asked to find out the differences between the ways the event was reported by the two sources and to try to guess the news agencies. While discussing the differences in her group, Faranak showed understanding of personal perspectives when discussing the handout in her group:

**Extract 8.74**

*In extract one, have a positive view for the revolution.*

(Faranak, Session six)

Based on the description of news given in the first extract, Faranak rightly concluded that the news agency was in favour of revolution in Bahrain.

Erfan goes one step further in describing where such ideas might stem from. While trying to make a guess on what news agency each piece of news come from, he noted:

**Extract 8.75**

*Algeria channel, XX channel, these channels from the Saudi Arabia is against the revolution in Bahrain because they lose one of their powers but for example, Press TV from Iran, Al Baseera from Egypt, they care for that. They say it’s good to have revolution.*

(Erfan, Session six)

Erfan, in the extract above, justifies the reason certain news agencies hold specific perspectives on different issues. In this case, for example, he shows understanding of the perspectives taken by the two news agencies affected by the competition on having more power in the Middle East.
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A few more examples related to this theme are found in session eight, where students’ assignments on different aspects of family life in the UK were discussed. This led me to highlight the importance of reflection on everything we read on the media to avoid stereotypes. The comment below appears inspired by this discussion in the class:

**Extract 8.76**

*What I did not know was the information I gain via the internet before travelling to a country might not necessarily be all true and people in that country might not conform with what I have read.*

(Nazanin, Reflective writing eight 44)

In the example above, Nazanin rightly mentions the possibility that what we read on the internet is affected by personal opinion(s) of the author(s) and that they might not all be accurate.

Finally, students made some references to media when students asked to write a reflection on the whole course in the last session. Faranak, for instance, gave the following example:

**Extract 8.77**

*I learned that different media affect different people’s beliefs.*

(Faranak, Reflective writing ten 45)

Although Faranak did not go further in explaining how the media might affect people’s opinions, the statement above can be counted as her awareness of the role media plays in affecting people’s beliefs, which, in turn, will hopefully prevent her opinions being affected by the media.

8.7.3 **Personal reflection on stereotypes**

The last theme identified which was thought to be useful in developing the desired attitudes for successful IC was labelled as PERSONAL REFLECTION ON

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STEREOTYPES. This refers to instances where students talk about personal events where they realised an assumption, which they had made based on a stereotypical idea they had in mind, was wrong (see extract 8.57). In addition, it included instances students show annoyance by someone else’s stereotypical belief (see extract 8.78). I consider it useful to encourage students to think of and talk about such examples to show the false picture stereotypes give us and thus, to address and decrease stereotypical ideas in students’ minds. As the table below reveals, this theme had the lowest number of occurrences among all the other ones:

Table 26. Personal reflections on stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of quotations in classroom interaction</th>
<th>Number of quotations in assignments</th>
<th>Number of quotations in reflective writings</th>
<th>Overall number of quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal reflections</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, only two students, i.e. Zohre and Katayoun, presented the theme PERSONAL REFLECTION ON STEREOTYPES and only in one session (i.e. session five). When asked to think of occasions where they made assumptions about someone which turned out to be wrong (or the other way around), these two were the only students who provided relevant examples. Katayoun, for example, talked about herself in an occasion where she was judged based on her appearance by her uncle:

**Extract 8.78**

*Because I wear chador[^46], my uncle every time that he see me, he laugh, I don’t know why. And he thought at first, I never listen to music, I can’t*

[^46]: a kind of cover worn by some Muslim women
speak to opposite sex and these things. But it’s exactly opposite. I am a social person, I can talk. But it’s not important for me because everyone has their own idea.

(Katayoun, Session five)

Katayoun, in the example above, expresses her disappointment about her uncle’s attitude towards her because of her appearance. The fact that she relates her appearance to the uncle’s attitude shows her awareness about the stereotypical picture the uncle probably holds about religious women. Her highlighting that “it’s exactly opposite” is a sign that she disagrees with such stereotypical picture because her self-image is quite different.

Another example of this is extract 8.57 (section 8.6.2.4), where Katayoun talks about a clergyman who was their maths teacher. His good style of teaching and focus on the subject demonstrates not only different social identities people can have discussed in 8.6.2.4, but also Kimiya’s understanding of her assumption based on his appearance was wrong.

Zohre, in a similar way, refers to an instance where she made an assumption about a teacher at school based on her look:

Extract 8.79

Last year, our maths teacher was very young compared with others and we all thought she is very fun. Her class is not a class, we are just laughing there and we can not do homework, something like this. And but at the first session, we all understood she is very formal, serious, even she taught us more than books and she, for example, she is very strict.

(Zohre, Session five)

Zohre and her classmates made an assumption about a teacher being easy-going based on her age, related to the stereotypical idea that younger teachers do not take teaching very seriously. However, this proved to be wrong in the first session, where the teacher appeared very strict in her job.

Although the number of such instances is limited, they are important to mention because of the crucial role they can play in diminishing stereotypical
ideas students have. Getting students to make a link between the idea of the flawed nature of stereotypes and students’ personal experience arguably leaves a more long-term effect in their mind and so is essential in creating positive attitudes to IC.

### 8.8 Summary and conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has shown how the themes identified in the analysis relate to each level of CA. In addition, I have identified a set of attitudes that relate to those recognised as useful in succeeding IC.

As discussed in 8.6.1, the basic level of cultural awareness includes three elements namely conceptualisations of culture as GENERAL, NATIONAL, and STEREOTYPES. Placing these themes within this larger level of CA is due to the static approach towards the conceptualisation of culture embodied here. Generally speaking, although such elements mainly appeared at the start of the course, they were also found towards the end of the course (see, e.g. extracts 8.22, 8.26, and 8.27). As described throughout different sections, this can be partly explained by the type of responses each task encourages in the classroom. In addition, it has to be highlighted that the responses received after each task are also inevitably dependent on each individual’s understanding and interpretation.

Another factor to take into account regarding personal responses of individuals to different tasks is the limitation faced by students while trying to express themselves in a foreign language. In the case of the assignments given in session six, seven and eight, for example, although some students might have partly been familiar with idea of problematizing stereotypes by that stage, they might not have been comfortable trying to express this while doing an assignment in English. Therefore, students might have continued to express their old beliefs, something achievable in an easy and relatively straightforward way.

Most importantly, the non-linear and complex nature of any development, including that of CA, needs to be taken into account (Edstrom, 2005; Scarino, 2009; Holmes and O’Neill, 2012). Therefore, it might not be surprising for students’ own old beliefs to appear at the end of the course as well. The
content of the course being so different with what students are accustomed to might also foster a maintenance and return to previously held cultural ideas (see chapter four, for context).

Advanced cultural awareness, which refers to moving away from essentialist viewing of culture, consists of four themes showing understanding towards RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS, CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION, and SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR (see also Baker, 2011a). Due to the more complicated concepts this level includes, tasks encouraging understanding of such elements were mainly included in the second half of the course while designing the syllabus. With the exception of a few cases, these themes were mainly identified in the second half of the course, i.e., from session five onwards. This indicates students' ability to follow the concepts highlighted and discussed in the classroom at a group level.

Finally, this teaching intervention tried to encourage attitudes, which have been considered as optimal for successful IC. It is worth mentioning that the only evidence obtained here are the verbal expressions of such attitudes and what students might do in real situation may well differ from what they say in the classroom. However, such expressions arguably are a positive first step towards succeeding IC for students who have never been involved in instances of IC (see 8.4 for more on participants) and are not familiar with such material in the classroom (see chapter four for context). REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was one of the themes identified as relevant to this group. Negative effect of judgement was the common point among all this material.

Holding stereotypical beliefs has been identified as an obstacle against successful IC (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, challenging such ideas, in addition to familiarising students with possible source(s) of shaping such ideas were also identified as positive attitudes towards successful IC. As one of the possible sources of shaping stereotypes and in line with Baker’s (2011a) suggestion of classroom material, media was brought up and discussed in session five and six. Unsurprisingly, students’ references to media mainly came up in the mentioned sessions, in either classroom interaction or reflective writing.
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As mentioned in 8.7.3, students’ PERSONAL REFLECTION ON STEREOTYPES refers to their personal stories on either when their assumptions proved to be wrong or understanding of others’ wrong assumptions and its consequences. This was brought up by Katayoun and Zohre in the middle of the course, in response to a specific task, where students were asked to think of such occasions. Although the number of such evidence is limited, I would argue that they are of great value because they prove students’ understanding of the flawed nature of stereotypes in their real lives. Now that the general themes related to RQ two to four have been discussed, I will move to next chapter, which I devoted to individuals’ trend of development.
Chapter 9: Findings - Phase 2: Individuals

9.1 Introduction

The findings discussed in the previous chapter relate to the development of the group of learners through the course of the teaching intervention. The following sections aim to provide short profiles of the individual students, which help to highlight the diversity of developmental patterns encountered. This is important to account for factors affecting diversity, such as personal experience and level of interest. This chapter also aims at shedding some light on RQ 3.1:

- How do individual differences affect such change?

It is important to note that individuals have been presented based on the development patterns found. In other words, I categorised individuals into different groups based on similarities they share.

9.2 Group A - Full engagement

This refers to students who were fully engaged in the course and appeared as dominant compared to other students. In addition, they showed evidence of advanced cultural awareness from the start of the course and stayed at the same level throughout the course. Two students, Erfan and Elyas, are included in this group.

9.2.1 Erfan

Erfan, a male participant aged 16, was the only participant who had the experience of living abroad. He had lived in Bangladesh with his parents for two years from the age of twelve to fourteen. During the sessions, he was extremely active and interested, evidenced by his dominant role during classroom discussion (see table 14, for the number of his contributions). His contribution to the classroom discussion might not have only rooted from his experience of living abroad and relating this knowledge to the teaching
content, but also his wider knowledge and his interest of watching the news and films.

Like other students, he did show some evidence of a basic level of cultural awareness. Looking at the evidences of this in his case, we can say that the following themes seem to be salient for him:

- VALUES, including customs and clothes (in total eight references in session one, six, seven, and nine)
- BEHAVIOUR (in total eight references in session one, seven and ten)
- REGULATIONS (five references in session four)
- BELIEFS (totally five references in session one, seven, and eight)
- GOVERNMENT (four references in session one)

What seems to differentiate him from other students is his ability to relate such conceptualisations to his personal experience. In his assignment on session six, when students were asked to imagine residing in foreign country and write about the experience and possible problems they might face (see table nine), for example, he wrote of his experience of living in Bangladesh:

**Extract 9.1**

*There is food which is like tropical food. I eat things which I didn’t see in the past which affected on me a lot.*

Getting back to evidence of basic cultural awareness, *Erfan* did show self-stereotypes in session one when discussing the handout on stereotypical statements about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A). To be more precise, while discussing sentence number five, i.e. “all Iranian women are active”, he chose to agree. In the same session, however, he argued for the concept of culture being independent of nation while discussing with his groupmates to define the term “culture”. This came up when some of his groupmates were insisting on culture being limited to one county:

**Extract 9.2**

*But for example, one person has the culture or many people have the culture.*
He expanded the same example in session two, when the students were asked how big they think the group of people sharing the same culture can be (see extract 8.40).

The contrast between him agreeing with the stereotypical sentence in the first session, on the one hand, and challenging the idea of culture being dependent on nation in both first and second session, on the other hand, might have come from several factors. Noticeable among them are peer pressure or peer alignment, as he was the only one who was arguing against such ideas at the start in the first session and he might have decided to give up his ideas working in a group.

Erfan showed evidence of advanced cultural awareness from the start of the course and he was generally comfortable and confident while discussing new topics in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, he drew on his personal experience at times while expressing his ideas. For example, he talked about certain customs common in Bangladesh but uncommon in Iran while discussing actions considered inappropriate in a different context in sessions six and seven (see extracts 8.29 and 9.1).

Likewise, when discussing the position of different news agencies in session six (see appendix F4, activity A), Erfan appeared as more knowledgeable about different news agencies and the positions they can possibly take when making guesses (see extract 8.75). This shows his personal interest to read and follow the news, which, in turn, helped him to have a better understanding of the role media can play in creating stereotypes.

The number of occurrences of some elements of advanced cultural awareness and attitudes including RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS (13 references), CULTURE INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY (11), REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT (19), and MEDIA INDUCING STEREOTYPES (16) stood at a considerably higher number compared to the rest of the students in his case.

In sum, we can say that Erfan clearly exhibited both basic and advanced levels of cultural awareness. His experience of living abroad and apparent wider range of self-study has positively affected him in understanding the content of teaching and his own level of cultural awareness. The course might have helped him to relate the experience he had to issues related to IC; thus have
transferred such knowledge to a more conscious level. Although he showed some evidence of advanced cultural awareness from the start of the course, he moved on to give more examples of this level towards the end of the course. This does suggest a positive impact of the intervention on this individual.

9.2.2 Elyas

In the same way as Erfan, Elyas, a male participant aged 17, appeared very active and dominant during the course (see table 14, for the number of his contributions). This can be related to his high level of interest in the course and self-confidence in speaking English.

His definition of culture at basic level included the following concepts:

- VALUES including customs, clothing, and food (in total 9 references in session one, two, four, six, seven, eight, and ten)
- BEHAVIOURS (in total 9 references in session one, four, six, and ten)
- REGULATIONS (in total 5 references in session one and four)

In addition, he showed evidence of SELF-STEREOTYPES in session one while discussing the handout on stereotypes about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A). When discussing sentence number one, for example, he chose to disagree with the statement justifying that:

Extract 9.3

*Because Iranian men love their women.*

Similarly, he gave some examples of OTHER-STEREOTYPES in session eight; when I asked the students to choose two topics out of the ones which were discussed in the classroom regarding the life of Brits based on students' research and see whether they agree or disagree in their own groups (see table nine). He stated, for example:

Extract 9.4

*I think they (British people) work part time and they have more time than us to stay and have time with their family.*

What puts Elyas in the same group as Erfan is his evidence of advanced cultural awareness from the start of the course. In fact, although he did
demonstrate some examples of SELF-Stereotypes in the first session, he was arguing against the idea of stereotypes while discussing the hand-out on stereotypes (see extracts 8.39 and 8.48).

It is worth noting that Elyas’s groupmate, Mehrdad kept emphasising that the answer should be a general either true or false. Therefore, he eventually disagreed with the statement, most likely as a result of peer pressure or peer alignment.

Having revised the concept of culture from session one, I asked students if they thought culture is a dynamic or static concept in session two. Elyas was the only student who went straight to the point expressing his awareness of culture as independent concept from nation:

Extract 9.5

*I think the whole culture of the country is dynamic and for a person, it depends on the person. For example, I see a person that has his culture for 20 years.*

Generally speaking, Elyas appeared not only very interested and dominant in the classroom, but also very sharp in getting to the point. In session nine, for example, when students were given the handout on critical incidents (see appendix F8, activity A), he was one of the first students who made the correct guess:

Extract 9.6

*Mr. Richardson tells that his friends call him Andy and he thinks as of his culture, he do it the same and called the Chu Hon Fai, Hon Fai.*

In the same way as Erfan, but in a more limited way, Elyas draws on his personal experience when talking about media in session five (see example 8.72, for instance) or codes of behaviour in different social groups in session nine (see extract 8.55, for instance).

In sum, Elyas showed evidence of both basic and advanced level of cultural awareness in his performance in the classroom. The presence of advanced cultural awareness in his performance from the start can be attributed to his high level of interest, therefore focus and attention in the classroom. This was evident in some of his immediate relevant answers in the classroom (see extract 9.6, for instance). In addition, as he was mainly socialising with Erfan in the classroom, it might be the case that he was positively affected by Erfan, whose level of CA was also relatively higher than the others from the start (see
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9.2.1. The course has probably helped *Elyas* to confirm his ideas, as he appeared more comfortable and confident in expressing such ideas towards the end of the course.

9.2.3  **Summary- Fully engaged students**

Both *Erfan* and *Elyas* were extremely active, interested, and dominant in classroom discussion throughout the course. They both exhibited evidence of advanced cultural awareness from the first session and therefore, I would suggest that the course was of some help to establish their beliefs on what they already seem to be aware of, rather than introducing them to completely new ideas.

In spite of the similarities they share, they were different in some aspects. *Erfan*’s experience of living abroad and wider range of knowledge based on his readings or watching the news helped him to share more personal stories and gave him the benefit of understanding the teaching content easier at times (see extract 8.75, for instance). This is probably why the number of occurrences for certain themes (see 9.2.1) was noticeably higher compared to *Elyas*’s contributions and those of the rest of the students.

9.3  **Group B-Mixed engagement**

This group includes students whose evidence of advanced cultural awareness mainly appeared from session four onwards. Therefore, this group is considered to be the one showing most clearly a trajectory of increased awareness throughout the course.

As will be shown in the following sections, there were fluctuations in the development of these students. To be more precise, although they provided evidence of advanced cultural awareness suggesting their awareness of the flawed nature of stereotypes in the second half of the course, they gave examples of stereotypical statements during the same period. This seems to align with a non-linear process of development, which is well-established in the literature (see 8.8).

Additionally, it should be mentioned that time-constraint did not allow for students’ stereotypical ideas to be addressed one by one. However,
investigating such ideas can be a positive step towards diminishing such belief (see Aktor and Risager, 2001, for example). This is further discussed section 11.5.

9.3.1 Katayoun

Katayoun was a female participant aged 17. Although the male participants were generally more active in the classroom, she was one of the more active students in general and the most engaged girl in the classroom (see table 14, for number of contributions). This was in contrast with her order of choices in the handout given out in session four to assess their level of openness, where she chose saying yes to an Afghan student due to her sorrow than interest, suggesting low level of interest in the topic of the course (see table 15).

The following themes were salient in her conceptualisation of culture at basic level:

- BELIEFS (totally four references in session one and eight)
- LANGUAGE (totally two occurrences in session six and eight)

Additionally, she gave stereotypical examples of both self (in total eight occurrences in session one, three, eight, and nine) and others (in total 22 occurrences in session three, four, eight, and nine).

The majority of such stereotypes were given when doing the assignment for session seven and eight (see table nine, comparison between UK and Iranian society and letters as Iranian and British student). What is interesting is that her reflective writing in session eight contains some ideas on existence of different perspectives within a nation and avoiding stereotypes:

**Extract 9.7**

Today I learnt, our life has many different from the other even our relatives have some differences from my family. So I have to be careful about these differences because it may cause a lot of problems and stereotypes.

Still, she made a few stereotypical statements in her assignment handed in session eight and nine (see extract 8.27, for instance). As mentioned in above,
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this might suggest a complex process of change in beliefs and fluctuation between students’ old and new beliefs. In addition, I feel it is important that in assignments, there was some added difficulty for students to express themselves in English.

In fact, almost all evidence of advanced cultural awareness for Katayoun came up in second half of the course, i.e., sessions four to ten. The relevant examples she gave during this period underline her ability to follow the teaching content and can be interpreted as a sign of development in her level of CA.

Katayoun was one of only two students who could relate the effect of stereotypes to her real life in session five, when asked if anyone has ever made a wrong assumption about them (see extract 8.78). She showed her awareness and somewhat annoyance towards her uncle, who seems to judge her based on her appearance, wearing chador. Similarly, she drew on her personal experience of forming judgements about a math teacher who was happened to be a clergyman (see extract 8.57). By this, she showed her potential to go beyond stereotypical ideas, as she understands their inaccurate nature and possible negative effects. In the latter extract, Katayoun mentioned not only the possibility of one’s assumption being wrong but also the different social identities every person has; something discussed in class only several sessions later. Another point worth noting about the personal stories quoted above is their relevance to religion. This strengthens her conceptualisation of culture as BELIEFS due to the highlighted role they seem to have in her personal life.

In terms of number of occurrences, she had the second highest number of references after Erfan for themes relevant to attitudes namely REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT (8 references). In addition, she was one of the two student who showed evidence of reflecting on the inaccurate nature of stereotypes based on her own personal events. Despite this, Katayoun produced the highest number of OTHER-STEREOTYPES during the course with 22 references.

It is hard to give an answer to whether development definitely occurred or not due to all the observed contrasts explained above. What is apparent, however, is all evidence of advanced cultural awareness and attitudes were brought up from session four onwards. This can be interpreted as the positive effect.
course had in encouraging more complex ideas than what Katayoun already knew.

9.3.2 Faranak

Faranak, a female participant of age 17, appeared as a relatively quiet student during the course. I found transcribing her contributions relatively challenging because of not only her passivity at times, but also her low voice.

Her definition of culture at basic level mainly included the following concepts:

- REGULATIONS (three references in session one)
- VALUES including food and clothes (two references in session one)

In session one, for example, she expressed some annoyance with the “traditional” culture of Iran (see extract 8.10). By making an analogy between culture and REGULATIONS, she expressed teenagers’ dissatisfaction of having no choice but to follow these regulations.

In line with Katayoun, Faranak’s assignments for both session eight and nine contained many stereotypical ideas both about self and others (in total 11 and 14 references). Ideas such as “Iranians being warmer” (assignment eight) and “Brits spending more time at work than with their families” (assignment 9) came up in these assignments.

In spite of what was mentioned about her stereotypical ideas in her assignments handed in session eight and nine, she produced relevant examples against such ideas and in support of Iranians being different from each other in the class discussion for session eight (in total 3 references, see extract 8.52, for instance). She also acknowledged this issue in her reflective writing of session ten (see extract 8.44).

In line with the rest of participants in this group, all evidence of advanced cultural awareness came up in the second half of the course, mainly sessions six to ten. She shows her understanding of concepts such as RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS by referring to it in session six, seven, and nine while discussing “moments of embarrassment”, its follow-up questions (appendix F6,
activity A), and the handout on critical incidents (appendix F9, activity A) (see extract 8.35, for instance).

In terms of attitudes, she also discussed the inappropriateness of pre-judging people in three references in sessions two, four, and five. Likewise, Faranak referred to the role media play in shaping people's stereotypical beliefs in her reflective writing of session five:

Example 9.8

*Today I understood that social media has effect on my mind and maybe has a bad effect. Sometimes I made an assumption about someone and maybe it's not true.*

This was in addition to her reference while discussing the handout on Bahrain's demonstrations (see appendix F4, activity A) in session six (see example 8.74) and her reflective writing of session ten (see example 8.77).

In summary, it can be said that although Faranak showed some contrasting ideas and fluctuations in her beliefs during the course, which is in line with the other participants in this group, she appeared to make some development towards an advanced cultural awareness in the second half of the course. More time might be needed to consolidate such beliefs in long term, but the data in her case suggest that the course can be counted as a positive step towards this aim.

9.3.3 Omid

Omid, a male participant aged 16, appeared shy and quiet in the classroom. Although he had good level of English and appeared as following the teaching content, doing his assignments on regular basis and being sharp in getting the points of lessons, I felt that his lack of confidence stopped him from expressing himself at times. This was made apparent while during a free discussion at the end of a session about students’ favourite job in the future, where he expressed his doubts on becoming a good English teacher, in spite of his interest, as he thought his English was not good enough. The fact that he was mainly together with Erfan and Elyas, the two very dominant students, probably did not help as it is likely that he did not find as much chance to
express himself. In addition, having a look at table 15, it can be seen, in the same way as Katayoun (9.3.1), he chose to agree with the Afghan student to sit next to him due her politeness than interest suggesting a less open attitude compared to the majority of students.

His definition of culture at basic level mainly included the following themes:

- **VALUES** including food, clothes and customs (in total 7 references in session one, four, six, eight, and ten)
- **BEHAVIOURS** (in total 3 references in session four, six, and eight)
- **REGULATIONS** (in total 3 references in session four)

Like the previous participants in this group, his assignments due in session eight and nine contained some stereotypical beliefs about both Iranians and the Brits (in total six references). An example, taken from session eight, is the following:

**Extract 9.9**

*Teenagers in England do much the same as kids in America or other European country do, they enjoy chatting and texting friends, hang out with them, listening to the latest music on MP3, shopping for the latest fashion or watching movie.*

Some of his stereotypical ideas at this stage included ideas about people's values; and so underline his view of culture as a set of **VALUES**. An example, taken from his assignment of session nine, is:

**Extract 9.10**

*The thing that was really amazing to me about Iranians was their leisure time and holiday. You know in UK on Sundays we go to church or stay home and rest but here in Iran, on Fridays that they are on vacation. They go and visit their grandparents. According to my Iranian friend, we go and visit them to show our respect and remind them that we don’t forget them.*

In line with other participants, all occurrences of advanced cultural awareness appeared from session six onwards. Whereas such evidence included RELATIVITY
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OF CULTURAL NORMS and SOCIAL IDENTITY in sessions six and seven with respectively two and three references, he brought forward CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY in sessions nine and ten (two references). This was in spite of stereotypical beliefs he referred to in sessions eight and nine (see e.g., extract 9.10). Note that the concept of social identity was only introduced to students explicitly in session nine, via sociogram activity (see appendix F5, activity A). Omid, however, already referred to this concept after going through the story “moments of embarrassment” in session six (see example 8.58).

Omid showed his right understanding of teaching content by referring to REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT at the early stages of the course, namely in sessions one and two, as it is shown below:

Extract 9.11

Different backgrounds make different ideas and opinions among people in different cultures, clothes, etc. These backgrounds make people judge unfairly (stereotypes) that would make them into disputes. We discussed how we can omit these unfair judges.

Similar ideas came up in session four, while doing ‘new comer’ activity (see appendix F3, activity B). This was when Omid put “do not judge” as one of the “should not” phrases along with his groupmates. In other words, hasty judgement was considered as a negative trait, which should not happen when living in another country.

Other references of attitudes included MEDIA AND STEREOTYPES, where he mentioned the role that media play in shaping stereotypical beliefs in sessions five and six.

Finally, he referred to change of his mind about his understanding of culture as one of the reasons he liked the course in the last session:

Extract 9.12

The reason I liked it was it was changing my mind about XXX culture and I learned that culture is something complex and everyone has their own culture.
The fact that *Omid* refers to the complexity of culture and every person having their own culture seems to imply his interpretation of culture as a concept beyond nation.

In short, *Omid* was similar to previous participants, such as *Katayoun* and *Faranak* in terms of the appearance of more complex ideas in the second half of the course. Nevertheless, he was different in terms of the way he conceptualised culture at basic level and the stage where such conceptualisations plus expression of relevant attitudes was brought forward. This profile is suggestive of the course success in developing more complex ideas throughout the engagement with the content of the sessions.

9.3.4 *Nazanin*

*Nazanin* was a female student aged 16, who was present in six sessions only. She missed four sessions namely two, three, four, and five due to being away on a family trip. Her understanding of culture at basic level mainly included:

- **BELIEFS** (in total eight references in session one, six, eight, and nine)
- **BEHAVIOURS** (in total seven references in session one, six, and nine)

This was made obvious in her assignment of session six (see table nine), where she talks about her ideal country “Narina”, where all people are “real Shias” (see extract 8.16).

Similarly, she highlighted the role of religion in the daily life when writing a letter as a British student in Tehran assignment given in session eight (see extract 8.7). Another example of the same assignment is:

**Extract 9.13**

*Soheila says praying makes us to be obedient and grateful to our creator’s kindness.*

As a part of her assignment, *Nazanin* refers to a behaviour “praying” which she observed in Sohelia’s Iranian family while staying with them. In fact, in line with extract 9.13, all examples of cultural behaviour brought forward by her related to religion.
Similarly, although not many references of stereotypes were found in her case (in total three references in sessions one and eight), they were related to BELIEFS. An example from session eight is:

Extract 9.14

Yeah, so in UK some people go to the religious places such as churches but also in Iran we go to religious place and I think most of the time holy shrine and it’s similarity.

As can be seen, the religious act of visiting a holy place has been generalised to all Iranians in the extract above.

Regarding an advanced level of cultural awareness, all evidence of this type came up from session six onwards confirming her ability to follow and make relevant interpretation of the teaching material. In fact, although Nazanin stated “we are not different” in session eight, when asked to find some differences among their families in their groups, she made the following comment in her reflective writing of session ten:

Extract 9.15

There are differences among people of a country, in spite of similarities that they have.\(^\text{47}\)

Another noticeable example made by Nazanin is session nine, where she refers to RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS in her assignment handed in session nine:

Extract 9.16

They do an strange thing which is called praying. They pray five times a day.

However valuable the act of praying to Nazanin is, she shows her awareness of this being relative by calling it “strange” when writing from a British student’s perspective.

\(^{47}\) my translation
Nazanin showed her ability for relevant interpretation of teaching content by her comment in session one about the inappropriateness of judgement in her reflective writing. This was the only found example on REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT theme made by her:

**Extract 9.17**

*I learned that one should not judge based on one's appearance.*

Other instances of attitudes occur in sessions six and nine, where she discusses the possible inaccuracy of information from media with two references in total (see e.g., extract 8.76).

Generally speaking, it appears from Nazanin’s references that she is on the right track for development to a more advanced level of cultural awareness. However, her absence from almost half of the course, mainly the first half, makes assessment of her progress a more challenging task. Overall, however, her profile suggests that the course raised her awareness on the importance of CA based on the found evidence.

### 9.3.5 Mehrdad

*Mehrdad*, a male participant aged 17, appeared as relatively passive during the sessions (see table 15 for number of contributions). This was probably reinforced by him mainly being together with *Hadi*, who also did not appear that interested in the course. He was present in six sessions only and missed sessions four, five, six, and seven.

Because of his somewhat quieter role in the classroom, not many references determining his definition of culture at a basic level occurred. Among the ones found, the following theme was salient:

- **BEHAVIOUR** (in total 3 references in sessions one and four)

*Mehrdad* appeared to endorse stereotypes especially in session one, when discussing the handout about Iranians (see appendix F1, activity A). This became apparent when he was discussing the statements with his groupmate *Elyas*. While *Elyas* was trying to prove his point on every individual being different (see e.g., extract 8.39), *Mehrdad* stated:
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Example 9.18

_No, we should address this issue in general._

Therefore, he was denying the possibility of differences among individuals in spite of coming from the same nation. In addition to session one, some stereotypical ideas were found in his assignment in session nine, the only one he submitted (see e.g., extract 8.28).

What is noticeable about _Mehrdad_ is that, despite his passive role in the classroom, all his reflective writings in the sessions where he was present, included a point either relevant to advanced cultural awareness or attitudes. Thus, the following themes occurred:

- **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION** (one reference in reflective writing session two) (see extract 8.46).

- **SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR** (two references) - This included one example of CODES OF BEHAVIOUR in classroom interaction of session nine and one instance of its ACKNOWLEDGEMENT in the reflective writing of the same session (see extract 8.59).

- **CULTURE INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY** (two references found in reflective writings of session eight and nine) (see example 8.37 for reflective writing eight).

In terms of attitudes, three references of **REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT** were found in his reflective writings of sessions one, three, and ten (see extracts 8.46 and 8.70). He produced no reference about the role of media on shaping stereotypes, possibly related to his absence from sessions five and six, when this topic was discussed.

Although not many relevant references to the themes discussed came up in _Mehrdad’s_ classroom interaction and he generally appeared as passive, all his reflective writings contained points showing his understanding and ability to follow the teaching content. This is reinforced by the presence of relevant instances at early stages. Although the facts that the number of instances are limited and he missed four sessions makes an evaluation of whether

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48 my translation
development has happened or not difficult, it is suggestive of his possible discomfort or lack of confidence to express himself in the classroom itself. In addition, such behaviour might stem from his tendency to conform with his friend, Hadi’s behaviour (see 9.4.1), in the classroom. Alternatively, this can be explained by the difference in speaking and writing, especially for L2 users. Whereas in speaking, thinking and producing happens at the same time, one has time to reflect before producing any ideas in writing. This might have been helpful to Mehrdad, giving him the chance to reflect on the teaching content.

9.3.6 Summary - Partly engaged students

I hope the discussion so far has clarified the common point among participants in this group is that they mainly showed evidence of advanced cultural awareness in the second half of the course. The exception is Mehrdad, who provided one example of DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION in his reflective writing of session two (see extract 8.46). Similarly, Nazanin referred to RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS in session one (see extract 8.31). This overall tendency of increased evidence of advanced cultural awareness among this group is arguably best interpreted as the positive effect of course on developing students’ level of awareness. Another common point among the group members is the contrast in their performance during the course. While the evidence of advanced cultural awareness appeared from around session five onwards, students expressed some stereotypical beliefs suggesting their judgemental attitude during the same period. This was most pronounced in their assignments of session eight and nine and seems to confirm the non-linear nature of developments and changes in participants’ well-established attitudes and beliefs.

In spite of similarities, a glance at each participant’s developmental profile highlights the differences in their conceptualisation of culture and the stages where different attitudes could be identified. In addition, participants’ diverse personalities had an effect on their development. Thus, Katayoun appeared as the most active in this group, whereas the rest of participants seemed relatively quiet. Although this passivity might seem a shared characteristic, it appears to originate from different factors. Omid, for example, seemed affected mainly by his lack of confidence. Mehrdad showed his willingness to
align with his peer, *Hadi*, and a greater comfort in the process of writing, arguably due to having more time he has to think before expressing himself.

## 9.4 Group C- Little or no change

This group refers to cases where not much evidence of advanced cultural awareness occurred. It consists of *Hadi* and *Zohre*, whose developmental profile and performance are discussed below, including a summary of their similarities and differences.

