A Review of Integrated Approaches and Their Role in Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence in a Foreign Language Classroom

Katarzyna Piątkowska

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

Abstract: Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been the subject of various theoretical discussions and empirical research for the past few decades. This article is an attempt to both summarize current theoretical frameworks of the concept and to discuss the role of integrated approaches to teaching in developing learners' intercultural communicative competence in a foreign language classroom.

1.0 Introduction

The growing number of cross-cultural relations and interactions in a globalized world has immediately given rise to a shift in the language teaching paradigm. Globalization and cultural clash have caused culture to be perceived as a heterogeneous identity with individuals' nationality regarded as of secondary importance (Marczak 2010, pp. 13-14). Thus, in light of these changes it becomes obvious that linguistic competence understood as the mastery of morphological, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic concepts in the target language is not sufficient in order to become a competent language user in intercultural communication. Nor is cultural competence viewed as knowledge of facts about the target language appropriate for cross-cultural interactions. As a consequence, intercultural teaching, which now has been emphasized by many researchers (e.g. Byram 1991, 1997, 2000, 2006, Kordes 1991, Meyer 1991, Risager 2007, 2008), promotes "the development of skills of observation, empathy for otherness, and the ability to adopt behaviour which would help one function appropriately in intercultural situations" (Marczak 2010, pp. 15-16). Intercultural teaching marks also a shift in the practice of foreign language teaching towards more integrated

approaches which put a great emphasis on the development of a variety of skills.

The present paper discusses main theoretical perspectives on intercultural communicative competence and describes how integrated approaches to foreign language teaching have been applied to developing learners' intercultural communicative competence.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

Intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1991, 1997, 2000, 2006, Meyer 1990, Kordes 1990, Risager 2007, Ho 2009) is an approach to learning which emphasizes the importance of developing in learners skills necessary for cross-cultural communication. It is based on the assumption that language and culture are interdependent (Byram 2006, Marczak 2010) and should be treated as equally important in language teaching. In a globalized world it becomes obvious that language learners more often communicate with non-native speakers of the target language than with its native speakers. As a consequence, teaching cultural competence cannot be understood as teaching mere facts about the target language culture. Instead, any approach to developing cultural competence has to take into consideration the

fact that in cross-cultural communication learners do not only face linguistic obstacles, but above all, cultural barriers stemming from cross-cultural differences (Byram 1997). Thus, intercultural communicative competence stresses the importance of being able to divorce oneself from the mother tongue culture in order to mediate between cultures (Byram 2006) or find "the third place" (Kramsch 1993) so as to interact with people representing various cultural backgrounds. Thus, intercultural communicative competence is different from other approaches to learning and teaching both language and cultural competence (e.g. knowledge-based approach, contrastive approach or Communicative Language Teaching) in that instead of focusing on teaching only facts about the target language culture or showing learners similarities and differences between their own and the target language culture, it promotes the development of more generic intercultural skills which can be transferred from one cultural context to another (Marczak 2010, p. 19) thus enabling learners to interact across cultures.

Three main theoretical perspectives on intercultural communicative competence, that is, Byram's (1991, 1997, 2000, 2006) model of five savoirs, a three-level cultural competence model (Meyer 1990, Kordes 1990) and a transnational paradigm (Risager 2007), have dominated the discussion over the concept for the past few decades.

2.1   Intercultural Communicative Competence as five savoirs

The model (Byram 1991, 1997, 2000, 2006) assumes that when interacting with speakers of different cultures every interlocutor brings to the situation their own experience, knowledge and attitudes which are affected by their native culture and impose a certain worldview (Byram 1997, p. 32). One of the key factors in successful communication is, as Byram (1997, p. 32) emphasizes, the perception of the interlocutor's identity. Thus, the model suggests that instead of judging the success of interaction in terms of successful exchange of information, we should take into consideration all aspects of human relationships such as for example the ability to overcome problems arising from lack of knowledge of the interlocutor's culture (Byram 1997, p. 33). Essentially, knowledge, attitudes and skills are regarded as preconditions in intercultural communication. According to this approach, skills involve the skills of discovery and interaction with the former relating to learning about new culture based on interaction with representatives of the given culture and the latter relating to the ability to analyze and interpret data from one's own and the target language culture as well as the ability to see the

relationship between these data (Byram 1997, p. 33). Thus, one may conclude that these two types of skills are related. Hence, four aspects of intercultural interaction are distinguished which are not necessarily learned through formal instruction; instead they are acquired as a result of experience and interaction with speakers of a given culture (Byram 1997, p. 33). The following concepts are proposed with reference to intercultural communicative competence: attitudes, knowledge, education and skills (Byram 1997, p. 36).

