Utrecht University

Intercultural competences in Multilingual Education: based on the example of the European School of Varese

Laura Müllejans (8351783)

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Utrecht University

1st Supervisor: Dr. Elisa Candido

2nd Supervisor: Drs. Emmeline Besamusca

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Abstract

The current world is more interconnected than ever before and multiple cultures are in contact with each other on a regular basis. Thus, intercultural competences are a key qualification particularly, especially in the international labour market. Research has shown that intercultural competences bring both individual as well as societal benefits. There is an assumption that students from international school have a higher intercultural sensitivity due to increased mobility and contact with other cultures. Research has also mainly focused on foreign language acquisition when it comes to intercultural competences. This master thesis aims to investigate how much intercultural competences are integrated in the foreign language teaching and ultimately to what extent a multicultural and multilingual environment plays a role in the development of such competences. The research was done by using two models; the INCA framework, a European Union project to complement the already existing *CEFR,* and Deardorff's circular model of IC development. The study was done via quantitative research, namely two surveys with students and former students of the European School of Varese, and qualitative research, namely interviews with current foreign language teachers of said school. The findings showed that by attending an international school, students do in fact acquire intercultural competences not only through the foreign language classroom but also by simply attending such a school. It furthermore resulted that intercultural competences are as a matter of fact incorporated into foreign language teaching, although not necessarily concretely. Therefore, it results that a solid reference system for the assessment and development of intercultural competences in schools is still missing.

"Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe."

(Marcel Decombis, Head of European School, Luxembourg between 1953 and 1960)

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1. Introduction

Increasing flows of economic and refugee migration as well as a massive rise in cross border business activity has brought to an increment of societal internationalization. In this new form of society, it has been proven that Intercultural competences (IC) are one of the most vital life skills and that having such competences are likely to result in favourable outcomes in the 21st-century workforce (Rahimi, 2019). The promotion of intercultural competences brings benefits on an individual level as well as to societal well-being. It can help with the individual development of a sense of identity and personality. At the same time, it can potentially facilitate policy making of multiculturalism, improving integration of ethnic minorities and supporting therefore social cohesion (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). These positive conclusions together with others turn the acquisition of intercultural competences into not only something good but something necessary for our current society.

It is especially interesting to see how IC unfolds in multilingual and multicultural settings as, for instance, international schools that are environments in which cultural difference is part of students' every day. There is an assumption that students from these schools have a higher intercultural sensitivity due to increased mobility and contact with other cultures (Pollock & van Reken, 1999; Willis & Enloe, 1990; Straffon, 2003). However, research conducted with high schoolers is still scarce, and since IC is gaining increasingly interest and importance, it seems therefore necessary to assess student's abilities and awareness regarding intercultural competences. Even though there has been an attempt in Europe, since the late 1980s to incorporate intercultural skills into school curricula, there has still been comparatively little work on it. Surprisingly, intercultural competences are also part of the EU language policy of multilingualism. Over the years, the European Union has developed a strict language policy that aims at developing citizens who are equipped with a multilingual/multicultural competence which affords them cross-border mobility, and social and economic participation. Although the focus lies heavily on language promotion, these competences are often not properly included in foreign language education of schools in Europe (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

All of this can be observed in the European School System since it is a very intercultural and linguistically diverse environment. It is, furthermore, a system that incorporates the European language policy about multilingualism. This would lead to the assumption that intercultural competences are a skill that is transmitted to students of this system through its foreign language teaching. Therefore, the following study will look at the awareness and transmission of intercultural competences in the European School of Varese (ESV).

The thesis is structured in five parts. The first section refers to the context and furthermore the relevance of this research. The second part presents the theoretical underpinnings of this study. A conceptual framework is introduced as a result of two different theoretical framework that deal with the assessment of intercultural competences. The third section deals with the methodology that was used to conduct this research including the approach, the participants and the procedure. Subsequently the results from this research are elaborated and discussed and finally in the fifth part the conclusions drawn from this study are presented together with suggestions for further research.

2. Context

The development of tools to assess IC originated in the concerns that US scholars and intercultural developers felt in the 1960s and 1970s. They wanted to explain the failure and predict the success of individuals working abroad – such as members of the US diplomatic service and Peace Corps volunteers – and to subsequently select people that work more effectively in unfamiliar cultures and that can develop their abilities in this respect. (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Since then, research about IC has grown significantly due to increased numbers of intercultural situations that people have to face in their lives. The world is more interconnected than ever, and cultural diversity is increasing in every corner of the planet. This requires active intercultural citizens such as Byram et al. (2016) describe:

A change in people's attitude to other human beings who do not happen to share their own

cultural affiliations and /or 'racial' characteristics… there is a need for much greater respect

for the inherent dignity, needs and rights of all human beings; a willingness to engage with

those who are perceived to have other cultural affiliations; a willingness to speak out against

expressions of prejudice and intolerance; a willingness to defend those who are disempowered

and disadvantaged; and a willingness to take civic or political action for the greater good if this

is required. (p.8)

But not only individuals are becoming more and more multicultural, also organizations and educational

institutions have to deal with diverse groups of people. The latter especially, is a key agent when

dealing with intercultural competence, since educational systems have to deal with the demands of

this new heterogeneous world but need the support from governments to be able to transmit

intercultural competences. Up until now this transmittal has focused more on foreign language

teaching. But it is generally agreed among scholars that IC must be promoted among students so that

simply attending school is actually a meaningful step toward having interculturally competent citizens

fit to exist in this new world (Aguado, et al., 2003). It cannot be denied that schools and universities

are very suitable for IC development as some of the sub-components require long-term nourishing.

Schools especially have the advantage that they deal with individuals that are at an age when it is

possible to facilitate the development of the values, attitudes and other qualities linked to personality

which go to make up intercultural competences. This can help to educate human beings with a

sensibility and awareness about interculturality that can be among other things beneficial for study

exchanges, semesters or internships abroad as well as later on in a professional context.

The promotion of intercultural competences in education has been therefore proven to

contribute to multiple matters. It brings benefits on an individual level as well as to societal well-being

(Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

These are also reflected in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

(*CEFR*). For instance, concerning the individual level of acquisition: "in an intercultural approach, it is a

central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of learner's whole

personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and

culture" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.1). This proposition connects the achievement of IC with the

domain of language learning and makes intercultural competences part of the multilingualism goals of the EU language policy. The *CEFR*, furthermore, also pursues the intention of improving societal well-being through intercultural competences. It states among its goals the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance through more effective communication as well as the goal to meet the needs of a multilingual/multicultural Europe by developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Council of Europe, 2001).

However, this has proven itself to be more complicated than expected. Several reasons have been identified for the difficulty of developing intercultural competences in the language classroom, the mostly mentioned one being lack of time (LACE, 2007). This refers to time within the classroom to incorporate the development of intercultural skills, but equally hard seems finding time outside of the classroom to organize international contacts, projects or trips. The second reason for a lack of IC in teaching mentioned by teachers is the shortage of resources such as textbooks being inadequate and in some countries internet access as well as IT equipment also causes difficulties to implement intercultural competences in the teaching (LACE, 2007). 53.1% of respondents to an online survey of the LACE study report spending 80% of classroom time on language learning, and 20% classroom time on developing intercultural competences. Furthermore, the study showed that in the implementation of IC the focus lies on only two aspects of the competences namely *Attitudes* and *Knowledge* and less on the third component *Skills*. Therefore, one can deduce that intercultural competences are somehow present in the foreign language teaching, however, not in a clear manner but rather as a secondary goal that is loosely attached to language teaching and that therefore gets often neglected.

Last but not least, more research about intercultural competences in multilingual and multicultural educational settings can be of potential inspiration for national educational institutions since it can be found that internationalization has several benefits. It might be true that international schools are more intentional about being diverse and inclusive. However, this does not mean that national schools are strictly monocultural or that they do not have to deal with cultural diversity nowadays. Globalization is bringing to higher levels of heterogeneity in national schools too, especially in metropolitan areas. Since the economies and societies of the 21st century are built upon increasing

complexity and diversity, today's high school students will enter a world that demands increased cultural sophistication and the ability to communicate and collaborate across cultures, whether they attended an international or a national school. (Almodovar, 2016, p.19) Therefore, this study about intercultural competences in an international school can bring to more awareness also for national schools in realizing the benefits of being conscious and intentional about multiculturalism and subsequently about the transmission of intercultural competences as well.