### 9.4.1 Hadi

*Hadi*, a male participant aged 18, came across as a passive student in the classroom, shown by the rather small number of utterances associated with him (see table 14). He was present in eight sessions and produced eight reflective writings, but only handed in one assignment given in session six (see table nine). Having a look at his answers to the handout given out in session four to evaluate students' level of openness (table 15) can probably explain his lack of interest in the course. As was explained in 8.4, *Hadi*’s first choice in the handout is suggestive of his unwillingness to meet anyone from another country and so might bode ill for any engagement with the core issues of the course.

What is noticeable about his reflective writings is they generally seem to exclude the main points covered in that session. Instead, these texts mainly described the tasks done in the classroom. The exceptions to this are reflective writings in session two and five where he respectively pointed at existence of **SEVERAL PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION** and **REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT**.

Mainly, *Hadi* viewed culture as the following:

- **REGULATIONS** (totally five references in session three, four, six, and eight)
- **HISTORY** (two references in session one)
- **GOVERNMENT** (two references in session one)

Generally speaking, his main association of culture was to a specific nation, viz.
Extract 9.19

*I understood there are many perspectives within Iranian culture, which was interesting*

In the example above, *Hadi* does bring up a relevant point as a result of an activity done in the classroom in session two (see appendix F2, activity A) in his reflective writing. However, he associates the term “Iranian” to “culture” in a way which suggests he views them as almost equal.

Another dominant element of basic cultural awareness for *Hadi* was stereotypes, specifically about Germans. In total, five references of such stereotypes were identified (assignment given in session six and classroom discussion of session seven). Overall, four of these stereotypes were either negative or neutral, and only one was positive. Unfortunately, it was not made possible to identify the source of these stereotypes for him because of the limited time during the course and him being absent in two sessions. As will be discussed further in 11.5, identifying where such pictures come from in cases like this, where the stereotypes relate to specific country only, can be a useful way in addressing such ideas.

*Relativity of Cultural Norms* was the only identified theme belonging to advanced cultural awareness in his case, occurring in session six. To be more precise, he was the one who brought up the relativity of the meaning “hand gestures” can have in different countries when working on the follow-up questions of the story “moments of embarrassment” (see extract 8.33).

Additionally, *Hadi* referred to the same concept *Relativity of Cultural Norms* by talking about his personal experience on this in the same session:

*Extract 9.20*

*I think in European country, we have no word for Taarof* so it have none meaning for them and I think last summer I said to my cousin Ok,

49 my translation
50 It is a cultural behaviour in Iran when people say no when they are offered something (even though they want it). They only accept the offer after they are asked a few times.
here you are I made it and he said no, I don’t want and I repeat my sentence for one or two times and he said why do you say.

As can be seen, he shows understanding of a certain behaviour common in Iran not understandable for a cousin, who does not live in Iran and possibly lives in a European country.

As mentioned earlier, RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS was the only theme belonging to advanced cultural awareness, which Hadi brought up. In spite of him being passive in the classroom and not showing much of interest in general, this can be related to the possibility of linking this concept to something he had experienced himself. In other words, this might have facilitated his understanding (see extract 9.20). In terms of attitudes, only one reference of REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was found in his reflective writing of session five.

In conclusion, we can say that Hadi’s level of development during the course was negatively affected by his own passivity, lack of interest, and strong beliefs he held about the link between nation and culture. In account of individual difference due to personal experience and initial interest, I would suggest that there are cases like him, who might remain unwilling or unable to change their attitudes or who might need more time before any type of change can be observed.

9.4.2 Zohre

Zohre, a female participant aged 17, was similar to Hadi in terms of producing not many references of advanced cultural awareness in the classroom. She was also similar to Hadi in terms of her reflective writings, which excluded the main points of the sessions. However, the focus of her texts was different. While Hadi’s ones mainly included the sequence of events in the classroom, Zohre’s focus lay on language aspect of the course including the language skills she could improve as the result of the session plus the teaching method at times. An example is given below from reflective writing eight:

Extract 9.21
In my idea, your teaching is better than the teachers who just teach the book. With talking you can learn more vocabulary than studying.

Zohre was expecting to take her university entrance exam soon at the time of taking this course and she seemed to be very pre-occupied by this test. This became apparent not only by her reflective writings which focused on language skills, but also her occasional longer stays in the classroom to ask me language questions on English.

Another point of difference between her and Hadi is that she appeared as more active in the classroom (see table 15), was always present, and handed in all the assignments.

The following themes were found to be most salient in her definition of culture:

- BEHAVIOUR (in total nine references in session one and four)
- REGULATION (in total four references in session one, six, and eight)

She also verbalised some stereotypical beliefs and so there were four occurrences of SELF-STEREOTYPES in sessions one and nine in addition to eleven references of OTHER-STEREOTYPES in sessions three, four, and nine. Such stereotypical ideas might have partly originated from a form of nationalistic bias, which I observed. In session three, for example, and while going through the follow-up questions for the story “in the gutter” (see table nine), she stated:

Extract 9.22

Iranian culture or the (style) of Iranian people is the best style.

Nevertheless, she did at times express an openness towards other nationalities; notably, she reacted favourably to the task of session four (see appendix F3, activity A) on reactions on sitting next to an Afghan in the classroom (see extract 8.11). This is in contrast with the majority of instances on REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT by other participants, where the statements were focused on beliefs only and not on potential actions.

Zohre’s stereotypical beliefs and her somehow biased attitude about she felt constituted “Iranian culture”, on the one hand, and the expression of open
attitude towards Afghan immigrants, on the other hand, suggests a level contradiction in her beliefs.

Three references of advanced cultural awareness were found in her case. The first one, in contrast with the majority of students, was at the early stage of the course, i.e. session two. That was when she referred to RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS. Having shown the students the vague pictures (appendix F2, activity A) and discussing how every person’s idea can be different depending on their background, I asked the students what problem might occur when two people from different backgrounds want to communicate:

**Extract 9.23**

*At first, they have different ideas from one thing that they see and maybe because of their this differentiation they can’t get the right concept.*

As can be seen in the extract above, Zohre rightly brings forward a point which had not been explicitly discussed in the classroom yet. This is suggestive of her ability to understand and follow the teaching material, possibly at a higher pace of some other individuals.

The other two references of advanced cultural awareness were session eight and nine where she respectively refers to DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION and EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY.

In sum, references such as extracts 9.23 and 8.11 at the early stages of the course are evidence of Zohre’s understanding of the teaching content and her potential to develop her level of CA. However, her preoccupation on the university entrance exam and thus her exclusive focus on the language aspect of the course seem to have acted as a barrier against embracing and fully engaging with the aim of the course.

**9.4.3 Summary-Students with little or no achievement**

As can be seen, Hadi and Zohre were similar in the sense that neither seem to have developed their CA during the course. Although they share similarities in the result they might have got during the course, this seem to originate from different factors in each person’s case.
While Hadi's observed behaviour seems to have come from lack of interest to the subject, Zohre seemed to be affected by excessive focus on language aspects of the course due to her upcoming university entrance exam.

### 9.5 Group D- Split engagement

The last category, with only one member, belongs to Hashem who was a 20-year-old male participant and was the oldest among the others. His observed behaviour can be said to stand at the opposite end to that of Mehrdad (see 9.3.5).

To be more precise, while Mehrdad's main evidence of advanced cultural awareness and attitude appeared in his reflective writings than classroom interaction, Hashem's evidence of advanced cultural awareness and attitudes mainly appeared in his classroom interaction. His reflective writings were exclusively on the main points of each session, including mostly compliments on my teaching methodology and tasks such as group work. Even if they did include a point about the teaching material, it was so vague and general that any interpretation was made impossible, viz.

**Extract 9.24**

_I learned a lot about culture._

The only exception was reflective writing nine, where he referred to _CODES OF BEHAVIOURS_ in each social group via examples:

**Extract 9.25**

_We can not behave in the same way that we behave in our friend's group with our classmates._

In contrast to his reflective writings, which excluded any important teaching point, he did bring forward evidence of advanced cultural awareness and attitude during classroom interaction. In fact, he appeared active during the course and was present in 9 sessions. However, he handed in no assignment in

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51 reflective writing one  
52 my translation
this period. Before going into detail about evidence of advanced cultural awareness or attitude and possible justification for such behaviour, I will go through his conceptualisation of culture at basic level:

- **REGULATIONS** (in total 4 references in session four and eight)
- **GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS** (in total 2 references in session one and four)

In addition, I found limited evidence of stereotypes. However, the low number of occurrence might also be related to not having done the assignments for sessions eight and nine. Another example occurred in session seven, when Hashem agreed with a stereotypical statement about Germans by Hadi (one reference of OTHER-Stereotypes).

Regarding advanced cultural awareness, one example was found in the very early stage of the course, i.e. session one. That was when he made the following comment:

**Extract 9.26**

*Every people have different idea about culture and have different culture.*

By referring to the possibility of every individual’s different culture ownership, he shows his understanding of CULTURE INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY. This is in line with the comment made by Erfan in the same session (see extract 8.38), although these two students were not in the same group.

Further evidence of advanced cultural awareness came up in sessions six, seven, eight and nine where he mentioned RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS (3 references), DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION (one reference), and EXAMPLE OF CODES OF BEHAVIOUR (3 references).

Another noteworthy point are the references to attitudes made by Hashem. Unlike the majority of students, whose evidence of REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was limited to the verbal repetition of such statement, those introduced by him can be said to have a higher validity. To be clearer, he expressed such attitude by putting it into different words and justifying such an action rather than repeating what was said in the classroom (see extract 8.65). Another example
happened session six, when I asked the class if they think toasting somebody is good or bad, following the story "moments of embarrassment":

**Extract 9.27**

*We are not judging about this action. Hmmm, how can I say it... because at first and basically we disagree with others' actions, we don’t have to follow these actions.*

In the extract above, Hashem explains everybody’s freedom to accept or reject an action without having to judge it.

In sum, although Hashem did show evidence of development and produced more complex ideas based on the topics of class discussion during classroom interaction, his lack of interest can probably be counted as a barrier to his optimal development. In other words, while he appeared as active and as being able to understand the points of teaching material, he did not seem to have enough interest to take time to reflect and write about the teaching content itself in his reflective writings or do any assignment.

I would like to note that in spite of the similarity between Mehrdad (see 9.3.5) and Hashem in terms of each being productive in one aspect of the classroom setting, i.e, reflective writing and classroom interaction respectively, I decided to put them under different categories. That is because, in spite of Mehrdad’s passivity inside the classroom, I see him as genuinely more interested in the course compared with Hashem. This is proved by the time he took to do reflective writings in addition to the assignment he submitted as opposed to no assignment Hashem handed in and little time he took to reflect on the teaching content for the writings.

**9.6 Summary and conclusion**

Although the thematic representation in the previous chapter gives a comprehensive picture of classroom data at a group level, it might not be sufficient for following the participants’ classroom development individually. Therefore, this chapter was presented for a brief overview of the individuals one by one during the course. Based on classroom performance and individual
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differences, four different patterns including high engagement, mixed engagement, little or no change, and split engagement were found.

Based on the data presented in the last three chapters, I will start next chapter by providing detailed answers to the research questions.
Chapter 10: Discussion

10.1 Introduction

This chapter will address the answers provided in my study to the following research questions (see also 1.2).

1. What are students' English learning objectives in relationship to culture?
   1.1. To what extent are they met by the state schools?
   1.2. To what extent are they met by private language institutes?
2. What are Iranian teenage students' perception of culture?
3. In which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through the teaching intervention?
   3.1. How do individual differences affect such change?
4. To what extent did the course encourage the desired attitude(s) for successful intercultural communication?

The previous chapters presented small pieces of a bigger picture; chapter 4, for example, gave an analysis of two sample books from the two teaching settings including state schools and private language institutes. Through this, I was able to provide more insight into English educational system of Iran, but it also enabled a comparison between learners’ objectives and their teaching content. Similarly, chapters 7, 8, and 9 described the results on students’ language learning objectives and process of development of cultural awareness and of optimal attitudes for IC. These chapters are based on a detailed analysis of the data collected in FGIs and the teaching intervention, including classroom interactions, written reflections of students and assignments. While all the previous chapters already present some of the answers to the research questions, this discussion chapter will bring the findings together in a more focused manner and allow for a more in-depth engagement.

10.2 Research question 1

In order to address research question one, four FGIs were conducted with learners who had the experience of learning English in both state schools and
private language institutes and arguably have shown more interest towards learning English. The rationale for such a decision comes from the current contradiction between the two mentioned educational settings (see 1.2, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3) and accompanied by the data analysed from two sample textbooks from the two settings (see 4.4). The number of FGIs was decided based on where saturation is assumed to be reached (see 7.2).

In order to analyse the data from focus group interviews, the concept of ideal selves as part of L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei (2005, 2009b) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) was used. This was mainly because, in line with previous research conducted in different Asian contexts including Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia (Warden and Lin, 2000; Yashima, 2000; Yashima, 2002; Lamb, 2004), learners’ interest to identify with L2 communities or seeing English as being restricted to English-speaking nations is absent.

Regarding English being used as a lingua franca, the findings of previous research mentioned above is not surprising. In fact, it is in line with criticisms against the concept of integrativeness brought up by several authors (see 3.6). Oxford and Shearin (1994) relate the relative strength and weakness of integrative motivation to the community where the language is being learnt. They argue that integrative motivation is stronger in communities where English is taught as second language than a foreign language, because of the need to live and communicate in the second language. A second language environment has been defined as a location where L2 is typically being used in a community for every day communication (e.g., French in Quebec). A learner in such an environment benefits from large amounts of visual and auditory stimulation which can facilitate learning the language. A foreign language, on the other hand, is not used as medium of the communication in the environment of the learner. Instead, learners are surrounded by the native language of that society and usually the artificial input in the language classroom is the main source of input they have. While this can justify the findings in the Iranian context, where English is learnt as a foreign language, the extent to which learners of a second language learn the language with the purpose of “integration” with the L2 community or meeting needs while living in a society might need more investigation. This question is particularly relevant these days with large numbers of immigrants living in different
countries because of unforeseen and unwanted reasons, which is beyond our discussion.

Instead of the tendency to become integrated within the target language community, the participants of this study seek to become members of imagined communities. The word “imagined communities” was coined by Anderson (1991), who used it explain the sense of nationalism among members of a national community. Expanding the concept to language learning situations based on the discussion of language not belonging to certain geographical borders anymore due to globalisation, Ryan (2006) argues for the possibilities of imagined communities existing outside territorial borders. Kanno and Norton (2003: 241) define imagined communities as “groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination”. As Ryan (2006: 33) continues, imagination in this sense does not carry its conventional meaning of fantasy but “as a means of reaching out beyond one’s immediate environment and experience”. It has been suggested that factors such as mass migration and communication technology including the internet and media as elements, which empower imagination and thus contribute to creation of imagined communities (Kanno and Norton, 2003) (see also 3.6). In the case of this research, extracts such as 7.1 and 7.2, where the interviewees expressed their willingness to use internet, can be counted as concrete examples of what is mentioned by Kanno and Norton (2003).

To be more precise, students' English learning objectives as shown in this phase of the study are similar to those found by Norton and Kamal (2003) and Lamb (2004) in Pakistan and Indonesia respectively, in the sense that learners of English are motivated by connecting to a larger global imagined community via the medium of English. However, in contrast to these studies, the location where the students thought they would make use of the language varied. Both Indonesian and Pakistani learners saw English as a useful tool “when Western people are going to come to Indonesia” (Lamb, 2004: 12) and the time when Pakistan becomes a peaceful society in which it is easier for people to connect both nationally and internationally through the means of technology and literacy in English (Norton and Kamal, 2003). However, references to the use of English inside the country were rare. Exceptions include examples of
professional selves (section 7.4) including 7.10, 7.11, 7.12 and 7.15. All extracts either indirectly or directly refer to the use of language inside the country including being able to study important reference books of their field, being able to do English in their undergraduate studies, being successful in university entrance exam, being an English teacher or a more successful medical doctor. As can be seen, professional selves, which refer to the use of English inside the country, exclude the connection to a global imagined community. Instead, they mainly focus on more instrumental uses of language.

Private selves, on the other hand, which were mentioned at a higher rate than professional selves (see 7.3), include the tendency to connect to a bigger imagined community. However, this seems to be considered as either virtual communities (see extracts 7.1 and 7.2) or outside Iran (see extracts 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8). These extracts of private selves were of different types including INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP, EMIGRATION, and TRAVELLING ABROAD.

The difference between this study and previous studies arguably has several reasons. First, in contrast with the participants in Lamb’s (2004) studies, the majority of my participants come from middle-class educated families; the parents of whom or the participants themselves have the experience of travelling abroad. Even if they have not, due to travelling abroad (for holidays, for example) becoming a popular trend in Iran, specifically among the mentioned class, they have possibly heard about the attractions and the importance of English there to get by.

The second point of difference between the context of this study and the mentioned research is the use of language in the society. As Norton and Kamal (2003) mention, they heard the students in their group work activities at school, for example, to use both the local language and English alongside. English inside the country in Iran, however, is not in use. The official language of the country is Farsi, with different dialects and languages, including Azari and Arabic, also in use depending on the region. English is not used as a means of communication between the locals in any case. In addition, there are no English-medium schools inside the country.

Finally, the difference found can be attributed to political obstacles existing in the country, such as negative attitudes towards the West (see table one). In
Lamb’s (2004) study, for example, students talk about the importance of knowing English for being successful when the Westerners come to their country. In Iran, however, the presence of non-Iranians in the country is not common enough to call for and highlight the need for knowing English.

As compared to the studies conducted in the Iranian context, I would like to point out that they typically have followed the traditional Gardner’s theory of integrative and instrumental motivation described in 3.6 (see also Taguchi et al., 2009). Examples of such include Moiinvaziri (2008), Vaezi (2008), and Chalak and Kassaian (2010). Although the mentioned studies involved participants who were students of different universities, they were similar in the sense that they all used Gardner’s Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Likert-scale); therefore, data was analysed quantitatively. The first two studies concluded that students are equally motivated both instrumentally and integratively while the latter found that students are more instrumentally motivated as compared to integrative motivation. This has been associated with the limited chance Iranian students have for communicating with native speakers of English in addition to the political atmosphere of the country where English-speaking countries are not favoured by Vaezi (2008).

Although the instrumental side of learners’ motivation in these studies including finding a better job and having a better education might correspond with the ideal professional selves of the participants in this study, the integrative motivation was completely absent from the current research. Alternatively, as mentioned earlier, students expressed their willingness to be able to communicate with people from various backgrounds, there using ELF.

The criticisms against Gardner’s theory of integrativeness was discussed in 3.6. I suggested that this view is problematic not only due to the current use ELF but also the overlap that integrative and instrumental motivation have. Moreover, although the use of questionnaires to investigate motivation gives the researcher the chance to access a big amount of data in a short period of data, the nature of closed question often prevents the collection of rich and complex data. In other words, such questions impose a structure to the answers given by respondent, which comes from the researcher’s bias (Denscombe, 2014). This means that under such circumstances, respondents
might not have had the chance to express anything else other than what is asked in the questionnaire.

To sum up, participants of this study were found to be seeking to decrease the distance between their current selves and ideal selves including private and professional via learning English. Private selves, which included the tendency to be able to communicate with non-Iranians out of interest labelled as INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP, EMIGRATION, and TRAVELLING ABROAD, stood at a higher rate than professional selves. As described in 7.3, this can be due to students’ age and background. Professional selves, on the other hand, included development in EDUCATION and JOB, which, in some cases, also involved the ability to communicate with people from different background of the participants (see extracts 7.13, 7.14, and 7.19). The objectives followed by learners call for students’ familiarity with extralinguistic elements of language learning, i.e. the intercultural aspect of it. Therefore, I conducted an analysis of two sample textbooks from the two teaching settings including state schools and private language institutes where the participants were learning English (see 4.4). This is was to assess the extent to which they prepare students for reaching their future aims. This leads us to research question 1.1 and 1.2 respectively discussed in 10.2.1 and 10.2.2.

10.2.1 Research question 1.1

As mentioned in 4.3.4, textbooks are used homogenously all over the country in the state schools. Unsurprisingly, these books are all licensed by Ministry of Education; therefore, they are designed in line with the educational policy of the country. As was discussed in 4.3.1, according to the educational policy, textbooks should seek to promote Iranian-Islamic values and promote national identity. In line with this, “advertising” Islamic values and including Iranian-Islamic values in the cultural aspect of teaching approach were listed as some of the objectives of the books (see 4.4.2.1). Despite listing coverage of all four language skills as aims, this textbook seems to have excluded the listening skill completely and given very limited attention to speaking and writing skills.

Alternatively, the book is mainly focused on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension texts. This can originate from the future use of English which
has been assumed by the policy makers for language learners described by Atai and Mazlum (2012), i.e. to improve reading skills in order to gain independence in industry, economy, and agriculture (see 4.3.2). The findings from this stage are in line with Riazi (2005), who confirmed the basis of the teaching approach in Iranian textbooks on mastery of rules and words. Similarly, Pishghadam and Mirzaee (2008) and Hayati and Mashhadi (2010) have confirmed the focus of Iranian textbooks on improving reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills.

Furthermore, as was explained in 4.4.2.2, no space is allocated to students' free production of the language and all exercises seem to be controlled by providing model sentences. Both Pishghadam and Mirzaee (2008) and Riazi (2005) confirm the dominance of memorisation and lack of creativity in Iranian textbooks, associated with conservative educational system of the country (Pishghadam and Mirzaee, 2008). In addition, Majdzadeh (2002) highlights lack of free production of language in Iranian textbooks.

A cultural investigation of the “language function” section in E1 (see 4.4.2.3) showed that cultural references rarely include any to other cultures other than that of Iranian (see also Majdzadeh, 2002; Aliakbari, 2004; Cheng and Beigi, 2012). In line with educational policy mentioned earlier in the section, Cheng and Beigi (2012) relate the publishers' tendency to include Islamic values and exclude references to religious minorities such as Sunni or Zoroastrians to the governors' tendency to create a picture of a homogenous nation. Examples of textbooks in other contexts, which mainly include local cultures, is Bobda (1997) in Cameroon and Mahboob and Elyas (2014) in Saudi Arabia. I consider it worth noting that while a focus on local culture in textbooks brings about some advantages such as allowing the learners to bring in their own values rather than internalising the cultural norms of English-speaking countries (McKay, 2003), exclusion of cultural references to any other context other than that of local, might hinder students' ability to succeed in IC instances (see 3.2).

Regarding the reading texts, where references to inner, outer, and expanding circle countries were investigated (see 4.4.2.4), I could establish that references to any country are generally limited. This is line with the analysis conducted by Aliakbari (2004), who concluded that “general culture-neutral texts” featured most prominently among other types of reading texts.
Finally, I analysed the images presented in E1 in terms of gender and occupational representation (see 4.4.2.5). In line with educational policy of the country, this was also investigated to shed some light on the ideologies of the publishers (Lesikin, 2001; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012; Hilliard, 2014). Familiarising one with ideologies behind a published textbook can be used as a tool to explain its content. In addition, this was meant to present a comprehensive picture of the book including both text and images (Gray, 2010). Regarding E1, males have a noticeably higher rate than females in terms of both visibility and occupational roles. In context of this study, this is line with an analysis of two Iranian textbooks conducted by Ansary and Babaii (2003). Similarly, Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) confirm the same result after a comprehensive analysis of four textbooks used from first grade of high school to pre-university. Regarding the ideological perspective of the publishers mentioned earlier, such a view can be reflective of the expectations toward male and female roles (Bahman and Rahimi, 2010). Although gender bias does not seem to be limited to Iranian textbooks only (see 10.2.2), the extent to which the gap between females and males in representation is in this case, i.e. 118/322 in terms of visibility and 2/11 in terms of occupational roles, is indicative of the publishers' conservative views. This can partly explain their unwillingness to include anything else except the local culture. Additionally, negative attitudes towards the West politically (see 4.2) and the need for learning English in industrial or economic improvement mentioned earlier in the section might contribute further to this view.

This, however, is in contrast with students' learning objectives discussed in 10.2. Students' learning objectives including achieving their private ideal selves and, to a certain extent, professional selves, calls not only for addressing speaking and listening skills which is absent from Iranian textbooks, but also for developing the intercultural side of language learning including CA (see 3.3). Considering the skills such as familiarity with one’s own culture and culture of others that developing CA includes (see 3.3.1), this is unlikely to be achieved with the cultural information in the Iranian textbooks which is often limited and basic. This might well account for an increasingly higher number of students choosing to go for private language institutes to follow their learning objectives (see 4.3.3). To what extent this is met by private language institutes is a question that is discussed in the following section.
10.2.2 Research question 1.2

In order to investigate research question 1.2, the internationally published TEI was chosen and analysed (see 4.4; 4.3.3). A number of differences between this book and the book from state schools, i.e. E1, were found which are listed and discussed in details here.

TE1, unlike E1, covers all four language skills. In terms of the type of the presented language, TEI views successful learning of English as being able to communicate with the “target language community” (see 4.4.2.1). Such a view implies the future use of the language by the learners as communicating with “native” speakers of English. This, however, is not realistic regarding the current use of English in today’s globalised world and has raised issue on IC (see 2.2 and 3.2). As was discussed in 3.2, English nowadays is a language of fluidity and is not limited to either geographical borders or certain nationalities. The fact that the number of non-native speakers exceeds the native ones is an evidence for transnationality of English. This rejects the idea of ownership of language by certain groups of people (see 3.6). Therefore, considering the sociocultural context of communication as those of native speakers is problematic.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I could establish that both “communication” section, where listening and speaking skills are highlighted most, and reading texts underline cultural references to inner circle countries most (see table three and table four, respectively). In this aspect, two differences with the Iranian textbook are noticeable. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, Iranian textbooks lack inclusion of other skills except for reading. The attention of listening and speaking skills in this book and the willingness of Iranian learners to develop their ability to communicate, as discussed in 10.2, can be counted as one of the reasons that such institutes have increasingly become popular in the country (see also 4.3.2).

In terms of reading texts, the reading texts in E1 are often imaginary and unrealistic. This resembled children storybooks to a certain extent, which might not suit teenagers. However, reading texts in TEI were mainly on realistic topics giving students some factual knowledge.
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Secondly, while cultural focus in E1 was found to be basic and limited to local culture (see 10.2.1), TEI is mainly concerned with the target culture. As was discussed in 3.2, the most dominant approach in ELT is the assumption of one to one correspondence between language and culture, which probably roots from linguistic relativity theory. This is in line with previous research on some global textbooks, which concluded that their presentation of culture is often a partial and stereotypical picture of target language community (see, e.g. Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Gray, 2010; Vettorel, 2010; Shin et al., 2011). Alternative approaches have been suggested. Gray (2002), for example, suggests localising textbooks by inviting local authors to cooperate in producing textbooks, which is tailored for certain contexts and in a way, bridging different societies. Similarly, Tomlinson (2003) suggests “humanising” textbooks, which students can relate to as compared to the ones which they are completely unfamiliar with. In addition, localising textbooks as one of the obvious ways to relate to the textbooks in spite of the less profit they produce compared to global textbooks, other ways such as benefiting from authors from various backgrounds and supplementing the textbook by materials provided by every class own teacher have been suggested (Tomlinson, 2003).

As can be seen, while E1 was mainly focused on Iranian-Islamic culture presented in the way which is in favour of local publishers (see 10.2.1), TE1 is mainly focused on the target culture. In general, while this might not meet students’ learning objectives either, it was found to be more helpful in terms of improving students’ reflective skills. No space was given to students' free discussion to express their own opinions in E1. In TE1, on the other hand, there are exercises where students are given the chance to discuss their own experience regarding a certain discussed topic. Such comparison which leads to discussion on similarities and differences relates to Baker’s (2011a) basic level of cultural awareness discussed in 3.3.1.

Finally, in terms of gender representation (see 4.4.2.5), I could establish that, in the same way as E1, also in TE1 males have a more dominant role than females in both visibility and occupation. However, the gap between the two was much narrower compared to that of E1, which had a ratio of visibility for males to females as 247/160. This was 28/17 in terms of occupational roles (see table seven and eight). This was respectively 322/118 and 11/2 in case of
E1. This result is in contrast with Gray (2002, 2010), who states that although underrepresentation of females was the case in the 80s in global British textbooks, it no longer exists thanks to certain guidelines including inclusivity that publishers should follow, as well as due to the effect of feminism and women’s less traditional roles. In case of the global textbook evaluated in this research, although, as was shown it has a less conservative and more open approach towards the role of females in the society compared to E1, the role of males was quantitatively still more dominant.

Returning to research question 1.2, I would like to note private language institutes using TEI and similar books do not meet students’ learning objectives fully either, which mainly involve communicating with people from various backgrounds rather than speakers of target-language communities (see 9.2). Having said that, these private institutes still have a better performance compared to the state schools. This relates to two aspects including covering all language skills equally and meeting the elements of CA, albeit to a limited extent.

10.3 Research question 2

Research question two addressed the perceptions of culture of Iranian teenagers. Analysing data at group level made it clear that sub-themes related to basic CA generally came up in the first half of the course (see 8.6.1.1 to 8.6.1.3). This shows that, with the exception of a few students, these participants generally had a basic awareness of culture when entering the course. Within this basic CA, national culture has the most salient role (see 8.6.1.2), which is not a surprising result. Baker (2015) refers to national culture, as much as it overlooks the emergent and fluid nature of culture, as the most common understanding of the concept especially among non-academics. Similarly, Piller (2011) refers to the popularity of such a conceptualisation in every society by referring to stereotypical jokes and travel websites. Holliday (2011) also found nation as one of the most salient theme, after having conducted interviews with 32 people from various nationalities who were all consciously engaged with the concept of culture via being immigrants living in countries other than that of their own or having a spouse from a different nation, to find out their views on culture. However, it should
be noted that in his research, participants often referred to the conflicts between their own identities and national identities. In contrast to this research, where participants all had the experience of cultural engagement in one way or another, the participants of the current study, with the exception of one person, had no experience of cultural engagement (see 8.4). In addition to this, they were unfamiliar with the topic of the course as it is excluded from the syllabus both in state schools and private language institutes (see 10.2.1 and 10.2.2).

Within a national definition of culture, certain subthemes were found, among which REGULATIONS, BEHAVIOURS, and BELIEFS were the most salient ones. References to REGULATIONS appeared in two different types. All extracts, except for one, referred to a set of regulations set by the rulers, either in Iran or in other countries, which people have to follow. Following such behaviour over time due to its requirement by the law becomes part of the culture (see extracts 8.8, 8.9, and 8.33, for instance). A similar example is Omid (extract 8.15), who notes rules as helping one to the extent that they adopt to the new environment when moving to a country. Therefore, regulations have been viewed as sources where certain behaviours stem from. As mentioned earlier, one example involved a student making an analogy between national culture and regulations (see extract 8.10). To be clearer, culture which is set by every nation was seen as an external power which people have to follow in the same way as they do with social rules regardless of liking them or not. The idea of viewing regulations of every country as determiners of people’s behaviours and therefore their culture can be said to relate to Goodenough’s (1957, 1964) theory of culture as cognition discussed in 2.4. Based on this perspective, people’s culture is not shaped in interaction with each other, but based on a set of shared knowledge, which in the case of this research, comes from regulations implemented in the society.

As noted earlier, the second most frequent trait within national culture was BEHAVIOUR expressed either as general references to the term “behaviour” or specific behaviours. Within these types, references to specific behaviours stood at a slightly higher rate, i.e. 13/10. Such specific behaviours were of two different kinds including the ones which have religious roots (see for instance, extracts 8.7 and 9.14) and the ones which were non-religious (see extracts
8.11 and 8.12). Religion, in the former, plays the same role as regulations in shaping the behaviours observable in a nation. Certain behaviours such as not shaking hands (extract 8.7) and going to religious places (extract 9.14) have been considered as results of a homogenous mentality, which in this case is sharing the same religion. Extracts which include certain behaviours in relation with religion are often related to Iran, and specifically Islam, which is the official religion of the country. This suggests the important role of context in shaping people’s understanding of culture discussed further in 10.6.1.

In line with this, BELIEFS was the third most frequent sub-theme within national culture; out of 17 references to beliefs, 14 were the ones which relate to religious beliefs (see for instance, extract 8.16) while 3 were simply referring to “beliefs” or “religion” as a general term (see for instance, extract 8.17). I would like to note that due to the close ties between this category and the previous one on behaviours originating from certain beliefs some degree of overlap was unavoidable. Not shaking hands (extract 8.7), for instance, is not only a certain behaviour but also refers to underlying beliefs leading to it.

To summarise, national cultures appeared to have the most salient role in students’ conceptualisation of culture in the first half of the course. This was mainly within REGULATIONS, BEHAVIOURS, and BELIEFS. BELIEFS mainly included the religious ones and particularly Islamic ones, possibly affected by students’ backgrounds. In line with this, a number of BEHAVIOURS mentioned were found to have religious roots. REGULATIONS referred to the ones implemented in the society and over time became part of social norms and specific behaviours certain nations follow. As mentioned earlier, this refers to essentialist view of culture which limits it to geographical boundaries. Within an essentialist view of culture, students’ conceptualisation of culture was found to mainly relate to cognitive understanding of culture which refers to having some common mutual knowledge leading to homogenous behaviour in a nation.