Attitudes in this model refer to attitudes towards those who belong to a different culture and display meanings, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors which are different from ours. Attitudes of curiosity and openness are perceived as necessary for successful intercultural interaction as they allow not only the suspension of prejudice, stereotypes, disbeliefs, and behaviors but also the possibility of looking at these aspects from the point of view of representatives of another culture, which is called the ability to decenter (Byram 1997, p. 34). It should be, however, stressed that there may not be any correlation between a high level of knowledge and positive attitudes as Byram (1997, p. 35) suggests. Instead, this is achieved rather through critical cultural awareness, which involves a reflective and analytical approach to the meanings, values, attitudes and behaviors of other people (Byram 1997, p. 35). Knowledge which we bring to the experience of interaction with representatives of other cultures is described in this model in two terms: 1) knowledge about social groups in our country and knowledge about social groups in our interlocutor's country (the degree of this type of knowledge may differ and may change constantly) and 2) knowledge of processes of individual and social interaction (this type of knowledge is the most essential for successful intercultural interaction but is not acquired automatically) (Byram 1997, p. 35). The skill of interpreting and relating is to some degree dependent on knowledge of one's own and the other culture while the skill of discovery is built up with reference to specific knowledge, understanding of beliefs, meanings and behaviors (Byram 1997, p. 38).

Essentially, as far as attitudes are concerned, their development includes the following aspects:
1) the ability to treat an interlocutor on equal terms in intercultural interaction,
2) readiness to discover otherness in interpretation of cultural phenomena in one's own and other cultures,
3) the ability to look at various cultures in a critical way, i.e. to evaluate values, beliefs and practices in various cultures,
4) readiness both to acculturate in a new setting and to interact with another culture,

5) the ability to interact with conventions and patterns of verbal and non-verbal behavior (Byram 1997, p. 50).

With reference to knowledge, the following objectives are specified:

1) the ability to find links between one's own and the interlocutor's country (including historical links),

2) knowledge of institutions or any means through which one can engage in contact with representatives of another culture and knowledge of means through which cross-cultural obstacles can be overcome,

3) causes of potential misunderstanding between representatives of various cultures,

4) the interlocutor's perspective of one's own culture and one's perspective of the interlocutor's culture,

5) geographical space of one's own country and how this is perceived by the interlocutor and geographical space of the interlocutor's country and how this is perceived by us,

6) social life, institutions and processes in one's own and the interlocutor's country,

7) institutions of daily life in one's own and the interlocutor's country,

8) the processes which govern social interaction in the interlocutor's country (Byram 1997, p. 51).

The development of skills of interpreting and relating includes the following objectives:

1) the ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document and the ability to explain the origins of such perspectives, 2) the ability to identify potential misunderstanding in intercultural interaction and the ability to explain them with reference to one's own and the interlocutor's culture,

3) the ability to mediate in conflicting interpretations (Byram 1997, p. 52).

Skills of discovery and interaction, which are associated with abilities such as acquiring new knowledge and practices in a given culture and the ability to make use of not only this knowledge but also attitudes and skills in intercultural interaction, are associated with the following abilities:

1) the ability to interact with a representative of a given culture in order to learn about the concepts existing in that culture and the ability to transfer this knowledge to other areas,

2) the ability to recognize connotations of cultural phenomena and their significance across various cultures,

3) the ability to recognize processes of interaction across cultures and the ability to use them appropriately in a specific context,

4) the ability to use knowledge, skills and attitudes in interactional intercultural contexts,

5) the ability to recognize relationships between one's own and the interlocutor's culture, including historical links,

6) the ability to use appropriate institutions to engage in interaction with speakers of other culture,

7) the ability to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to mediate meanings between one's own and the interlocutor's country (Byram 1997, p. 53).