3. Theoretical Framework

Both in the professional and in the educational domain ways have been sought in the past to determine how to successfully assess whether people have actually acquired intercultural competences. Up until now, one of the most diffused methods for intercultural competences is through self-assessment. Examples of such self-assessment inventories are the intercultural development inventory (Hammer, 1999), the cross-cultural inventory (Kelley & Meyers, 1999), the overseas assignment inventory (Tucker, 1999) and the four-value orientation exercise (Casse, 1999). However, these methods have been rather preferred by organizations, while the educational sphere prefers methods of peer or teacher assessment. Some concrete suggestions for this have also been made in the past by scholars such as Lessard-Clouston (1992), Seeley (1994) and Byram (1997).

As a matter of fact, applied linguistics used to pay little attention to intercultural competences and Michael Byram was one of the first linguists of his time that dealt with the incorporation of intercultural skills into the foreign language curriculum (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Foreign language classes have always been the main focus of intercultural competences research in the educational domain. The importance of assessment in foreign language education lies in the fact that all communication in a foreign language is to a certain extent intercultural since both have a sociolinguistic as well as a discourse component (Sercu, 2004). The LACE study (2007), conducted for the European Commission, for instance, examined the development of intercultural competences in compulsory foreign language education in 12 nations in Europe. The study aimed at contributing to a

better understanding of the connections between foreign language education and the development of intercultural competences and made use of the *CEFR*, Byram's model and Chen and Starosta's model to analyze the curricula (LACE, 2007, p.22). It recognized that these in general prescribed relatively vaguely formulated objectives to be attained by language learners and that the levels of attainment and assessment methods are not described in any detail (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). The main findings were (a) intercultural competence focusses to a large extent on knowledge and attitudes, (b) the approaches in the curricula bring most likely change in attitude and knowledge but less in behaviour and (c) more than 80% of the teachers use oral teacher input and only few other methods such as tandem learning or school trips abroad or area studies. It results that a solid reference system for the assessment of intercultural competences in foreign language education is therefore still missing.

However, while some may believe that IC will develop as a by-product of language learning, studies have shown that even when there is contact with other cultures in the classroom, this in itself does not lead to the development of IC (Szuba, 2016). This brings to the crucial question whether the foreign language classroom is the environment in which people acquire intercultural competences in school or not. And moreover, if it is the only environment for IC acquisition. International schools, for instance, have other spheres such as lunch breaks, school trips or sport teams which could be environments in which students acquire IC, since the diversity of the student body makes many interactions outside of the classroom intercultural. Intercultural competences become for them part of everyday life at school.

But what is even meant with intercultural in this specific sense? Before we discuss different models of intercultural competences, we first need to provide some clarifications on key terms that lie at the basis of this research.

3.1. Culture, Interculturality and Intercultural Competences

The term *interculturality* naturally arises from the term *culture* which itself is a concept hard to define. Some scholars use criteria such as geographical features to draw boundaries between cultures

while other scholars include nationality and/or ethnicity to determine what culture is. But these are in general rather static conceptualizations of culture. In this approach relations between cultures occur between groups of people with different cultures, expressed through different patterns, or institutions that are considered to be defining features of their respective groups and cultures. However, the disciplines of anthropology and cultural studies have moved towards a definition of culture that is more about symbolical interpretations, routinized praxis and collective resources (Dietz, 2018). This dynamic nature of culture is reflected in the definition by Spencer-Oatey (2008):

> Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretation of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (p.3)

Interculturality therefore nowadays relies much more on a hybrid, processual notion of culture.

Equally hard to define is therefore also the concept of intercultural competences that cannot be determined easily mainly because of its multidimensionality and because its elements are rather abstract concepts such as 'attitude', for instance. Furthermore, intercultural competences are relevant for multiple disciplines which means that researchers coming from different disciplines focus on different aspects about it.

Furthermore, the construct of intercultural competences has changed significantly throughout time. The aim of "culture teaching" changed name many times, going from 'familiarity with the foreign culture' moved on to 'cultural awareness' and then to 'intercultural communicative competences' that now has been abbreviated to intercultural competences by certain scholars. In the educational domain, Byram (1997) developed a definition of 'intercultural competence' containing five dimensions, namely *savoirs, savoir apprendre, savoir comprendre/faire, savoir être* and *savoir s'engager*[1]. These are also present in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe,

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[1] declarative knowledge (savoirs), ability to learn (savoir apprendre), skills and know-how (savoir-faire), personality traits, attitudes, etc. (savoir-être), critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)

2001, p.135) making intercultural competence part of the foreign language policy of the EU. Indeed, in the *CEFR* plurilingual and pluricultural competences are defined as the ability to "use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures." (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). However, Byram's description of IC, and therefore the *CEFR* conception of IC to a certain extent as well, is more about a person that has *already become* interculturally competent. This notion of IC makes it therefore difficult to be implemented in an educational curriculum because it does not provide an idea about how one can acquire said competences.

Other studies, therefore, started focusing more on the process of *becoming* an interculturally competent person. Seeing intercultural competences as a process turns out to be more relevant when talking about development of IC in the educational domain and is moreover the key point of Deardorff's research (2004). This thesis will therefore use her definition for intercultural competences: "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitude." (Deardorff, 2004, p.194).

This definition was subsequently approved by 23 intercultural competence scholars from all over the world who were identified as experts in their field by internationalization administrators from 73 US universities in the Delphi study conducted by Deardorff in 2006. What is meant exactly by terms such as 'effectively' and 'appropriately' becomes clearer by looking more closely at the following theoretical models of intercultural competences.

3.2. Models of Intercultural Competences

As shown in a report called "Intercultural Competence Assessment Formats" by Rahimi (2019), there are many different models and frameworks that deal with the assessment and the awareness of intercultural competences. One of the most recognized models outside of academia is Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competences that focusses on IC in the educational environment (Byram, 2014). His model is primarily derived not from empirical studies but from

conceptual thinking on communicative competence/communicative ability in foreign language education, drawing on the work of earlier theorists such as Canale and Swain (1980) and van Ek (1986). It is made out of four components: the linguistic component, sociolinguistic component, discourse component and last but not least the intercultural component. According to him, IC requires the first three components in a foreign language while the last component has to do more with culture. The intercultural competence component is then split up in (1) attitudes, (2) knowledge, (3) skills of interpreting and relating, (4) skills of discovering and (5) interacting and critical cultural awareness/political education. (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p.120).

Although the integration of foreign language is the strong point of Byram's framework, the lacking description of process and development to get intercultural competences is probably it's biggest weakness and due to this, this study will not make use of Byram's model directly. It simply appeared too crucial and significant not to be mentioned at all due to its focus on the educational field and its influence on other theoretical frameworks such as the development of the "user/learner's competences" section of the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001, p.101).

For instance, The *Intercultural Competence Assessment project*, also called INCA project (2004), is one of these frameworks that is mainly based on Byram's model. It results relevant for this research because it is a model that was a European Union project that wanted to develop a framework of intercultural competences parallel to the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) and therefore seemed fitting when looking at international schools such as the European School System. The second model that turns out to be relevant is Deardorff's model of IC that reinvented the concept of intercultural competences by Byram and other scholars and made it a cyclical process of acquisition. All three models can be found in the Appendix A.

3.2.1. INCA project

The INCA project (2004) is based on Byram's findings but takes into consideration other scholar's works such as Kühlmann (1996) and Müller-Jacquier (2000). The framework was a European Union project that wanted to develop a framework of intercultural competences parallel to the already

existing *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001). It identifies six characteristics of an interculturally competent person: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness, and empathy. Furthermore, there are three strands of intercultural competence: openness, knowledge and adaptability (Appendix A). The six characteristics have an effect on three different fields which are: motivation, skills/knowledge and behaviour to show if a person is interculturally competent.

The aim of the INCA project was mainly practical and basically developing "a valid framework of intercultural competence and robust instruments for assessing intercultural competence to meet the needs of employers" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). The framework is a hybrid of the components identified by Kühlmann and Stahl (1998) and by Gudykunst (2004), with the addition of Byram's emphasis on knowledge discovery. INCA was a project which developed a framework, diagnostic tool and record of achievement for the assessment of intercultural competence and linked it to language competence. It was an attempt to make IC more measurable and therefore treating it more like an ability. This fits well with the focus of this study on intercultural competences development and is also reflected in Deardorff's definition that describes IC first and foremost as an ability.

3.2.2. Deardorff's Model

Based on her definition, Deardorff then developed a model based on the most voted components of the research study with 23 ICC experts mentioned above in combination with a review of existing literature (2006) through the use of the so-called *Delphi technique.* This method included three rounds. The first one was two open-ended questions on the definition of IC and best ways to assess it. Round two was a rating of data from round one on a four-point Likert scale and the third round was accepting or rejecting the data collected in round 2.