10.4 Research question 3

Evidence of advanced cultural awareness including RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS, CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION, and SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR generally started to appear from session
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five onwards (see 8.8). As I discussed when explaining cultural formation in IC, characteristics of culture, such as fluidity and relativity, which correspond with the sub-themes of advanced cultural awareness, are brought about in its formation via and through discourse (Baker, 2015- see 2.3.1) and formation of small cultures in different contexts (Holliday 1999, 2013-see 2.3.2).

The fact that this theme generally occurred from session five onwards at group level is indicative of the positive effect of the course in improving students' level of advanced cultural awareness. In other words, at a group level, students seem to have moved from understanding culture as a static concept, mainly limited to nation (see 10.3), towards understanding as a more emergent one with blurred boundaries, which in return can foster the optimal attitudes for successful IC (see 10.5).

Compared to the previous empirical research on intercultural development in different educational settings (see 3.4), similarities and differences were found in this study. Although all extant research evaluated their effect of implemented activities as positive in the same way as the present study did, there are differences in the frameworks used and type of activities. This might stem from lack of consensus among researchers on what constitutes intercultural competence (Byram and Feng, 2006a) and different interpretations of the same concept in different contexts (Holmes and O'Neil, 2012). What is more, the process through which individuals can develop intercultural competence is still unclear (Holmes and O'Neil, 2012). In the following, I will outline some examples of framework used in some empirical research with relevance to intercultural development.

Gabay (2014), who made use of drama in her classroom to promote intercultural language education, explicitly states her aim as developing “intercultural awareness”. However, her exact definition of “intercultural awareness” remains unclear. Moreover, the type of drama she incorporates in her classroom, arguably all stay at cross-cultural level, i.e. different cultures are compared and conceptualised based on the nationalities people come from (see 3.4). This is also clear by phrases such as “Latin-American culture” (p 154). While familiarising students with the concept of national culture might be helpful as a starting point to bring students' attention to cultural differences at
national level, basing the whole course on such concept does not meet the purpose of “intercultural awareness”, where culture is viewed as fluid.

Other examples of empirical research, discussed in 3.4, is Truong and Tran (2014) and Holmes and O’Neil (2012), who respectively made use of the model of “intercultural sensitivity” by Hammer et al. (2003) and Byram’s (1997) model of ICC (see 3.3). While both models advocate a model of moving from ethnocentrism towards relativism, Hammer et al.’s (2003) model seems to be more focused on individual’s attitudes towards cultural differences or “cultural worldview”, as they label it, from ethnocentric to relative. This includes different stages from denial to integration. Based on this, Hammer et al. (2003) proposed a quantitative test to evaluate different dimensions of their model. The shortcomings of quantitative methods to assess intercultural development were discussed in 3.3.2. Byram’s (1997) model, on the other hand, is more comprehensive in a sense that it includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes one actually needs to possess in order to be interculturally competent. Although these are qualitative traits and their assessment in an individual is not an easy task, the given description is both more comprehensive and systematic (see 3.3.1).

Regarding the conducted studies themselves, Truong and Tran’s (2014) project, included making use of the film “Million Dollar Baby” followed by class discussion to investigate socio-cultural context of the film and some cross-cultural comparison in addition to playing out certain scenes to “deepening understanding of native speakers”(p.214). The assumption of native speakers as the norm, which students should linguistically and culturally learn about, is problematic considering today’s era of globalisation where English is used as a lingua franca among people of various background. Holmes and O'Neil’s (2012) study, on the other hand, got the participants to engage in actual communication with a “Cultural Other”, who had to be a student from a different background of that of the participants.

Another aspect of difference in the discussed studies were the type of activity which was used in different educational settings. Gabay’s (2014), Truong and Tran’s (2014) and Holmes and O'Neil’s (2012) studies mentioned above respectively made use of drama, a film, and actual intercultural encounters in their research. As was discussed 3.4, other activities include tandem learning
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and residence abroad programs. This might originate from two reasons. Firstly, as was discussed in 3.3, due to different nature of every context of teaching, there is so single methodology which can frame every context (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Baker, 2015). In fact, it is both linguistic and cultural complexity of every context, which can determine the process of language teaching (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Secondly, as mentioned earlier, it is still unclear how exactly intercultural competence can be improved (Holmes and O’Neil, 2012).

Due to the reasons mentioned above, every activity which has been implemented in different research is valuable and justifiable in its own context. However, a major difference observed between the previous research and the present study is the range of implemented activities. While, to my knowledge, previous research used one type of activity such as film or drama in the teaching setting to incorporate the intercultural side of language into their syllabus, the present study used a variety of activities to reach this aim (see table nine). This has advantages and disadvantages. While the former type of research might give the researcher the chance to delve deeply into that particular teaching activity and investigate it comprehensively, it fails to consider different needs different learners might have. In other words, considering individual differences among learners (see 3.5), including a variety of activities might be more fruitful if one is to benefit all the learners in a teaching context (Dörnyei, 2005). For instance, as can be seen in table nine, I tried to include videos, as well as reading and writing activities in the syllabus. Although these activities led to class discussion in the majority of times, I attempted to address different preferences students might have when receiving input. Additionally, this might also help towards covering range of different interests learners might have.

To sum up, the teaching intervention proved to be helpful considering evidence viewing culture as a more fluid and emergent concept, related to the level of advanced cultural awareness, appeared from session five onwards. In the same way as the majority of previous research, this research is also unique in the chosen framework, which confirms lack of consensus on what constitutes intercultural side of language learning. Moreover, the present study seems to cover a wider range of activities in the teaching setting compared to
the previous research, which might be more helpful in meeting different individuals’ needs and interests, which might in turn increase students’ level of motivation (Dörnyei, 2009a).

10.4.1 Research question 3.1

As was discussed in 3.5, individual differences can affect the process of language learning including intercultural development. The findings in this research, as was discussed in chapter nine, support this. This section will highlight the main points discussed in the mentioned sections in response to question 3.1.

Although intercultural encounters do not necessarily have a positive effect on one’s intercultural development, once mixed with some type of formal learning it is more likely that it makes a positive difference (see 3.5.1). This was observed in case of Erfan (see 9.2.1) as the only participant with previous experience of living abroad. As was shown in 9.2.1, this experience proved as helpful to facilitate understanding the teaching content via association with what he was familiar with.

Another point which is well-established in the literature as helpful in such development is extroversion (see 3.5). While in multilingual contexts, this might translate into individuals approaching others from various backgrounds and gaining experience of intercultural encounters, in the context of this study, as a monolingual one, meant active participation in classroom and group activities, which might lead to deeper understanding of classroom material. In the case of Erfan (9.2.1), this might have partly come from the higher confidence he had due to the familiarity of the course topic to him because of his experience. There were also other students who appeared as extroverted. Elyas (9.2.2) was another example. In his case, extroversion in addition to the interest he showed towards the topics of discussions seemed to have acted as positive.

Having said that, I would like to note that based on the findings of this research, extroversion does not necessarily lead to success in developing the intercultural side of learning. Zohre (9.4.2) was an example of a student who appeared relatively active during the course and was present in all the
sessions. However, her improvement seemed to have been hampered by her excessive focus on university entrance exam, which distracted her attention from the main focus of the course to its linguistics side only.

Another example of an extroverted student was Hashem (9.5), who was similarly active during the course (see table 14). Compared to Zohre, mentioned earlier, he showed more evidence of advanced cultural awareness inside the classroom; however, his lack of interest to devote more time for his own learning seems to have hindered his development. To be more precise, as was explained in 9.5, although evidence in classroom interaction confirmed his ability to follow the teaching content, his reflective writings did not go further than positive comments on my teaching methodology. In addition, he did not hand in any of the assignments.

As was discussed in 3.5, in contrast with extroversion, introversion can be disadvantageous when it comes to communicative tasks and improving intercultural side of language learning. In context of this research, introversion appeared in two different ways with two slightly different outcomes. The first example is Hadi (9.4.1), who appeared as passive in the classroom and not many contributions of him to the classroom discussion were found (see table 14). Additionally, having a look at the result of the handout given in session four to assess students’ level of openness (see table 15), it can be seen that his answers were dramatically different from those of the others. To be clearer, his first choice of the handout implied that he had no interest in meeting people from other countries. Therefore, his appearance as introverted might have simply come from his lack of openness therefore interest in the course. Unsurprisingly, he did not appear to achieve much during the course (see 9.4.1).

Another example of students who appeared as introverted was Mehrdad (9.3.5). In this case, this might have come from two different reasons. Firstly, in terms of personality, Mehrdad might have genuinely felt uncomfortable during communicative tasks (see 3.5). This is likely to have been in spite of his understanding of the teaching as his reflective writing shows. Additionally, the time to write might have not only given him the space he felt comfortable to express himself but also the time he needed to process the material and make relevant meanings of them. Secondly, he was mainly socialising with Hadi who,
as was mentioned earlier, also appeared as passive during the course. As was discussed in 3.5, groupmates can affect each other’s performance during the classroom. Therefore, Mehrdad passivity might have partly been due to peer alignment.

Another possible evidence of peer alignment which came across during the course were Erfan and Elyas both appeared as dominant in the classroom setting (see 9.2). However, Omid, who appeared as shy and slightly less open compared to the majority of students (see 9.3.3), was also Erfan and Elyas’s groupmate almost every session. Considering his lack of confidence, his willingness to be quiet might have been reinforced by the two dominant and relatively more knowledgeable groupmates he had.

In summary, traits such as previous intercultural encounter in the classroom, interest and extroversion proved to be helpful in encouraging intercultural development. In contrary, introversion and being quiet in the classroom, mind occupation with exams, lack of openness and lack of interest were found to act as barriers against intercultural development. Additionally, a peer effect affected individual’s performance in the classroom in a positive or negative way depending on one’s own personal characteristics.

### 10.5 Research question 4

In line with the purpose of the course, which was to increase learners’ CA, promoting optimal attitudes for successful IC was also integrated into the course. The relevance of attitudes to ICC, and specifically CA, was discussed in 3.3 and 3.3.1. Attitudes including tolerance and willingness to negotiate differences constitute one of the main elements of Byram’s (1997) ICC. Similarly, attitudes have been discussed in different proposed definitions of cultural awareness. Risager (2004), for example, suggests moving from ethnocentrism to relativism via different activities including engaging with national stereotypes. Moreover, Masuhara and Tomlinson (2004) see gaining CA as developing attitudes such as a sense of equality of one’s and others’ cultures (see 3.3.1). Before going on into details about the encouraged relevant attitudes throughout the course, I will provide an overview of attitudes observed, which are considered as counteractive for developing CA.
One of the found sub-themes which belonged to general cultural awareness was *STEREOTYPES*. Two types of stereotypes including *SELF*, which related to Iranians, and *OTHER*, which related to other nationalities, were identified. There are two points which are noticeable here. Firstly, stereotypical statements appeared not only at the start, but also towards the end of the course. This confirms the non-linear and fluctuating nature of intercultural development (see 8.8). Secondly, and probably of more relevance to attitudes, is the type of stereotypes which appeared. Having a look at table 18 and table 19, it can be seen that the overall number of *OTHER*-STEREOTYPES was slightly higher than those of *SELF*-STEREOTYPES, i.e. 62/64. Additionally, the number of positive stereotypes was the highest for *SELF*-STEREOTYPES whereas in *OTHER*-STEREOTYPES, neutral stereotypical statement was twice the number of both positive and negative statements.

This has been referred to as Othering by Holliday et al. (2010) and Holliday (2013); there is a tendency in every society to reduce the foreign Other to less than who they really are due to the temptation for easy answers to complex questions. As Holliday (2013: 25) puts it “stereotypes are often infected by *prejudice*, which is in turn leads to *Othering*”. Such prejudice often appears when one compares us versus them with us being affected by prejudice positively and others negatively (Holliday et al., 2010).

In the case of this research, *OTHER*-STEREOTYPES outnumbering *SELF*-STEREOTYPES can be related to the tendency to explain the characteristics of foreign Other, who students are not familiar with. Similarly, positive stereotypes outnumbering negative and neutral stereotypes in case of *SELF*-STEREOTYPES can be said to be the result of students’ positive prejudice towards their own nationality. *OTHER*-STEREOTYPES, on the other hand, did not seem to be affected as much by negative prejudice as the majority of statements were neutral. This can be considered as positive in students’ attitudes due to the negative effect such negative prejudice has in preventing successful IC. Nevertheless, attitudes such as positive prejudice towards one’s own nationality was observed. This, in addition to students’ lack of experience in the concept of IC and intercultural encounters, call for the need to promote such attitudes in the teaching setting.

Having said this, it should be emphasised that the mentioned result was at a group level and there were students including *Nazanin, Mehrdad*, and *Elyas,*
where the number of SELF-STEREOTYPES outnumbered those of the others. In case of Mehrdad, this may originate from his tendency to be introverted in the teaching setting discussed in 10.4.1. It should be noted that the majority of instances of SELF-STEREOTYPES came up in session one in response to the given handout (see appendix F1, activity A), which means that he did not produce many examples of SELF-STEREOTYPES during the course either. In addition, it is noticeable that REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT (see 8.7.1), which will be explained later in this section, also came up in his data. This shows that such result can also partly be due to his actual understanding of the inappropriateness of judgements. Such a correlation was not observed in case of all the participants. For Elyas, this can be due to his higher level of CA, which was observed from the start of the course (see 9.2.2). Considering Nazanin’s absence in four of the sessions (see 9.3.4), judging the underlying reason for lack of OTHER-STEREOTYPES in her data is not an easy task. It should be noted though, that REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT only came up once in the first session of the course as her only reference to this category. Therefore, considering her understanding and referring to this issue in the first session, it might come from her actual understanding of the inappropriateness of judgement.

Qualities such as developing a sense of equality for various cultures and breaking stereotypical pictures were addressed in previous empirical studies including those of Truong and Tran (2014), Holmes and O’Neil (2012), and Dodd (2001) (see 3.4). In line with this, three sub-categories including REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENTS, MEDIA AND STEREOTYPES, and PERSONAL REFLECTION ON STEREOTYPES were found.

REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENTS as was discussed in 8.7.1, refers to the instances where students identify the inappropriateness of judging someone before we get to know them. In contrast with studies such as those of Holmes and O’Neil (2012) and Dodd (2001), where participants other than one nationality were involved and assessing such a trait was made possible based on real-time experience, this was impossible due to the monolingual nature of the teaching setting in this study. Therefore, this refers to verbal expression of such attitude. In line with the centrality of attitudes in CA, this occurred in every session except for session seven throughout different class activities (see table nine- 2b in session one, 2b in session two, 1a and 3a in session three, 2a and
3a in session four, as a few examples). Although observing such behaviour in real-time communication is probably more valuable in confirming such quality is gained, it can be argued that verbal references to it, which can be considered as students' awareness of such an issue, are likely to improve students' attitudes towards a non-judgemental approach in real-time communication. In order to gain more insight into the category REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT, this has been compared against the number of STEREOTYPES which was brought up by the participants in case of three students including Erfan, Katayoun, and Hashem, who had the highest number of references in REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT. This was to assess the extent to which students might have actually appropriated this quality.

The first instance was Erfan (see 9.2.1), whose number of references for REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was considerably higher than those of the others. In line with, the number of stereotypical statements he made was low. In case of OTHER-STEREOTYPES, although higher than SELF-STEREOTYPES, the majority of references were positive. Considering the higher level of CA Erfan proved to have from the start of the course (see 9.2.1), this might not be a surprising result. The second highest references to REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT belonged to Katayoun (see 9.3.1); however, this was slightly different from Erfan. She also had the highest number of STEREOTYPES, particularly those of others. This raises the question of the extent she actually believes in not judging others. In line with Erfan, a negative correlation between the number of STEREOTYPES and REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was found in the data related to Hashem (see 9.5). To be more precise, while the number of references for REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT was the third highest in his case, only two references on stereotypical statements were found. Having said that, as was noted in 9.5, Hashem did not hand in any assignment during the course where a lot stereotypical statements were brought up (see 8.6.1.3).

As mentioned earlier, the two other sub-themes were MEDIA AND STEREOTYPES and PERSONAL REFLECTION ON STEREOTYPES, both of which are hoped to work through helping students to move beyond STEREOTYPES. As has been discussed by Scharrer and Ramasubramanian (2015), media play an important role on shaping racial and ethnical stereotypes and educating students on such role can make a great difference on reducing prejudice such represented pictures
can create. In line with this and as was mentioned in 8.7.2, investigating different represented images by media is suggested as one of the possible classroom material to increase intercultural awareness (Baker, 2011a). Therefore, the role of media in creating their desirable pictures was integrated via different activities during the course and was brought up in the second half (see 8.7.2) by all the students except Hadi, Zohre, and Mehrdad. This, again, can be explained via individual differences found among the individuals, i.e. lack of interest, mind occupation with exams, and introversion (see 10.4.1).

Finally, PERSONAL REFLECTION ON STEREOTYPES, which refers to instances where students connect their actual experiences including wrong assumptions about others or being judged by others to their knowledge about inappropriateness of stereotypes were identified (see 8.7.3). Contextualising learning by connecting it to real experience has been counted as effective in the process of learning (Gee, 2004). Therefore, although the number of such references was limited and was only brought up by two students including Zohre and Katayoun, it is still valuable in terms of learning. Katayoun (9.3.1) is an interesting case considering the observed contrasts in her class performance. On the one hand, she had one of the highest number of references in REFRAINING FROM JUDGEMENT and one of the two students who associated her personal experience to inappropriateness of the concept of stereotypes. On the other hand, as was mentioned earlier, she had the highest number of OTHER-STEREOTYPES. This might suggest the longer time a learner may need to consolidate such ideas.

In summary, considering the themes related to optimal attitudes for IC, the course can be evaluated as positive in initiating and encouraging such qualities. In light of this, there are two points that should not be ignored. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, such attitudes might best be evaluated in real-time communication, which was not possible due to monolingual nature of this classroom. Secondly, the extent to which this was observed in every individual, probably in the same as any teaching content, in dependent on individual differences.
In response to the research questions, three main points including English textbooks in state schools and private language institutes, students’ English learning objectives, and the results of the teaching intervention phase of the study were investigated and discussed. Context of the study including students’ sociocultural background, educational system and political situation of the country were found to possibly affect the findings, particularly those of learning objectives and conceptualisation of culture. The following sections will give some details on the possible role of context.

10.6.1 Context and English learning objectives

The images of possible selves described by the learners seem to be following dual purposes. There is a cluster of goals which seem to deal with more immediate purposes of the learners. This was mainly found under EDUCATION theme, where some learners discuss the importance of English for gaining success in their university entrance exam (see 7.4.1). As the interviewees were all high school students, they were going to take this exam in the next 2-3 years depending on their age. The majority of the reasons, though, seem to deal with less immediate images of possible selves. This type of categorisation is in line with Yashima et al. (2004) who relate the dual purposes of Japanese English learners to the current situation in Japan where English is thought and emphasised in schools for two reasons. On the one hand, English is needed in order to have good mark and gain a good position in Japanese universities in which gaining the ability to communicate with people in the world might not be realistic. On the other hand, the number of programs in which students are involved in study-abroad programs to study English intensive courses in countries such as US or UK is increasing which underlines students’ understanding of the need to be able to communicate with international community. The situation in Japan seems to be similar to that in Iran in terms of the importance of English to have a good mark at university entrance exams without necessarily having a good communicative competence. However, it is different from Yashima, et al.‘s (2004) context of the study in the sense that Iranian students do not often have access to study-abroad programs. Having said that, the majority of Iranian students’ English-using selves are concerned
with a more distant picture of their possible-selves (see for example 7.3.1 and 7.3.2). This brings up one question, how is that possible in spite of their actual limited access to the world outside the country?

It has been argued that possible selves are context-dependant (Lamb, 2009; Henry, 2015). Therefore, Lamb (2009: 229) suggests that "self-guides are affected and shaped by the social domains in which individuals move". This is line with Markus and Nurius (1986: 954), who state “the pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual's particular sociocultural and historical context”.

In order to investigate this point, Lamb (2009) presents a case study of two 11-year-old learners talking about their possible English-using selves in a series of three interviews. The learners came from relatively different backgrounds: One of them came from a middle-class family with both parents being university lecturers and she herself born in the US while her father was doing a master there as a part of his scholarship (although she only lived there for one year). The other learner, on the other hand, came from a rural part of Indonesia and was sent to the school in the capital (site of the study) by her parents and she was living with her extended family.

The first learner's possible selves for learning English mostly involved international elements such as being able to study abroad or becoming a journalist so that she can travel all over the world. The latter mainly talked about learning English as an obligation without much of the picture of his ideal selves. As Lamb (2009) describes, this difference can be partly due to family background.

In case of the current study, the participants are likely to come from middle class families (see 7.3), for whom a knowledge of English is important enough to accept the extra fee and register their children in evening language classes. Coming from such families does not only imply having educated parents but also makes the likeness of having access to facilities such as satellites and the internet is stronger. Such learners are likely to be more familiar with the concept of globalisation and have a stronger imagination power to see themselves being involved in “imagined communities” (see 10.2).
10.6.2 **Context and conceptualisation of culture**

As was discussed in 10.3, a conceptualisation of culture at a national level was the most salient categorisation among the participants. In addition to the fact that national conceptualisation of culture can be one of the most common ones among individuals discussed in 10.3, this can be due to the schooling system, which, as Piller (2011) explains, promotes national identity in their syllabus in many contexts. This is particularly relevant in the current study where participants were school students. In case of this research, the educational system was investigated in 4.3.1, where the educational policy is focused on national identity, among which religion, in particular Islamic and Quranic values, was most highlighted. This was supported by investigation of English textbooks in states schools, where local culture was the focus (see 10.2.1). Other examples of this are poems including “Motherland” and “We are the children of Iran” from Farsi book in first grade of primary school presented by Piller (2011), where nationalism is observed.

Secondly, there were sub-themes including **REGULATIONS** and **BELIEFS** within national definition of culture (see 10.3), the formation of which in students’ ideas can be due to situation of the country. As was explained in 4.2, after the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, a lot of effort was put towards Islamization of the country. In line with this, are implementation of regulations such as compulsory hijab for women and putting a ban on drinking alcohol in the country. Such regulations were brought up by the participants at times as well (see extract 8.8, for instance). Nowadays, although the regulations might be less strict than early years of the revolution, there still are many regulations the same as the ones which were mentioned to keep the country as “Islamic”, in the way that the governors wish to. This means that people, regardless of their own will, should conform to these rules to a great extent.

In line with this and as was mentioned in 10.3, there were references to some behaviours rooting from religious beliefs and references to religious beliefs themselves, which were salient in national conceptualisation of culture. This might originate from two factors. Firstly, considering the majority of Iranian population who are Muslims, students themselves might come from a religious background. This logically might lead to religious behaviours and beliefs having
a strong role in their mentality. Secondly, as was mentioned earlier, the general atmosphere of the country as a religious one might reinforce such mentality in students’ minds. Based on this, sociocultural and political situation in a certain context can be said to affect people’s conceptualisation of culture.

10.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter was devoted to giving detailed answers to the research questions, which were proposed in 1.2. I outlined that students’ English learning objectives are mainly concerned with being able to act as a competent member of the global community, which calls for developing CA along with the language skills. Investigating the textbooks from both teaching settings in the country including state schools and private language institutes proved that neither meet the mentioned needs fully. However, the underlying reasons were found to be different due to very different textbooks they follow.

The results of teaching intervention showed that students mainly view culture at national level at the start of the course with sub-categories including REGULATIONS and BELIEFS, the formation of which might have been affected by the students’ own backgrounds and socio-political situation of the country. Generally speaking, this was found to move towards understanding of culture as a more dynamic and fluid one in the second half of the course. Similarly, the course was evaluated as positive in developing optimal attitudes for IC. Finally, the level of development was found to be different depending on participants’ own individual differences.
Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This final chapter is set out to give an overview of the whole thesis including its rationale and findings followed by the study limitation, contributions and suggestion for further research.

11.2 Overview of the thesis

The rationale for doing this thesis comes from two factors, i.e. the existing gap in the literature and my own personal experience. In terms of the literature, there is a lack of empirical studies on promoting the intercultural side of language education whereas, theoretically, the importance of preparing students for participating in IC in today’s era globalisation has widely been discussed (see 1.2, 3.2, and 3.3). This can originate from various elements including lack of consensus on what constitute intercultural side of language learning and how to implement this in the classroom setting.

Additionally, having experienced both learning and teaching English in Iran, I came to realise that what learners are exposed to while learning English is not sufficient for preparing them for their future use of English and being involved in instances of IC. This was specifically after my experience of coming to England and facing problems while participating in some conversations, in spite of my relatively good English level.

It has been argued that this problem mainly originate from the two teaching settings, namely state schools and private language institutes. State schools, on the one hand, in following the NC, limit the cultural side of English teaching to local Iranian-Islamic “culture”. State schools are complement, on the other hand, by popular private language institutes, where, unlike in state schools, the textbooks used are all published abroad. This means that, in line with the majority of global textbooks, they are heavily focused on the culture of inner-circle countries (Kramsch, 2006; for a detailed analysis of textbooks, see chapter four). Therefore, I decided to design this research in form of an AR
dissertation project, to investigate whether conducting a course on cultural awareness can improve students' understanding of this concept and equip them with the skills they might need in their future use of English.

To establish the position of current language learners who have the experience of English learning in both settings and as a precursor to the teaching intervention, I conducted four FGIs with the main purpose of delving into learners’ objectives of learning English in order to answer RQ1. Additionally, I aimed to establish their preferences in a language course in order to have some inspiration for designing the course.

As was discussed in chapter 7, the results of FGIs show that students chose to learn English in private language institutes as an extracurricular activity and in addition to obligatory learning of the language in state schools to decrease the gap between their current selves and ideal selves, private ones in particular. It was made clear that what students are exposed to in their language classrooms, specifically via English textbooks, does not match students' English learning objectives, which calls for being involved in instances of IC.

Chapter 8 was devoted to detailed explanation of findings of the teaching intervention at thematic level. I argued that, at a group level, students seem to have moved from basic level of CA in the first half of the course towards a more advanced level of CA in the second half. However, it should be mentioned that, as shown in chapter 9, individual differences also affected students' level of development throughout the course. The complex and fluctuating nature of development was also supported with the majority of students belonging to the group “mixed engagement” (see 9.3), where references to advanced cultural awareness and basic ones, which at times contrast each other, appeared at the same time towards the end of the course. Finally, chapter 10 was allocated to addressing the research questions in a detailed manner with regards to the previous research.

11.3 Limitations of the study

The first possible limitation of this study relates to the nature of qualitative data, which involves a small number of participants as compared to quantitative data and therefore, leaves the question of generalisability of the
results open. In contrast with quantitative data, the result of which is generalisable to every setting, the result of qualitative data is limited to the setting it has been conducted (Maxwell, 2013).

This has been regarded by some researchers (see, e.g. Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990) as a limitation. I would argue, however, other concepts including resonance (Richards, 2003) and transferability (Lichtman, 2013), are valid alternatives to concept of generalisability. Such concepts refer to careful evaluation of the research by other researchers in light of their own contexts (Richards, 2003; Lichtman, 2013). As Richards (2003) continues, this can be achieved via a detailed description of the research by researcher so that other researchers can “share in the researcher’s understanding and find instantiations of them in their own professional experience” (p. 266). Lack of generalisability of qualitative data has in fact been counted as its strength due to its particularity to a certain group of people and the thick description it provides by some researchers (see, e.g. Tracy, 2010; Maxwell, 2013).

In the case of this research, there are two issues which should be considered. Firstly, considering teaching as a complex and context-dependent process, the activities that I used during the teaching intervention phase might not be suitable for a different context (see 3.2). Secondly, if a teacher/researcher decides to make use of them after careful evaluation of their teaching setting, the results might be different with students from a different national background or age group.

Another limitation of this research includes the period, during which the teaching intervention was conducted. In spite of my initial intention to run the course during ten weeks, I was obliged by practical limitations to run the course in five weeks (see 8.2). Considering the complex nature of the concept of CA and its underlying purpose, which is to equip students with some skills while taking part in IC events, one might argue that the mentioned period is too short for meeting its aim. While a longer period could have given me the chance to help students further in developing their level of CA, considering the participants of this study, who had no previous exposure to any content with relevance to intercultural side of language learning (see chapter four, for context), this can be considered as a positive step towards preparing students
Chapter 11

for future use of English. This was also strongly supported by the findings of the study (see chapter 8).

11.4 Implications for ELT and contributions

This thesis offered a teaching intervention focused on increasing CA among Iranian learners in form of an AR and the results showed that this course generally had a positive effect in increasing students' level of CA (see chapter 8).

This course was the first of its kind in the monolingual context of this study, where intercultural education is absent from the NC in spite of the increasing use of ELF and the growing position of Iran as a more open country to international relationships. I hope that this can bring both the importance and possibility of promoting CA while teaching English to both educators and researchers’ attention in Iran and similar contexts, where on the one hand, educators might be limited by their country’s conservative attitude towards English learning and English-speaking countries, and thus their unwillingness to include intercultural language education in their NC, and on the other hand, students’ objectives for learning English calls for inclusion of this element into English teaching programs. Teachers inside the classroom play an important role in reinforcing concepts which relate to intercultural side of language learning. This has been confirmed by McConachy (2013). A clear example of this related to this research is session two, where, following the statements we discussed in the first session, I asked the students if all Iranians are educated, with “all” being stressed while I was asking the question. This eliciting question was helpful in giving the student the clue to give me a negative response immediately (see 8.6.2.2). Although this might have been only at verbal level, similar strategies can be used by teachers inside the classroom to give students hints to reflect on certain topics and guide them through being more interculturally competent.

Furthermore, this thesis highlighted the role of individual differences in the development of CA (see chapter 9), which is an important insight for language educators. Considering the difference that personal traits, experiences, and backgrounds can make, including a wide range of activities such as both
individual and group work and both writing and speaking tasks in the classroom might suit the needs for all the learners more. In terms of the existing literature, as was shown in 3.4, the majority of studies, focus on the effect of one particular activity on promoting intercultural side of language learning, which although give a greater chance in investigating that particular activity in depth, probably take individual differences for granted. As was shown in this research, a variety of activities can be implemented in the classroom setting to reinforce different aspects of the concept, which is sought to be promoted by educators.

11.5 Suggestions for further research

The time constraints in this study did not allow me to address students' stereotypical beliefs, which was the most frequently occurring sub-category of basic cultural awareness in the second half of the course and in the biggest group of students, i.e. mixed engagement (see 9.3), one by one. I argue that conducting the teaching intervention in a longer period and addressing such beliefs via a class discussion would challenge students' ideas and work towards a deeper change in students' level of CA.

In addition, owing to the fact that the findings of the study supported the effects of individual differences on intercultural development, further studies can be conducted after careful evaluations of the type of learners, learning styles, for example, to maximise the effect of the course.

Finally, considering English being a foreign language in Iran and students’ limited chance of being involved in instances of IC in the country, providing them with the chance to have a “cultural other”, as Holmes and O’Neil (2012) label it, with whom they can communicate electronically might be more fruitful for developing students’ level of CA. In addition, this will give the researcher(s) the chance to assess how the discussed concepts in the classroom work in real-time communication.

The time constraints in this research did not allow me to arrange for students having such cultural other; however, considering students’ access to the internet these days, this is possible and is a valuable resource after careful
consideration of the cultural other’s background, students’ age, and institutional regulations.

### 11.6 Summary and Conclusion

This thesis has offered the first research of its kind in a monolingual context of this study, i.e. Iran, with its somehow paradoxical situation. In contrast with the widening research on the importance of inclusion of intercultural development into language learning, there are contexts, like the context of this study, where the general ideological atmosphere of the country, reflected in the NC, does not leave any space for teachers to include this in their teaching content in state schools. This does not align with younger generation’s language learning objectives, which call for their preparation to be involved in IC.

However, there are private language institutes that are not as restricted by the teaching content they have to follow. Therefore, they each can use any internationally published textbook they would like to use. Although these textbooks will probably lead to higher level of CA as compare with national textbooks (see chapter 4), they often do not go very far in taking students to a more advanced level of CA.

As was shown in this study, positive development is possible even in difficult circumstances. In addition, private language institutes provide a good opportunity for helping language learners develop intercultural side of English learning within the regulations of educational settings. This study is thought to be fruitful not only for the language educators in Iran, but also in the countries with similar characteristics. I would hope that educators can adopt this to suit their own context.
LESSON TWO

A. New Words

1. This man has a monkey. The monkey is on top of the tree. The monkey has a coconut in his hand.

   Where is the monkey? What does the monkey have in his hand?

2. A cat saw a dog. The cat climbed to the top of the tree. Where did the cat climb? Why did the cat climb to the top of the tree?
3. Farmers work on the land. They grow fruits and vegetables.
   Where do farmers work?
   What do farmers do on the land?

4. In some countries monkeys work as farmhands on the farm. They help farmers.
   What does a farmhand do?
   Where does a farmhand work?