The development of critical cultural awareness, which requires from a speaker the ability to look at one's own and other cultures in a critical way, refers to the following:

1) the ability to understand documents (including hidden meanings) from the target culture,

2) the ability to evaluate critically documents and events from other cultures,

3) the ability to interact and mediate in intercultural communication referring to knowledge, skills and attitudes (Byram 1997, p. 53).

2.2 A three-level cultural competence

A view of intercultural competence slightly different from the one which sees the development of intercultural competence as acquiring five savoirs (Byram 1997) is presented by Meyer (1991) and Kordes (1991), who distinguish three levels of cultural competence leading to transcultural competence. According to this view, intercultural competence "identifies the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (Meyer 1991, p. 137). Thus, being an interculturally competent speaker means both being aware of cross-cultural differences and being able to overcome obstacles in cross-cultural encounters resulting from these differences. Hence, one of the key aspects of intercultural competence is to be aware of one's own cultural identity, to make others be aware of their own identity and, what is more, to be able to mediate between these cultures (Meyer 1991, p. 137). In this perspective, on their way to the mastery of transcultural competence, learners go through the following stages of cultural competence:

stage 1 - a monocultural level, at which stage learners are able to communicate with speakers of other languages but are not aware of cross-cultural differences in values, beliefs and communication. This means learners are not aware of the fact that they are communicating with speakers of another culture and, as a consequence, they are not able to either overcome cross-cultural differences or solve intercultural problems (Meyer 1991, p. 141). Essentially, at this stage learners display the type of behavior and thinking which are typical of their own culture even in cross-cultural interaction and their conceptual system

is based on stereotypes and ethnocentric concepts (Meyer 1991, p. 142);

stage 2 – an intercultural level – at this stage learners are fully aware of cross-cultural differences, are able to explain them as a result of knowledge of historical, sociological, psychological and economic concepts (Meyer 1991, p. 142). However, learners are not yet able to mediate or negotiate between cultures; neither are they able to solve problems stemming from intercultural differences (Meyer 1991, p. 143).

stage 3 – a transcultural level – at this stage learners are able to evaluate the level of cross-cultural differences, solve intercultural problems and negotiate meaning whenever necessary (Meyer 1991, p. 143). As a result, learners are able to go beyond their cultural identity, which as Meyer (1991, p. 143) notices, does not imply a cosmopolitan viewpoint. Instead, learners at this level of cultural development are tolerant of various worldviews (even those that do not conform to their expectations), are cooperative as far as misconceptions and misunderstandings in communication are concerned and are universal and unbiased in their way of thinking about other cultures (Meyer 1990, p. 143).

From this perspective, the development of cultural competence is described in a similar way to interlingual development, where the intercultural level is understood as a transitional stage between learners' culture and the target language culture (Kordes 1991, p. 301). It, however, should be emphasized that the model does not imply a linear progression toward the transcultural competence; instead it supposes that it is possible that learners may slide back in the process of cultural development (Kordes 1991, p. 303). From Kordes' (1991) point of view, cultural development does not take care of itself. Learners need catalysts such as a new cultural experience or cultural shock, which make learners reorganize their cultural experience (Kordes 1991, pp. 302-303).

2.3 Transnational paradigm

The model, proposed by Risager (2007), can be regarded as an extended version of Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (Marczak 2010, p. 24). The transnational paradigm introduces the concept of languacultural or linguacultural competence and discourse as key components of intercultural competence (Marczak 2010, p. 24). In this model the relationship between language and culture is transnational, that is, it takes into consideration the concept of linguaculture, which "foregrounds the personal meaning resources and practices of the individual in shifting contexts" (Risager 2008, p. 2). The perspective is a consequence of a growing mobility of people across the world

forming social networks, which causes linguistic flow. Therefore, the perspective stands in opposition to Byram's (1997) view of intercultural competence in that it accounts for not only general aspects of language and cultural competence but also individual aspects such as inner speech or language varieties (Marczak 2010, p. 24). The transnational paradigm distinguishes three dimensions of linguaculture: linguistic semantics and pragmatics, linguistic poetics and linguistic identity (Risager 2008, p. 3). Hence, in this model learners acquire languacultural competence (i.e. semantics, morphology and syntax) referring to languages they already know, which allows for meaning negotiation across already known languages and cultures facilitating in this way the development of intercultural competence. The dimension of linguistic poetics relates to the ability to use a given language in a creative way while linguistic identity is associated with conscious or subconscious development of our linguistic identity and how this is expressed in language use in intercultural interaction (Marczak 2010, p. 25).