What differs with the other models and which makes Deardorff's model so special is that the components of IC are considered part of a cyclical process meaning that acquisition of intercultural competence is a continuous process, and that perfection can never really be reached. This model

therefore focusses also more on the process of becoming interculturally competent rather than simply having the competences. According to the Council of Europe (2014) as well, an individual's intercultural competence is "never complete but can always be enriched still further from continuing experience of different kinds of intercultural encounter" (p. 17). The process starts on the individual level with one's *attitude* which includes openness towards other cultures, curiosity and tolerating ambiguity (Deardorff, 2006). Attitude therefore turns into a key element for the growth of intercultural competences. The next component is the development of *knowledge and comprehension* in the sense of cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge and sociolinguistic awareness (Deardorff, 2006). The latter can also be found in the notion that languages "may express shared ideas in a unique way or express unique ideas difficult to access through one's own language(s)" cited from the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 18-19). This component includes skills such as to listen, observe and interpret as well as to analyse, evaluate, and relate.

From the personal level (attitude, knowledge and comprehension, skills), Deardorff's model moves to an interactive intercultural level. *Internal outcomes* that arise within intercultural interactions are described as adaptability, flexibility and empathy (Deardorff, 2006). The *external outcomes* complete the circular process of developing intercultural competences with the ability to effectively and appropriately communicate and behave in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006).

In order to have the strengths of both approaches to IC and for the purpose of this research the two theoretical models of the INCA framework and the Deardorff model were combined. As mentioned before, what makes Deardorff's model so different from any other scholar's model is its cyclical nature. In the new and combined model this circular shape has been maintained in order to underline the fact that gaining intercultural competences is a process. The INCA framework does not possess a shape but simply mentions six different characteristics that are very similar to the ones in Deardorff's model and can therefore be considered an extension to the four main stages of the Deardorff model.

What both models have in common is that they determine the degree of intercultural competences on three main aspects. For Deardorff these are the degree of *Attitudes, Skills* and *Knowledge/Comprehension* achieved. In the INCA framework the six characteristics are ascribed to the

three overarching strands *Openness, Knowledge* and *Adaptability*. These match the ones by Deardorff

making them the three main aspects of intercultural competences:

Table 1

Pairing of INCA framework characteristics and Deardorff model aspects

INCA framework	Deardorff Model	Components
Openness:	Attitudes	Tolerance for Ambiguity
		Respect for Otherness
		Curiosity and discovery
Knowledge:	Knowledge/comprehension	Knowledge discovery
		Cultural self-awareness
		Sociolinguistic awareness
Adaptability:	Skills	Behavioural flexibility
		Adaptability
		Communicative awareness
		Empathy

Figure 1 shows a visual representation of the combination of the two models.

Figure 1

Combination of the INCA and Deardorff Models
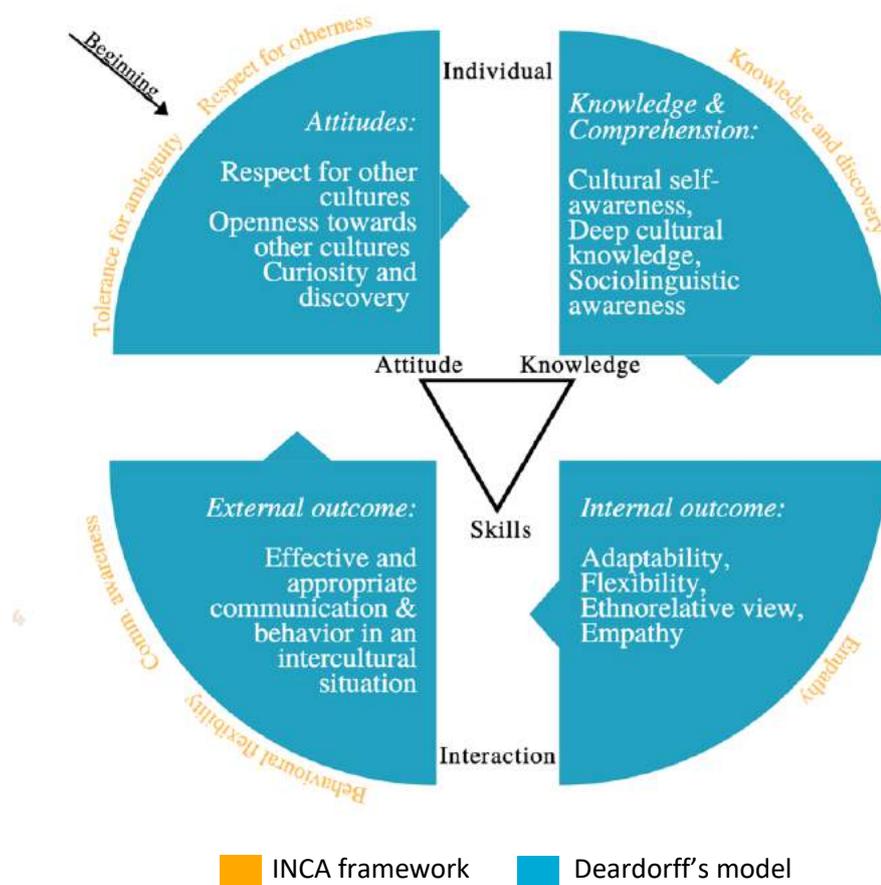
The merge between the two models was made in order to create a framework that considers the INCA project's intent to complement the *CEFR* and is therefore a model that deals with the European Union's approach to intercultural competences, and Deardorff's cyclical shape of IC development that no other IC model has had up until now. By doing so this study wishes to promote both models and their strengths and at the same time redirect research about IC to the educational domain that has received comparatively little attention. For this specific research project, the combined model will be used to frame and then assess the level of intercultural competences present in students from an international school, in the case of this study the European School of Varese.

4. Research-Approach

Based on the knowledge gained from the literature and the research done on previous case studies that have dealt with this topic the following hypotheses (H) have been established as the basis of this research.

Firstly, literature has proven that although intercultural competences are part of the EU policy of multilingualism they are often not implemented in the educational setting. This can be seen in foreign language classrooms. Often it happens that intercultural competences have to compete with the subject taught and teachers usually prefer to focus on the latter (Szuba, 2016). This could be due to a lack of awareness about intercultural competences as well as a lack in knowledge about how to transmit them (LACE, 2007). This leads to the hypothesis that *(H1) foreign language teaching at international schools does not have a very high level of transmitting intercultural competences* and that therefore a proper assessment is necessary.

However, schools are multicultural/multilingual not only in their classrooms, but in other aspects that make out a school such as lunch breaks, sport teams or school trips. These are all opportunities for students to interact with each other, and in the case of an international school to interact *interculturally*. Therefore, the second assumption of this research project is that *(H2) intercultural competences can be acquired outside of the foreign language classroom.* This means that

students coming from international schools such as ESV still acquire intercultural competences simply by being schooled in a multicultural/-lingual environment. This suggests a potential shift of focus from implementing intercultural competences in the L2 classroom to concentrating on it in other parts of school education too.

And finally, in relation to H1, it can be assumed that students at school are not necessarily conscious about the intercultural competences they might or might not have while in relation to H2, it appears that intercultural competences take time to develop and their benefits appear later on in life (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). The third and last assumption therefore is that *(H3) ex-students perceive more value, development and benefits of intercultural competences than students that are still attending the European school.* Combining these three hypotheses the following research question has been formulated:

> *To what extent does attendance at the European School of Varese (ESV) as a*
> *multilingual/multicultural educational setting provide its students with intercultural*
> *competences?*

5. Corpus and Method

5.1. Corpus

The research will focus on the European School of Varese (ESV) as an example for the European School system. The European Schools have among other objectives the goal to provide "a multilingual and multicultural education for nursery, primary and secondary level pupils" and to foster "the unity of the school and encourage genuine multi-cultural education" (https://www.eursc.eu/en/European-Schools/mission). It therefore appears suitable for this research for two reasons: firstly, because it is a multicultural/multilingual environment and secondly because it has the goal to include IC in its education due to the European language policy of multilingualism (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Council of Europe, 2001).

The European School of Varese, founded in 1960, is one of the 14 existing European Schools in the European Union, the only one in Italy, and it is located in Varese. Originally, the school was built to accommodate and educate the children of employees of the Joint Research Centre in Ispra but, within the limits of available places, it also accepts other students. Compared to its sister schools, the European School in Varese is medium-sized and currently hosts more than 1350 students of 47 different nationalities. It is divided into five language sections (Italian, English, French, German and Dutch) and offers teaching in the mother tongues of all EU member countries. The secondary school includes both middle schools, with a three-year study cycle, and high school, with two two-year cycles (called Secondaria). The first two-year period (pre-orientation cycle) ends with a series of harmonized examinations, while the second two-year period (orientation cycle) ends with a series of harmonized examinations that are the same in all European schools, leading to the European Baccalaureate, commonly referred to as the BAC (https://www.eurscva.eu).