5. The cows are eating grass in the field.
   Where are the cows?
   What are the cows doing there?
6. My students are **clever**. They learn very fast.
   Are my students clever?
   Do they learn fast?

7. Flowers are beautiful. Don’t **pick** them.
   Are flowers beautiful?
   Should we pick beautiful flowers in parks?

8. We pick fruits when they are **ripe**.
   We don’t pick them when they are **green**.
   When do we pick fruits?
   Which is better a green orange or a ripe orange?

**Lesson Two**
9. Monkeys are funny animals. It is fun for the children to see monkeys.

Why do children like monkeys?
Where can children see monkeys?

10. Farmers raise plants, vegetables, and flowers. They also raise animals.

What do farmers do?

Practice Your New Words.

Find the meaning of the underlined words.

1. Many animals can climb trees.
2. Farmhands help farmers.
3. The cows are eating grass in the field.
5. Farmers raise plants and vegetables.

a. grow
b. go up
c. farm workers
d. things that make us laugh
e. a piece of land
B. Reading

THE FUNNY FARMHAND

1 Monkeys are clever animals. They can learn many things. In some countries they are farmhands. They help farmers.

2 These monkeys live in the jungles of hot lands. There, farmers raise coconuts in fields.

3 Coconuts grow at the tops of tall trees. The farmer must climb each tree to pick them. It is hard work. Some farmers keep monkeys. They do this work.

4 It's fun to see a monkey going to work. He rides on the back of the farmer's bicycle. When they get to the field, the monkey climbs each tree. He looks at the coconuts.

5 The monkey knows that a brown coconut is ripe. He knows that a green one must stay on the tree longer. He picks the brown ones. And he drops them down to the farmer.

Lesson Two
Appendix A

C. Comprehension

I. Answer the questions orally.
   1. What can monkeys learn?
   2. Where do farmers raise coconuts?
   3. What must the farmers do to pick coconuts?
   4. How do monkeys help farmers?
   5. How does a monkey go to work?
   6. What colour is a ripe coconut?
   7. Why do farmers call monkeys "farmhands"?

II. True or False?
   1. It’s easy for people to climb a coconut tree.
   2. Monkeys live in all parts of the world.
   3. Farmers think that picking coconuts is difficult.
   4. Monkeys can ride their bicycles to work.
   5. Their work is fun.
   6. Monkeys know their job well.

III. Complete the sentences. Use a, b, c or d.
   1. Monkeys are clever animals because they
      a. can learn many things
      b. are very funny
      c. help people very much
      d. like coconuts
   2. The farmers keep monkeys to
      a. climb trees
      b. do many things
      c. ride bicycles
      d. pick coconuts
   3. It’s hard work to pick coconuts because they grow
      a. in the jungles of hot lands
      b. at the tops of tall trees
      c. in a few countries
      d. far from the farmers’ houses
   4. When a fruit is ripe
      a. it is good to eat
      b. you shouldn’t pick it

Lesson Two 25
Appendix A

IV. Read the paragraphs and complete the sentences. The number of the paragraph is given.
1. There are many countries in Asia. (2)
2. Persian farmers a lot of rice in the North. (2)
3. Could you please me with my English? (1)
4. There is a small cat in the of the house. (4)
5. He'll take an exam tomorrow. He must stay awake tonight. (5)

D. Speak Out

Presentation 1

Structure: "it" used as the subject of a sentence.

It is hard to pick the flower.
It is a hot day.

Notice the use of it in the following sentences.
A) It is five o'clock.
   It isn't very late.
   It is time for lunch.
B) It is nice today.
   It is raining.
   How is the weather? It's very cold.
C) It is about 200 meters to the post office.
   How far is it to your school? It's quite far.
D) What is it? It is a dictionary.
   Who is it on the phone? It's Mr. Brown.

Lesson Two
Who is it? It's me.
E) It is easy to learn English.
   It is difficult to walk in the dark.
   Is it necessary to stand in line?

To the teacher
(1) In the sentences above, it is used with **be** and a **noun phrase**, an **adjective** or a **verb** such as **rain**, **snow**, etc.
(2) In these sentences, it has no real meaning. It is used to fill the subject position in the sentence.

**Speaking 1**
Substitute the words in the pattern sentence.

It is ten o'clock.

1. Monday
2. early
3. hot today
4. raining
5. getting late
6. easy to learn English
7. ten kilometers to the next village

**Speaking 2**
Use the following words and phrases in questions with it and give the correct short answer.

**Example:**
summer Is it summer? No, it isn't.
winter Is it winter? Yes, it is.

1. spring
2. Aban
3. cold today
4. snowing
5. fun to watch little children play
6. difficult to climb a coconut tree
7. easy to speak English
8. necessary to speak correctly
9. important to finish the book

*Lesson Two* 27
Speaking 3
Answer the following questions.
1. Is it cold today?
2. Is it difficult to walk in the dark?
3. When does it usually snow?
4. Did it rain yesterday?
5. How far is it from here to your home?
6. How far is it to the nearest bus stop?
7. Who is on the phone? Your teacher or your brother?
8. Is it time for lunch?
9. Is it easy to learn English?
10. Is it important to be on time?

Presentation 2

Structure: should + simple form of the verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They should do things with their hands.</th>
<th>Meaning: Light obligation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He should study tonight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaking 4
One student reads the situation. Another student reads the sentence with should.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have a test tomorrow.</td>
<td>They should study tonight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. He has a cold.</td>
<td>He should stay in bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It's very late.</td>
<td>They should get up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mary is tired.</td>
<td>She should go to bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reza doesn't know the answer.</td>
<td>He should study more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The children are hungry.</td>
<td>They should eat something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The student wants to understand the question.</td>
<td>He should listen carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The teacher is thirsty.</td>
<td>He should drink something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. His bicycle doesn't work.</td>
<td>He should fix it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E. Write It Down

Writing 1
Write a sentence for each situation with "it" as subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>situation</th>
<th>sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is it?</td>
<td>It _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Whose book is it?</td>
<td>It _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What time is it?</td>
<td>It _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How far is it to Tehran?</td>
<td>It _______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson Two 29
5. Is it raining or snowing? It ____________

Writing 2
Use **should** with the phrase given.

**Example:** They have an exam tomorrow. (study tonight)
They should study tonight.

1. Their radio doesn't work. (buy a new one)

2. **John** likes to see his brother. (travel to Europe)

3. You are sick. (stay in bed)

4. **She** doesn't know the dialog. (learn it)

5. I like to learn English. (study hard)

6. The student doesn't have a dictionary. (go to the library)

7. We have a test at 7 o'clock. (get up early)

8. They don't know the address. (ask a **policeman**)

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**F. Language Functions**

**Finding out about People**

1. 
   A: Where do you come from?  
   B: I come from Japan.  
   A: What do you do?  
   B: I'm a teacher.  
   A: What's your address?
Appendix A

2.
   A: Who's that?
   B: That's Hassan.
   A: Where's he from?
   B: He's from Turkey.
   A: I see. And what does he do here?
   B: I think he's a student.
   A: Can he speak Farsi?
   B: Yes, he can.

Now practice with a friend.

G. Pronunciation Practice

1. These words have an / u: / sound. Listen to your teacher and then repeat after him/her.
   
   zoo          soup
   too          cool
   two          fool
   you          rule

2. Listen to your teacher and circle the words which have the / u: / sound.
   
   food         true         good
   no           boot         book
   do           put          tooth
   who          tool         blue
H. Vocabulary Review

Make sentences with the words in column I and column II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plate</td>
<td>very difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monkey</td>
<td>dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test</td>
<td>full of wild animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange</td>
<td>cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jungle</td>
<td>very thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td>full of beautiful pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flower</td>
<td>funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sky</td>
<td>fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child</td>
<td>not ripe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The plate is dirty.
2. ........................................
3. ........................................
4. ........................................
5. ........................................
6. ........................................
7. ........................................
8. ........................................
9. ........................................
10. ........................................

32 Lesson Two
## Appendix A

### I. Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>also*</th>
<th>funny*</th>
<th>piece* (of sth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as* (prep)</td>
<td>get late</td>
<td>post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>go up*</td>
<td>quite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awake</td>
<td>grass*</td>
<td>raise*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back* (on the back of)</td>
<td>green*</td>
<td>ripe*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better*</td>
<td>have a cold</td>
<td>snow (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clever*</td>
<td>He's from ...</td>
<td>something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climb*</td>
<td>How far ... ?</td>
<td>spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cloudy</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>stand in line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coconut*</td>
<td>It's me.</td>
<td>stay*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold (adj)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>take an exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correctly</td>
<td>jungle*</td>
<td>thirsty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow*</td>
<td>keep*</td>
<td>travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark</td>
<td>kilometer</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialog</td>
<td>land*</td>
<td>understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drop down*</td>
<td>laugh (v)</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>long*</td>
<td>weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exam</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>What do you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>far (from)*</td>
<td>meter</td>
<td>Where do you come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farm</td>
<td>monkey*</td>
<td>Where is he from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmhand*</td>
<td>necessary</td>
<td>which*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field*</td>
<td>north*</td>
<td>Who is it on the phone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fix</td>
<td>top (on top of)*</td>
<td>Who's that man?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>full (of sth)</td>
<td>pick*</td>
<td>winter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B  Focus group interviews questions

Version one

For bold questions, the students will be put in groups of three and will be given a few minutes to think and discuss before an open discussion in front of the whole group.

1. What is your name? What institute do you study English in? How long?
2. What do you like about learning English?
3. What do you dislike about learning English?
4. What comes to your mind when you first hear the phrase “learning English in Iranian state schools”?
5. What comes to your mind when you first hear the phrase “learning English in Iranian private institutions”?
6. Why did you decide to study English at a private institution in addition to your school studies?
7. Why did you choose this institute in particular?
8. What were your expectations of learning English at a private institution?
   • How far have they been met?
   • Where have they not been met?
9. Do you use English outside the classroom currently? How? (e.g., friends, internet, reading)
10. When and with whom do you think you’ll use English in the future?
11. How do state schools prepare you for these purposes?
   • How does your private institution prepare you for these purposes?
12. Do you think it is a good idea to have English as an obligatory subject at schools? Why/ Why not?
13. Generally speaking, what do you think state schools do better than private institutions? Can you make some examples?
14. What do you think state schools do worse than private institutions? Please make some examples.
15. Is there any specific topic that you think/you’d like some sessions in state schools/private institutions to be allocated to?
Appendix B

16. Would you like to learn about British/ American culture when you learn English?
17. How do you think that is useful?
18. In groups of three, have a look at the books you have received and discuss their similarities and differences (Total English, Top Notch, American English file).
   • Then, decide which one (if any) would you prefer to be used in the classroom? Why?
19. Considering all we discussed about (a short summary of students’ thoughts on book contents, the current use of English in the world), is there anything you would like to change about the current approach in state schools?
   • How about private institutions?
20. Is there anything else in relationship to your experience of learning English (either in private institutions or state schools) that you would like to add?
Version two

1. Tell me more about you English learning background (including your likes and dislikes when learning English).
2. Why are you taking part in private language institute classes?
3. What are the factors that you think are important when choosing a particular language institute to study in? Can you relate any of this to the institute you are going now?
4. Using the photos you have taken, discuss your use of English now and in the future.
5. Compare language institutes and state schools in terms of:
   - Content
   - Teaching Methodology
   - Outcomes
6. Discuss weaknesses of private language institutes.
7. How do you feel about having English as an obligatory subject from the first grade of junior high school?
8. Is there any specific culture you would like to learn about when learning English?
   - Do you think it’s important to talk about Persian culture while teaching English?
9. Is there any specific topic that you think/you’d like some sessions in state schools/private institutions to be allocated to? (written exercise)
10. In groups of three, have a look at the books you have received at the start and discuss their similarities and differences. (there will be one state school book and one book from each of the institutes the students come from) (written exercise)
   - Then, decide which one (if any) would you prefer to be used in the classroom? Why?
11. Is there anything else in relationship to your experience of learning English (either in private institutions or state schools) that you would like to add?

Question number 9:

Discuss the topics and tasks you would like some time of the class to be allocated to with your group mates. List your thoughts in the following chart:
Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks (e.g, free discussion)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics (e.g., eating habits in the UK)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question number 10-**

Have a look at the books you have been given in your groups.

List their similarities and differences in the following chart. Which one do you prefer to be taught in your class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Positive Points</th>
<th>Negative Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American English File</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Notch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chosen Book:**

**Reasons:**
Appendix C  Poster for recruiting participants

Student Research Project

Are you a female student aged between 15 to 18?
Do you have the experience of learning English on a previous language course?

Is your English level intermediate or upper-intermediate?

You are hereby invited to participate in a group interview (90 minutes) and take part in a lottery with the following gifts as well as sharing your experience of learning English.

First person (a £40 gift card)
Second person (a £30 gift card)
Third person (a £20 gift card)

Attention: You should take at least 3 photos (either with a camera or mobile phone) with the topics “My daily use of English” and “English role in my future” and email it to abdulazek.yaxmimai@gmail.com prior to the interview. Alternatively, you can bring the photos along on the day of the interview.

Deadline for registration: 14/02/2014

In order to gain more information and participate in this research, please contact the main email address stating your name, English level, and contact number. The first 30 participants will be contacted.
Appendix D **Initial course objectives**

**Basic cultural awareness**

1. The students can recognise culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values.
2. The students can understand the role that culture plays in interpretation of meaning by every individual.
3. The students can recognise the role that culture plays in inducing certain behaviours and values and beliefs both in oneself and others.
4. The students can differentiate between oneself and others as the result of number 3 and accept this without judgement.

**Advanced cultural awareness**

5. The students can view the nature of cultural norms as relative.
6. The students can identify individuals as being members of several social groupings at the same time.
7. The students can appreciate possible heterogeneity in any cultural grouping in spite of their belongingness to seemingly one cultural grouping.
8. The students can deal with “otherness” and are able to look at one issue from different perspectives.
9. The students can understand the potential danger laid in stereotypes and have the ability to move beyond this.

**Attitude**

10. The students are tolerant and able to suspend their own beliefs in order to understand someone else’s.

The students have the openness to revise their own beliefs if required in light of the understanding of relativeness of cultural norms.
### Session one

1. Group discussion on definition of culture
2. Working on the hand-out (appendix F1, activity A)
   - 2.1. Do you agree/disagree?
   - 2.2. What problems do you think this might cause while commutating with non-Iranians?
3. Students discuss their thoughts on the hand-out (appendix F1, activity B) after having it discussed in pairs.
4. Writing activity:
5. What do you think you have learned this session?

### Session two

1. Students discuss their interpretation of images given in their hand-outs (in groups and as a class) (appendix F2, activity A)
   - 1.1. Do you think the interpretation would be the same with students from a different background than yours?
   - 1.2. How do you think this matters when communication takes place in between people from different backgrounds?
2. Read the story “An understanding supervisor” (appendix F2, activity B)
   - 2.1. What do you think has gone wrong in this scenario?
   - 2.2. How does Jabu see herself?
   - 2.3. How does Jeremy see her?
3. What is your understanding of this session? Write a short review.
4. For next session:
   - Read the story “in the gutter” (appendix F9) and think of the following question:
   - What issues do you think one person might face when he/she first immigrates to a country?

### Session three

1. Review of the story and discuss the following questions:
   - 1.1. Family plays a huge role in Firoozeh’s family. Is this role as strong in your family?
   - 1.2. How do you think this is different in other countries?
   - 1.3. Who was the most recent immigrant in your family? Are you aware of anything they have done to come to grip with the target country culture?
2. Work on your hand-out. (Afghan student) (appendix F3, activity A)
   - 2.1. Share comments as a group activity
3. Work on your hand-out. (Abadooooloo) (appendix F3, activity A)
   - 3.1. Sharing comments as a group activity
## Appendix D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Work on &quot;New comer&quot; activity (Appendix F3, activity B) (Zandian, 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What are your thoughts on this session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Next session: Read the story “Save me, Mickey” (appendix F9) and think of the following question: What role do television and media play in shaping our assumptions of different societies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>1. Review the story and discuss the following questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.1. What was Firoozeh's father biggest fear when moving to America?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.2. Where did that come from?</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.3. When you see negative events about another country in the news, what assumptions, if any, do you make about the people of that country?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.4. Has anyone made an assumption about who you are and where you are from based on your appearance?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.5. Have you ever made an assumption about someone else? To what extent did that turn up to be true?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>2. Read the hand-out (Appendix F4, activity A) and discussing the questions in a group and as a whole class</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>3. Reflective writing</td>
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<td> </td>
<td>4. What do you think you have learned this session?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>5. Next session: Read the story “of mosquitos and men” (appendix F9) and think of the following question Have you ever had/heard of someone else having a similar experience to what happened between Firoozeh and Francois about choosing a place for honeymoon?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>1. Review the story and discuss the following questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.1. Why do you think Firoozeh and Francois get married ins spite of all the differences they apparently have?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.2. Where do you think their different ideas on choosing a place for honeymoon came from?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.3. What factors do you think are involved in shaping our beliefs as who we are now?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>1.4. Have you ever had/heard of someone else having a similar experience to what happened between Firoozeh and Francois about choosing a place for honeymoon?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>2. Sociogram activity as a basis for class discussion (appendix F5, activity A)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| six     | 1. "Moments of embarrassment" activity (appendix F6, activity A) (adapted from Byram and Zarate, 1995)  
2. Reflective writing:  
3. For session 8: Do a research on different aspects of family life in the UK (for example, family structure, family gatherings, wedding ceremonies, etc) using the internet (or any other resource you think that is valid) How are your findings similar/ different from your culture as an individual? | 1  
2  
3  
4  
10  
11 |
| seven   | 1. "Where do you stand" activity (appendix F7, activity A) (adapted from Brander et al., 2004)  
2. Watch the video "studying in the UK: pros and cons" (available on YouTube).  
2.1. Would you choose to study in the UK? Why or why not?  
3. Reflective writing  
4. Next Session: One volunteer to describe her findings (assignment given in session 6) in 10-15 minutes | 3  
4  
7  
8 |
| eight   | 1. Presentation of findings on the assignment by a student  
1.1. How similar/different are your findings to hers?  
1.2. To what extent do you think this information is helpful if you travel to the UK?  
2. Students discuss the main genres that came up in the previous discussion within their own families (as a group work and in class)  
3. Reflective writing:  
4. Next session: Based on your own writing last session, write the following letters: You are staying with a British family as a university student in London. Write a letter to your friend in Iran and explain your experience. You are a Brit staying with an Iranian family as a university student in Tehran. Write a letter to your friend in the UK and explain your experience. | 5  
7  
8  
9 |
## Appendix D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(adapted from Duffy and Mayes, 2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| nine | 1. Look at the critical incident cards. (appendix F8, activity A)  
1.1. Work with your partner and try to explain what has happened/ has gone wrong?  
1.2. Is there anything that could be done to repair the situation?  
2. Reflective writing:  
3. For next session: Have a look at the pages you have been given from the book “American English file 2”. Reflecting on all you have learned during the course until now, to what extent do you think they will prepare you for your use of English in the future, “communication” in particular? (p46, 48) (appendix F10)  
Hint: Think of the following questions:  
What countries are mentioned in the text?  
How likely is it that you will be in a similar situation?  
To what extent, this information can be helpful? | • 1  
• 2  
• 3  
• 5  
• 7  
• 8  
• 10  
• 11 |
| Ten | 1. Class discussion:  
1.1. What are your thoughts on the pages you were given last session?  
2. Students are divided in two groups. Each group will be given the following books:  
   Group A: Saudi Arabian Schools’ English, American Headway 2  
   Group B: Senior English for China, Top Notch 2A  
3. Students discuss the following questions in their groups:  
   3.1. Looking at the images and skimming through the content, what do you think the cultural focus of every book is?  
   3.2. To what extent do you think they are useful for preparing students for their future use of English (including communication)?  
4. Class discussion about the given books  
5. Based on what you have written for the reflective writing activity in the previous sessions, write a report on what you think you have learned in the whole course?  
6. Class discussion:  
   6.1. What did you like about the course?  
   6.2. What did you dislike about the course?  
   6.3. How do you think it could have improved? | • As this session acts as a revision session, it is possible to work through developing various listed aims (which depends on what direction the class discussion goes) |
Appendix F  Classroom materials

F.1  Session 1

- Activity A

Read the following sentences; to what extent do you think they are true? Please discuss.

1. Iranian men treat women like property.
2. Iranians hate the west esp. the USA.

http://www.topix.com/forum/world/iran/TCR0QQOEAHDIY2NQ

3. Iranians are an educated and advanced nation.

https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090823040101AAcLvwc

4. Iranian parents always compare their child with his/her friends, no matter how successful he/she is.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlVYRSkTams

5. Iran's women are active and organised.

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jan/09/iran.world
The following text has been taken from a Canadian Website, providing its citizens some information if they wish to travel to Iran.

Read the following questions and answers from a Canadian citizen who resided in Iran for a few years. To what extent do you agree/disagree?

Discuss in groups.

Cultural Information - Communication Styles

Question:

What do I need to know about verbal and non-verbal communications?

Canadian Perspective:

An Iranian’s personal space is generally closer than that of a Canadian. Men are openly affectionate with each other often holding hands in public and frequently greeting each other with a hug and two or three kisses to the cheeks. Women are also very affectionate with each other in public. The rules become less obvious regarding men and women. I have made the mistake of offering my hand to a man in public and having him pointedly ignore it. At other times I have simply bowed and have had a man approach me to give me a kiss in greeting. The best rule of thumb for a woman would be to simply bow toward a man and let him take it from there. The Iranian men have a very gracious gesture of placing their right hand on their heart and bowing to someone in greeting, if they are meeting them for the first time. Among women whom I did not know, I usually shook hands. However, even if a meeting began somewhat formally, it would often end with a warm embrace.

There are public and private rules and it would be safest to be more formal and careful touching someone in public until you know the person well. The Canadian thumbs up gesture is considered rude and one would never point a finger at someone in a conversation.

I did not find Iranians to be particularly direct in their communications. They often make their point through an allegory, a poem or a Persian saying. They will spend hours in discussion on general issues before getting to the point of
a meeting. One has to be very patient and very persistent to survive in the Iranian world.

In my experience, Iranians are master negotiators and always approach a deal as though they are operating from a position of strength, even if they have more to lose. They are very proud, very polite and difficult to scrutinize. They appreciate strength and intelligence in their opponents and like a challenge.

Cultural Information - Display of Emotion

Question:

*Are public displays of affection, anger or other emotions acceptable?*

**Canadian Perspective:**

I have occasionally observed men yelling at each other and visibly angry in public. However, given the daily stresses of traffic, pollution, economic difficulties and social restrictions, Iranians are actually quite controlled in their behaviour. Public displays of affection are generally limited to hand-holding and greetings among married couples, parents and their children, and young men or women with their own sex. It is not acceptable for unmarried men and women to congregate or to publicly demonstrate affection for each other.

Cultural Information - Relationship-building

Question:

*How important is it to establish a personal relationship with a colleague or client before getting to business?*

**Canadian Perspective:**

Good personal relationships are absolutely essential if you wish to succeed in Iran. Trust must be established before someone will feel comfortable working with you. Trust is established through honesty in your business dealings, sensitivity, hospitality and a genuine interest and concern for the Iranian people, their perspectives and problems.
Question:

I have a work-related problem with a colleague. Do I confront him or her directly? Privately or publicly?

Canadian Perspective:

I generally worked in the non-governmental organization (NGO) environment where one has to be more careful regarding staff and volunteers, the hierarchy is not always as clear as in the business environment. My experience has been that Iranians do not often confront someone directly. You tend to hear about a problem "through the grapevine" or well after the fact. This makes it a challenge to confront someone as he/she can claim that the problem is merely hearsay. You can only try to be open and honest in approaching someone and resolving a problem. Also, try not to embarrass someone publicly as their status in society or in the workplace is very important.

F.2 Session 2

- Activity A:

*Using your imagination, think of what is going in every image.*
Jeremy is a lecturer in an Australian university. He was very pleased when he heard he was going to supervise a black student from South Africa. Several years ago Jeremy had been involved in a three-year science education program in secondary schools in South Africa, and he felt he knew the place better than his colleagues. He felt he would clearly be the best person to help Jabu go through her research project. He had also read quite a few things on cultural differences, which interested him a great deal.

Jabu first met Jeremy during a class he was teaching on introducing science research. She was the only “overseas student” there and felt quite angry when, during introduction, he announced to all the other students that he knew her “context” very well. She was not sure whether it was something about his tone of voice—as though he was speaking about someone who had a handicap of some sort—or his speed of voice—as though she might not understand normal English—or that she was being separated out from all the other students as needing some sort of special attention—which annoyed her. Or perhaps it was that he was making out that he understood her and was on her side. What could he possibly know about her and her background which would give him this right!? Even her closest friends at home did not presume that they know her so well that they could speak for her like this—no one except perhaps her mother—and every daughter knows that story!

She could see, at their first tutorial, that he really was trying his best; but he still maintained his slow tone of voice. At least he wasn’t shouting as some people did when they thought you might not understand. Then he began to explain to her that he understood something about what he called “black culture in South America” and that therefore he would be able to help her meet deadlines and “to understand concepts” that might be “alien to her”. He even said he knew what it was like, “with the history of black people”, that she had to “suddenly have to compete in every sphere”. It took her a moment to understand what he was getting at. Then she realised that he was having the ignorant audacity to be thinking that she might have difficulty keeping up with “white people”.
This sort of thing became the norm of their meetings. When she showed him work he always made a big thing of saying of how well she had done—as though he was surprised that she could do it at all. Then there were lots of informal “friendly” bits of conversation in which he always put on a very “kind” face, about “food”, “rituals”, “marriage practices” and “ceremonies” “in black culture”; and once he even asked her if “she was still in contact with her tribe”. He was also supervising a German student; and she was sure he never asked him about “food”, “rituals”, “marriage practices” and “tribes”.

One day Jabu really felt like giving up the whole thing and going home. She was walking down the corridor towards Jeremy’s office. He was standing in the corridor talking to a colleague. He hadn’t seen her; and he was saying, “Well she does have some difficulty meeting deadlines; but of course that’s something deep in black African culture, isn’t it?”

She knew as a matter of fact that she was having no more difficulty than any of the other students; and anyway, even she was, why should it have anything to do with being black African? There was a Welsh student who always missed deadline; and no one would dare suggest this was anything to do with “Welsh culture”.

(Holliday et al., 2010: 34)
F.3 Session 3

- Activity A

Read the episode below. How would you react?

One of your classes at your high school is starting in 10 minutes. You are sitting in the classroom, waiting for the teacher to come in. The teacher comes in along with a student you do not know.

She introduces the new student, that she comes from Afghanistan, and she will be your new classmate from now on. The Afghan student then moves on to have a sit.

As there is an empty seat next to you, she decides to sit there. She asks you if that is OK. What do you think you would say? Please work in pairs and rank them in order of the possibility (from 1 as the most likely to 4 as the least likely)

You like meeting new people, you happily say yes and try to make friends with her.

You like meeting new people, not from a different country though. You still say yes to be polite/because you feel sorry for her.

You like meeting new people, not from a different country though. You say no.

You are shy and you do not feel comfortable interacting with new people, no matter where they come from. You say no.
Read the episode below. How would you react?

You have just moved to a country called Abalooboo. It is your first day at school. The teacher introduces you to your new class.

Next to which of explained students would you like to sit? Please work in pairs and rank them in order of the possibility (from 1 as the most likely to 4 as the least likely)

Sabina is originally from Africa, but her parents moved to Abalooloo when she was born.

Adele is from Afghanistan, they have recently moved to Abalooloo. Her mother tongue is Farsi.

Sarah was born in Abalooloo. She can only speak the language spoken in Abalooloo.

Jin is from China. She moved to Abalooloo with her parents one year ago.

(Zandian, 2014)
Appendix F

- Activity B

New Comer Activity

*If you emigrate to a country as a teenager...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should</th>
<th>You should not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Zandian, 2011)
F.4 Session 4

- Activity A

The following extracts on the same issue “Bahrain’s anti-regime protests” has been taken from two different websites. Read them carefully and think of the following questions:

1. Can you see any differences? If yes, what? (Hint: think of the position the media’s position in every context: on Bahrain’s regime side, anti-Bahrain’s regime side, or neutral?)
2. Where do you think differences originate from?
3. Where do you think they have been taken from? (If not the news agency, think of the country the news agency might belong to)

Extract 1:

Over the years the country enjoyed increasing freedom of expression, and monitors said the human rights situation had improved.

However, in early 2011 the government called in the Saudi military to crush protests by demonstrators demanding a greater say in government and an end to what Shias say is systematic discrimination against them in jobs and services.

Thousands of demonstrators gathered for several days in the centre of Manama, inspired by the popular uprisings which toppled the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt. Several people were killed in clashes with security forces.

Despite the crackdown, Shia resentment has continued to simmer, sporadically erupting in anti-government protests. The controversial decision to allow Bahrain to host the Formula 1 Grand Prix in April 2012 further galvanised protests.

Analysts believe that the ruling Khalifa family - which effectively controls the government - is split on how best to respond to opposition calls for a more meaningful dialogue.
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It is thought that Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa is a hardliner who is reluctant to make any concessions on the grounds that they will only encourage opposition leaders to make more demands.

Extract 2:

Security forces in Bahrain have injured several people after clashing with anti-government protesters demanding the release of a prominent jailed opposition leader.

On Friday, Bahraini regime forces launched another heavy-handed crackdown on demonstrators who had taken to the streets in the town of Diraz outside the capital, Manama, to protest against the detention of prominent Shia cleric, Sheikh Ali Salman, the secretary general of Bahrain's main opposition bloc, al-Wefaq National Islamic Society.

Several people were injured after the Al Khalifa forces fired tear gas and birdshots to disperse protesters.

The massive rally was held two days after Salman went before a regime court and denied all charges against him.

Before the trial, the detained opposition leader called on the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and world nations to increase their efforts to enable the Bahraini people to choose their government democratically, saying it is a moral responsibility to support a nation's right to peaceful assembly and protection from suppression.
F.5 Session 5

- Activity A

Sociogram Activity

1. Review the definition of culture discussed in session 1.
2. Take one student as example (chosen on basis of knowledge of class).
   Get her/him to describe all her/his social circles: parents, grandparents, school friends, extracurricular classes friends, holiday job, term-time part-time job, mosque, sport, music, cafes, etc. Draw them on the board, at least a dozen circles, many of which overlap, e.g.

3. Each student draws their own sociogram. Conclusion: we all belong to multiple social groups, and thus to multiple cultures.
4. Bring out that each social context has its own code of behaviour. Get some examples, e.g., swearing outlawed at grandparents', essential on building site; wearing make-up not accepted at school, accepted while going out; formal dress for school, fashionable dress for going to parties. Seek less superficial examples: e.g., more deferential to parents than to grandparents; sometimes even different languages: Informal with friends, formal with parents
5. Conclusion: we all have multiple identities, multiple behaviours which we adopt as a matter of course to respect the conventions and values of
Appendix F

our different social groups. Values and behaviours are relative, dependent on the social context.

- [At this stage, students could supply anecdotal accounts of misreading occasions /settings and behaving inappropriately.]

(Hall and Toll, 1999)
F.6 Session 6

- Activity A

_Session 6 “Moments of Embarrassment”_

1. Students will be given the following extract from a (true) story from the account of an anthropologist (called Barely) of his first meeting with an African leader.

Students’ group work:

What do you think his mistake was? Discuss in pairs.

Note: In many cultures, it is very common to raise a drink and call somebody’s name as a sign of wishing him good health (known as toasting)

(Barley had been offered a drink)

“I held the cup and proclaimed Zuuldibo’s name in a toast. Immediately a deep and shocked silence descended upon the gathering. The boys stopped talking. Zuulidbo’s smile froze upon his face. The very flies seemed to hush from their buzzing. I knew…I had made a serous mistake.”

2. Students share their guesses with the rest of the class.
3. Students will be given the Barley’s explanation of this mistake in separate piece of paper:

“The problem lies in the fact that Dowayos have no notion of our institution of “toasting”. All they have is an institution of cursing. When wronged beyond human bearing a man may curse another by calling out his name, sipping a drink and spitting the contents of his mouth on to the earth. It is then expected that the victim will weaken and die...

Class discussion:

To what extent were your guesses close to the story account?

How do you think Barley can explain “toasting” when it does not exist in the other culture?

4. Students will be given the rest of the story in a new piece of paper:
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“But how can your words make a man live long?”

“No. It’s not quite like that. We just show it is our wish-then we are friends.”

“But this means that the other men there—that you do not name—you wish them to die...”

Eventually Barley has “an inspiration” and when he say “it’s like the opposite of cursing. It means good things”, Zuuldibo understands this strange custom from an exotic country.

5. Group discussion:
   a. Have you had moments of embarrassment similar to the story you just read? What happened and what each side perceived of the other side?
   b. Think of the concept of “t’aarof” which exists in between most Iranians while greeting. How would you explain this to a non-Iranian?
   c. How do you think Zuuldibo would react in an English social gathering if he was asked to toast someone present? Would he be able to do it even though he knows it has the opposite meaning, or will his feelings and habits be too strong?
   d. Can you think of any examples that you could not do in a different environment, even though you knew it was “the done thing”? Are there things they do but which they might expect a foreigner would have difficulty in doing?