3. Integrated approaches in teaching intercultural communicative competence

It was not until the 1980s that foreign language researchers and teachers started to move away from teacher-centered methods and approaches towards more learner-centered ones (Celca-Murcia 2001, p. 301) making a shift from the understanding of language competence as a single faceted to a more multifaceted phenomenon set within a general framework of the teaching process, which encompasses not only language competence but also sociocultural competence. Thus, integrated approaches, like intercultural paradigm, appear to be postmodernist in nature. They are in line with the assumptions of intercultural communicative paradigm as they encourage meaning negotiation, construction of knowledge, the development of skills and attitudes and active learning. All the models of intercultural communicative competence presented above share several key characteristics. The first one is that mastering the elements of the target language is not sufficient in order to become a competent language user. The second one is that learning or teaching culture is not tantamount with learning or teaching facts about high or low culture associated with the target language. Instead, the models stress that speakers bring to the act of communication their own understanding and experience of culture. Hence, the concept of culture should be negotiated in a foreign language classroom where the most essential skills to be developed are: 1) the ability of critical cultural awareness and 2) the ability to extend cultural self-awareness into cultural openness towards differences. Therefore, integrated approaches to learning and

teaching with their focus on a variety of skills have been implemented into developing intercultural communicative competence by many educational practitioners.

3.1. Experiential and negotiated language learning

Experiential and negotiated language learning are both educational frameworks stemming from a humanistic approach to learning and teaching (Eyring 2001, p. 338). These two frameworks joined together provide an opportunity for learners to develop or rather acquire their competence in the environment which addresses their social and emotional needs facilitating meaning negotiation inside and outside the classroom (Eyring 2001, p. 338). Experiential learning, which puts a great emphasis on learners' affective needs by advocating the implementation of those experiences that relate to students' affective states in a direct way (Eyring 2001, p. 334), appears to be ideal for developing learners' intercultural communicative competence, which values learners' attitudes towards the target language culture. In experiential learning it is important that a classroom reflects society outside so that students learn how to cooperate, participate with each other in the learning process and learn collaboratively (Eyring 2001, pp. 334-335). Essentially, in experiential learning students are not provided with ready-made facts and information; they are rather expected to engage in a dialogue and negotiation of meaning based on their experience with both a teacher and other students. This type of approach to learning and teaching with reference to intercultural communicative competence takes place through either students exchange or students taking part in the learning process in the target language community. The influence of experience-oriented learning on developing intercultural competence has been emphasized by Keller (1991), Badecka-Kozikowska (2010), Debaene (2010), and Niżegorodcew (2009, 2010, 2013). Keller (1991), who investigated the role of students exchanges in a short-term study program on learners' attitudes and perception of other cultures with regards to stereotypes, notices that students exchanges help learners to negotiate the notion of culture to some extent. Another conclusion drawn by Keller (1991, p. 132) is that students exchanges should enable learners both to accept the assumption that stereotypes do not describe the complexity of a given community and to be able to adjust their attitudes to other cultures in accordance with their experience. In order to make it possible, Keller (1991, p. 132) suggests that learners should be provided with the opportunity to interact with not only representatives of the majority groups in the target culture but also with representatives of minority groups. Whereas Keller (1991, p. 129) concludes that it is difficult to say whether students