5.2. Procedure

Based on Rahimi's study (2019) about the advantages and disadvantages of different assessment forms for intercultural competences and previous case studies that have confirmed the advantage of such a choice (Deardorff 2006; Fantini, 2009), a mixed-method analysis was conducted.

This approach seemed appropriate as it has been found in general to increase the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses of both separate methods, it can give a better understanding of a complex issue and has potential to improve validity (Dörnyei, 2007). Dörnyei, furthermore, points out that a mixed-method approach is the most suitable methodology for classroom research. This recognition has been echoed by other classroom researchers in the past (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Nunan, 2005). This is due to the fact that classrooms are highly complex environments that include all sorts of aspects such as beliefs, goals, values, perceptions, classroom management, physical space and a social-emotional climate (Turner & Meyer, 2000). It is common to distinguish between two broad dimensions of the classroom environment: the 'instructional' context and the 'social' context. These two are interdependent and interact with the complex act of *learning* (Dörnyei, 2007).

This study will mainly focus on the social context of the classroom as this includes students' perceptions of teaching but also teachers and students' perception of the school (Weinstein, 1991).

The mixed-method research entails a quantitative and a qualitative part. Both parts are based on the theoretical models aforementioned in order to frame the intercultural competences at ESV.

To ensure correctness and transparency, an information letter and consent form was given to all the participants and to the parents/guardians of those underage. Overall, the research did not entail risks or burdens and estimated not to be too time and energy consuming. However, perchance on certain questions the participants felt reluctant to tell the truth in order to preserve face.

5.2.1. Quantitative Research: Surveys

The quantitative part of the research method was made out of two surveys. The first one was sent out to the students of the three L2 language classes of ESV, while the second one was distributed to ex-students of the School. The surveys represent a combination of the INCA project's full assessment of IC (part two) and Deardorff's list of specific competences that were considered as part of the intercultural competences set (part three). They have been, however, adapted to the target group of this research project since the INCA project was oriented more towards working people rather than students. Deardorff's list of competences was adapted as well in order to make sure that the language was intelligible for lay people.

The first survey has a total of 19 questions and is divided in three parts: *Background Information*, *Intercultural Profile* and *IC in the Classroom*. The first part has the objective to make the participant reflect on their personal background while also giving valuable information for the research. Although this research looks at IC in the L2 classroom, there is a possibility that the intercultural competences of the participant developed as a result of "an interplay among personality, upbringing, socialization and life experience" (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2007, p.200). Therefore, taking the personal background information of the participants into account seemed fitting. There were a total of 15 questions concerning hobbies, abroad experiences and language skills as well as the intercultural

contact in school with an additional response box giving participants the chance to talk about additional intercultural experiences at ESV.

Part 2 of the survey included 18 statements on intercultural situations provided by the INCA project, and these are based on the three big topics *Attitude (Openness), Knowledge (Knowledge) and Skills (Adaptability)* that were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. Items 1, 8, 12, 16, 17 described Attitude. Items 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 demonstrated Knowledge and items 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15 were about Skills.

Part 3 was about *IC in the classroom*. This part asked the participants to rate to what extent they think they have gained each element of the Deardorff's list of specific competences thanks to the L2 classroom. It had as well a total of 18 items. Similar to part two, this part of the survey also illustrated the three aspects *Openness (Attitude), Knowledge (Knowledge) and Adaptability (Skills)*. Items 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18 were about Openness. Items 1, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17 were about Knowledge and items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 14 were about Adaptability.

A second version of this first survey was sent out to ex-students of the European School of Varese. This second survey is almost identical to the first one and has been simply adapted to the second category of participants by including the work/studies environment. This made it a bit longer than the first one with a total of 26 questions. 22 Questions concerned the personal background of the participant including topics such as hobbies, abroad experiences and language skills, the intercultural contact in their work or studies and their intercultural contact when they used to attend ESV. Part two and part three, on the other hand, were identical to the first survey. For the full outline of the surveys see Appendix B.

5.2.2. Qualitative Research: Interviews

The qualitative part of this research consisted of semi-structured interviews. Research about intercultural competences has confirmed these to be among the more effective methods for the topic at hand (Deardorff, 2006). The goal was to gain a second perspective on the awareness and transmission of IC at the school. Based on the availability given, the interviews were conducted with

one teacher per L2 option, which in the case of the European School of Varese entails the languages German, English and French. The focus was similar to the surveys but allowed a more in-depth discussion of the topic. It focused on the student's acquisition of IC in the classroom as well as its transmission through the L2 language teaching. The interviews had a total of 13 main questions, from which some were elaborated into several sub-questions. The questions were separated into three big topics: Knowledge about intercultural competences, IC in the classroom and IC in L2 teaching with two "Extra" questions (Appendix C).

5.3. Participants

In order to look accurately at intercultural competences and how they unfold in the European School of Varese, three distinct participant groups were determined.

5.3.1. Students of ESV

The first group was the student body. It seemed appropriate to investigate the students from the last year (S7) of the European School of Varese since developing intercultural competences demands long term development and nourishing (Spencer Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Being last year students means the participants had the chance to gain over the several years at the school intercultural competences. The definite sample of participants was chosen through the teachers' availability to conduct this research. Three classes were selected: the German L2 class, the French L2 class and one of the English L2 classes. The survey was sent out to a total of 41 students (5 in the German-L2; 14 in the French-L2; 22 in the English-L2) and was developed in English since the level of English acquired at the European School of Varese aims to be at C1 level in the S7 as pointed out int the Syllabus of all L2 Languages (European Schools, Office of the Secretary-General Pedagogical Development Unit, 2016). C1 was determined to be a sufficient level to understand the survey. Furthermore, concerning those students who picked L2-French or L2-German and who might not have studied English as school, the language of the survey posed no problem as they are either from the English section, and can therefore not pick English as first foreign language for obvious reasons, or

picked English as their second foreign language (L3) and therefore still had a sufficient level of English to understand the survey.

The survey was made accessible to the participants for a total of two weeks. Participants of the Students of ESV-survey filled out a total of 29 responses. Of these, nine were determined invalid due to missing replies to the questions. Of the 29 responses, 11/22 were of the L2-English; 5/14 responses were from the L2-French and 4/5 responses were from the L2-German. In total, this gives a response rate of 61%.

5.3.2. Ex-Students of ESV

The study examined as its second group of participants ex-students of the European School of Varese that fulfilled the same requirements as the students from ESV in addition to having graduated from the school in the last ten years in order to ensure that the experience of students and ex-students was similar if not identical. The aim was to have responses that can add further information and confirm that intercultural competences are a process of learning and that they are a long-term development. The participants were selected through the *snowball sampling* technique (Dörnyei, 2007, p.98). This survey had a response of 50 people of which 12 were considered invalid for the same reasons as those cancelled in the students of ESV-survey. With a total of 38 valid responses, 29 of the participants did the L2-English class, 6 participants did the L2-French and 3 participants took the L2-German class in their school years.

5.3.3. Teachers of ESV

The third category of participants were the corresponding teachers of the German, French and English L2 classes of the S7 whose students represent the first category of participants. This choice was made because research about intercultural competences in the educational domain has focused on foreign language classrooms and L2 teaching. This category of participants furthermore adds another perspective to the awareness and acquisition of intercultural competences. The interviews lasted around 30-40 minutes, were recorded and were conducted in the language the interviewee chose and

felt more comfortable expressing themselves in. This turned out to be German for the German L2 teacher, Italian for the French L2 teacher and English for the English L2 teacher. The questions for these interviews were determined based on the results of the surveys and were developed by the researcher herself. The interviews were then transcribed, translated and then examined for the three hypotheses. H1 was colour-coded yellow, H2 colour-coded green and H3 colour-coded turquoise. Additional potentially relevant answers were colour-coded pink (Appendix D).

6. Results

6.1. Administration of Quantitative Data

The collected correct data was inserted into the SPSS software. Four items were recoded, that is to say, the original response on the five-point scale of: *1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Somewhat Disagree, 3. Neither agree or disagree, 4. Somewhat Agree, 5. Strongly agree* were transformed into: *1. Strongly Agree; 2. Somewhat Agree; 3. Neither Agree or Disagree; 4. Somewhat Disagree; 5. Strongly Disagree* so that the values would be reasonably correlated with the other scores.