(Byram and Zarate, 1995)
F.7 Session 7

- Activity A

Session 7- Where do you stand?

Students are divided into two groups, where one group agrees with all the statements and the other one doesn’t with any (regardless of their own real opinions).

The students should then provide reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with each statement.

The students then sit in a different group, where two students come from “for” group and two from “against” group.

Choosing one of the statements to discuss within their group, they have to convince the other members with opposing opinion to agree with them.

Love is a solution to all problems.

Immigrants take away houses and jobs.

Men are better drivers than women.

Nationalism means war.
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F.8 Session 9

- Activity A

Critical incidents

No.1.

Linda, an American teacher in an adult class in the US, was speaking to Usa, one of her Thai students. She said, “Usa, I’m very happy with your work. Your English is really improving.”

Usa looked down and said, “Oh, no. I’m not a good student. My English is not very good.”

Linda really thought that Usa was making progress, and she wanted her to know it. She said to Usa, “But you are a good student, and you’re making excellent progress. You should be proud of your work.”

Usa responded to this remark saying, “No, no. You are a very good teacher, but I am not a good student.”

Linda didn’t know what to say, so she decided not to give Usa any more compliments.

1. Why did Usa look down when the teacher compliment her?
   a. She was ashamed of her work.
   b. She was embarrassed by the teacher’s compliment.
   c. She was trying to show respect for the teacher.
   d. She didn’t like the teacher

2. Why did Linda decide not to give Usa any more compliments?
   a. She decided that Usa was not a really good student.
   b. Usa’s behaviour was disrespectful.
   c. Usa didn’t seem to be pleased with the compliment.
   d. She expected Usa to say something like “Thank you”.

   (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993:85)
No.2.

Two men meet on a plan from Tokyo to Hong Kong. Chu Hon-fai is Hong Kong exporter who is returning from a business trip to Japan. Andrew Richardson is an American buyer on his first business trip to Hong Kong. Is a convenient meeting for them because Mr. Chu's company sells some of the products Mr. Richardson has come to Hong Kong to buy. After a bit conversation they introduce themselves to each other.

Mr. Richardson: By the way, I'm Andrew Richardson. My friends call me Andy. This is my business card.

Mr. Chu: I'm David Chu. Please to meet you, Mr. Richardson. This is my card.

Mr. Richardson: No, no. Call me Andy. I think we'll be doing a lot of business together.

Mr. Chu: Yes, I hope so.

Mr. Richardson: (reading Mr. Chu’s card) “Chu, Hon-fai.” Hon-fai, I’ll give you a call tomorrow as soon as I get settled at my hotel.

Mr. Chu: (smiling) Yes. I'll expect your call.

(Scollon and Scollon, 2001b:135-137)
Appendix F

F.9 Short stories

All the stories have been taken from the book “funny in Farsi” by Firoozeh Dumas.

In the Gutter

My father grew up poor in Ahwaz, Iran. His parents died at an early age, brought down by maladies readily cured today. He and his siblings survived through teamwork, and now, even though they are well into their seventies and have many kids and grandkids, they remain the central players in one another’s lives. They have supported one another through deaths and illnesses and rejoiced in one another’s good fortune. If someone were to ask my father about his proudest moment, he would probably mention the day his nephew Muhammad finally bought a house in America, or the day his great-nephew Mahan graduated from law school. Telling my father that his beloved older sister, Sedigeh, is angry with him is like putting a grown man in time out. He just can’t stand it. The unbreakable bond between my father and his siblings serves as a testimonial that even though their parents lived very short lives, they did something right.

My father’s hardscrabble life also left him with a burning desire to get rich. History is full of stories of men overcoming poverty to amass great fortunes in steel or pig farming. Others
reach great heights through education, becoming successful doctors and lawyers. My father was an educated man, but as a salaried engineer, he had not a chance of becoming rich, and he knew it. Unwilling to abandon his champagne wishes and caviar dreams, my father dreamed of ways to get rich that required neither hard work nor further education. His dream was that the doorbell would ring and he would answer it. Standing there would be a man in a three-piece navy blue suit who would ask him, “Are you Kazem?”

“Yes,” my father would answer.

Then the man would inform my father that through a series of unbelievable circumstances, he had come into boatloads of money.

It was with this mind-set that my father decided to enter *Bowling for Dollars*.

In his attempts to embrace American culture, my father had joined the local bowling league. Every Wednesday evening, he would head off to the bowling alley, returning with spellbinding stories about strikes and gutters. Somewhere along the way, he started to believe that he was a gifted bowler. I suspect it had something to do with the American habit of generously heaping praise and encouragement on anyone who tries anything. At some point, someone must have yelled “Good job, Kazem!” which my father interpreted as “You should go on television and win a fortune!”

*Bowling for Dollars* was a game show that merged the fascinating world of bowling with the thrill of Las Vegas. All a contestant had to do to win the jackpot was roll two strikes in a row. The jackpot grew each time a contestant failed to win, taking the excitement up a notch. My parents and I watched the show religiously, with my father’s running commentary, which did not
resemble that of traditional sports announcers, in the background. My father's comments ranged from "You should've gotten that!" to "I would've gotten that!" From our sofa, bowling looked easy, and we couldn't understand why so many contestants failed to win the jackpot. At the end of each show, viewers were encouraged to call the studio to become a contestant. My father gathered the courage to call and was invited to come for a trial run.

Like a bride preparing to walk down the aisle, my father carefully chose his clothing, got a haircut, and practiced saying "Hello, I am Kazem" to the bathroom mirror. My mother, now a self-declared bowling expert, gave him all kinds of advice. "Make sure you win."

My father drove the hour-and-a-half round-trip to the Burbank studio for the first trial run and returned feeling triumphant. He hadn't bowled any strikes, but he had been asked to return for the second practice. If the second practice went well, he would then appear on television.

Another hour-and-a-half trip for the second practice, and he was selected to return for a taping of the show. My father was hoping that none of the contestants before him would win, so that the jackpot would be really big. He didn't want to merely win the jackpot; he wanted to win a huge one.

The big day finally arrived and my father was ready to strike it rich. He filled the Impala with gas and set off for the third and final drive to the studio. We waited anxiously at home.

My father returned that night looking sadder than I had ever seen him. In his two tries, he had hit a total of only seven pins, winning seven dollars. He had never before bowled so poorly. He blamed his poor performance on everything from the lights to the long drive. We didn't care why he hadn't won; we just could
not recall anybody winning so little on *Bowling for Dollars*. My father had spent several times as much on gasoline just driving back and forth to the studio.

When the performance was aired a few weeks after the taping, we watched in silence. My father looked very nervous on television, especially after he hit his first gutter ball. After the second gutter ball, he looked positively panicked.

After this brush with fame, we no longer watched *Bowling for Dollars*. We didn’t feel the same emotional involvement. Who were we to criticize these people, all of whom managed to win more than seven dollars?

Shortly thereafter, my father gave up bowling entirely, deciding it was a stupid sport, if one could even call it a sport. More important, his Wednesday evening bowling nights had forced him to miss *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*. Now he was able to squeeze onto the sofa with the rest of us and catch up.
Save Me, Mickey

When we first came to America in 1972, we knew we would be staying only for about two years. This gave us approximately 164 weekends to see everything there was to see in California. From Knott’s Berry Farm to Marine World, from the Date Festival to the Garlic Festival, we saw it all. Along the way, we tasted garlic ice cream, date shakes, and cherry slushies, and other foods that we no longer remember, although we do recall the ensuing scrambles to the drugstore for Rolaid.

Because we were new to this country, we were impressed not just by the big attractions but also by the little things—smiling employees, clean bathrooms, and clear signage. Our ability to be impressed by the large selection of key chains at the souvenir shops guaranteed that every place we saw delighted us.

There was, however, one attraction that stood apart, one whose sweatshirts we wore with pride, one that generated near religious devotion: Disneyland. My father believed that Walt Disney was a genius, a man whose vision allowed everyone, regardless of age, to relive the wonderment of childhood. Ask my
father what he considers to be man’s greatest creation in the
twentieth century and he won’t say computers, the Concorde, or
knee replacement surgery. For him, “Pirates of the Caribbean”
represents the pinnacle of man’s creative achievement. No mat-
ter how many times my father goes on that ride, he remains as
impressed as a Disneyland virgin. “Did you see that pirate leg
hanging over the bridge? Could somebody remind me that it
wasn’t real? And the battle between the ships, geez, was I the
only one ready to duck and cover? What kind of a man would
think of creating something like this? A genius, that’s who.” I
doubt that even Walt Disney’s mother felt as much pride in her
son as my father did.

According to my father, any activity that is enjoyed by our
family will be exponentially more enjoyable if shared with oth-
ers. A crowded dinner at his sister’s house where only half the
guests have chairs is preferred to a meal with four people and
ample seating. His tribal nature may result from having grown
up with eight siblings, but whatever the root cause, my father
decided that if Disneyland was fun for our family, just think
how much more fun it would be with twenty other people. That
is how one weekend we found ourselves at Disneyland’s main
entrance with six of my father’s Iranian colleagues and their
families.

I had already been to Disneyland fifteen times and was,
frankly, getting a little sick of the place. I knew every turn in
every ride and all the punch lines to all the shows. But nonethe-
less, on yet another Saturday morning, I stood in front of Mr.
Toad’s Wild Ride with a large group of people, all oohing and
aahing, as my father, the self-appointed ambassador to the Magic
Kingdom, pointed out fascinating tidbits: “See how people just
wait patiently in these long lines? In other countries, you'd have a fight! But not here, this is America.”

We roamed through Disneyland like a herd of buffalo, stopping only at the rides deemed worthy by my father. At one point, we found ourselves near the telephones where one could talk to Mickey Mouse. As my father was busy explaining the wonders of the nearby Monsanto ride with the big eyeball that looks positively real, I decided to experiment with the phones, which I had somehow never tried before. I picked up the receiver and discovered that there was no conversation with Mickey Mouse on these so-called phones, just a taped message. Disgruntled, I hung up and looked around to find the rest of the herd. They were gone.

One of my father's biggest fears in moving to America was child kidnappings. Our hometown, Abadan, was about as safe a place as one could hope for. We knew all the neighbors, everyone looked out for everyone else's kids, and there was basically no crime other than petty theft. Whenever my relatives came to visit us in America, they would watch the evening news a few times, and then refuse to leave the house. "It's too dangerous here," they always said. "Why are there so many shootings?" In Iran, citizens do not have access to guns, so we do not have the types of crimes that so often lead to murders in America. My father was acutely aware of the dangers inherent in our new surroundings and lectured me regularly on the perils of strangers and how I should always go to the police if I ever needed help.

There were no police officers in Disneyland, so instead I opted for the young man in the powder blue jumpsuit wearing the hat that resembled an inverted origami boat. "I'm lost," I told him. "Okay," he said in a kind voice. "Can you tell me what your par-
ents look like?” I told him. “Now can you tell me what your parents are wearing?” he asked. No seven-year-old, except maybe a young Giorgio Armani, could tell you what his parents were wearing on a given day.

After my failure to answer the clothing question, Mr. Polyester escorted me to a small building near the main entrance. This was the Lost and Found, a place that, not surprisingly, I had never noticed during my previous visits. Once I entered the room, I started to cry. Several women surrounded me and asked me my name, which I, in the midst of my mucus-choked sobs, had to repeat several times. “What kind of a name is that?” one of them asked. It was as if I was doomed to answer the same questions over and over again, for the rest of my life.

“I’m from Iran,” I sniffled.

“How nice,” she said. From the look on her face, I could tell she had no idea where that was. Another one complimented me on my English. Then they told me not to worry. I could just sit down here and color while I waited for my parents to come and get me. I continued to cry. The three women tried to comfort me, but by then I had decided to cry the whole time.

A few minutes later, the door opened and in came a screaming boy who looked to be a few years younger than I. As Team Comfort rushed to his side, it became apparent that this boy spoke no English. No matter what the women said to him, he just screamed. When asked his name, he shook his head and cried louder. In desperation, one of the employees turned around and started walking toward me with a big I-have-a-great-idea smile on her face. I knew what was coming. “Is that boy from your country?” she asked me. “Why, yes,” I wanted to tell her. “In my country, which I own, this is National Lose Your Child at Disneyland Day.”
“No,” I told her. “He’s not from my country.” I had no idea where the scream was from, but I knew he wasn’t Iranian. A gerbil would never mistake a hamster for a gerbil, and I would never mistake a non-Iranian for an Iranian. Despite the belief of most Westerners that all Middle Easterners look alike, we can pick each other out of a crowd as easily as my Japanese friends pick out their own from a crowd of Asians. It’s like we have a certain radio frequency that only other Iranian radars pick up.

After a few futile attempts to communicate with the boy, another one of the women came to me and asked me if I could please, in my language, ask that boy his name. I told her that I spoke Persian and I was certain that the boy did not. The woman then knelt down and got real close to my face, skills picked up during Coercion 101. Speaking very slowly, she told me that she needed me to do her a favor. I could tell she was trying to remember my name. She was thinking hard. “Sweetie,” she finally said, choosing to sidestep the name like a soldier avoiding a land mine, “could you just try to talk to him? Will you do it for Mickey?”

I wanted to tell her that Mickey was the reason I was lost in the first place. Had I not been trying to talk to him on those so-called phones, I wouldn’t be sitting here. I didn’t owe that rodent anything.

I once again told her that I spoke Persian and I could just tell that the boy did not. “Could you just try?” she pleaded.

Just to get rid of her, I walked up to the boy, who, breaking all stamina records, was still crying, and said in Persian, “Are you Iranian?” The boy stopped crying for a moment, then let out the loudest scream heard since biblical times. Not only was he separated from his loved ones, he was now trapped in the Tower of Babel.
Although I was sorry for the little boy, I also felt vindicated. I went back to my coloring book, no longer feeling the urge to cry. I colored a few pages; then, lo and behold, in walked my father, looking completely panicked and breathless. He ran and hugged me and asked me whether I had cried. “Of course not,” I answered. He told me that I had gotten lost just when the group split in two, so an hour went by before anyone noticed I was missing. “I thought you had been kidnapped,” he told me, still out of breath. Timing is key, and I knew this was my moment. “Could we go to the gift shop?” I asked. “Anything you want,” he said, “anything at all.”

We had to leave Disneyland early that day because my father was too weak in the knees to continue. Even the thought of “Pirates of the Caribbean” could not revive him.

We spent the usual half hour looking for our car in the parking lot. I clutched closely two helium balloons, items my father prior to this visit had always called a waste of money and never bought for me, a two-foot-long pencil with scenes from Disneyland, a complete set of miniature plastic Seven Dwarves with their own carrying case, and a Winnie-the-Pooh pencil holder. In the midst of my father’s newfound appreciation for me, I also asked him if he would take me to the Movieland Wax Museum the following week. “Sure,” he said. “Anything you want.”

My father spent the drive home re-creating my actions in his absence.

“So how did you know for sure you were lost?” he asked.
“I couldn’t see you guys,” I answered.
“How did you know whom to go to?” he continued.
“I looked for someone who worked there.”
“How did you know he worked there and he wasn’t just standing around looking for lost kids?”
“He had the same outfit as the other six people around him and he had a name tag.”

“A name tag, huh? Very clever.”

I knew what he was thinking. Thanks to Mickey, I had been elevated from child-who-can’t-learn-to-swim to child genius.

The following weekend, standing in the Movieland Wax Museum gift shop, I was having a hard time deciding among the visor, the inflatable mini pool with the museum logo, and the deck of cards emblazoned with four different movie stars. Then I heard my father utter the magic phrase “Why don’t we just get all of them?” “Good idea,” I said, hoping his newly generous view of useless purchases was more than a passing phase.

We left the gift shop with my father holding firmly on to my hand, just as he had done the entire day. Clutching my purchases with my other hand, I basked in my new status as favorite child. Perhaps I did owe that rodent something.
Of Mosquitoes and Men

My husband, François, loves to travel. When I first met him, he regaled me with stories of exotic places he had visited: the Maldives Islands, West Africa, Bali, Sri Lanka. He told me stories about his Greek grandfather, Savas, who traveled to Baghdad to set up the city's first leavened-bread factory. A few months after his arrival, he suffered a minor cut during his daily shave. The seemingly innocuous cut became infected. Penicillin had not yet reached Baghdad, and Savas died a few days later, leaving behind a wife and two young daughters. In keeping with local tradition, Savas was buried in a Muslim ceremony. A few nights later, François's Belgian grandmother, Octavie, went to the gravesite at midnight with two young men, a Roman Catholic priest, and a shovel. She had her husband dug up, then reburied in a Catholic ceremony.

Before Baghdad, Savas and Octavie had lived in the Congo, where Octavie had a beloved baby buffalo. This gentle creature hung around their home like a family pet. But, like all buffalo, he eventually grew big and turned into the proverbial bull in the china shop. Having been domesticated, he could no longer be
returned to the wild, so Octavie decided to send him to the zoo in Antwerp. After a teary good-bye, she placed the buffalo on a steamship bound for Belgium. But, alas, the zoo never received its newest addition. Somewhere between the Congo and Belgium, the cook had developed a hankering for buffalo stew.

François also told me that when he first attended kindergarten in Paris, his teacher called his parents after a week to inform them that their son was exhibiting inappropriate behavior and needed to see a psychologist immediately. Apparently, François was unable to keep his clothes on at school. His mother had to explain that, having spent his formative years in Africa, he wasn’t used to wearing clothes. Given time, she said, he would surely adjust.

I loved all of François’s stories and never had to impress him with any exotic tales, since as far as he was concerned, being Iranian and having a name like Firoozeh far outweighed any of his adventures. I didn’t quite agree with him, but who was I to burst the bubble of a man whom I had somehow managed to effortlessly impress, a man who was captivated by the mere details of my life? Every so often, I would toss out some piddly story about the caviar vendors beside the Caspian Sea or the smell of nasturtiums in my aunt Sedigeh’s garden, and the Frenchman went gaga. By the time I told him about the frog infestation in Ahwaz, he wanted to marry me.

All was well until we started to plan our honeymoon. François had told me that he wanted to take me to “the most romantic place on earth.” That sounded good. “We’re going to go to a former palace,” he had continued. Was this really my life, or had I, through some wrinkle in time, stepped into somebody else’s universe, like maybe Grace Kelly’s? But like every good fantasy, this one lasted about thirty seconds. That’s when François told me
that this romantic getaway was in India. I tried to conceal my shock, but for me, “India” and “honeymoon” just didn’t belong in the same sentence. As much as I love Indian music, literature, and food, I had never felt the need to go there on my honeymoon. I feel about India the way I feel while watching those Jacques Cousteau adventures where the divers explore undersea caves, flashing their lights in the pitch-black crevices only to discover that the cave is teeming with sharks and giant squid. Yes, it’s breathtaking, but from my sofa. Do I want to don a wet suit and join Jacques in those frigid waters? Non, merci.

François was very disappointed that several weeks of planning had been met with “Are you kidding?” I tried to explain to him that for me, a vacation does not involve certain hardships including, but not limited to, mosquitoes, vaccinations, poor plumbing, or stomach ailments. Having grown up in southern Iran, I experienced enough physical discomforts to make me truly appreciate a nice resort. François’s life of affluence in the Parisian suburbs, on the other hand, had left him itching for adventure. The only itching I felt was caused by the constant mosquito bites I got in Abadan. To François’s family, a vacation meant going to their secluded seaside villa in Greece, where they brushed up on their tanning and windsurfing skills. These activities were interspersed with fishing or looking for ancient relics that washed up on the beach. To my family, a vacation usually meant going to a relative’s house and sleeping on the floor, squeezed between several cousins. François enjoyed traveling throughout Greece on rickety buses—such a refreshing contrast to the orderly and predictable Parisian Métro. I had to ride a similar bus to school in fourth grade, and I found it neither quaint nor charming. Ignoring any notions of safety, the bus driver packed in twice as many kids as seats. Since I was one of the last to be picked up, I had to stand in
the aisle, squeezed between the other kids like an egg in a tightly packed tin of beluga caviar. One day, the girl behind me threw up all over me on the way to school. The driver kept driving. By the time I reached school, I was in tears, but the teacher would not let me go home. I had to spend the entire day with dried vomit all over my uniform while all the kids around me held their noses.

During other vacations, François saw the sights in Thailand and Bali. The only sights we ever chose to see were the faces of family members who lived in other towns. François's family thought large bugs and humidity were exotic; we worshiped the guys who invented climate control and bug spray. We never sought exotic forms of discomfort; they were part of a package deal that came with our homeland.

I remember being five years old and going to the bazaar in Abadan with my mother and needing desperately to go to the bathroom. The only bathrooms available were “Turkish” ones, which consist of a hole in the ground. If odor could be measured in decibels, these toilets were the equivalent of front-row seats at a heavy metal concert. Needless to say, I just couldn't get myself to use any of them. Besides setting a bladder endurance record, I learned never to drink anything on the morning of bazaar day.

As much as I loved living in Abadan, I hated the heat and the mosquitoes. If everyone has a lifetime quota of bug bites, I reached mine by age six. My father used to tell me that I must be the sweetest person because the mosquitoes bit me more than anyone else. The constant itching combined with the oppressive heat made me truly appreciate modern touches like powerful air conditioners and screen doors. When we came to California, one of the first things I noticed was the pleasant absence of mosquitoes.
After almost two delightful mosquito-free years in Whittier, we returned to Iran. My mother and I went to live in Ahwaz with my aunt Fatimeh, while my father worked in Tehran. Ahwaz, in southern Iran, is a town generously endowed with dirt and dust. Everything that moved on the unpaved streets, whether people, donkeys, or cars, only served to relocate the dirt from the ground to the face of anyone who happened to be walking down the same path. It rarely rained, but when it did, the dirt became mud, and mud on the face is far more annoying than dirt.

I was slow to adjust to my new, more physically challenging surroundings. Just when I was getting used to the taste of dust in my mouth, along came a frog infestation of biblical proportions. Tiny frogs covered the town. The streets undulated under a blanket of frogs. Before we entered any building, we had to scrape off the layer of sticky frog guts clinging to our shoes. No matter how quickly we opened and closed the front door of our house, five or six frogs managed to hop in. We always found the intruders eventually, but in the most unlikely places. I never quite got used to hearing my mother scream, “How did the frog get in there?” This went on for a couple of weeks, until the frogs mysteriously disappeared and frog innards were, thankfully, no longer a part of my daily life.

The next time I saw frogs close up, I was on my honeymoon in Paris. François and I were staying in a beautiful hotel with great plumbing and no mosquitoes. This time, the frogs were not covering the bottom of my shoe but instead were covered with a light persillade and came with a side of asparagus. They were much better that way.
Appendix F

F.10 American English file 2- examples
4 Lost in San Francisco

DIRECTIONS
(a) Listen to Allie talking to the hotel receptionist. Order the directions 1–5.
1. It’s the third street on the left.
2. Go straight ahead, down Sutter Street.
3. Go out of the hotel and turn left.
4. Union Square will be right in front of you.
5. Turn left at Stockton.

ASKING FOR INFORMATION
(a) Cover the dialogue and listen. Where does Allie want to go? How is she going to get there?
Mark the route from Union Square on the map.

YOU SAY
Can you recommend a good museum?
Sorry! Where did you say?
Where is it?
How far is it from Union Square?
Can I walk from there?
Can you show me on the map?
What time does it open? Thanks very much.

YOU HEAR
Well, SFMOMA is fantastic.
Not far. It’s just a ______ of blocks.
Sure, it’ll ______ you ten minutes.
Yes, Union Square is here, and the museum is here. From Union Square you go down Geary to the ______ and turn right.
That’s Third Street. Go down Third and you’ll see SFMOMA on the ______.
It opens at ______.
I have a good day. I’m sure you’ll ______ the museum!

SOCIAL ENGLISH looking for Union Square
(a) Listen and circle a or b.
1. Allie and the man... a. have met before. b. haven’t met before.
2. Mark is... a. meeting Allie later. b. in a meeting.
3. Del Monaco’s... a. a coffee shop. b. a restaurant.
4. Brad wants to... a. go shopping with Allie. b. take Allie to Union Square.
5. Brad loves... a. Allie’s conversation. b. Allie’s pronunciation.

b. Complete the USEFUL PHRASES. Listen again and check.
c. Listen and repeat the phrases. How do you say them in your language?

USEFUL PHRASES
B. Don’t I know you?
A. I don’t know so.
B. What are you doing here?
A. I’m looking for (Union Square).
B. That’s really kind of you.
A. Are you sure?
Appendix G Ethic forms

Student Research Project Ethics Checklist Nov 2011

This checklist should be completed by the student (with the advice of their thesis/dissertation supervisor) for all research projects.

Student name: Yasmina Abdzadeh  
Student ID: 24771461

Supervisor name: Dr. Julia Huettner  
Discipline: Applied Linguistics

Programme of study: PhD

Project title: The effects of a culturally responsive teaching methodology on Iranian students' perception of English language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Will your study involve human participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Does the study involve children under 16?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Does the study involve adults who are specially vulnerable and/or unable to give informed consent (e.g. people with learning difficulties, adults with dementia)?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Will the study require the cooperation of a third party (e.g. advocate for access to possible participants) or involving the cooperation of an advocate for access to possible participants (e.g. students at school, residents of nursing home)?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Does your research require collection and/or storage of sensitive and/or personal data on any individual? (e.g. date of birth, criminal offences)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Could you research induce psychological stress or anxiety, or have negative consequences for participants, beyond the risks of everyday life?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses or compensation of time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Are there any problems with participants' rights to remain anonymous, and/or ensuring that the information they provide is non-identifiable?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Will you have any difficulty communicating and assuring the right of participants to freely withdraw from the project at any time?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If you are working in a cross-cultural setting, will you need to gain additional knowledge about the setting to work effectively? (e.g. gender roles, language use)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Are there potential risks to your own health and safety in conducting the study? (e.g. lone interviewing in other than public spaces)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Does the research project involve working with human tissue, organs, bones etc that are less than 160 years old?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please refer to the Research Project Ethics Guidance Notes for help in completing this checklist.

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions, discussed the form with your supervisor and had it signed and dated by both parties (see above), you may proceed with your research. A copy of the Checklist should be included in your eventual report/dissertation/thesis.

If you have answered YES to any of the questions, i.e. if your research involves human participants in any way, you will need to provide further information for consideration by the Humanities Ethics Committee and/or the University Research Governance Office. This information needs to be provided via the Electronic Research Governance Online (ERGO) system, available at www.ergo.soton.ac.uk.

CHOOSE ONE STATEMENT:
I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research does not involve human participants (nor human tissues etc).

[ ]

I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research will involve human participants. I understand that this research needs to be reported and approved through the ERGO system, before the research commences.

[ ]

Signature of student: Yasmina ... Abdzadeh ...

Date: ........28/10/2013.....................

Signature of supervisor: .................................................. Date: ...........................................
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

OUTLINE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS, TO BE SUBMITTED via ERGO FOR ETHICAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL.

STUDENTS PLEASE NOTE: You will need to discuss this form with your Supervisor. In particular, you should ask him/her to advise you about all relevant ethical guidelines relating to your area of research, which you must read and understand.

ALL RESEARCHERS PLEASE NOTE: You must not begin your study until Faculty of Humanities ethical approval and Research Governance Office approval have been obtained through the ERGO system. Failure to comply with this policy could constitute a disciplinary breach.

1. Name(s): Yasmina Abdzadeh

2. Start date: 15/02/2014 End date: 15/03/2014
   15/07/2014 15/10/2014

3. Supervisor (student research only): Dr. Julia Huettrner

4. How may you be contacted (e-mail and/or phone number)? ya2e10@soton.ac.uk

5. Into which category does your research fall? Delete or add as appropriate.
   MPhil/PhD Research

6. Title of project
   The effects of a culturally responsive teaching methodology on Iranian students' perception of English language

7. Briefly describe the rationale for carrying out this project, and the specific aims and research questions
   This research originates from the current contrast which exists between two educational organisations in Iran including state schools and private language institutes. They contrast in two main ways. Firstly, they contrast in teaching ideologies in the sense that one (state schools) follow a grammar-translation method while the other one (private language institutes) focus on a more communicative approach. Similarly, their teaching objectives are different (with state schools focusing on expanding vocabulary and grammar knowledge and private institutes aiming at improving speaking and listening skill).
The second difference, which is the main focus of this research, is the content of ELT books. State schools (published inside the country) represent Islamic culture using both pictures and written text whereas books used in private institutes (published abroad) represent Western life which mainly follows a consumerist approach.

On the other hand, with the growth of ‘culturally-responsive teaching’ concept and that the teaching methodology and content should both be based on students’ cultural background and preference, the extent to each of the mentioned content is in line with students’ preference and needs plus the real use of English as an international language nowadays is questionable.

Therefore, the following questions have been designed in order to investigate the context carefully as the first phase of the research: (use of interviews and focus group interviews)
1. What are the students’ motivations of learning English?
2. How do they see themselves using English in the future?
3. How do they feel about what they get in state schools and private institutes in terms of content, teaching methodology and outcome?
4. Why did they choose to go to private institutes?
5. What are the factors that shape students’ view on English?

The data gained from this stage then will act as precursor to the second phase which is an action research. The intervening teaching process will last 10 sessions (one session a week) and the syllabus will be based on students’ needs and expectations plus an attempt to show the real image/use of English in the world plus where Iren fires within this image. In other words, the second phase of the research will try to answer the following questions:
6. To what extent a culturally responsive teaching methodology (substantive which is based on content) change students’ views on the state of English in the world and their use of English in the future?

8. **What is the overall design of the study?**

Research questions 1-5 will be answered by the use of individual interviews and focus group interviews. The students will also be asked to take some photos to demonstrate their view on English and/or their future use of English, about which they will discuss in the focus group session. (30 participants)

The interviews will be audio-recorded but the focus group interviews should be video-recorded as well for practicality and ease of voice recognition while transcribing.

The data related to this stage is supposed to be collected from 15/02/2014 to 15/03/2014.

As mentioned before, the last research question will be tried to answer using an intervention teaching process which lasts for 10 sessions.

Data for this stage will be collected throughout the sessions using class discussions, students’ creative works such as posters and pieces of writing.

The researcher hopes to collect the data related to this stage over summer 2014.

9. **What research procedures will be used?**

Participation involved attending an individual interview which predictably lasts about 45 minutes plus a focus group interview which might last about 90 minutes.

The participants will also be asked to take some photos using either a camera or their mobile phones with the topic of “English use in my future” and “English in today’s world” and bring it along to their focus group. They will be asked to
discuss their photos with their partners during the session.

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<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>Who are the participants?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The participants are high school students (most likely 15-17 years old). They will be approached in private language institutes classrooms where they will be both explained orally and be given the participant information sheet. The researcher will be present in the classroom to answer any question the students might have regarding the research.</td>
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<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>How will you obtain the consent of participants, and (if appropriate) that of their parents or guardians?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If any student is interested after being explained about the research and reading the information sheet, they will be given the consent form to sign. They will be instructed to read the form carefully before signing it. In case any possible participant is under 16, they will be asked to take the consent form to their parents to sign.</td>
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<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<th>13</th>
<th>Detail any possible discomfort, inconvenience or other adverse effects the participants may experience arising from the study, and how this will be dealt with.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The students might feel uncomfortable when they are being audio-recorded (during the interviews) and video-recorded (focus group discussions). This will be addressed by developing a friendly relationship with them plus assuring them that the data will remain confidential.</td>
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<th>14</th>
<th>How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time without penalty?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This has been clarified in the consent form attached. They will also be orally told about the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime they wish orally.</td>
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<tr>
<th>15</th>
<th>How will information obtained from or about participants be protected?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The collected data will be stored in a password protected computer and be transcribed by the researcher only. The name used in the actual thesis will be aliases rather than students’ real names.</td>
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<th>16</th>
<th>If this research involves work with children, has a CRB check been carried out?</th>
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<td>Yes  No</td>
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<th>17</th>
<th>Outline any other information you feel may be relevant to this submission.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix G

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM
To be completed in accordance with the attached guidelines

Activity:

Interviews, focus group interviews with 30 high school students and some language teachers
Classroom observation
Teaching

Locations:
Mashhad, Iran
(Private institutes + public schools)

Potential risks:
Students’ increased anxiety as the result of being observed in the classroom. Anxiety of both students and teachers in talking about their teaching and learning practices and of their data being used for other purposes than research.

Iran is considered a high risk destination for travel according to the UK foreign office, in view with the political situation and the increased risk of terrorism. However, there are several reasons why I consider the risk to myself as minimal:
Firstly, I am an Iranian citizen and native speaker of Farsi returning to my home town. I am thus familiar with all cultural expectations and norms, and will be perceived as an Iranian student rather than as a representative of a British institution.

Secondly, Mashhad is not located in any of the high risk areas of Iran as listed by foreign office (such as the capital city, within a 100 kilometre to Afghanistan or Iraq’s border, etc). Besides, I am completely familiar with the whole city as I have been living there my whole life before coming to the UK. This means that I am aware of the potential dangers which can exist in any country (walking alone late at night, for example) and will not take any action that can threaten my health.