exchanges reduce prejudices, other studies (e.g. Olson and Kroeger 2001, Anderson et al. 2006) appear to confirm that students exchanges increase learners' cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence. Another interesting line of study (e.g. Badecka-Kozikowska 2010, Debaene 2010 and Niżegorodcew 2009, 2010, 2013) is represented by the role of students exchanges in developing learners' intercultural communicative competence with reference to prospective teachers. Badecka-Kozikowska (2010), on the basis of her experience of teaching Chinese learners of English at one of the Polish universities, notices that the bigger the cultural gap between the students' and the target language culture, the more challenging the teaching process is. Thus, she suggests that peer-learning and peer-tutoring are factors which may help in bridging the cultural gap as they are usually associated with positive feelings in the process of negotiation of cultural meaning (Badecka-Kozikowska 2010, p. 207). Additionally, as she further stresses, in cases where cultural differences are great obstacles in the process of acculturation, appropriate teaching methods and techniques used by a teacher may turn out to be detrimental (Badecka-Kozikowska 2010, p. 207). Other suggestions regarding experiential and negotiated learning with reference to developing prospective teachers' intercultural competence come from Niżegorodcew (2009, 2013), who discusses the influence of a mobility semester in two-year master studies on students' intercultural communicative competence. The author argues that the type of learning where the syllabus is designed in a way which enables learners to compare systems of education, languages, works of art, literature, social patterns, history and politics of students' own culture and the culture of the countries where students are supposed to spend a semester will not only enhance their intercultural or multilingual competence but also will enable them to integrate these elements in a language curriculum in their respective countries (Niżegorodcew 2009, p. 257). Debaene (2010, p. 161), who compared the sociocultural and linguistic situation of Polish migrants in France and Ireland, arrives at a similar conclusion to Keller's (1991) that the most detrimental factor in acquiring intercultural competence is a daily interaction with representatives of a given culture where learners are not segregated in separate language-centered classes.

3.2. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Intercultural communicative competence can also be developed through teaching subjects by content and language integrated learning. The approach is advocated by various researchers (e.g. Komorowska 2010, Dzięcioł and Oki 2010) and the European

Commission (2002) as an approach which supports the development of intercultural communicative competence. Encompassing many methodological frameworks such as Content Based Language Teaching (CBT), Bilingual Education (BE), Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Language Across Curriculum (LAC), CLIL encourages multilingual and multicultural dimensions (Komorowska 2010, p. 60). One of the major aims of CLIL is to provide learners with a broad cultural context. CLIL distinguishes five dimensions: the culture dimension (CULTIX), the environment dimension (ENTIX), the language dimension (LANTIX), the content dimension (CONTIX), the learning dimension (LEARNTIX) (www.clilcompendium.com). Thus, cultural competence is strongly emphasized with its focus on building intercultural knowledge and understanding, developing intercultural communication skills, learning about specific neighboring countries, regions and minority groups, and introducing wider cultural context (www.clilcompendium.com). Although the amount of studies into the effectiveness of CLIL in developing learners' language content knowledge and language proficiency is enormous (see Komorowska 2010), little research has been carried out on the relationship between CLIL and students' intercultural communicative competence. Although CLIL has been advocated as one of the main frameworks of education, only between 3% to 30% of school students in Europe have access to this type of education with some countries such as Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Iceland and Portugal not offering CLIL at all (Komorowska 2010, p. 59). The most widespread form of CLIL is implemented by International Baccalaureate schools. The International Baccalaureate cooperates with 3632 schools which provide educational curricula to students between the age of three and nineteen in 146 countries across the world (www.ibo.org). The main aim of International Baccalaureate schools is to "promote intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century" (www.ibo.org). The goal is to be achieved through educational programs which focus students' attention on cross-cultural differences among people. An essential aspect of the programs offered by the International Baccalaureate is to create international education, which is defined according to the following criteria: 1) to prepare learners to function and communicate across various languages and cultures, 2) to shape learners' awareness with reference to their own culture, 3) to make learners recognize universal human values, 4) to inspire students, to instill in them inquiry-based approach to learning and to raise their motivation to learning, 5) to equip students with knowledge and skills which they will be able to use across various areas, 6) to develop the type of education which is global and regional at the same time, 7) to encourage a variety of teaching methods and techniques, 8) to emphasize international benchmarking and assessment (www.ibo.org).