A descriptive statistics analysis was then conducted and the data was additionally examined for its internal consistency reliability:

Table 2
Reliability test and descriptive statistics for Students and Ex-Students

	Students			Ex-Students		
	Attitude	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude	Knowledge	Skills
Cronbach Alpha	.843	.865	.754	.685	.806	.812
M	327.16	441.53	435.39	412.69	569.84	488.35
Variance	16393.585	29101.596	10275.075	4657.761	9869.491	10113.568
SD	128.037	170.592	101.366	68.248	99.345	100.566
n	10	13	12	10	14	12

Three separate Cronbach Alphas were computed for the three sub-components of IC since the two scales, part two and part three, contained all three sub-components intermixed. As Dörnyei (2007) points out, L2 researchers "typically want to measure many different areas in one questionnaire" (p.207). The Cronbach Alphas for both students and ex-students of all three aspects *Attitude* ($\alpha > .84$;

α > .69)*, Knowledge* (α > .87; α > .81) and *Skills* (α > .75; α > .81) show that the study is very reliable by

being around α > .70 .

As a second step new variables were computed in order to create a mean (M) for the level of

Attitude, of *Knowledge* and of *Skills*. This procedure was conducted for both part two (P2) and part

three (P3) of the surveys. The means of part two were then brought on a scale of 100 to make them

mergeable with the scores of part three. The following tables show the results:

Table 3
Means of attitude, knowledge and skill level for Part 2 and Part 3

	Students			Ex-Students		
	M	n	SD	M	n	SD
P2 mean of Attitude	78.20	20	11.57	75.47	38	11.73
P2 mean of Knowledge	72.71	20	8.42	75.29	37	9.07
P2 mean of Skills	72.33	20	8.73	71.93	38	7.54
P2 IC Level	74.42	20	7.39	74.39	37	7.17
P3 mean of Attitude	75.47	19	25.39	78.78	36	13.45
P3 mean of Knowledge	75.29	19	24.12	76.26	33	15.75
P3 mean of Skills	71.93	18	16.88	77.79	37	16.66
P3 IC Level	65.63	18	19.14	78.31	33	12.86

6.2. Analysis of Quantitative Data

Paired t-tests were conducted in order to decide whether there was a statistical difference

between the means of IC level in part 2 (P2) and part 3 (P3). For students it was found that there is no

significant difference in score for P2 IC Level (M=74.42, SD=7.39) and P3 IC Level (M=65.63, SD=19.14);

t(18) = 2.102, p = 0.051. Same goes for ex-students with no significant difference in score for P2 IC

Level (M=74.39, SD=7.17) and P3 IC Level (M=78.31, SD=12.86); t(17) = -2.439 , p = 0.013 as both p-

values are <0.05. Since no significant difference existed between the two IC levels, these were merged

into one general intercultural competences score (IC Level) respectively for students and ex-students.

Table 4 shows the scores of general IC Level of students and ex-students as well as general scores for

the three sub competences of intercultural competences.

Table 4

Scores of general Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and general IC Level of sample

	n	Min	Max	M	SD
Students					
General Attitude	19	43,10	92,00	70,02	15,77
General Knowledge	19	31,64	89,64	66,15	15,06
General Skills	18	50,92	83,75	69,88	9,32
IC Level	18	47,15	88,30	69,82	11,88
Ex-Students					
General Attitude	36	50,70	92,50	77,00	10,25
General Knowledge	37	42,50	94,75	74,89	9,97
General Skills	32	50,36	92,50	76,92	9,97
IC Level	31	60,54	92,69	77,08	8,12

All of the calculated means show that the level of *Attitude, Knowledge* and *Skills* are high for both students and ex-students and do not differ greatly among each other. All the mean scores are between 60 and 80 out of 100 which is a range that was labelled as 'Somewhat Agree' and that was the fourth option out of five. Curious is to notice that the IC level of ex-students is slightly higher with a M = 77.08 than the IC level of current students of ESV with a M = 69.82.

Furthermore, in order to determine the relationship between the three sub-components of intercultural competences a correlation analysis was executed. Deardorff's theory says that the development of IC is a circular process. This leads to the assumption that attitude should be strongly correlated with knowledge, knowledge should be strongly correlated with skills and potentially even skills be correlated with attitude bringing the process full circle.

An analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there is a strong link between the sub-components of intercultural competences:

Table 5

Correlations between IC sub-components

		Attitude	Knowledge	Skills
Students				
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.921	.857
	Significance		.000	.000
	N	19	19	18
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.921	1	.887
	Significance	.000		.000
	n	19	19	18
Skills	Pearson Correlation	.857	.887	1
	Significance	.000	.000	
	n	18	18	18
Ex-Students				
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.807	.705
	Significance		.000	.000
	n	36	31	36
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.807	1	.887
	Significance	.000		.000
	n	31	31	32
Skills	Pearson Correlation	.705	.887	1
	Significance	.000	.000	
	n	36	32	37

Furthermore, a linear regression analysis was calculated to predict participants' personal background information based on the IC level. These were in total 13 variables for the students and a significant regression was found regarding the variable *Which L2 class are you attending?* $(F_{(1,16)}=4.610; p=.047)$ with an R^2 of .224. Same was done for ex-students and the results of the regression predicted that one variable had an impact on the IC level $(F_{(1,29)}=5.312, p=.029)$ with an $R^2=.155$, this variable being *How many languages do you think you speak well?*.

A quick summary of the results is that the several Cronbach Alphas' all scored around 0.70 and make therefore the study reliable. In addition to that, the paired T-test results showed that there is no significant difference between the two IC levels so that these were merged into one general intercultural competences score (IC Level) respectively for students and ex-students. Furthermore, the means were high and not differing a lot among each other suggesting that the level of IC for both

students and ex-students of ESV is high, although the one from ex-students is slightly higher. In the theoretical framework the development of IC is portrayed as a cyclical process so in order to determine the relationship between the three sub-components of intercultural competences a correlation analysis was executed proving that there is a strong link between the sub-components of intercultural competences but not necessarily that there are correlated with each other in a circular way. And finally, the linear regression analyses of several independent variables showed that only two had an impact on the dependent variable IC level namely *What L2 class are you attending?* for students and *How many languages do you think you speak well?* for ex-students.

Together with the results from the qualitative data, namely the interviews, the three hypotheses of this thesis were proven right or wrong.

6.3. Proving the hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1) that *the foreign language teaching at international schools does not have a very high level of transmitting intercultural competences* can be evaluated partly by the different means that were computed. For instance, for students of ESV, the mean of the IC Profile (part two) is at 74.42 and therefore higher than the mean of IC in classroom which scores 65.63. This result is supported by the comments given by students at the end of the survey. For example, one student points out that they "learned the majority of these fairly well through the school, but not in L2 class" and later on "In S7, L2 is all about preparing for the BAC, we do not really discuss culture in depth". Another student commented that "what can greatly impact your self-awareness, understanding of other cultures, and your openness is traveling, observing and interacting with people across multiple cultures and nationalities, not just speaking in your second language during your L2 lesson."

This point of view is reflected by the remarks from ex-students. One comment stated, "I genuinely don't believe that our L2 syllabus was designed to keep up with those high cultural standards" and later on "only when returning to a german-dominated environment did I realise how we had never really learned how to deal with these extreme cultural differences". All of these

comments show how students perceive that the foreign language teaching at ESV is not transmitting intercultural competences to its students.

It also has to be noticed that the linear regression analysis conducted on the data from current students revealed that the variable *What L2 class are you attending?* suggests that the teacher plays a key role in the extent to which IC is transmitted or not to the students. This could mean that currently at ESV the responsibility for the transmittal of IC lies on the teachers rather than on the curriculum or the school as an institution. Additionally, the linear regression analysis from ex-students highlighted the variable *How many languages do you think you speak well?.* A frequency analysis thereupon showed that 63.2% of the participants learns their second language at school and a 65.8% of the participant acquires their third language at school as well. Language 4 also has the highest percentages of acquisition through school with 28.9% while Language 5 does not apply to the majority of participants. This puts the spotlight on foreign language acquisition when looking at IC development at ESV, marking the school not only multicultural but multilingual as well.

In order to gain a second perspective, the topic of transmission of intercultural competences through the foreign language teaching was addressed more in depth in the interviews conducted with the teachers of ESV. In these, among other things it became clear that as teachers they actually do try to integrate IC to a certain extent into their lessons. However, it also became clear that a training for intercultural competences and how to transmit them does not exist concretely yet. The goal to simply "convey the European idea" and a special attention to the "European dimension" is focused upon but rather vaguely. This shows that there is a lacking familiarity with the exact notion of intercultural competences as well as the documents by the EU such as the *CEFR*. Nevertheless, teachers at ESV do use methods to transmit intercultural competences such as role plays, mixed group work and presentations about culture. Their approach to integrating IC in their teaching is rather "organic" and adapted to whatever they are teaching then organized and straightforwardly concentrated upon. This might be due to a lack of training but also because there might have not been a need for it. Teachers describe students as "curious", "respectful" and "knowledgeable" having therefore already "quite developed by S7, a good degree of intercultural competences themselves". Overall, the link between

IC development and foreign language learning was felt to be true as well as the presence of IC in their foreign language teaching. However, this did not appear to stand at the centre of the L2 classroom, for reasons such as the need to focus on topics and readings in preparation for the final exams, but rather something that automatically becomes part of the teaching. The assumption by the teachers that student's already have a high level is further examined through H2.