Thirdly, my research is considered non-political by educational institutions and as a former student and former teacher I am familiar with the precise circumstances and the expectations made on teaching.

Who might be exposed/affected?
Participants
Researcher

How will these risks be minimised?
With regard to the risks for participants, I will develop friendly relationship of trust with students and teachers so that they feel more comfortable. I will assure them both orally and in writing that collected data will be confidential. In practice, this will mean that pseudonyms are used in any documentation and the original data will be stored on a password protected computer.

With regard to myself, I will not travel outside Mashhad and will be staying with my family in our home. I will not attend any demonstrations which might threaten my safety. I will also maintain contact with my supervisor by sending her weekly emails.

Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Southampton SO17 1BJ United Kingdom
Tel: +44(0)23 8095 3000 Fax: +44(0)23 8059 3060 www.southampton.ac.uk
Appendix G

Risk evaluation: XLow / Medium / High

Can the risk be further reduced? Yes / No

Further controls required:

Date by which further controls will be implemented:

Are the controls satisfactory: Yes / No

Date for reassessment:

Completed by: Yasmina Abdzadeh

Name: ____________________________ signature: ____________________________ date: ____________________________

Supervisor/manager: If applicable

Name: ____________________________ signature: ____________________________ date: ____________________________

Reviewed by: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ signature: ____________________________ date: ____________________________

28/10/2013
Participant Information Sheet (Face to Face)

Study Title: The effects of a culturally responsive teaching methodology on Iranian students’ perception of English language

Researcher: Yasmina Abdzadeh

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton who is looking at the cultural representation in English language teaching textbooks which are being used in state schools and private language institutes in Iran. I am interested in finding out the students’ opinions about them and their beliefs about the use of English in the world at the moment.

Why have I been chosen?

As students who are learning English both at schools and have decided to participate additional English classes in private institutions, you are considered suitable for the purpose of this study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

In case of your agreement to take part, you will attend a 45 minute interview which is conducted by the researcher (the interview will be in Farsi). The researcher will try to set the date and time of the interview as it suits you the best. You will also be asked to take part in a focus group discussion (in which you will talk about certain questions which is given by the researcher with some other students about the same age as you. This will also be conducted in Farsi). You will be asked to take some photos (maximum three) that show your view of English language in the world and bring them to the focus group discussion. You will discuss them with other participants (your group mates). The photos can be taken either with a mobile phone or camera.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Although you might not directly benefit from your participation except for getting to know what other students’ beliefs are in the focus group interview, your participation will contribute to conduct a research which has never been done in the Iranian context before and can eventually lead to designing more suitable material for learning English.

Are there any risks involved?

There is no serious risk involved. You might feel a bit uncomfortable due to interviews being audio-recorded and the focus group discussion being video-recorded. However, I can assure you that this is only for the purpose of data analysis.
and your real names and any kind of personal information will not be revealed in the actual thesis. The audio and video files will be saved in a password-protected computer.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Although, the focus group interviews will be video-recorded, you will be given false names (pseudonyms) when writing up the thesis so your real names and information will remain confidential. The video will only be viewed by the researcher and possibly her supervisor for data analysis.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You are free to withdraw from participation any time you wish.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton Prof Chris Janaway (0044 23 8059424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the researcher on 091551 99049.
CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: Insert Version number)

Study title: The effects of a culturally responsive teaching on Iranian students’ perception of English language.

Researcher name: Yasmina Abdazadeh
Staff/Student number: 23771461
ERGO reference number:

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (insert date /version no. of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

[ ]

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

[ ]

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected.

[ ]

Data Protection:
I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name): ..............................................................

Signature of participant: ...........................................................................

Date: ........................................................................................................
# Student Research Project Ethics Checklist 2014/15

This checklist should be completed by the student (with the advice of their thesis/dissertation supervisor) for all research projects.

**Student name:** Yasmina Abdzadeh  
**Student ID:** 23771461  
**Supervisor name:** Dr. Julia Huettner  
**Discipline:** Applied Linguistics  
**Programme of study:** PhD  
**Project title:** Cultural awareness in Iran: Can a course make a difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please refer to the Research Project Ethics Guidance Notes for help in completing this checklist.

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions, discussed the form with your supervisor and had it signed and dated by both parties (see over), you may proceed with your research. A copy of the Checklist should be included in your eventual report/dissertation/thesis.

If you have answered YES to any of the questions, i.e. if your research involves human participants in any way, you will need to provide further information for consideration by the Humanities Ethics Committee and/or the university Research Governance Office. This information needs to be provided via the Electronic Research Governance Online (ERGO) system, available at www.ergo.soton.ac.uk.
Appendix G

CHOOSE ONE STATEMENT:

☐ I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research does not involve human participants (nor human tissues etc).

☒ I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research will involve human participants. I understand that this research needs to be reported and approved through the ERGO system, before the research commences.

Signature of student: ................................................................. Date: 23/05/15........................................

Signature of supervisor: ............................................................... Date: ..................................................
Appendix G

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

OUTLINE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS, TO BE SUBMITTED via ERGO FOR ETHICAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL

STUDENTS PLEASE NOTE: You will need to discuss this form with your supervisor. In particular, you should ask him/her to advise you about all relevant ethical guidelines relating to your area of research, which you must read and understand.

ALL RESEARCHERS PLEASE NOTE: You must not begin your study until Faculty of Humanities ethical approval and Research Governance Office approval have been obtained through the ERGO system. Failure to comply with this policy could constitute a disciplinary breach.

1. Name(s): Yasmina Abzdadeh

2. Start date: 20/07/2015    End date: 07/09/2015

3. Supervisor (student research only): Dr. Julia Huettner

4. How may you be contacted (e-mail and/or phone number)?
   ya2e10@soton.ac.uk

5. Into which category does your research fall? Delete or add as appropriate.
   PhD Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title of project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cultural awareness in Iran: can a course make a difference?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Briefly describe the rationale for carrying out this project, and the specific aims and research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>This research originates from the current contrast which exists between two educational organisations in Iran including state schools and private language institutes. They contrast in two main ways. Firstly, they contrast in teaching ideologies in the sense that one (state schools) follow a grammar-translation method while the other one (private language institutes) focus on a more communicative approach. Similarly, their teaching objectives are different (with state schools focusing on expanding vocabulary and grammar knowledge and private institutes aiming at improving speaking and listening skill). The second difference, which is the focus of this research, is the cultural side of language teaching. State schools’ textbooks (published inside the country) represent Islamic culture using both pictures and written text whereas books</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1

347
used in private institutes (published abroad) represent Western life which
mainly follows a consumerist approach.
With the current debate on the concept of English as a lingua franca and the
importance of (inter)cultural awareness while using English, the extent to which
each of the mentioned settings prepare students to meet their future needs is
under question.
Therefore, the following research questions have been designed:
1. What are students’ English learning objectives in relationship to culture?
   1.1. To what extent are they met by the state schools?
   1.2. To what extent are they met by private language institutes?
2. What is students’ experience of culture while learning English?
3. To what extent can a course on intercultural communication develop
cultural awareness among Iranian students?
The first stage of data collection addresses question one and two and have
already been conducted.
The 10-session course that I am going to conduct aims at answering question
three.

8 What is the overall design of the study?
As noted above, questions 1-2 have already been addressed using focus group
interviews after having the approval of ethics committee in 2014.
The second stage of the course to answer question number three is in form of
action research using an intervention teaching which lasts 10 sessions (5
weeks).
Data for this stage will be collected throughout the sessions using class
discussions, students’ creative works such as posters and pieces of writing.

9. What research procedures will be used?
Participation will involve attending a 10 session course (90 minutes per
session) which will be held in 5 weeks.
The recorded class discussion plus students’ writing (either in class or as
homework) will be used as basis for data analysis.

10 Who are the participants?
The participants are high school students (most likely 16-18 years old). They
will be approached in the private language institute which has already agreed to
contribute in conducting the research. The students will be both explained orally
and be given the participant information sheet. The researcher will be present in
the classroom to answer any question the students might have regarding the
research.

11 How will you obtain the consent of participants, and (if appropriate) that
of their parents or guardians?
The learners would have already been given information about the course by
the involved language institute and would have freely decided to take part prior
to the start.
To be on the safe side, I will make sure to meet them before the actual course
starts, orally explain the process plus passing the information sheet and
consent form to them.
In case of the presence of any student under 16 years old, the participant will
be asked to take a Farsi version of participant information sheet home and have
the consent form signed by her parent.

12 Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full
informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard
their interests?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Detail any possible discomfort, inconvenience or other adverse effects the participants may experience arising from the study, and how this will be dealt with. The students might feel uncomfortable when they are being audio and video-recorded during the course. The content of teaching which might be completely new to students can be another source of discomfort. This will be addressed by developing a friendly relationship with them plus assuring them that the data will remain confidential.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time without penalty? This has been clarified in the participant information sheet attached. They will also be orally told about the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime they wish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>How will information obtained from or about participants be protected? The collected data will be stored in a password protected computer and be transcribed by the researcher only. The name used in the actual thesis will be aliases rather than students' real names.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>If this research involves work with children, has a CRB check been carried out? In Iran, we do not have a CRB check as such. It is the institute itself which evaluates the qualification of the teacher whether to hold a class with children/teenagers. In my case, this has already been approved by the institute.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Outline any other information you feel may be relevant to this submission.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ETHICS IN RESEARCH RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

To be completed in accordance with the attached guidelines

This is not a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. If your project also involves Health and Safety Risks you will also need to complete a Health and Safety Risk Assessment form. Contact your supervisor for more information about this.

Activity:
Teaching a 10 session course on intercultural communication (focused on the level of cultural awareness).
Each class mainly consist of class discussion plus reflective pieces of writing by students.

Locations:
Mashhad, Iran
(a private language institute)

Potential risks:
Students’ increased anxiety as the result of the classes being audio and video recorded and their possible concern of their data being used for other purposes than research.
Students’ possible discomfort with the course at the start due to the content and structure being completely new to them.

Iran is considered a high risk destination for travel according to the UK foreign office, in view with the political situation and the increased risk of terrorism. However, there are several reasons why I consider the risk to myself as minimal:
Firstly, I am an Iranian citizen and native speaker of Farsi returning to my home town. I am thus familiar with all cultural expectations and norms, and will be perceived as an Iranian student rather than as a representative of a British institution.

Secondly, Mashhad is not located in any of the high risk areas of Iran as listed by foreign office (such as the capital city, within a 100 kilometre to Afghanistan or Iraq’s border, etc). Besides, I am completely familiar with the whole city as I have been living there my whole life before coming to the UK. This means that I am aware of the potential dangers which can exist in any country (walking alone late at night, for example) and will not take any action that can threaten my health.

Thirdly, my research is considered non-political by educational institutions and as a former student and former teacher I am familiar with the precise circumstances and the expectations made on teaching.

Who might be exposed/affected?
Participants
Researcher

How will these risks be minimised?

With regard to the risks for participants, I will develop friendly relationship of trust with students so that they feel more comfortable. I will assure them both orally and in writing that collected data will be confidential. In practice, this will mean that pseudonyms are used in any

Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Southampton SO17 1BJ United Kingdom
Tel: +44(0)23 8059 5000 Fax: +44(0)23 8059 www.southampton.ac.uk

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Appendix G

documentation and the original data will be stored on a password protected computer.

With regard to myself, I will not travel outside Mashhad and will be staying with my family in our home. I will not attend any demonstrations which might threaten my safety. I will also maintain contact with my supervisor by sending her weekly emails.

Risk evaluation: xLow / Medium / High

Can the risk be further reduced?  Yes X No

Further controls required:

Date by which further controls will be implemented:

Are the controls satisfactory?  Yes / No

Date for reassessment:

Completed by: Yasmina Abdzadeh  
Name  signature  date

Supervisor/manager:  
If applicable  
Name  signature  date

Reviewed by:  
Name  signature  date
Participant Information Sheet (Face to Face)

Study Title: Cultural awareness in Iran: can a course make a difference?

Researcher: Yasmina Abdzadeh  
Ethics number: 6253

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I am studying for a PhD at the University of Southampton in England, and am very interested in understanding how people who learn English think about different cultures. To understand this better, I need to conduct a 10-session course, in which we will work on different worksheets and discuss different topics. You will not be explicitly asked any question. Our classes will be recorded and I will use the class discussion and your reflective writings and homework as my sources of data analysis.

Why have I been chosen?

Due to the level of the course, students with upper-intermediate level of English are needed for participation. Therefore, you have been considered suitable for the study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

In case of your agreement to take part, you will need to attend 10 sessions of classes lasting about 90 minutes each (2 sessions per week). Every session is mainly made of class discussion (speaking). At the end of every session, you will be asked to write a short reflective writing on what you think you have learned that session (either in Farsi or in English depending on your preference). You will also be given some homework (short story reading or writing), which you need to do during the course.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Yes, there is. The clearest benefit in the practice you get for your English. Although the focus of the course is not on English itself but the whole sessions will be running in English (mainly speaking, but also includes the other three skills) and I will be helping you to improve your language skills as much as I can. I will also check your written homework and pass it to you for further improvement.

The other benefit is you will get the chance to learn about cultures and hopefully improve this necessary but often ignored aspect of language learning. To my knowledge, this is the first time such a course is running in our country. You will receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the course.

Are there any risks involved?

There is no serious risk involved. Although you will be audio- and video-recorded, you should behave as normal and the recordings will only be used for the purposes of data analysis. None of them will be made public. However, I can assure you that...
this is only for the purpose of data analysis and your real names and any kind of personal information will not be revealed in the actual thesis. The audio and video files will be saved in a password-protected computer.

Will my participation be confidential?

Although the classes will be recorded, you will be given false names (pseudonyms) when writing up the thesis so your real names and information will remain confidential. The video will mainly be viewed by me and possibly my supervisor for data analysis. In the possible case of the use of some sections for other academic purposes, conference presentation for example, the videos will be altered by the use of appropriate software to protect anonymity.

What happens if I change my mind?

You are free to withdraw from participation any time you wish.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton Prof Chris Janaway (004423 80593424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk). You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Julia Huettner at the University of Southampton (J.Huettner@soton.ac.uk).

Where can I get more information?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me on 09155199049. Alternatively, you can email me at ya2e10@soton.ac.uk.
CONSENT FORM (FACE TO FACE: 6253)

Study title: Cultural awareness in Iran: Can a course make a difference?

Researcher name: Yasmina Abdzadeh
Staff/Student number: 23771461
ERGO reference number:

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (insert date /version no. of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. □

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study □

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected □

Data Protection
I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name).................................................................

Signature of participant.............................................................................

Date.............................................................................................................
Appendix H  First and final draft of FG codes

First draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Sub-codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferences in a curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present use of English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferences in a curriculum</td>
<td>The topics and skills students would have added in the syllabus, if they had the freedom to design it themselves.</td>
<td>&quot;We had a teacher who used to use music while teaching grammar. It was really good.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present use of English</td>
<td>How English is used currently by the learners.</td>
<td>&quot;I watch a lot of English-speaking films.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wide range of topics
- Use of films
- Up to date info
- Tourist attraction in different countries
- Studying in different countries
- Shortness of the course
- Short stories
- Research-based
- Reading group
- Playing games
- Music use
- Knowing about countries internationally
- Knowing about the target country for immigration
- Independence age of children in other countries
- Important news in the world
- Group work
- Focus on speaking skill
- Focus on listening skill
- Festivals in different countries
- Famous people in the world
- English as medium of instruction
- Different countries’ tradition
- different countries’ history
- different countries’ food
- Deviation from the main course book
- characteristics of people (diff countries)
### Appendix H

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Learning English objectives</th>
<th>Cultural experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Communication  
  • Eng as field of study  
  • Immigration  
  • Interest  
  • Internet  
  • Listening to music  
  • Social level  
  • Travelling abroad  
  • Watching films | | |
| This refers to reasons of learning English when students refer to their short-term purposes. | | |
| “We are going to immigrate in the future; that’s why I am learning English.” | | |
| | | |
| • Immigration  
  • Job  
  • Listening to music  
  • Travelling abroad  
  • Understanding films | | |
| This refers to reasons of learning English when students refer to their long-term purposes. | | |
| “For me, it’s for my job or leaving the country, if I can.” | | |
| | | |
| • Yes  
  • New York  
  • Dublin  
  • No | | |
| This refers to instances where students refer to any possible "cultural knowledge" they have gained via their classes. | | |
| “I remember we learned something about Dublin last semester but can’t remember what it was.” | | |
## Preferences in a curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>sub-codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td></td>
<td>The topics and skills students would have added in the syllabus, if they had the freedom to design it themselves.</td>
<td>&quot;Getting to know about different countries. Countries like China or India, they have a lot of different topics to discuss about.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>research-based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reading group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>playing games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>music and film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>free discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>book design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>deviation from the main course book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number of students in the class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>distance from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Present use of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>sub-codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>How English is used currently by the learners</td>
<td>&quot;I watch a lot of English-speaking films.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English in studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of dictionary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watching films</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td><strong>ideal selves</strong></td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• good job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• well-educated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• intercultural friendship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Immigration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Travelling abroad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This refers to students' motivation for learning the language (including both short-term and long-term).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Because English is an international language, it is spoke worldwide in every country. It is very useful for communication.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural experience</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• internationally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dublin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• France</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• London</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New York</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This refers to instances where students refer to any possible &quot;cultural knowledge&quot; they have gained via their classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The countries which are focused most in our languages classes are UK and the US.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I  
First and final draft of teaching intervention codes

First draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course objectives</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Observed behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students are</td>
<td>Habits</td>
<td>The students refer to culture as a set of shared behaviour and/or beliefs and/or</td>
<td>• Culture is tradition and people’s habits. (habits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>able to define</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>habits among a specific group of people. (including but not limited to nations)</td>
<td>• UK society has different minds and culture. They accept all tips (types) of appearance. (beliefs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture as a set</td>
<td>Behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td>• I think culture is word that means connect your behaviour, your behaviours in society that you learn from your father or your family and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of shared beliefs,</td>
<td>Customs</td>
<td></td>
<td>I think society is most important part of culture. (behaviours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviours and</td>
<td>Foods</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bangladeshi people have a custom that they give a necklace to the bride and the bride shouldn’t open until the ceremony ends. (customs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values among a</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• On the other hand, you may have problems with your customs and their customs such as clothing, table manner, and foods, which they would taboo for you. (Customs, clothes, social manners, foods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain group of</td>
<td>Lifestyles</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teenagers in England do much the same as kids in America or other European country do, they enjoy chatting and texting friends, hang out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people. (obj 1)</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td>with them, listening to the latest music on MP3, shopping for the latest music on MP3, shopping for the latest fashion or watching movie. (life style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>manners</td>
<td></td>
<td>• He said his name in a toast- I think the regard this as an uncommon behaviour among the tribe. (social manners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• I guess there are no different with the Iranian person and maybe just</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Appendix I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course objectives</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Observed behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The students can understand the role that culture plays in interpretation of meaning by every individual. They talk about the trajectory of this either in opinions each individual hold or the behaviours (or reactions, in their words) they show over a certain event in certain situations. (obj 2) | • Opinions  
• Reactions | The students successfully identify and talk about the role of culture in interpretation of meaning by different groups of people. The viewing of a certain issue in a specific way can be seen in either in the opinions the individuals hold or the reactions they show towards different events in different situations (contexts). | • I understand that different action has a different meaning in a different culture. (opinions)  
• Culture is a multi-layered subject which contains sub-conscious and conscious parts. That people in specific groups and areas possess and react to what is happening to them. (reactions) |
| The students can recognise the role that culture plays in inducing certain behaviours, values, and beliefs in both oneself and others. (obj 3) | • Effect on oneself  
• Effect on others | The students talk about the effect that they think their own culture (and background) has on making meanings of different events. (including but not limited to their nationality)  
In addition, they talk about the trajectory of different cultures (including but not limited to nations) which can be observed in different behaviours or beliefs in others. | • But maybe we can have it in a for example, different groups of people. We (attend) a different groups of people and we do something that is for example not common among that group of people. (effect on oneself)  
• My XXX is different, in my country people take more time for cooking than England. (effect on oneself)  
• I think in Anderson culture, they say when they want to make friends and become friendly with each other, they call each other with a first name but in Chinese culture they don’t like this to call with first name. (effect on others) |
<p>| The students can view the nature of cultural norms as relative. (obj 4) | Obj 4 | The students are able to identify and talk about the different possible meanings one action can have depending on the cultural grouping it is being evaluated. | • Wearing black in the funerals. I think they think it’s not good to wear black. They wear white for the funerals because they think it may happy the soul of the dead person. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course objectives</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Observed behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students are able to recognise the factors, which affect, facilitate, or disrupt communication. (obj 5)</td>
<td>- Facilitate (religion, language, behaviour, flexibility)</td>
<td>The students show an understanding of the factors which affect communication in one way or another by referring to them.</td>
<td>- And she tired and she opened the necklace from her neck and become tired but they think it’s something like tohin (they were offended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Affect (media, customs, stereotypes, personal background, cultural differences)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- One of hardships there is to communicate but fortunately, they are Muslims (same religion) and Bangladesh is colonized by Britain and fortunately, most people know English. (facilitate → language, religion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Prevent (religion, cultural differences, lack of mutual understanding, stereotypes, customs, judgements)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- I think it’s better to study about the new culture and their behaviour in each situation, to have good communication (facilitate → behaviour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- I learned that while communicating I have to see one issue from the other’s perspective to prevent problems (my translation). (facilitate → flexibility)</td>
</tr>
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<td>- It (media) makes background. When we want to communicate, it affects on the communication. (affect → media)</td>
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<td>- (One of the things I learnt about in this course was) the effects of the customs in each culture on communication. (affect → customs)</td>
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<td>- (One of the things I learnt about in this course was) the effect of stereotypes on our judgement in communication. (affect → stereotypes)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- I see more aspects of him not only in appearance and when I was thinking of communicating the effect that past background. (affect → personal background)</td>
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### Appendix I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course objectives</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Observed behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>The students can appreciate possible heterogeneity in any cultural grouping in spite of national boundaries.</td>
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<td>For example in our school, we have a sheikh. We used to think that we need to talk about religion when we are with him. He speak</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personal experience</td>
<td>• Culture independent of nationality</td>
<td>The students are able to define the concept of culture at a level beyond nationality (and stereotypes) by either referring to</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Observed behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Example</td>
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</table>

- This course helped me that if one day I talk to a non-native speaker I would act really considerate because he has different cultures or backgrounds that would affect judging about myself and my country. (affect \(\rightarrow\) cultural differences)
- In one side, you may have problems with the new culture and their religion. (prevent \(\rightarrow\) religion, cultural differences)
- And what would happen if, for example, while communicating, everyone only see the issue from their perspective? What will happen? If this is the case, what would be the problem?
- Generally, they can’t communicate well. (prevent \(\rightarrow\) lack of mutual understanding)
- If we want to communicate with people around the world, we need to know stereotypes and the dangers of miscommunication. (prevent \(\rightarrow\) stereotypes)
- On the other hand, you may have problems with your customs and their customs such as clothing, table manner, and foods, which they would taboo for you. (prevent \(\rightarrow\) customs)
- If we judge someone before getting to know them in a real conversation, we might face problems while communicating with him/her. (prevent \(\rightarrow\) judgement)
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<tr>
<td>of their belongingness to seemingly one cultural grouping. (obj 6)</td>
<td>• Media and stereotypes</td>
<td>possible heterogeneity within one nation (or referring to the concept of culture being limited to as small as an individual), a personal anecdote on how they have personally observed such differences, and how medias are often wrongly affecting people to shape stereotypes about different countries.</td>
<td>about XXX and he never advise something and he just teach maths and he's cool. (personal experience)</td>
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<td>• In some families wedding ceremonies men and women are mixed but in some families they are separated. And bout the for example get divorced, in some family they don’t accept it XXX get divorced. (culture independent of nationality)</td>
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<td>• Today I understood that social media has effect on my mind and maybe has a bad effect. Sometimes I made an assumption about someone and maybe it’s not true. (media and stereotypes)</td>
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<td>• Of course we have, we are here as a student, we are with family as a family member, we all have friends, and we are as a brother. (social identity)</td>
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<td>• For me, it’s different the way I even talk to my friends and classmates. (Codes of behaviour)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social identity</td>
<td>The students reflect upon and talk about individual’s membership in more than one social grouping (i.e., different social identities we have depending on the situation) and at times refer to different codes of behaviour they are expected to follow in each.</td>
<td>• The students criticise judgement before knowing someone as a bad trait and talk about the importance of getting to know others in real-time communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Codes of behaviour</td>
<td>• The students reflect on their personal experience and talk about changing their mind about</td>
<td>• All of us have our appearance and don’t judge the people by his cover. (refraining from judgements)</td>
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<td>• I am only answering my idea because most of my friends at school are Afghan, from Afghanistan and they are Afghan. And some of them are really nice, maybe more than the Iranian friends. (personal experience)</td>
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<td>• I can remember an idioms which says “when in Rome, do as Romans</td>
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The students can identify individuals as being members of several social groupings at the same time. (obj 7)

The students are tolerant and able to suspend their own beliefs in order to understand someone else’s. (obj 8)
### Course objectives

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<td>something after rethinking the idea (finding more information about an event). In addition, students’ quotes on their personal experience at time can be interpreted as their openness.</td>
<td>do”. I think it’s good to adopt yourself with new things under your religion and values. (readiness to adapt)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The students express their willingness to adapt in a new context in order to succeed communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Description</td>
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| 1. What were students’ perception of culture?                                    | Basic                                                               | DEFINITION OF CULTURE (GENERAL)  
- Behaviour (which includes behaviour as a general referred term, actions, social manners, and habits)  
- Beliefs (which includes beliefs as a general referred term and religion)  
- Values (which includes customs, foods, clothes, lifestyles)  
DEFINITION OF CULTURE (NATIONAL) (the same category as above) plus  
- Geographical borders  
- History  
- Government or regime  
- Statistical facts  
- Regulations  
STEREOTYPES  
- Oneself  
- Others | This parent code refers to instances of definition of culture by referring to a set of shared behaviour, belief or values at general level (no reference to any specific country). | GENERAL  
“I think culture is word that means connect your behaviour, your behaviours in society that you learn from your father or your family and I think society is most important part of culture” (behaviour)  
NATIONAL  
“About XXX I think in I read something on the internet and said 2500 years ago Iranian soldiers can write and read.” (History)  
“For example, by my idea, the government’s culture is the same as people’s culture” (Government)  
“In Iran, women should have cover the way that wearing in society is very important. They shouldn’t go out of house without complete wearing. For the men, drinking alcohol drinks are banned also.” (Regulations)  
STEREOTYPES  
“British people are more friendly and more approachable with their colleagues and even boss in the work because they call |
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| 2. In which ways do these perceptions and conceptualisations change as the result of different class activities through the teaching intervention? | Advanced                                                              | • IDENTIFYING CULTURE AS A CONCEPT INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY  
• RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS  
• DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION  
• SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR                                                                 | All the presented codes show moving from essentialist definition of culture by including characteristics of non-essentialist nature of the term.  
CULTURE AS INDEPENDENT OF NATIONALITY  
“We reached that culture is depend on place but not limited.”  
RELATIVITY OF CULTURAL NORMS  
“They do an strange thing which is called praying. They pray five times a day.”  
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WITHIN A NATION  
“People of a country or a city are different in spite of the similarities, which should be taken into consideration while communicating”  
ACKNOWLEDGING SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR VIA A DEFINITION  
“And also we are at the same time participating in...
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<tr>
<td>3. To what extent could the course encourage the desired attitude(s) for successful intercultural communication?</td>
<td>attitudes - Refraining from judgement - Personal reflection on stereotypes - Media inducing stereotypes</td>
<td>This code includes instances where students express attitudes which counted as desired for successful intercultural communication. Refraining from judgement refers to instances where students identify judgement as a negative and destructive trait, especially while communicating. Personal reflection on stereotypes refers to the cases where students show awareness towards stereotypes' unfairness by reflecting on their personal experiences and judgements. As the name reveals, media inducing stereotypes refers to instances where students identify the role of media in creating stereotypes.</td>
<td>Refraining from judgement: &quot;We have to first respect others' perspective and you know, do not judge everyone by their culture and other's perspective&quot; Personal reflection on stereotypes: (Talking about a clergyman who was a maths teacher at her school) &quot;But at first I thought he wants to speak about religion and these things but he... I was wrong.&quot; Media inducing stereotypes: (talking about national TV) &quot;I think when I watch the news in the television, all the news show demonstration. The TV news show there is a demonstration in USA. When we are in the Iran in here, we think there is no security and I think we misunderstand. When you go to the USA, you saw there is a security. We saw the security and the safety&quot;</td>
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Appendix J

Appendix J  Teaching intervention transcriptions

J.1  Classroom interactions

J.1.1  Session 1

Y: So let’s start the class officially. As I told you in my participant info sheet, the main purpose of the class is culture. So, it’s very important to know what culture is, at all. What do we mean when we say culture. So what I would like you to discuss with your partner please, is this question: what is culture? Something that will help you to think about this question is: Is it single or multi-layered?

Y: Do you know what I mean by multi-layered? Do you know layer?

Y: Do you know an onion?

(Laugh)

Y: Is it has got several layers

?: Parts?

Y: Yeah, so for example, one 1 layer, 2 layers, like this

Y: I would like you to work in groups of four please, so we’ll have 3 groups of four. So we’ll have three groups of four.

Y: So you have 5-10 mins to discuss and you can take some short notes if you want to

(Group works)

Elyas: I think culture is word that means connect your behaviour, your behaviours in society that you learn from your father or your family and I think society is most important part of culture

Erfan: I think culture is, I heard from one of my teachers that culture is, XXX unidentified words. For example, you can’t say this means culture. But by my idea, culture is a group of behaviours which some group of people do. But for example, it XX one person has the culture or many people have the culture. Culture maybe for XXX is a group of behaviour, which people react to something. Sometimes, for example, people react to... to worship the God is culture. For example, Iranians we do Moharam ceremonies..

Elyas: I think it’s something like our customs

Erfan: Yeah, like customs. Customs, I think, is a part of the culture.

Elyas: A part of culture, yes. How about you? What is culture?
Omid: At first, I believe that culture
Y: Something that will help you is to think of some key works, for example, like history, tradition, whatever.
Omid: I believe that culture is multi-layered. It is XX customs, gestures, or even foods from the XXX
Erfan: You mean food is part of the culture?
Elyas: Yes, foods, our clothes
Omid: Culture change in specific orders XXX
Elyas: And I think culture is related to our language very much
Elyas: How about you? What is culture?
Mehrdad: As he said, culture is the behaviour of the group of people
XXX
Ok, continue. Keep on.
Elyas: That’s it.
Erfan: But I think, one question that I have from this is you mean, for example, culture is one country. Is that right?
Elyas: I think every country has its own culture
Erfan: But in my opinion, the country is XXX different from how XXX
Elyas: I said too. We are in the same idea. I said every country has its own culture
Katayoun: What’s your idea about culture?
Nazanin: I think culture is a group, is a part of, people’s ideas or people’s opinions about something that for example, shows that something is good or bad depends on their ideas and I think it forms some behaviours
Hashem: Yeah, you are somehow right. What about you?
Katayoun: I think culture depends on people, what people think about something and culture shows behaviours of people of area, people’s minds
Y: Something that will help you is to think of some key words for example, like history, traditions, whatever
Hashem: Is it single or multi-layered?
Nazanin: I think it’s multi-layered because in different centuries maybe the same culture is done with different behaviours.
Katayoun: I have no idea about single or multi-layered.
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Hashem: I think culture is included in all of them. All of them... history, traditional, people's ideas, everything. Every people have different idea about culture and have different culture.

Y: Ok, I think most of you have finished already. So let's see what you have. So I don't know, shall we start with the group there?

Me?

Y: yeah, anyone in your group who wants to speak.

Faranak: I think different countries have a different culture and it's a rule people should

Y: So rules

Yeah

Faranak: People should follow these rules and pay attention. And I think Iran sometimes have a tradition culture and teenagers don't like it.

Y: Anything else?

Faranak: But most of the time teenagers should accept these rules and do it.

Y: Thank you. Anyone in your group wants to add something?

Hadi: Culture depends to the government. For example, in the past

Y: Depends on the government. Yeah go on?

Y: I think you were about to add something. No?

Y: Ok, how about other groups? Do you think culture depends on the governments or?

Katayoun: People, depends on people

Y: Depends on people

Katayoun: Yes, because I think culture shows people's minds in the area.

Y: So maybe we can say the way people think, right?

Y: Anyone else?

Hashem: Yes, as my friend said, we reach to this conclusion that culture is something which people made it. You know, it includes everything.

Y: like?