3.3. Literature and Language Integrated Learning (LLIL)

The role of literature as content has been examined by various researchers (Fenner 2001, Katnić-Barašić 2001, Kostelníková 2001, Gómez 2012) with reference to teaching intercultural communicative competence. Rejecting the concept of literature as a vehicle for developing language learners' translation skills as understood in the grammar-translation method (Komorowska 2010, p. 69), researchers discuss the role of literature within the framework of dialogic interaction with literary texts where developing cultural competence is understood as a dialogue between a learner and a foreign culture (Fenner 2001, p. 6). In this perspective literature is regarded as a very good source of authentic language which is valued higher than any texts written by authors for the purpose of foreign language teaching (Gómez 2012, p. 52). However, it has to be emphasized that in order to promote intercultural understanding, skills and knowledge, literature should be introduced through appropriate teaching approaches within LLIL. One of such approaches is an inquiry-based approach. Requiring learners to express their opinions, negotiate meaning, share personal views, engage in asking and answering questions, the approach is a learner-centered and contrary to the tenets of grammar-translation method (Gómez 2012, p. 54). Another approach suitable for fostering in students intercultural competence is a transactional approach, which has some affinities with a dialogic approach in that it treats the reading process as a an act of communication between a reader and a text (Gómez 2012, p. 54). Relating their past experience, knowledge, values and beliefs to the concepts presented in a literary text, learners are engaged in meaning negotiation (Gómez 2012, p. 54). Thus, one of the main advantages of the transactional approach is that it enhances a variety of interpretations from learners. One may therefore conclude that the approach is in line with constructivist perspectives as it promotes meaning construction and meaning negotiation. The main advantages of introducing literature as content include its potential to develop creativity, social values, the overall development of learners and their reading comprehension skills, which lead to the transfer of skills to all school subject-areas (Komorowska 2010, p. 69). Meaning negotiation lends itself particularly well to be developed through literature (Gómez 2012, p. 52) as it allows learners to engage in a dialogue with the target culture through social interaction in a classroom (Fenner 2001, p. 8). Thus, forming a new version of CLIL, literature has

become a discipline which can be taught through a second or foreign language (Komorowska 2010, p. 69). Undoubtedly literature provides learners with the opportunity to make comparison, learn values, various lifestyles, attitudes, thus enabling students to develop both their critical thinking and the ability to evaluate, which are at the center of intercultural competence (Komorowska 2010, p. 70). Particularly valuable in this respect is the so called immigrant literature, which is considered as an ideal source for examining cultural differences and making cross-cultural comparisons as it presents protagonists who very often have to face cross cultural differences (McKay 2001, p. 329). Following Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1989), McKay (2001, p. 328) notices that literature has the potential of developing in learners four dimensions of culture, that is, the aesthetic sense, associated with the literature, music or film of the target culture, the sociological sense, according to which culture is mirrored in the language, and the pragmatic sense, which states that cultural norms and values influence the appropriateness of language.

It should be pointed out, however, that LLIL is not yet popular in foreign language teaching, which for many decades has favored methods and approaches encouraging the teaching of the elements of language, (especially grammar and its rules) over the approaches putting emphasis on learners contributing to the learning and teaching process (despite the recommendation of the Council of Europe 2004). Furthermore, ESL/EFL textbooks present a limited range of literary texts. Another reason why LLIL is rarely used in a foreign language classroom is that many teachers feel unsure about their ability to incorporate literature in their teaching (Gómez 2012, p. 52). Hinkel (2001, p. 443) notices that sociocultural competence is as important as language proficiency in cross-cultural communication, which requires learners to face differences in cultural concepts, beliefs, values, experience and interaction patterns that affect language use. Essentially, teaching a foreign or second language goes beyond teaching linguistic skills or the elements of language. It is thus vital to reconsider that authentic texts such as literature can provide learners with culture-specific context.

3.4. Blended and e-learning

With the development of new technologies in the 70ties computer assisted learning has been embraced by foreign language teachers (Sokolik 2001, p. 477). Having been criticized in its strongest version (i.e. where a classroom is fully automated and devoid of a teacher) on the grounds that it does not provide sufficient feedback, voice recognition, grammar checking or essay marking (Sokolik 2001, pp. 479-481), computer assisted language learning has lost its