The second hypothesis (H2) that *intercultural competences can be acquired outside of the foreign language classroom* became primarily evident in the open question comment boxes of the survey. Students mentioned other aspects of school education that they consider having helped them to develop intercultural competences such as an exchange of four months to another European School, peer to peer education[2] and a so-called kiva project[3] as well as Eurosport[4]. Some of them mentioned more daily aspects of school life that promote intercultural communication such as the diversity of nationalities in most classes (eg. history, geography, religion and philosophy) and the bus rides home that are organized by a bus system that supports the school. One student describes the school environment and social interaction as: "everybody has their own personality. and u have groups even between the intercultural variety we have in school. So meaning people hang out with people who fit with them". Another student, referring to the assumption that IC is transmitted in the L2 classroom, says "being really honest. All of these are social skills. In L2 we learned about grammer and speaking English. All of my social/cultural capabilities are thanks to me seeking to relate with others. Outside of class."

These opinions were supported by the ex-students that additionally mentioned theater class that occurred after school once a week. One ex-student also pointed out that the one thing they have taken away from growing up in multinational environment is "how much people really adapt their entire persona to the language they are currently speaking. A culture is always inevitably intertwined

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[2] A system of matching students from different years to give tutoring for courses. It is not necessarily per section but the language skills have to match between the two students.
[3] Finnish project against bullying. Lead teachers of the language sections received a booklet with activities to do with their students about class about topics such as cohesion and respect to sensitise students to the topic of bullying.
[4] A sort of small Olympics between different European Schools that takes place every two years.

with its language." This remark shows a certain level of sociolinguistic awareness, which is also part of Deardorff's list of intercultural competences, and a sensitivity that comes by dealing with people from different backgrounds on a daily basis. It proves that intercultural competences can be acquired by simply growing up in a multicultural environment. This was also greatly supported by the interviews with the teachers that pointed out that language acquisition is intertwined with being interculturally competent but doesn't necessarily have to be. Teachers mentioned breaks (that were more often at ESV than in their previous schools), eating in the canteen together or school activities such as the amnesty group. According to them, interculturality takes place at least 50% outside of the classroom as well as 50% inside the classroom and with this emphasizing that "the social aspect is probably more important than the teaching then, and the classroom environment is a product of that". This ties well with the fact that classrooms are an environment with a social but also instructional context being ideal for the development of intercultural competences.

And finally, the third hypothesis (H3) that *ex-students perceive more value, development and benefits of intercultural competences than students that are still attending the European school* can be detected by observing first of all the means of the general IC level of the two groups. Students have a M = 69.82 while ex-students have a general IC level of M = 77.08. This confirms H3 by showing that ex-students have a higher awareness about their intercultural competences. The theoretical framework might suggest that this might be due to a bigger exposure to intercultural situations, contact with people from other cultures or higher chances of going abroad. However, the linear regression analysis conducted through SPSS showed only variables that are tied to the school environment to predict an impact on the IC level.

Moreover, in both groups *Attitude* had the highest mean out of the three sub-components which means that tolerance for ambiguity, respect for otherness and curiosity and discovery (Table 1) are the abilities most developed by the participants. *Knowledge* had the lowest means out of the three and *Skills* was between those two (Table 4). This does not fully coincide with the results by the LACE study (2007) in which results had confirmed that there is more focus on *attitude* and *knowledge* (p.9)

rather than on skills while here it appears that the most developed sub-components are *attitude* and *skills*.

Moreover, comparing the means of part two and part three they show that ex-students think there is a stronger link between their intercultural competences and the L2 classroom than current students of ESV. While the P2 IC Level is almost the same for students (M = 74.42) and ex-students (M = 74.39), the P3 IC level is higher for ex-students (M = 78.31) than current students (M = 65.63). This might suggest that they see more appreciation for their school education and specifically of their L2 teaching.

7. Discussion

But how do these results relate to all the IC research that has been conducted up until now? This study focused on the foreign language teaching at ESV because research has proven that IC research has favoured the foreign language classroom to look at the development of intercultural competences, especially when looking at the European dimension. Similar to the results of other studies such as the LACE study (2007), this one confirms that curricula have only vaguely formulated objectives to be attained by language learners and that the levels of attainment and assessment methods are not described in detail. The ESV curriculum too, does not specifically describe how intercultural competences are supposed to be integrated into the foreign language teaching. And this even though being part of the European School System ESV would be expected to give more attention to intercultural competences in foreign language teaching since it is part of the values of the school that are partially based on the European language policy of multilingualism and the linked *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* For instance, only one out of three language teachers was familiar with this document. This means a solid reference system for the assessment of IC is still missing in the European School of Varese too.

Moreover, the LACE study determined several reasons for the lack of implementation in curricula such as, for example, lack of time. Several statements in the interviews with the teachers confirm this:

"Well, of course, with the S7 L2 at the end you concentrate on the BAC" and another teacher said "It is true that this year I have focused a lot on, since we have to focus a lot on the literary work, then starting from this work I make my own topics" and in general students, especially, have confirmed that they do not believe their intercultural competences come from the L2 classroom. The other problematics such as inadequate textbooks, bad internet access or bad IT equipment were not addressed in any way and are therefore assumed to not be a problem ESV has to face or that hinders the transmission of intercultural competences in the school. But although there is no clear and explicit description of how IC are supposed to be integrated in the foreign language teaching at ESV, this does not mean that zero intercultural competences are transmitted to the students of the school.

As a matter of fact, the statistical evaluation shows that students as well as students who have graduated a maximum of ten years ago have a high level of IC. Additionally, teachers confirm that they do try to integrate intercultural competences in their teaching programme, even though they do not directly plan to do so by theorizing intercultural competences. The teachers say they "probably do it without knowing it because the doing, there is in everyone, in every class where there are students anyway, we all have classes with students of different languages and nationalities" and "we're kind of trying to look at ehm the European dimension and comparing it to our own countries as well" or rather "what we always try to do, of course, is to convey the European idea." Their way of integrating intercultural competences is rather organic and added to whatever the year program requires them to talk about. The interviews showed that the teaching of intercultural competences at ESV in the L2 classroom is taught as an aside but also that it is actually hardly separable from the language teaching. It appears that the teachers as well have a general understanding that intercultural competences are highly linked to language acquisition and that it therefore automatically becomes part of their L2 teaching. This was confirmed by different activities and assignments they mentioned as examples that clearly go beyond the basic aspects of language teaching, like simple grammar teaching would be (see interviews in Appendix D).

But if intercultural competences are not a big part of language teaching, an association IC research and the Council of Europe have up until now strongly suggested, the question arises where the high

level of IC comes from in students of ESV. As one teacher pointed out "they're already quite they they've already developed by S7, a good degree of intercultural competence themselves out of respect for each other." As a matter of fact, both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the school environment plays a big role in the development of intercultural competences of its students.

This encourages the notion that international schools are very suitable environments for the growth of intercultural competences because IC skills are developed almost subconsciously partially through the teaching partially through simply attending the school and giving the chance to engage with students with different (cultural) backgrounds.

This subliminal way of transmitting intercultural competences through schools helps to develop active intercultural citizens that are very necessary in the globalized world of today as Byram et al. have pointed out (2016, p.8). They describe active intercultural citizens as people that have greater respect for otherness and a willingness to fight prejudice and intolerance. These are the very characteristics that have been mentioned by the teachers in the interviews as well when describing their students and how they determine their level of IC. Students of ESV have been described as curious, tolerant, empathic and able to communicate with each other effectively even though they have different cultural backgrounds. These abilities have been acquired by students in some measure inside the classroom but also to a certain extent through the school environment and the different activities outside of the classroom it offers. Examples are the peer-to-peer programme, the theater group, the amnesty group, Eurosport and exchanges to other European schools for several months but also the mixing of the school language sections for classes such as history, sports, philosophy.