Hashem: People's opinions, how to dress, and

Y: How to dress, maybe we can say clothes

Hashem: Clothes, yes. And also geographical, geographical

Y: Geographical location, you mean?
Y: Do you mean nationality?
Hashem: Yes, something like that.
Y: Thank you, anything else in your group?
No.
Y: Ok, in your group?
Erfan: In our group, or by my idea, culture is a group of behaviour that people react to things. For example, by my idea, the government’s culture is the same as people’s culture.
Y: what do you mean by the government’s “culture” is the same as people’s “culture”? what do you mean by culture?
Erfan: For example, how the governments, for example, react to things which happen in the society is the same as how people react. For example,
Y: Maybe values?
Erfan: Yes.
Y: Ok, values, beliefs
Omid: And I think it is highly related to your language
Zohre: And I guess culture is a multi-layered thing because at first, people make culture. Because culture is people’s minds, behaviours, habits, and traditional things. And because the majority of people do something rapidly, they make a culture. But if a government, make some rules for the country and people have to follow it. So maybe government can make a culture.
Y: You mean the rules?
Zohre: Yes, but at most people make them. Because when a group of people do something exactly in one way, they can make something new. And culture is basically one thing. But they have different things. For example, we have to wear cover in Iran. For example, Rohani (cleric men) have to wear something different from others because of what they study and their minds. But for example, the clerks wear suits and you can understand in our culture, what people do from their wearing.
Y: Yeah, so again we can understand people’s values and beliefs by the way people dress up.
Y: Ok, getting back to the second question and having a look at all these words I have here (on the board) which comes from you words, do you think it’s a single or multi-layered thing?
Students: No, it’s multi-layered.
Y: How is it multi-layered?
Y: So, for example, think of something like food and drink. Do you think it’s a part of culture?
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Yes, of course.

Y: Ok. Or I don't know music. Our traditional music, for example?
Yes

Y: Or for example what we consider as something polite and sometimes we consider something as taboos or impolite
Yes

Y: That's a part of culture, also, isn't it?

Y: So I think, maybe thinking of the second question being single or multi-layered, maybe one thing can be thinking of culture as an ice berg. Do what an ice berg is?
Zohre: Yeah. Mountain of ice.

Y: yes, exactly. So imagine this is the water line, this is an ice berg. Sorry, my drawing is really bad. So maybe we can say, some of them are more conscious, we are more aware of them. For example, like what? Like?

Erfan: Clothes

Y: Clothes or the way we dress up, right? So here, I would put more conscious like for example, clothes. What else do you think is more conscious or we are more aware?

Faranak: Food

Y: Food and drink, right?

Y: Anything else you can think of which is more obvious, we are more aware of?

Mehrdad: Sorry, I didn’t understand what you mean.

Y: Ok, so anyone wants to explain? Anyone who is clearer about what I'm talking about?

Zohre: Yes, something is clear and you can see it is one culture. For example, your wearing shows your culture.

Y: Maybe, when I move on to this one you understand what I mean. For example, when I say subconscious. Do you know subconscious?

Yes

Y: Something we are less aware of. We do it, we practice it, but we are less aware of it as a part of our culture. For example, our values and beliefs. Maybe when, if you are in a discussion with someone, if we are on something’s side, it’s our values and beliefs and maybe this comes from our culture but consciously, we are less aware of it. But still, it’s a part of our culture. We can’t see it very clearly, it’s in our minds. Yeah?

Yes.
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Y: So subconscious can be maybe our values, our beliefs
Katayoun: Ideas
Y: Our ideas
Y: Come on, please help me
Hashem: Language
Y: Language, do you think, it’s here or there?
No, there.
Y: At the bottom because although we speak Farsi, for example, maybe we don’t clearly see the effect it has on our culture.
Zohre: Lifestyles
Y: People’s lifestyles, yeah
Y: Anything you would like to add?
Y: So culture is something really complicated. We can’t simply say we have a really long history, 3500 years so we are very cultured people. It has several layers. Much more complicated that what we have here, right?
Y: Ok, now I am going to give each group a paper. I would like you, you have 5 minutes, because you are all really really quick. Have a look at the board and the discussion we had and in one or two sentences, come up with your own definition of culture. In one or two sentences, yeah?
OK.
Y: So that’s yours, for your group.
(Group work)
Zohre: Culture is traditional habits which comes from the basic values from the past.
Nazanin: I think culture is people’s XXX from different things that is like unwritten rules which people of the area do
(Farsi)
Akharesho yek chizi begin
Nazanin: Afkare mardom darbareye masaele mokhtalef ke dar vaghe mese ghanoone na neveshte hast
Zohre: Ghanoone na neveshte khoobe dige
Nazanin: Mardom amal mikonando zendegie khoeshooono XXX
Katayoun: Khob hamino benevisim,
Zohre: yek jomleye nahayi alan minevisim
Appendix J

Zohre: Khob hamino benevisim begim culture yek ice berg e ke haminjoory dare mahv mishe
Khob bashe hamino benevisim
Katayoun: Ye chizi benevisim rahat bashe
Katayoun: Na benevisim 2 ta zavije dare, conscious va subconscious
Zohre: Hamooni ke goftam kootah booda, culture is tradition and people’s habits
Zohre: XXX tradition and reaction to the things
Katayoun: Kodum things?

XXX
Hashem: I think it’s XXX that people step by step doing them and it become/make their culture
Zohre: By people’s talks and actions, step by step they make culture
I think culture comes from many words
Culture is the behaviour of how to react
Culture comes from many words and (eni ke to gofty)
Elyas/ Erfan/ Mehrdad: Culture is a multi-layered subject which includes a group of behaviours, which contains conscious and subconscious parts
Elyas: En chie subconscious and conscious?
Erfan: Are, yani yekish too zehnete
Elyas: Yani na khod agah va khod agah
Erfan: Yani nemoode tasviri nadare
Elyas: Yeki gharizie
The same group (Elyas etc): Which contains subconscious and conscious XX
Omid: That refers to people’s clothes, food and people have specific part of XXX
Elyas: That all refers to our behaviour
Mehrdad: Enaro ke goftim dige, hamoon subconscious o enahasho ke goftim dige
Erfan: Subconscious o enaro ke goftim yani kollesho shamel shode
Erfan: Hamoon shamel shode hasho bayad tozih bedim
Elyas: That refer to our behaviour, our language, our world
Hadi: That every single ....
Elyas: That refers to our behaviour, our rules, our language
Erfan: That refers to our behaviour such as clothing, XX, and thinking
Hadi: A group of behaviour that people have in specific XXX period
Elyas: Culture divided from XXX
Erfan: Aslesh doros shod alan masaleye asli area she, masalan ye nafar too iran culture e amirikayi dare
Mehrdad: khob na oon dige estenaashe, estesnaa hameja vojood dare
Erfan: Khob estesnaa kheili darim, ma alan chan nafar darim too mashhad ke farhange amrikayi dare?
Mehrdad: belakhare estesnaa too har chizi hast dige
Elyas: Culture divided to some
Erfan: divided ro gofty dige
Hadi: That refers to history, geographical,
Elyas: rules, our behaviour
Omid: Mitoonim begim kollan Specific parts of something
Elyas: XX in specific group and areas And react to happening to them
(When finished all the three definitions (group A, B and C) were on the board)
Y: Now I would like all the groups to stand up, go around and have a look at the other groups’ definition and choose the one which you think is the most comprehensive one.
Mehrdad: Male khodemoon az hame behare
(students start to go around)
(Group works)
Group A is best
Erfan: Man az unwritten aslan haal nemikonam
Elyas: Are, chon asan be rule rabt nadare
XXX
Erfan: The government change, the culture will change
Yekie ma behare, kootahtare.
(Y reads out all the definitions)
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Ok, so group C, which definition do you think is best?

C

(class laughter)

Y: Why do you think so?

Nazanin: I think it’s short

Zohre: and it can connect the concept very clearly

Y: The concept is very clear and short.

Etemad be nafsemoon be saghfe

Na jeddi XX (min 37)

Y: Ok, how about this group?

C or B, both of them

Y: Both of them are good.

C ke aslan be dard nemikhore

Group B

(class laughter)

So you think B is the best one, why?

Faranak: Because it’s ours, our idea

Y: Because it’s yours. Very very logical

Y: Any different idea? Why B is best?

Faranak: It’s our idea and it’s XX the way we think

Y: It’s best. It’s good.

Ma ham ke begim A dige

Ma begim C

Ha eshkalesho begim

Omid: We chose C but I want to ask a question

There’s a little problem

Omid: For example, We said clothes include culture. But you said includes thoughts and behaviours. Where is clothes?

Hashem: It’s something general

Zohre: Whatever you thought, reaction to your appearance. For example, the way of you are thinking, you are wearing in that way also.
Elyas: But I think culture is not a rule
Zohre: Unwritten rule
Elyas: Rule, but it’s rule
Y: So what do you think it is, if it’s not rule?
Elyas: I don’t know
Y: You don’t know. Ok, let’s clap hands for everyone, I think everyone’s
definition is good
Y: Ok, so finally I have the videos I was going to play for you ready. This is in
general is about what all our course is about.
(video played)
Y: How was it? Would you like to watch it again or it was clear.
Y: Yeah? So anyone who would like to give us a brief summary of what is was all about?
One more time
Y: One more time? Yeah
Yes
Y: Ok, any volunteer to give us a brief summary of? Yeah
Hashem: You know the main question about the culture is “what do you see when you look at the people with different culture?”
Y: So the main point of this video was?
Communication
Hashem: And it shows different people in different situations and how to react in these situations and as our group’s definition, it’s unwritten rules and you have to see with your own eyes and she emphasised that you have to experience and fly to that
Y: So what’s the point of experiencing all different cultures? I mean, how is it related to communication?
Erfan: We may know the cultures, we know the better language. You learn the meaning.
Y: Yeah and talking about culture, maybe it gives us a wider perspective. To see things, to be able to see things from a different perspective rather than how we see it as an individual with our culture. And how would that help while communicating with people? How is it related?
Erfan: At first, I think it showed that for example, the man saw, one person is standing behind them and one person thinks that he is poor in his culture by the values of his culture and the other person thinks that he is a rich man
Appendix J

Y: Exactly

Erfan: For example, after that the other person thinks in his mind a very good beach, the way they go but they think that it’s not a good place, the way they go

Y: Yeah. And what would happen if, for example, while communicating, everyone only see the issue from their perspective? What will happen? If this is the case, what would be the problem?

Hashem: Generally, they can’t communicate well

Y: Exactly, so miscommunication happens

Yeah

Y: Because everyone sees something in their mind and they don’t even try to see what the other person is talking about.

Y: Ok, this was basically the video I was going to show you the first session. To show you what I mean by the whole course.

Y: And the second short video, I gonna show you today, is I think, a little bit funny. I would like you to watch it carefully and guess what’s going on.

(video played)

Y: So what do you think? What happened there?

Y: Would you like to watch it again or it was alright?

It was alright

Y: Any volunteer?

Erfan: By my idea, this person wants to show we have expect, for example if we saw a person like to, for example like his face, he is from Korea or Asia, or something like not from our region is, don’t know our culture but she knows.

Y: exactly, so why do you think the guy…what was the first question the guy asked her?

Where do you come from

Y: And why do you think he asked that?

Zohre: Because of the way she looked

Y: Because of her facial features, yeah

Yes

Y: She wasn’t white, she looked Asian, yeah

Y: So what do you think this tells us? What was the message of the video?

Y: And what was the rest of the conversation? So
Appendix J

Y: By the way, what is Kimchi

It's a food

Y: Exactly, it's a traditional food. And why did he say that to her?

Katayoun: He wanted to say that you are Korean

Y: And I think he wanted to actually impress her saying oh look, I know about your culture

Faranak: I think people wants to show their culture is the best, it's my idea

Zohre: I guess people's nationality doesn't seek to understand or live with others' culture

Y: Exactly, So I think what this video is trying to say is we can’t actually judge people. Because see she looked Korean, but she was American, she was born in the US. But he kept emphasising that no, you are Korean, you are Korean. And what do we call this?

Erfan: Racism?

Y: Racism is probably a bit too strong. Stereotypes (on the board)

Y: What does it mean? Maybe look up in your dictionaries and if someone can read out the definition for me.

Elyas: A belief or idea of a particular type of person or thing is like. Stereotypes are often unfair or untrue.

Y: So stereotypes, this is important, are often unfair or untrue

Y: So he kept saying that you are Korean, you are Korean but she was American. And what did she do in return?

Erfan: She said that you are English

Y: You are English and what was the crazy things she was doing?

Erfan: Joking their culture

Y: Yeah, she was kinda imitating British accent and also, she mentioned a stereotypical British food. What was it?

Fish and Chips

Y: Yeah, fish and chips. You people's fish and chips is amazing whereas he was also American

Y: Ok, so what I gonna do next is I gonna give you some handouts

Y: So, if you look at your handouts, there are five statements. I have taken all these statements from the internet, you can see the references. These are stereotypical statements about us, Iranians. I would like you to read these statements and discuss it with your partner in groups of two.
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To what extent, do you agree or disagree with each statement?

(Students’ group works)

Sentence number 1

Elyas: I think it's somehow true, somehow false. I think there are a lot men and humans on the earth and especially Iranian men are different from each other and I think one can treat women like property and one can't treat like this and I think there are a lot of, depends on the person, depends to the man.

Mehrdad: But most of Iranians don’t treat women like property.

Elyas: How do you know?

Mehrdad: Hmmm

Elyas: Do you know someone?

Mehrdad: Khob akhe na dige, alan nis dige. Mibiny too jame e mibiny.

Elyas: Speak English.

Elyas: No you saw the appearance, you saw the work every person do. Maybe they treat women like property in their minds. They think women are like property in their minds.

XXX

(Sentence number 2)

Elyas: I think it’s completely false.

Mehrdad: It’s false

Mehrdad: Completely wrong

Elyas: But this actually depends on the person, if a person can hate the USA.

Mehrdad: But most of the people don’t hate the USA

Elyas: I think old people, elderly people, hate America

Mehrdad: No, in the past yes. Too taxi ha adam ghashang mifahme.

(sentence number 3)

Elyas: I think it’s somehow true

Mehrdad: Iranians are educated, but I think not advanced

Elyas: Yes, we are the third world country. I don’t know anything about this because I don’t know anything about the status or like this. I don't know. But everyone I know I think most of Iranians are not educated, they are going to work. Actually free works

Mehrdad: But we have lots of doctors
Elyas: Yes actually
Elyas: But it talks about all the Iranians, I think. I don't know.

(Sentence number 4)
I think this sentence has problems.

Y: There are two sentences I would like you to discuss please:
Y: there are two questions I would like u to discuss please, to what extent do you agree or disagree with every sentence?
Y: How do you think this might affect communication while communicating with non-Iranians?
Elyas: I think it's somehow true. Yes I think it's true.

Mehrdad: But I think they don’t compare their (successful esh ghalate), ta jaye enjash doroste, az enja be baedesh ghalate
Elyas: No no no, I think every parent compare their child with his or her friend. It means that you go to school and you mom said come on, your friend got more points but you can

Mehrdad: XXX yes yes

(sentence number 5)
Elyas: No, never.
Elyas: I think it's completely false. I disagree; I think it’s true but for the past.

Mehrdad: No, aslan az ghabl ham enjoory nabood
Elyas: No, no. I think it’s true but for the past. The women of Iran in the past was very active but now what the girls do: they just make up their face and go out to the street

Ye bar dige begim

(sentence number 1) THEY ARE REVISING
Elyas: Somehow yes but it depends on the person, who are you. It's up to the person, who are you

Mehrdad: Na khob dare rajebe kolli mige, nemishe ke XX
Elyas: I think it’s false. Because Iranian men love their women.

(sentence number 2)
Elyas: I said my idea, I think it’s completely false. It may be the idea about us. I think the Americans think that we are hated by them but I don't know

Mehrdad: Mardomse siyasi chy mishe?
Elyas: Political, political people
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Mehrdad: Political persons only hate the USA; the people don’t
Elyas: You think why?
Mehrdad: Che midoonam
Elyas: I think today no one hate the USA
Mehrdad: Feghih or sheikhs
Elyas: I agree with you
(sentence number3)
Elyas: I think not nation but I don’t know
Mehrdad: Melliyat
Elyas: Midoonam
(Next sentence)
Elyas: Never. But I think depends on the woman
Mehrdad: Khob na nemikhad ke bege never, be tore kolli bayad begy
Elyas: Be tore kolli I think it’s wrong, it’s true for the past
Ok, if you have finished, let’s discuss the sentences
Sentence number one- can you read it out please?
....
So in your group what did you think?
Hashem: You know it’s something general about Iranian men, Iranian men care about their property but not includes for women. We disagree with that. It’s not just like this.
Y: Other groups?
Elyas: I think Iranian men love their women
Mehrdad: If I were in the past, I agree with this sentence but now I disagree
Y: You think it’s changing
Mehrdad: Yes, changing
Y: Yeah, by the time it’s changing
Y: So sentence number two please
Me? ....
Nazanin: I think it depends on the behaviour.
Y: Behaviour of?
XXX
Y: People’s behaviour
Nazanin: People’s behaviour, yes
Y: So you mean that…can you clarify what you mean?
Nazanin: Because they have a different cultures and different religions. Because of this
Y: So what you mean is we can’t say all Iranians
Yes
Y: Is that what you are trying to say? So every Iranian is different, is that what you are saying?
Nazanin: Yes yes. But I think they don’t hate.
Y: Yeah, OK. And you?
Me, number 3?
Y: yes please
....
Ghazal: I think yes because we saw that most of the Iranians are educated and
Y: OK, how about the other groups about sentence number 3? Do you have different opinions? Did you all agree?
Yes
Hadi: I agree with this sentence because I read something on the internet and said 2500 years ago Iranian soldiers can write and read
Y: But pay attention to the sentence, are not were
Elyas: Now
Zohre: I guess because the Iranian nation is young between 15 to 25, because of this most of the are educated and these days even a girl, after her marriage continues her study.
Uhum, yeah
And because of this, I think it’s true
Y: Ok and number 4, you please
....
Erfan: I think here we agreed with that, but how do you define being successful? For example, ordinary family, for example have their child, for example the father is a taxi driver, they don’t expect that their child should be
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a doctor but for example, if he has a good store, they honour him. But if he don’t have, becomes like his father, they don’t honour him.

Y: So how about the other groups, did you all agree with sentence number 4? They always compare, yeah?

Zohre: I guess in the past yes, but these days parents take more notice to, they compete with other parents to advance their children and no matter about their study. They just try to show that they are more rich and they support their children

Y: So they don’t compare

Zohre: Yes

Y: they just try to help their child to study

Zohre: Study. However he/ she is

Y: OK yeah?

Katayoun: These days parents are well-educated and they are knowledgeable so, they don’t do this I think

Y: You disagree in your group. And the last sentence, you please?

...

Faranak: I completely disagree with this

Y: You completely disagree. Ok, why?

Faranak: Iranian women are two groups. One of them work outside, and one of them work at home. The ones who are housewives, for example, they just do their house chores. But the second group is XXX and they are trying to XXX

Y: So you think we can’t say all Iranian women

Erfan: I think I agree with that because organisation, for example if you look at the education system in Iran, there is part for women. If you look at the jobs, we can see there is a part for women. It means that they accept women’s work, and women’s are active in the society

Y: So you agree

Erfan: Yes

Katayoun: Iranian people, all of them, generally are organised and they care about tidying, planning

Y: OK, let’s move on to the 2nd question: So imagine you are communicating with a non-Iranian and he/ she has gone on the internet and has found all these sentences as some examples, about us Iranians. How do you think this might affect communication while communicating with non-Iranians, if the person has got this kind of judgement in their mind?

Y: Do you think it matters at all?
No, it matters

Y: It doesn’t matter?

Katayoun: No, it’s important for us

Y: So imagine you, as a woman, are talking with a non-Iranian man and he thinks that in your country all woman are treated as property. Does it matter?

Katayoun: Yes

Y: So how do you think that might affect the communication?

Erfan: They think, for example, if we talk with a professor at a university, we XXX the word that he, for example, talking knowledge of your thoughts but when you accept that she is woman and she is the property of men, you don’t accept for example talking some behaves and you accept hardly the words.

Y: Right. So maybe think of the video we watched, maybe miscommunication happens. Because this is the danger about having stereotypes in our minds. Maybe we can say that, as one of our friends said here, every Iranian can be different, right? We can’t say all Iranians are, in my opinion at least, are educated. Maybe depending on the family background and many other factors, some are educated and some are not educated. Of course, sometimes it can bring good things to us.

(Reflective writing)

J.1.2 Session 2

Y: Ok right, let's switch to English. So how was your weekend? Did you have a good Friday?

Elyas: Yes, it was good.

Y: What did you do?

Elyas: I hanged out with my friend.

Y: Again?

Elyas: Again Torghabe.

Y: Yeah? How about others? What did you do?

Katayoun: That was monotonous because I didn’t do anything

Y: Oh OK, maybe next weekend you’ll have more stuff

Y: How about others? Did you have a good weekend?

Omid: Yeah, I went to my father’s friend’s garden and we spent time with family
Hashem: But actually for me it's not really good. One of my relatives passed away

Y: Oh, I am sorry

Hashem: and I had to participate in funeral

Y: Sorry about that

Y: So do you wanna know about my weekend?

Yeah, what did you do?

Y: I listened to the audio files from our class last session and I transcribed them.

Y: Do you know what transcribe is?

Yeah. Highlight?

Y: I forgot my markers, just one minute

Y: Ok, so I transcribed the audio files, yeah? There was some guessing somewhere, do you know what it means?

Translate?

Emm, transcription means so I out the files on my laptop, I listened to them and I typed. So you listen and you type whatever you hear

One point is (explaining the problem abt identifying the voices and giving them the stickers)

Y: So this was one point about transcription. And another point is, do you remember what we talked about last session mainly?

Culture

Y: Yeah, the definition of culture. So when I was listening to your conversation in the class, the main thing I heard was is set of behaviour or a group of behaviour among a group of people. So what I would like to start the class with this session is: so how big do you think that group is? So by group of people, do you mean the geographical location? Do you mean a family? How big do you think is that group?

Elyas: I think it includes all the world, all the countries, all the societies

So when you say the culture of a group of people?

Elyas: It devotes to a special place, every place has its own culture, it depends on the place

Y: OK so what do you mean by place?

Erfan: I think the place affect on the culture but it’s not dependant on the culture. For example, a person who lives in Iran, for example, could have the culture of American people.
Y: yeah, that’s a good point. So I think what he means is it’s not limited to geographical borders. Yeah, any other opinion? How big is that group? Do we mean a nation, do we mean a city, do we mean a family?

Erfan: I think it’s for one person to bigger, it starts from one person and then goes bigger

Y: Yeah, Faranak how about you?

Faranak: I think about the people of the culture, the people of country and society

Y: Country and society, so think of the handout I gave you last session for example, can we say all Iranians are educated?

No, no

Elyas: not all of them

Y: So maybe we are talking about nationalities, we have to be a bit careful, because it’s not limited to borders, right?

Y: so if somebody thinks of culture only at national level, so think of all Iranians are like this, all British people are like that. I don’t know, maybe you have heard this statement as well, when you are in Iran, everyone say oh British people are very cold, very unfriendly or all Iranians are very hospitable, they are very friendly, of course they are some who are like that, but generalising maybe a bit

Erfan: different

Y: It’s different and sometimes it can be dangerous, it’s ignorant.

(explaining the meaning of ignorant)

Y: And what do you think will happen if someone only thinks of culture at national level?

Erfan: Stereotypes

Hashem: last session you described the culture like the iceberg so we can’t put it to special groups.

Y: Yeah culture, as we talked about it last session, it does have several layers, OK? But those layers is not only among a nationality, this is what I am trying to say. Maybe, it can be a smaller group. Not all Iranians are the same necessarily. Not necessarily all Iranians have the same kind of behaviour. But maybe we, as a class, as a group of people, we might have our own culture. We create our own culture which might not be necessarily the same as the bigger culture, as a nation. But culture as a concept, does have several layers. Yeah?

OK

Another question I would like to ask you about last session is do you think culture is dynamic or static?

(explaining the meaning of dynamic and static)
So do you think it's dynamic or static. Katayoun do you want to give us some opinion?

Katayoun: yes, I think it's dynamic because people change by the time so culture change with people.

Faranak: yes, a lot because culture is dependant on people so when people change, culture changes.

Y: Yeah, people’s mentality, for example

Elyas: I think the whole culture of the country is dynamic and for a person, it depends on the person. For example, I see a person that has his culture for 20 years

Y: Ok but you think as a whole?

Elyas: Yeah, as a whole it changes

Y: Any other opinion?

Omid: I think culture is something dynamic and gradually it changes

Y: Why do you think so?

Omid: Culture of people in Iran I think changed a lot before the revolution and after the revolution

Y: Yeah, maybe getting back to our discussion last session, sometimes it depends on the society’s situation and all that.

Yes

Y: Anything else you would like to add?

Y: OK, let’s move on to the next activity (min 8) I have some images here. So I would like you to look at it (holding the image) and think and tell me what do you see in this picture?

(Different guesses)

Y: Next image

(again different guesses)

Y: So how many different interpretations/guesses did we have here?

Y: So do you think the interpretation of these images might be different if we show it to a different group of people?

Yes/ Yes

Why?

Hashem: because different people have different ideas

Elyas: and different thoughts
Elyas: Different IQs EQs

Zohre: Maybe they are from different nationalities and they understand
different things from a different thing

Y: Yeah, maybe different nationalities have different ways of thinking. Yeah,
any other guesses?

Elyas: About students?

Y: About why different group of people/ students would think differently?

Erfan: Because I think from the experience of each person, different from
others. Each person have his/her own life. This means this affects a lot on the
idea of the people.

Y: yeah, I think as all of you somehow mentioned of how we see different
things like these images which are not really clear, they are a bit vague, is our
background.

Yeah

Y: For example, if you remember, when somebody asked me, what that was,
what was my answer?

Eraser

Y: It’s an eraser, because I’m a teacher, I’m also a student. I see everything as
marker or eraser.

OK (laughing)

Y: Because of my background, yeah? So maybe our background affects what we
see and how we think. Yeah?

Y: So the next question: how do you think this matters while different people
are communicating with each other?

Elyas: Again please, sorry

Y: So as we discussed now, different people might see things differently
depending on their background, Yeah?

Yes

Y: So how do you think this matters or this affects the communication while 2
people or 3 people are communicating with each other?

Erfan: To satisfy their needs

Y: To satisfy their needs? Imagine for example 2 people are discussing one
topic, and they are from different backgrounds. What might happen?

Elyas: it changes the information

Y: It might change the information
Appendix J

Erfan: Argument
Hashem: Misunderstanding
Y: Anything else?
Hashem: Takes a lot of time and energy
Y: It might take a lot of time and energy
Hadi: They share their experience
Y: But if they want to come to an agreement or if they want what the other person is talking about, what should they do? Each of them see the topic differently so what should they do?
Erfan: know their knowledge
Y: their?
Erfan: Knowledge of each other
Y: Yeah, they should increase the knowledge of each other
Erfan: And the language
Y: Yeah, something as we discussed last session, remember that video we watched, when the airplane was going from one place to another.
Yes
Y: What is was talking about? Having a?
Erfan: Stereotypes
Y: Emm, yeah, getting far from stereotypes and don’t think stereotypically
Zohre: What was the question?
Y: Ok, we discussed these images and how different people might see these differently depending on their background, yeah?
Y: So imagine two-3 people from totally different backgrounds are communicating with each other, what do you think might happen as a result of this?
Zohre: At first, they have different ideas from one thing that they see and maybe because of their this differentiation they can’t get the right concept
Y: So something that will help us is having a?
Zohre: view, their view
Y: yeah, what kind of view?
Elyas: Wide
Appendix J

Y: yeah, wider. Having a wider perspective or having a more flexible perspective, yeah?

Faranak: See, I think, other side

Y: Yeah, trying to see things from a different perspective might help. Rather than just thinking the way we think, trying to look at one issue from different perspectives. And maybe that can stop miscommunication or misunderstanding.

Hashem: We have to first respective others’ perspective

Y: Of course

Hashem: And you know, do not judge everyone by their culture and other's perspective

Y: Yeah, yeah. We shouldn’t judge them, we shouldn’t have stereotypes, we should listen to them and we should try to look at things from different perspectives

Giving the handout (understanding supervisor)

Students read it in their own time/ explaining vocabulary/ no time to discuss the questions/ next session will start by discussing the relevant questions

J.2 Assignments

J.2.1 Erfan

Session 6

At first, I should say I migrated to Bangladesh which is near idea. In my idea, if you categorize the problems which I face there, it is divided to the place and the people.

By place I mean the climate and by people, I mean language, culture, religion, finances, diseases. In Bangladesh, the weather is humid and I was born in dry weather which is very hard for me to resist humid weather. There is food which is like tropical food. I eat things which I didn’t see in the past which affected on me a lot; one of hardships there is to communicate but fortunately, they are Muslims (same religion) and Bangladesh is colonized by Britian and fortunately most people know English. I say fortunately because their language is too hard for learning. My family communicate with them in English but we do bargain in shopping and talk to them.

To conclude, for become and past hardships (to get over difficulties) in immigration you have to find similarities and differences in culture; you use similarities to make your life easier and find differences to find solutions and adjust.

Session 8

Family life in the UK (statistics)
Appendix J

1. Size of house holds
- There were 26.4 million household in the UK in 2013.
- 29% consisted of only one person. In 1973, 9% of adults live alone.
- 20% consisted of four or more people.
- 12.3 million household consisted of a couple with or without children.
- The average size of household in the UK in 2013 was 2014.
- 1.7 is the average number of dependent children in a family.

2. Families
- In 2013, there were 18.2 million families. 7.7 million (42%) of those dependent children.

Here is some statistics in addition:

Married couple
- 12.3 million of UK households consisted of a married couple without child.
- 7.7 million couple families have no dependent children.
- 4.7 million married couple families have dependent children.
- The percentage of families that have just one dependent children increased from 42% in 1996 to 47% in 2013.

3. Divorces
- The number of divorces in England and Wales in 2013 was 118140, an increase of 582 over the 2011 figure.
- There were 13 divorces an hour in England and Wales in 2012.
- The divorce rate has been stable over the last year standing at 10.8 divorcing per thousand population. It was 13.3 per thousand in 2002.
- The average age of divorce was 45 for men and 42 for women.
- Overall 42% of marriage will end in divorce.

Session 9

To my friend Mathew in England

Hi Mathew,

I try write publicly because if others want to read you are comfortable. I start here with sun, here of lots of sunny days. Climate is totally different and when climate different means food is different, people is different, architect is different, etc. One of the good things I have here is because I am from
England, I have British visa, I have VIP car number which means I have ability to go more than others.

After these, I’d like to write about people and media. I want to talk about people; Iranian people like people all around the world, they live in cities, they have child, they go to universities, they got married but also different from others. They affected in politics, they experiences lots of war and revolutions and they are affected and affect the religions but all they are people too.

A letter from me to my Iranian friend Ali

Hi Ali,

I miss you so much. Until I came to England, I saw numerous rains which I saw in Iran in my whole life. In here I have hobbies that I have in Iran; I go to gym, swimming pool here too. I couldn’t go to the holy shrine and it’s the only thing which I couldn’t have here. I’m here in studying life, if you want to know I have to study and spend my time about my study topics more than in Iran and if you want to know about food and eating in here, I would say you may not find every food material in Iran or find them cheap and easy but you could have them here in expensive way. Actually, like every other place in Europe, religious and beliefs of each person is not matter as much as work and the output of work but you could have and save your religion here too.

J.2.2 Elyas

Session 6

Living in your own country with your own nationality and your own culture is so easy and you don’t have problems with that because you were born with. But when you want to reside in another country with different people and culture, you may have a lot of problems.

In one side, you may have problems with the new culture and their religion. I think it’s better to study about the new culture and their behavior in each situation, to have good communication.

If you know nothing about them and thinking they have the same culture as you have, you misbehave and can’t understand each other and as result of this, you can’t communicate with them.

On the other hand, you may have problems with your customs and their customs such as clothing, table manner, and foods, which they would taboo for you.

I can remember an idioms which says “when in Rome, do as Romans do”. I think it’s good to adopt yourself with new things under your religion and values.

J.2.3 Katayoun

Session 6
Appendix J

My family and I are going to move to Australia for a year. I think the biggest problem for us is different culture, I don’t know about their culture yet.

People who live in Australia are from different nation and language because most of population in Australia are immigrants so different culture. It might be more dangerous for communication but I try to know different culture before our trip.

To conclude, live with foreigners is hard but I’ll do my best to be a good citizen.

Session 8

UK society has different minds and culture. They accept all tips of appearance. Now, I want to talk about their wedding party. They don’t want to get married on May, they prefer April month than the other months. If they walk to church, it will help them in the future.

Before they go to party, first they call to host. They don’t go to a party without invitation and host has to invite guests two weeks earlier than the day of ceremony. English people don’t communicate with a person who talk without knowing reason of something.

Iran and UK both know politeness and know how to respect to each other.

Session 9

I’m a British student. I study in Iran and I live with an Iranian family.

The biggest point about Iranian family is kindness; most of them care about each other and they support their children until marriage. They really care to eating lunch together. They have children after marriage.

I’m an Iranian student. I study in UK and I live with a British family.

Most of them they are at work and they don’t have so much time to be with their family.

They born children before marriage and they grow up lonely. Teenagers leave their family when they are 17 because of independence.