status in the practice of foreign language teaching and evolved into blended learning "where technology is integrated with face-to-face classes" (Maciaszczyk 2010, p. 262) or e-learning "where technology and the Internet are used to mediate the whole, or most of the learning experience" (Maciaszczyk 2010, p. 262). Incorporating social interaction, the Internet and other media in foreign language teaching enhances communication with speakers of other languages, facilitates meaning negotiation, enables learners to become cultural mediators and encourages experiential learning (Penz 2001, p. 103). Thus, this type of learning has also found its place in the development of intercultural communicative competence (Penz 2001, Krajka 2010, Marczak 2010, Myers 2010). Penz (2001) reports two projects where groups of students were engaged in social interaction through the Internet and other media. In the first project two groups of school students from Great Britain and Austria, using information technology, prepared materials in their mother tongue on the topic 'law and order', which the groups later exchanged. The study showed that the students used a variety of text types (from newspapers, magazines, textbooks, Codes of Laws) representing various genres in order to prepare their materials. The experience, as Penz (2001, p. 109) notices, let the students learn the relationship between cultural and language awareness as they made effort to adjust their materials to the other group of students representing a different cultural background. It can therefore be concluded that the experience engaged the students in a dialogic interaction. Another observation Penz (2001, p. 110) draws is that the students of both groups displayed a high degree of concern about the other group's interests and needs and the problems the group may encounter as a result of cross-cultural differences. Still another conclusion that Penz (2001, p. 111) arrives at is that the experience raised the learners' awareness of both their own culture and the differences between the two cultures and awareness of linguistic and cultural conventions. In the next project reported by Penz (2001) two groups of university students from Austria and Great Britain involved in a proseminar 'Language and Culture' where the idea was to involve the students in a computer-mediated communication (through chat interaction and e-mail exchanges) on the topic of education. Discussing the aspects of the educational systems in Great Britain and Austria, the students were engaged in the negotiation of cultural and linguistic meanings learning the differences in conceptual frameworks in the two cultures with reference to the two educational systems (Penz 2001, p. 113). Furthermore, the learners evaluated the project in a positive way as in their opinion experiential learning of the kind they experienced during the project was more valuable than learning through accumulating factual knowledge (Penz 2001,

p. 117). Krajka (2010) presents a study where computer assisted learning was incorporated into a teacher training course. The project proposed a new e-learning teacher training component that included, apart from traditional courses for prospective teachers such as courses in the practice of foreign language teaching, pedagogy or psychology, a course in culture studies and intercultural communication which prepared future teachers for teaching in multinational classrooms (Krajka 2010, p. 260). The basic assumption of the proposal is that students can be taught how to use information and communication technologies but they can also be taught a particular content through computer assisted teaching (Krajka 2010, p. 243). Myers (2010) discusses the concept of teaching Israel through the Internet and the student blogs in the same vein as Penz (2010) or Krajka (2010). According to her, computer assisted language learning, in contrast to the type of learning which is confined to a classroom, provides students with a possibility to access multiple perspectives enhancing multicultural education (Myers 2010, p. 130).

4. Discussion

The main objective of this article was to synthesize both current models of intercultural communicative competence and attempts to apply integrated approaches into the teaching of intercultural communicative competence. Ever since the development of intercultural communicative competence was advocated in foreign language teaching many approaches have been applied to the teaching of knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with the concept. However, with their multiskills focus (Celca-Murcia 2001, p. 301), integrated approaches appear to lend themselves particularly well to develop key skills, attitudes and knowledge of intercultural communicative competence. However, it must be stressed that little research has been carried out with reference to the effectiveness of integrated approaches in teaching intercultural communicative competence.

To conclude, intercultural communicative competence implies cognitive development, which guarantees appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness and without which becoming a fully competent intercultural speaker is not possible (Byram 1997, p. 54). In other words, it is assumed that the development of intercultural competence is a gradual process. Obviously, that is not to say that children or teenagers are incompetent users as they are in the process of gaining the experience of otherness which can support their understanding (Byram 1997, p. 54).

Essentially, all the studies presented above speak to the fact that integrated approaches are in line with negotiated learning, which is at the centre of intercultural learning. All intercultural models understand the development of cultural competence as constant engagement in the process of acculturation, which takes place through negotiating cultural meanings, understanding, sensitivity and attitudes, which is in most cases achieved through interaction with members of a given culture in a naturalistic environment.

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