All of these are to a certain degree aspects of "normal" school life that therefore make the difference between international and national schools hard to see at first glance. However, the interviews gave a possibility to get a moderate comparison between the two types of school as all three teachers taught in national schools before starting to teach at ESV. There depiction can be considered valid in giving a general impression of the difference since they all three come from different countries. One teacher answered to the question whether they see any difference of the IC level between students at ESV and students at their former school: "Ehm yeah, I mean, I think they are

more interculturally competent for sure, ehm, here. Just because they're they're mixing with different people". This is supported by the other two teachers who answered similarly to the question. One mentions that:

> Here in Varese, the pupils are much friendlier and look first and you get the impression that they only then form an opinion. Whereas in Germany, you're just the teacher and that's it. So they don't look, well of course, of course they also look at what kind of teacher she is, but it's not so, yes, it's just not so open. (p.87)

Students of ESV are furthermore described as more open, unprejudiced and tolerant. The national school scenarios were not necessarily described as the opposite of this but in terms of intercultural competences on a lower level. For instance, one teacher said that in her former school "outside the classroom, ehm, outside the classroom except for the trips, there wasn't, no" meaning there were no other activities they could think of that could have helped students to develop intercultural competences. This research wishes to dock at this point as well, by emphasizing the importance of intercultural competences' assessment and awareness. This is crucial not only for international schools but for national schools as well that are becoming more and more multicultural too. This study's results have shown that an international school environment together with teaching that somehow includes the transmission of intercultural competences ultimately makes students develop intercultural competences. It is time for national schools to make this shift too.

8. Conclusion

The present thesis investigated to what extent getting a multilingual education and growing up in a multicultural environment leads to the development of intercultural competences. In order to do so, a new model was developed out from the INCA project model and the Deardorff model. This new model helped to concretize and also measure intercultural competences of people that were schooled at an international school. The European School of Varese was chosen as an example hereof. Three hypotheses were formulated to explore different aspects of intercultural competences' development

and then tested through two surveys, as quantitative analysis, and three interviews, as qualitative analysis.

The results showed that H1 is generally speaking right but when looked at in detail not entirely correct. L2 language teaching does not directly and consciously try to teach intercultural competences to students of ESV *but* because of the classroom environment, the internationality of the school and also the link between language and culture, it does end up doing so more in an organic way than straightforwardly. This organicity is facilitated by an already high level of intercultural competences of students that was further examined through H2.

H2 has been proven right since all three participant groups students, ex-students and teachers confirm that for them interculturality takes places in the school in general rather than in the classroom. The opinions differ, however, between teachers and students to what extent this takes place as the former confirm that they try to integrate IC into their L2 teaching while the latter believe that no intercultural competences are transmitted to them through the IC classroom. This was confirmed also by the data of the surveys showing that students and ex-students of ESV assess their own IC level to be high but their own assessment of whether they have certain abilities thanks to the IC classroom scored lower. Yet, these scores were lower but not low in general meaning the foreign language classroom still takes part in transmitting intercultural competences. This shifts on a broader scale the focus from the classroom to other aspects of school life that have the chance to make students develop intercultural competences. A shift that this research has proven to be very beneficial for the development of intercultural competences as can be noticed from the high IC level of students at ESV.

H3 has also been proven right but only slightly since ex-students when assessing their own IC level have higher scores than current students of the school but broadly speaking do not differ that much meaning there is not much more development of IC. However, ex-students ascribe more of their skills to the L2 classroom than current students proving that they see to a certain extent more value from their L2 education at ESV.

These conclusions make a general answer to the research question: *To what extent does attendance at the European School of Varese (ESV) as a multilingual/multicultural educational setting*

provide its students with intercultural competences? a loud and clear yes. This furthermore confirms that schools are important places to transmit intercultural competences, international schools such as the ones from the European school system even more so. This also proves that there should be an academical and educational shift from a focus on foreign language acquisition to other environments of school life, so that children and teenagers can develop intercultural competences more effectively, which are so relevant for life nowadays in our globalized world.

8.1. Limitations of the analysis

Nevertheless, like every research project this one too has certain limitations. In general classroom research has been mentioned to pose challenges, that most people are not aware of and that are often dismissed and downplayed (Dörnyei, 2007). Some of these difficulties mentioned by Dörnyei (2007) have been part of this study to a certain extent potentially impacting the outcome. *Working with teachers* as well as *working with students* was mainly made more difficult through the COVID-pandemic that made it hard to follow up on the students and in general complicated the communication. As Dörnyei points out, "even when you have the full support and cooperation of teachers, this does not mean that all students will follow suit" (2007, p.189) which is exactly what happened in this research. The collaboration with the teachers worked luckily very well, but the response from students to the survey was not as high as expected. Classroom research often turns out to be more *time consuming* as well because the progress depends on many other people involved in the project. School directors need to give approval, availability of participants needs to be checked, teachers need to be involved and parents/guardians need to be asked for consent for minors. All of these factors did not hinder the research but in a certain way impacted it.

Moreover, one must take into consideration that being aware of intercultural competences doesn't necessarily guarantee IC behaviour. Ruben (1976) sets out the theoretical argument for behavioural observations of intercultural effectiveness by emphasizing the gap between knowing and doing: "Even within one's own culture, knowing that one ought to be respectful or empathic or non-judgmental does not guarantee that one will be able to perform the behaviour, even with good

intentions" (p.344). In order to make sure IC development is examined accurately, third-party-observations or class observations would have been more efficient. This research however chose to use self-assessment tools due to a shortage of time and options but also because they are in themselves a teaching and learning procedure which stimulates greater self-awareness and reflection and may thus inspire participants to a personal development process.

This leads to another limitation concerning the methodology of this study. Research about IC development in younger people suggests conducting research over extended periods of time since the development of intercultural competences and of some of its sub-competencies demands long-term nourishing. This, as a matter of fact, was one of the reasons why this study chose to look at the graduating year of the European School of Varese and in general at the school environment, but which unfortunately did not have the time to observe the participants over multiple months or even years.

Finally, due to the current situation of schools being closed, it seems pertinent to mention the ongoing COVID-pandemic in relation to this research. Concerns might be that the closure of schools, limits students experience and could therefore potentially also limit their acquisition of intercultural competences since these can be acquired outside of the L2 classes as well and these environments such as lunch breaks, sport teams or school trips have been not part of the school year. However, because the development of IC needs longer periods of time and the participant students have been attending the school for multiple years missing only their last year, no direct and significant consequence from the COVID pandemic was expected to appear in the results of this research.

8.2. Suggestions for further research

Based on the limitations of this study, the following suggestions for further research are considered. Firstly, more thorough research project about IC in multilingual education would involve a study of participants over longer periods of time to actually observe the development of intercultural competences. This could be for example a round of interviews and surveys at the beginning of the Secondaria (S1) and then a second round of interviews and surveys with the same participants at the end of the Secondaria (S7). A more accurate account of such a development is achievable through

other additional methods than the ones used in this study. For instance, observation and role plays have been used by other studies and have been proven to be advantageous. This due to the fact that the simple awareness about intercultural competences does not mean that one automatically also act in an interculturally competent way. A discrepancy that the observation technique could diminish. A more thorough research would therefore employ more of these methods in order to examine the phenomenon from all angles.

 Secondly, an analysis between different schools also would make results more accurate and broaden the outlines of the phenomenon. A comparison between different European Schools all around Europe would highlight the phenomenon from different perspectives, revealing differences in the European School System and assess more accurately to what extent the foreign language teaching impacts the IC level of students and what role a multicultural/multilingual environment fostered by the EU can have on IC development. But also a comparison between the European School System and other international schools could be curious to determine more concretely the role of the multicultural/multilingual environment in the development of intercultural competences.

Lastly, a comparison between the European School System and the Public School System of different countries might be worth investigating as well. This would help to determine to what extent international schools have a better chance at transmitting intercultural competences or simply what differences exist in the transmission of IC between multilingual and monolingual schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IC models

Figure 2
INCA framework (2004)

	Openness		Adaptability		Knowledge	
Competence	Tolerance for ambiguity	Respect for otherness	Behavioural flexibility	Communicative awareness	Knowledge discovery	Empathy
Definition	Tolerance for ambiguity is understood as the ability to accept ambiguity and lack of clarity and to be able to deal with it constructively.	Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.	Behavioural flexibility is the ability to adapt one's own behaviour to different requirements and situations	The ability in intercultural communication to establish relationships between linguistic expressions and cultural contents, to identify and consciously work with various communicative conventions of foreign partners and to modify correspondingly one's own linguistic forms of expression.	The ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to act using that knowledge, those attitudes and those skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction	The ability to intuitively understand what other people think and how they feel in concrete situations. Empathic persons are able to deal appropriately with the feelings, wishes and ways of thinking of other persons
Motivation	Readiness to embrace and work with ambiguity	Willingness to respect the diversity and coherence of behaviour, value and belief systems	Readiness to apply and augment the full range of one's existing repertoire of behaviour	Willingness to modify existing communicative conventions	Curiosity about other cultures in themselves and in order to be able to interact better with people	Willingness to take the other's perspectives
Skill/ Knowledge	Ability to handle stress consequent on ambiguity	Critical knowledge of such systems (including one's own when making judgements)	Having a broad repertoire and the knowledge of one's repertoire	Ability to identify different communicative conventions, levels of foreign language competencies and their impact	Skills of ethnographic discovery of situation-relevant cultural knowledge (including technical	Skills of role-taking de-centring; awareness of different perspectives

				on intercultural communication	knowledge) before, during and after intercultural encounters	
Behaviour	Managing ambiguous situations	Treating equally different behaviour, value and convention systems experiences in intercultural encounters	Adapting one's behaviour to the specific situation	Negotiating appropriate communicative conventions for intercultural communication and coping with different foreign language skills	Seeking information to discover culture-related knowledge	Making explicit and relating culture-specific perspectives to each other