J.2.4 Faranak

Session 6

My parents and I reside to Malaysia. We will have some problems in Malaysia. Different culture is the most problem in that country. People of Malaysia have a different method to communicate with each other.

For example, must of the people in there trust each other very soon but Iranian people often accustom to ethics can trust each other.

I can’t judge people with my own beliefs and culture.

In Malaysia some professors are racist.
I must get acquainted with their culture and have good relationships with them.

Session 8

British people are more friendly and more approachable with their colleagues and even boss in the work because they call each other by first name but in my country everybody call each other by their last name unless they be close over than a colleague.

In Iran family environment is warmer and more intimate than in the UK. It mean British parents spend most of their time in work. And rest of them when they are at home everybody goes to their own bedroom for resting but Iranian family gets together at home specially for eating and watching TV.

In my country people take more time for cooking than in England and they try eating every three meals at home with family but in England come to restaurant even for serving breakfast.

Session 9

As a foreign student,

The concept of family is more important than many other countries. Iranians take their responsibilities to their family quite seriously.

Families tend to be small or two children but the extended family is quite close. Loyalty to the family come before any other social relationship, even business.

In Iran, parents are sensible abt their children and they pay attention to their children’s lifestyle. Iranians give gifts at various social occasions such as returning from a trip or if someone achieves a major success in their personal or business life.

As Iranian students,

British people spend most of their time in work and also rest of the day when they are at home, everybody goes to their own bedroom for resting. And many women do not want to have children immediately.

J.2.5 Omid

Session 6

My family have planned to migrate to a European country for a few years. The problem starts when they choose France as a destination country.

I can speak English very well with no issues but in France majority of people don’t know English very complete so we will have problems in communication between people there.

Therefore, for this I decide to take up French course so at least for removing everyday needs. Second thing that really bothers me is solitude. In a foreign country, you should be able to be independent. However, when I ask people
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who have travelled to another country according to them, time will make you getting used to it.

In addition, we should prepare ourselves for new behavior, climate, food, clothing. Also, we should learn about native’s behavior and adjust to them.

**Session 8**

Teen's life

Teenagers in England do much the same as kids in America or other European country do, they enjoy chatting and texting friends, hang out with them, listening to the latest music on MP3, shopping for the latest music on MP3, shopping for the latest fashion or watching movie.

Birthday celebrations

They invite special people to celebrate with them. Presents are opened as soon as the children are awake. Friends and family send birthday cards. Sending birthday cards is custom that began in England 100 years ago.

Leisure time

Weekends are a time in which people have worked for five days and most parents do not work. Sundays used to be very special day of the week for worship and rest and most people are at home or church.

**Session 9**

Dear my friend,

I have been in Iran for six months and I have learned a lot of things from Iran and Iranians. The thing that was really amazing to me about Iranians was their leisure time and holiday. You know in UK on Sundays we go to church or stay home and rest but here in Iran, on Fridays that they are on vacation. They go and visit their grandparents. According to my Iranian friend, we go and visit them to show our respect and remind them that we don’t forget them. He was my friend since I came to Iran and I have learned many things from him.

Love

Dear my friend,

First, I apologise that I haven’t written sooner. It’s about six months that I’m here in England. Therefore, I’ve got a lot of experience from here. As a teenager before I travelled to here, I studies teen’s life here includes leisure time, entertainment and daily life so I realised that they are interested in activities just same as our in Iran. They listen to the latest music, shop for the latest fashion, chatting and hanging out with them.

Anyway, I must go.

Best wishes,

J.2.6 Nazanin
Session 6

Narnia is an imaginary land that like another lands have do's and don'ts. If you want to be one of its citizens, come with me to the world of mind to recognize its culture and customs.

All the people in there are real Shias. All the people devote themselves to their unique god, because of that qualities such as attempt, fair, honesty, kindness, clean, cooperation, sympathy, helping others, getting on well with others, bravery, generosity, scarification are considered pretty and very good. If you hurt or break somebody’s heart, they don’t blame you. They try a lot to return you to the right way. It is really bad to be sad there because all of them and satisfied from God and each other. You can't drink wine or smoke or even wear flatty clothes. People think more, speak less, and work more.

Be sure you have a great time there.

Session 8

You can get a divorce if you have been married at least a year and your relationship has permanently broken down. You must have a marriage that is legally recognized in the UK, and have permanent home in England or Wales.

There are three main steps to get divorced:

1. File a divorce petition- you have to apply to the court for permission to divorce, and show reasons why you want the marriage to end.

2. Apply for a (discrenisi)- if your spouse agrees to the petition you’ll get a document saying there is no reason you can’t divorce.

3. Applying for a decree absolute-this legally ends your marriage-you need to wait 6 weeks after you get the decree before you can apply.

Also in Iran couples can agree for divorcing or one spouse can be disagree, in this case, if the other spouse has firm grounds they can get a divorce.

Session 9

Hi Carla,

I’m happy about writing a letter to you. I have a lot of things to say. My Iranian friends' family are really friendly and hospitable. My friend whose name is Soheila is really kind and sweetheart.

Once, I wanted to blame one of our classmates because of making our professor XXX Soheila prevented me from doing that. She told me talking behind somebody is bad and in Islam, our religion, it is called backbiting. She added “do you like somebody talks behind you while you aren’t present to defend from yourself?”. 

And of course, I didn’t approve it. Therefore, I learned to behave in a way that I like to be behaved me with me.

They didn’t tell lies as far as I know. Soheila and her brother respect to their parents a lot and his parents support them also. They do an strange thing
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which is called praying. They pray five times a day. Soheila says praying makes us to be obedient and grateful to our creator’s kindness. I think it’s really a nice way to look at it. I really looking forwards to coming there and tell you more.

Your friend,

Nazanin

Hi Sepideh,

My last trip these day to overseas was the best tour I’ve ever had. The most significant point is that I am not alone and I am settling in Sue’s house. Sue is my new friend.

We went to different sightseeing of England. The things are terrific. For example, tall towers, magnificent nature, high quality clothes, delicious foods, clean roads, memorable nights in cruises and extremely superb jewellery.

Sue’s brothers are convenient and our first meeting was cute. They shook me hands and I refused to shake hands. At first they were shocked; however, after a while they burst at laughing. Sue told me they wanted to play a joke on me. If you shook hands with them, your hands would have become completely purple. I really thank God I didn’t do that and I wasn’t shy because exactly the day after I had to carry out an experiment on a mouse in front of all students and our professors.

I really want to tell them about my religion. I’m sure if they recognise my religion, they will be into that. I can’t wait to hear your suggestion.

Your sister,

J.2.7 Mehrdad

Session 9

My family,

Many thanks for your last letter. My new university is very good and this university have a lot of perfect teachers. I live with a kind Iranian family in downtown. They are four person, one boy and one girl. The size of family in Iran is similar to our country and one of the big difference that with us is their food.

They eat less fast foods and they prefer to eat homemade foods instead of fastfoods. Iranians are not concerned with their environment. They cut their trees and they waste their energy.

Anyway, I’d better close now as have lots of work to do.

All the best,

Sam

J.2.8 Hadi
Session 6

When in Germany, you must remember that is a country which is different from others. Germans have their own thoughts, emotions. Moreover, try not to become one of them (people) because it shows you in their mind like crazy person.

Germans help you however they don’t know who are you and generally they are rude. I can say they don’t say please, can you or would you please but they are good drinker people.

Finally, I can say you must deal with them when you want to enjoy your life and take it easy and understand that people’s culture, behavior, and another important things.

J.2.9 Zohre

Session 6

Our country Iran is one of the countries that each year expects lots of tourists from all over the world.

Tourists with their vacations, they become familiar with Islamic and Iranian culture and they should do rules of Islamic society. In Iran, women should have cover the way that wearing in society is very important. They shouldn’t go out of house without complete wearing. For the men, drinking alcoholic drinks are banned also. The way of react to a muslim woman should be polite and they shouldn’t do anything impolite.

They should know that Iran is a country with big culture that the value of humans are very important to it.

Session 9

Dear Sara,

Before I travelled to Iran, I thought I would have different and sad life. I knew that Iran’s culture is completely ?? by ours culture and I was worried about this. But when I arrived and spent time with them, I understood how interesting their culture is. Let me mention some of them for you:

Here there isn’t any special month for getting married but there, there is. They have special way of divorce which is different from ours. Here children are always with their parents except when they get married but there, children only stay with parents until they are 18.

I want to write more for you but time don’t let me.

Dear Sara,

After I went to England, I was sad and alone because I had no friends and most of the time, I was at home. But after a while, I found a friend. Tina, who lives with me in the same house always talks to me about their culture.
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For example, when they want to get married they go to church or when they want to get divorced, they apply to the court. Then, they send the documents and they can get divorced. When children become 18, they can live separately.

There is a lot of similarities between our culture and their culture so I think I can have easy and enjoyable life here.

These days I', very happy

J.3 Reflective writing

J.3.1 Erfan

Session 1

Man dare en jalase amookhtam ke baraye farhang yek taerife moshakhas nist ama shenakhthayi az abaaede aan vojood darad. Masalan farhang be do bakshe ashkar va nahan taghсим bandi mishavad. Farhang rabete mostaghim ba zaban, din, hokoomat, melliyat, va ghaza darad va adame shenakhte farhang baese ejade moshkel ya be ebaraty adame darke matloob miyad afarad ba farhanghaye mokhtalaf mishavad.

Session 2

In this session, we discuss about previous topic more and enlight the way of discussion to each other and we reached that culture is depend on place but not limited.

Session 3

Ba arze poozesh az babate dir amadan va amade naboodan.

Dar en kelas amookhtam ke afrady ke baraye mohajerat be keshvarhaye digar rafte, karha, raftarha, va ... baraye motabgehat va motafavet naboodan dar digar javame e farhangy anjam midahand, mamande baize bowling dar dastane gheraat shode.

Session 4

Dar en jalase amookhtam ke mitavan baraye dashtane ertebate movafagh, barkhy karha anjam va az anjame barkhi karha parhiz kard. Be onvane mesal, dar Jame’eye kelase ma har kasi baraye tabaghebandi nazare motafavty dasht ama hameye afrad bar en asl taekid dashtand ke majmooe amaali ke bayesty anjam dad ta ba farhang va sharayet sazgar sho. Be gholi digar, sazgary dar Jame’e az tarighe farhang soorat migirad.

Session 5

Dar en jalase amookhtam afrad az tarighe manabe’e mokhtalef manande media etelaat kasb karde ke bar hasbe hamin etelaat tasavorat dar morede javame va farhangha darand ke oomooman na dorost va eshtebah ast ke tae’sire cheshmgiri bar ravabet darand. Albate barkhi niz tasavory darbareye javame’e farhangy nadarand ya be aan etenaayi nemikonand.

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Session 6

Man dar en jalase amookhtam dar farhanghaye mokhtalef barkhi rosoom motadavel ast ke dar barkhi farhanghaye digar rayej nist va gaahy anjame anha baese sooe tafahom mishavad ke nabayad ke aanha ra khoob o bad namid va aanha nesby hastand.

Session 7

Dar en jalase amookhtam yeki az avamele barghararie ertebar ekhtelafe nazlar mibashad va niz amookhtam ke hazineye tehsil dar engilis ballast va noee azadie tahsili vojood darad.

Session 8

Man dare n jalase amookhtam ke motale'e rosoom va farhange yek keshvar etelaaty dar ekhtiyare ma migozared ke dar soorate estefadeye na dorost en etelaat monhar be stereotypes ya haman kilishe va ghezavate na dorost mishavad va dalil bar en sohit, tafavothayi ke dar har jam'e ke koochiktar az yek meliayt manande khanevade va fard dar farhange eenhast mibashad.

Session 9

Man dar en jalase amookhtam ke rosoom dar har farhang yek pas zamineye zehni dar aan jam'e ya afraade an ejad mikonad ke dar soorate ertebar mitavanad monjar be adame tafhim miyane ashkhas ba farhanghaye mokhtalef shaved va niz amookhtam ke har fard daraye abaade shakhsiyat ast. Nemoode en abaad dar gorooh haye mokhtalef ejtemaee mesle doostan, hamkaran, khanevade va ... ast. En goroohhaye mokhtalef daraye zavabete motafavet hastand ke raayate zavabete ye gorooh dar gorooho dighig gah sood bakhsh va aksare mavaghe na motabegh mibashad.

Session 10

Agar neveshte aval r aba neveshteye jalaseye akhar moghayese konam be dorosty dar khaham yaft ke shayad baz ham tairife moshakhas az farhang ra nayafte am vali hala mitavanad an tabaghe tabaghe boodane Farhan, tafavothaye farhangy, rosoom rayej dar har gorooho farhangy va taesire aan bar ertebar daraye khod taghsim bandi konam. Hala mitavanad begooyam kare na chandan dorosty ast ke adaab va rosoom farhang ra dar yek farhang borde v aba vijegiha va motavadelate aan farhang moghayese konim va dar akhar yek ghezavate nagesh anjam dahim. Man amookhtam ke hatta nemitavan bar asase etelaat ke a yek resane be dast avardim be mardom yek gorooho farhangy nesbat dahim va mohre aam boodan baa an rasm dar tamame afrade gorooh danest va yek ghezavat na dorost anjam bedahim. Albate barkhi az etelaate aan dorost ast.

J.3.2 Elyas

Session 1

Rastesh fek mikonam ba vojoode en hame nazarate mokhtalef dar akhar bardakht khoob va mofifi az vajeye farhang dashtam va enke chetor farhangy yek keshvar ba mardom yek keshvar ertebat darad va hamchenin chetor.
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Farhanghaye mokhtalef beham marboot mishavand va az hameye en ha behtar tavanayie sohbat kardan be zabane engilisi dar man taghviyat shod.

**Session 2**

Kho ben jalase aval darbareye pas zamineye zehnie har ensani gofte shod va yad gereftam har ensani ba tavajoh be aghayed va adabo rosoome khodash background darad va baraye ensan haye mokhtalef ba melyiat ha va farhang haye mokhtalef motafavet ast va en pas zamineye zehny taesire besiyr ziadi dar eretbat bargharar kardan ba digaran darad va mitavad be raftarash shekl bedahand.

Dar akhare kelas ham bargehayi dade shod eke 2ta dastan neveshte va darbareye barkhrd haye eshtebah dar mogheayit haye mokhtalef bood.

**Session 3**

Faghat az babate nakhandan bargeha ozr mikham va az jalaseye baed tekrar nemishe.

New words haye ziyady yad gereftam dar reading va mesle har jalase taghviate speaking.

**Session 4**

Bayad begam ke chon mozooe har jalase mozooe sabetist, pas har jalase man hole mozooe farhang matalebe bishtary yad migiram. En jalase ham darbareye chegoonegie eretbat farhang va zaban yad gereftam va enke baraye raftan be yek keshvare khareji che chizhaye laze mast.

**Session 5**

Bardashte man az en jalase en bood ke hamishe yek selsele tafakoraty vase hameye adama vojood dare ke nesbat be kasi ke taze molaghateshoon mikin be vojood miad va en tafakorat taesire besiyr ziady dar ravabet va sohghta darad. Masalan agar ghabl az enke ba kasi moasherat konim va beshnasimesh, tafakoraty nesbat be typo zahere oo bokonim, momken ast dar barghararie eretbat ba fard dochare moshkel shavim.

Mesle jalase ghabl darbareye farhang sohnat shod va bayad begam ke har jalase etelaate bishtary darbareye farhang va zir majmooe hash yad migiram va en be nazaram khoobe.

**Session 7**

Too en jalase az bahso monazereyi ke beine do gorooh bood kheili lezat bordam va aali bood, faghat enke zamane tabadole nazarat kam bood.

**Session 8**

Too en jalase darbareye keshvare enghis sohbat shod va darbareye shiveye zendegy va adabo rosoom oona chizaye ziyady yad gereftam va az hame mohemtar enke keshvarha baham fargh mikone va en tafavot be ejtemae va farhang va hatta khode fard barmigarde. Pas behtare ba didane yek fard
darbareye kolle yek keshvar ya jame'e ghezavat nakonim. Hamchenin dare n jalase yad gereftam ke hatta beine afrad ba din va mazhabe yeksan tafavothaye ziyady vojood dare.

Session 10

Az bargozarie jalaseye aval ta akhar mozooe sabet bood va darbareye farhang bood. Khob osoolan man az vajeye farhang shenakhte mokhtasary dashtam vali be khatere en kelas ha va bahs hayi ke shod etelaate man darbareye farhang chand barabar shod. Farhang shakhehaye besiyar ziyady dare va dar khodesh kholase nemishe va en khoob bood ke dar en kelas ha darbareye tamame joeyaye farhang sohbat shod mesle adabo rosoom, aghayed, melliyat ha va eshtebahate ziyady ke dar barkhorde do nafar ba do farhang va melliyate mokhtalef rokh midahad. Dar kola z en kelasha lezat bordam aval be khatere taghviyate speaking va dovom be khatere etelaate ziyady ke be dast amad va sevom enke tasavorat eshtebah va ghalat haye zehni darbareye moghelyat haye mokhtalef az bein raft.

J.3.3 Katayoun

Session 1

Today was useful and I understood many things about culture and can also improve my English speaking. Culture is a great topic because most of us don’t know about culture.

Session 2

You showed us some pictures that were not clear and everyone in this class had different ideas and I can judge that pic in that other side and my vision to that picture changed because of my friend’s idea.

Session 3

Today was useful, we read two stories that were useful and somehow interesting for me. I learned not to judge others by appearance.

Session 4

Today I imagined myself as an immigrant and that was a different vision. When a person immigrates to the other country has to learn language and their culture.

Session 5

Today, I understood how important media is. We can’t judge a diff nation by the things we hear from different news and sources.

Session 6

Today I learnt don’t judge the other culture. Maybe one action isn’t good in my idea but it is the best for non-Iranian.

Session 7

Different idea about one issue show us everything has bad and good things
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Session 8
Today I learnt, our life has many different from the other even our relatives have some differences from my family. So I have to be careful about these differences because it may cause a lot of problems and stereotypes.

Session 9
Today I understood in different situation and different identities we have to behave differently and choose different way of speaking.

Session 10
In this course, I learnt in different situation we have different codes of behavior.
Culture is relative and depends on people and the group we are in.
Media has effect on communication. When we want to travel to another country, we have to learn language and culture also.

J.3.4 Faranak

Session 1
Today was good. I learnt something and it’s good for my English language and when we discuss about things in the class, I can enjoy more.

Session 2
We discuss about different things about culture and we have different ideas. I shouldn’t judge people with my idea only.

Session 4
Today I understand that when I go to another country, how I can react with other people. I should be familiar with culture and then when we compare it with our own culture, the sometimes we can judge people.

Session 5
Today I understood that social media has effect on my mind and maybe has a bad effect. Sometimes I made an assumption about someone and maybe it’s not true.

Session 6
I understand that different action has a different meaning in a different culture.

Session 7
Today is the best session because they have a great subject. I understand that we have different ideas but we can persuade each other.

Session 8
I understand that my life style is different from British people and my family environment is warmer than British people.

**Session 9**

Raftare mokhtalef dar baezi az keshvarha momken ast maenie motefavaty dashte bashad va en baraye mardome keshvarhaye digar khoshayand nabashad va ma gahy majboorim raftareman ra avaz konim ta baese narahatie tarafe moghabel nashavad.

**Session 10**

En jalase be dalile en ke etelaaty ke dar jalasehaye ghabl dar kelas dade shode kheili kheili ?? bood. Dar en kelas ha daneshe zabanie man kheil afzayesh peida karde va man mitavanam az enha dar etrebat bargharar kardan ba digaran estefade konam.

Farhange har jamie'eyi baham motafevat ast va hatta farhanghaye khanevadeha baham fargh mikonad va en bastegy be aghayede an khanevade darad va enke resanehaye mokhtalef taesir bar rooye aghayed darad va nabayad digaran r aba farhane khod moghayese konim.

**J.3.5 Omid**

**Session 1**

In this session I realized the effect of language in culture and the definition of “stereotyped” people and how they react.

I have changed my mind and learn how explain culture for others and subject that effect on it. Also the previous view of a country or culture must not make us to judge.

**Session 2**

In this session we learned how different backgrounds make different ideas and opinons among people in different cultures, clothes, etc.. These backgrounds make people judge unfairly (stereotypes)that would make them into disputes. We discussed how we can omit these unfair judges by having knowledge.

**Session 3**

In this session, we studied experiences and true stories about relationship between different cultures and what bothers other people from different culture.

We also realized that importance of knowing culture or event of the habits of country if we want to immigrate for getting used to it.

**Session 4**

In this session, we have studied about what knowledge we need for immigrating to anywhere in the world.

The rules help us adopting to new environment and getting used to a new place easily.
Session 5
In this session, we studied about other types of misunderstanding that make people think about our country, behavior, etc. And also we realise the tools that affect on mid to make assumption; media, appearance.

Session 6
In this session, we talked about the moments that makes disputes because of cultural differences. The differences that we should study before travelling abroad.

Session 7
In this session, we had a discussion. The topic isn’t important. The essential thing is that we realized how to persuade someone and learned people have different perspectives that they try to defend.

Session 8
In this session, the way of teaching was like the ones that were before and enjoyable to myself because all sessions we attend in groups and discuss together. But in this session the topics from which we don’t have much information so speaking was a bit more hard. To sum up, it was good generally.

Session 9
In this session, we discussed about different conditions about cultural differences and the importance of communicating with knowledge to prevent miscommunicating.

And also we are at the same time participating in different groups in which we should consider the manners.

To sum up, the way of teaching (like previous ones) was great and improved our speaking skills.

Session 10
In the last session we reviewed all that we have learned up to here. And generally myself, I have changed my mind about the definition of culture. Culture is a big word that includes all people’s beliefs, backgrounds, clothes, costumes, etc.

This course helped me that if one day I talk to a non-native speaker I would act really considerate because he has different cultures or backgrounds that would affect judging about myself and my country.

J.3.6 Nazanin

Session 1
Dar en jalase az barnamehayetan amookhtan ke ensan nabayad zood ghezavat konad faghat bar asase zahery kea z tarafe moghabelash mibinad va yadgirie
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farhange keshvarhaye mokhtalef alavave bar yadgirie zabane aan keshvar mohem va baraye barghararie eretbate dorost va monaseb lazem ast.

Session 8

Man dare n jalase amookhtam ke dar yek keshvar ba vojood shebahathaye ziade beine mardom, bakhshhaye mokhtalefe aan tafavothyai niz vojood darad.

Nokteyi ra ke nemidanestam amookhtam ke agar baraye raftan be yek keshvare digar dar morede aan az manabe internet tahghigh konam va etelaaty be dast avaram, mardome aan keshvar mitavanand daghian motabeghe aan mataleb nabadshand.

Session 10

Man az jalasate gozashte motevajeh shodam ke farhang makhsoos be yek matlake khass nist balke layehaye goonagooni darad va be nokteyi pei bordam ke ba motale eye farhang yek keshvar nemitavan natije gereft ke tamame mardom daghigan motabegh ba haman farhang amal mikomand va mardome yek keshvar ya hatta yek shahr ba vojood shebahat hayi ke darand ekhtelafat va tafavothyai niz darand va bayad be aana hengame eretbat bargharar kardan tavajoh kard.

Kalamate sakht va motafavety niz yad gereftam.

J.3.7 Mehrdad

Session 1

Ma dar jahane bozorgy zendegy mikonim kea z oon farhanghaye motafavety vojood dare va ma bayad eno bedoonim ke hichvaght baghiye ro bedoone shenakht az farhangeshoon ghezavat nakonim va bayad eno bedoonim ke chejoory zendegy konim.

Session 2

Har ensaani baraye khod didgaahy darad ke ba didgahe digaran motafavet ast. Gaahy en tafavot mitavanad kheili bozorg bashad va hengami ke ma ba fardi ke didgahe motafavety darad goftegoo konim momken ast moshkelaty dar dark yekdigar etefagh bioftad va ma abayad bedanim baraye jelogiri az en etefagh bayad say konim ke donya ra az didgahe oon bebinim.

Session 3

Dar ebteda bayad babate motale’s nakardan bargehayi ke be onvane taklif dade shode bood ozrkhahi konim.

Ba tavajoh be bargeye aval chizi ke mishod az en barge fahmid een bood ke hichvaght ba etelaate andak afarad ra ghezavat nakonim.

Session 8

Chizi kea z en jalase fahmidam en bood ke tafavothaye farhangy tanha dar keshvarha balke damane ye en tafavtha mitavand az en ham bishtar shaved be tori ke hata mitavanim az yek keshvar miyane khanevade niz vojood dashte
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bashad va danestane en tafavotha mitavanad mara dar shenakhte farhang yaary konad.

Session 9
Man az en jalase motevajeh shodam ke har ensani dar gorooh haye motafavete farhangy gharar darad ke dar har yek az goroohha fahnage motafavety mojood ast va ma bayad een agahy ra dashte bashim kea z rafter kardane gheire motaaref dar jamhaye mokhtalef beparhizim.

Session 10
Be tore kolli dare n dore alava bar taghviate maharate goftare engilisi va ashnayi ba kalamate jaded, man ba mafhoome vagheyeie farhang ashna shodam va amooze hayi darbareye ertebeba digaran ba farhanghaey motafavet be dast avordam va fara gerdofam ke farhang daraye laye haye motafavety hast va ma bayad dar hengame ertebebat ba digaran masael ra az didgahe oo barresi konim ta az mavorad kelisheyei beparhizim.

J.3.8 Hadi

Session 1
Nazaram darbareye jalaseye aval kheili jaleb va motafavet boo dba kelashayi ke ta alan dar har zamine boodam va danestan farhang haye kharej az iran mobhadjameyi mitavand bashad baraye sahar ya zendegi dar keshvar haye mohtalef va baese khoshhal.

Session 2
Jalaseye dovom kamel konandeye jalaseye ghanl darbareye farhang haye mokhtalef va tarze did nesbat be aanha bood ke ba gozashte har jalase nazare man darbareye enke farhang ro chejoory bebinam va az keenashe be rahaty nagzaram pishraft mikonad. Darbareye kelas jalaseye dovom behtar az jalaseye aval bood chon kelas hamahangtar va nazdiktar va ashnatar shode bood nesbat be mozooe asli va motevajeh didgahaye mokhtalef nesbat be farhange jahan va hatta farhange iran dar beine azaye kelasi shodam ke jaleb bood!!

Session 3
Darbareye en jalase mitavanam begam ke khob en jalase motafavet tar az jalasate ghabl bood chon jalaseye aval va dovom be soorate kolli farhang ha ra barresi mikardim va jalaseye seovom varede joozeyeie aan amsalan raftare dolat ba khanevadeha va khanevadeha ba farzandan va ghavanine mokhtalef baraye har keshvar ya har mantaghe ke baese khoshhalie man dare n jalase shod, manzooram ashnayie bishtar ba ghavanine riz joozeyeie farhang.

Session 4
En jalase be nobeye khodash jalaseye khoobi bood chon baes shod darbareye enke be onvane yek bigane varede ye keshvare khareji beshim bishtar bahs konim va az nazaraie baghiye be khosoos ghesmate akhare jalase ke bayad ha va nabayad bood estefade konam va mohemtarin haro olgoo gharar bedam.

Session 5
Dar morede jalaseye panjom mishe goft ke arbareye yek shakhe az kalameye farhang amookhtim va natijeye payani ke mishavad gerefte darbareye en shakhe ghabl az enke dar morede fardi nazari bedim y aba oon shahs goftegooyi dashte bashim ya hadeagh hal az rooye chehre va negah nazar nadim va mishavad goft ke behtarin jalase bood.

Session 6
I think about this session, I understand before we exactly say this culture is bad or ok, we must think about it.

Session 7
Dar mavaghe sherkat dar bahshaye gorooohi vayeksan kardane aghidehaye shakhsi kare jaleb va jalebtar az an ghbaool nakardane do goroooh berese. Enke dorost ya na ba enke momkene hata eshtebahe khod ra ghbaarol dashte bashand va neshan dahandeye yeksan naboodane afrad hat aba yek farhang va yek melliyat ast.

Session 8
I think this session made me prepared for living in UK or I don’t know ehrewe I want, I mean it’s goof to know about some countries, cultures, and behaviours. If you know them, it will help you to live safely and have good communication with others. This session is good like other sessions.

J.3.9 Zohre

Session 1
I guess this class can help and improve our speaking and also push us to use the words that we know. And try to guess the meaning of words that we don’t know.

Session 2
Showing pictures can increase our view and help us to express our idea about something better

Session 3
I guess how much you study vocabulary, when you use them in speaking you can keep them in long term memory and your classes help us to do this.

Session 4
When you try to open our minds to understand other culture, we can learn the language better because we can communicate with the culture.

Session 5
Each session when you repeat the vocabulary of last session, we can keep them in long memory, that help us in our speaking.

Session 6
Appendix J

In my idea, the text you bring is hard this session.

Session 7

In my idea, discussion like the end of the class is the best way of talking in class, because it makes us creative.

Session 8

In my idea, your teaching is better than the teachers who just teach the book. With talking you can learn more vocabulary than studying.

Session 9

In my idea, speaking class time with your way of teaching is good also, because most of your class time is speaking by interesting topic.

Session 10

During six years study, I have idea by speaking and repeat vocabulary we can keep them in our mind for long time. Even you can learn grammar better with speaking. I guess your teaching way is more speaking.

In your class we can remember the word that we learned but we don’t use them. In my idea, if your speaking is good, you can pass the exam better.

J.3.10 Hashem

Session 1

Ba kamala ghadrani va tashakor az shoma, fekr mikonam besiyar mofid boode bashe vase man en jalase v aba yek system e azmoozeshie jadid robe roo shodam ke ghabele taamol bood bataye man.

Session 2

Bayad be arze jenabali beresanam ke besiyat jalaseye mofid va ghabeli ra emrooz dar kenare ham gozaranimm va man az sherkat dar bahse gooroohi besiyar khorsand shodam va movafeghe en ghaziye hastam. Hamchenin az enjam takalif va tafakor darbareye mozooaate mokhtalef lezat mibaram.

Session 3

Omidvaram bahshayi ke emrooz sare kelas dashtim mofid boode bashe baraye movafaghiyate enjaneb agar gharar bashe safary be jayi dashte basham ke darbareye anja shenakhty nadashte basham.

Session 5

Bardashte enjaneb az en jalase en bood ke barkhi avamel taesir gozar hastand bar tasvoarate ma darbareye etefaghaty ke piramoone ma rokh midahad. Baraye residan be etminan darbareye sehate matlab bayad bishtar motale’e nemood va az manabe’e moetabar bahre bord.

Session 6
Ba farhanghaye mokhtalef dabareye sayer keshvarha ashna shodam va en bisyar lezat bakhsh bood va hamintor nahveye barkhorde sahig hengame movajeh shodan ba afrady az farhang haye mokhtalef.

Session 7
A sherkat dar bahse gooroohy va bayan kardan ede haye shakhsi baraye resindan be natijeye aali besiyar lezat bordam va omidvaram zamane en goone barnameha bishtar bashad ta be natijeye delkhah beresim.

Session 8
Az fahmidane tafavot ha va hamchenin shebahat ha dar farhang haye mokhtalef va hamechenin dar morede bachehaye kelas besiyar lezat bordam. Az nahveye amoozesh va tadrise shoma ham besiyar razi hastam va en ke tadris ha mobtani bar raveshhaye jadid va motenave ast.

Session 9
Pey bordan be en mozoo ke nahveye barkhorde ma dar har jamee besiyar mohem ast va ma nabayad aan tor ke masalan dar jamie doostan rafter mikonim dar jamie ham kelsi ha ham raft dar konim baraye man besiyar jaleb bood va hamchenin az sherkat dar bahse gooroohi va ashna shodan ba raft har haye gheire moaaref har yek az doostan dar jamhaye mokhtalef besiyar khorsand shodam.

Session 10
Ba arze khaste nabashid babate tamamie zahamate shoma dar tooled ore bayad arz konam ke man chizhaye ziadi az shoma va mabahese gooroohi fara gereftam ke omidvaram dar ayande dar forsat haye shoghli va darsi enjaneb mofid vaghe bashad.

Dar payane end ore ehsas mikonam ke maharate zabane engilisi dar man besiyar ghavitar az gabl shod east va hamchenin daneshe man darbareye farhang haye mokhtalef va chegoonegie barkhord ba afrad az melyiat haye mokhtalef afzayesh yafte ast.


Appendix K  My reflective journal

**K.1  Session one**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My class observation</th>
<th>Action points for the coming session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students' overall interest in the session, specifically communicative activities</td>
<td>- Make all the activities as interactive as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Boys appear as more active as compared to the girls</td>
<td>- Try to get more girls involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I ran out of time to go through all designed activities</td>
<td>- Shorten my own talking time and time the activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**K.2  Session six**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My class observation</th>
<th>Action points for the coming session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The level of language in ‘Save me, Mickey’ short story generally seems to be higher than students’ language ability. This resulted in less active participation of students.</td>
<td>- Adapt the level of language for classroom material and omit the stories whose level of language is too high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students' lack of incultural experience seems to be acting as an obstacle towards their class participation.</td>
<td>- Pair up less active students with more active ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Come up with more tangible account of intercultural experience examples so that more students can relate to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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