Figure 3
Deardorff's model of intercultural competence. Source: Deardorff, D. K. (2006)
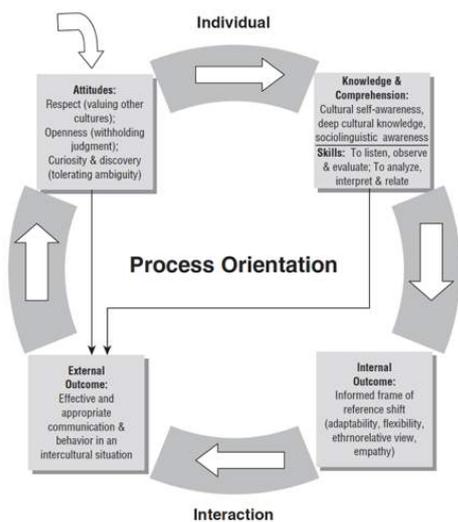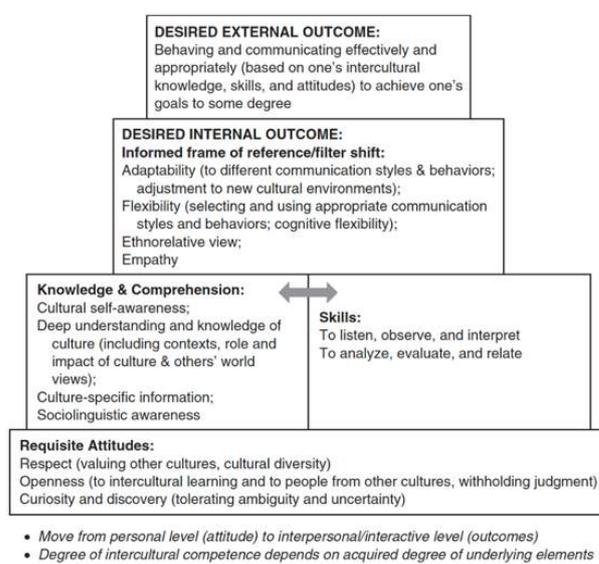

Figure 4. Process Model of Intercultural Competence
Source: Deardorff (2004).
Note: Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills achieved.
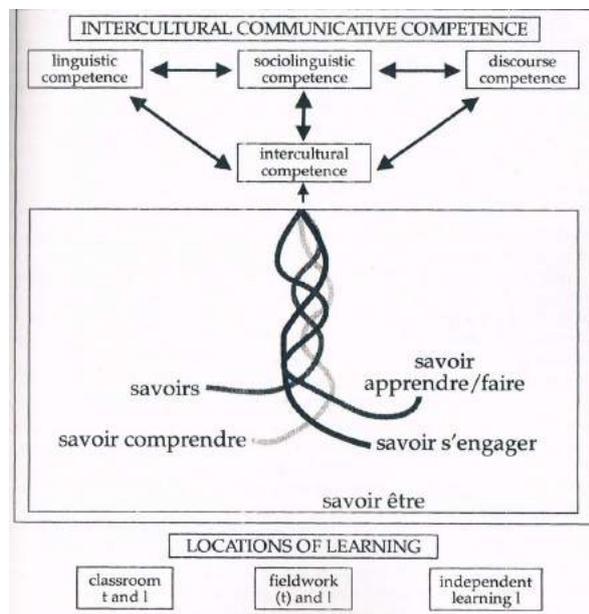
Figure 3. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence
Source: Deardorff (2004).

Figure 4

*Byram's conceptualization of intercultural communicative competence. Source: Spencer-Oatey, H., &
Franklin, P. (2009).*

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

linguistic competence — sociolinguistic competence — discourse competence

intercultural competence

savoirs
savoir apprendre/faire
savoir comprendre
savoir s'engager
savoir être

LOCATIONS OF LEARNING

classroom t and l | fieldwork (t) and l | independent learning l

Concept 3.5 Byram's (1997) conceptualization of intercultural communicative competence		
Components		**Description**
Linguistic competence		The ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language.
Sociolinguistic competence		The ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor.
Discourse competence		The ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes.
Intercultural competence	Attitudes	Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
	Knowledge	Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
	Skills of interpreting and relating	Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own.
	Skills of discovering and interacting	Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.
	Critical cultural awareness/ political education	An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Appendix B: Surveys

STUDENTS OF ESV SURVEY

Questionnaire about Intercultural competences at ESV
Welcome!
Thank you for filling out this survey on intercultural competences at ESV. I am Laura, student of the master programme Intercultural Communication at Utrecht University conducting research on this topic for my master thesis.
The survey has a total of 19 questions and participation is voluntary. It should not take you longer than 15 minutes to complete the survey. Answers can't be right or wrong, I am simply interested in learning more about how you perceive intercultural competences.
Let's get started!

Information about participation in:
The Online Survey about intercultural competences at ESV as part of a Master Thesis Project
1. Introduction
The Online Survey about intercultural competences at ESV is part of the master thesis project by the undersigned researcher. The study deals partly with the students at the European School of Varese. The participant's parent/guardian is hereby asked to give consent for the participation of their child in scientific research. The study is conducted online on behalf of Utrecht University. If a wish to withdraw from the study should exist, you are allowed to withdraw at any time (see section 6).
2. What is the background and purpose of the study?
This online survey is part of the master thesis project of the researcher. It is therefore for educational purposes only. The topic of the master thesis project is intercultural competences in multilingual education. It will examine the level of awareness of intercultural competences as well as the level of acquisition through L2 teaching of these competences. In the survey that is for the students of the European School of Varese, the researcher is mainly interested in how the participants own intercultural competences are perceived.
3. How will the study be carried out?
The study will be conducted through an online survey of 19 questions and a length of approximately 15 minutes. The survey has been developed with the programme Qualtrics XM and is made accessible through a link. No audio or video recordings are part of the study. The survey consists of three parts. The first one collecting background information about intercultural experiences of the participants in their lives, in their current job/studies and at the school. The second part consists of assisting the intercultural competences level of the participants. The third part tries to determine if certain skills are linked to the L2 teaching classroom.
4. What is expected?
From the participants it is expected to answer truthfully to the several questions of the survey. The filling out of the survey should not last more than 15 minutes. The survey will be accessed through a link and will be filled out during the L2 class or during the participants' free time.
5. What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of participating in this study? As a participant you will not benefit directly from participation in this study. However, the study may provide useful data for the future. For example, research into intercultural competences can also provide basic information on the causes and possible approaches to language acquisition. Potential disadvantages include:

- It may take a considerable amount of time to complete the questionnaire.
- You might face potentially confrontational questions.

6. What happens if your child no longer wishes to cooperate during the study?

In the event that your child no longer wish to participate in the study while it is being carried out, the study will always be stopped.

7. Voluntary participation

Participation is voluntary. If the child decides that you they do not want participate after all, no action is necessary on your part. You do not need to sign anything. In addition, you do not need to explain why you do not want to participate anymore. The child can stop at any time — including <u>during</u> the study. In addition, consent can be withdrawn after the child has taken part in the research. If you choose to do so, the research data will not be included in the analyses. However, the data can no longer be deleted if it has already been analysed or if the research data can no longer be traced back to you.

8. For what purpose will the data collected be used?

Your personal data will be managed by a single person, **Laura Müllejans.** If you wish to correct or have this personal data deleted, you can do so by contacting **Laura Müllejans (l.mullejans@students.uu.nl)**. The personal data will not be passed on to people other than the researchers who are directly involved in this project.

Data will be collected during the participation in the study. These data are given a code that can only be traced back to your child with a key. This means that the research data are encrypted. We are obliged to store the encrypted research data for at least 10 years. You are consenting to this if your child is participating in this study. If you do not agree to this, your child will not be able to participate in this study. Your child's data will be stored and kept on a server secured by Utrecht University. The encrypted research data may be shared with and/or reused by other scientists, possibly to answer other research questions. The key that can be used to trace encrypted data back to you or your child personally will be destroyed as soon as possible.

9. Is any reimbursement provided for your child's participation in the study?

There are no reimbursements arranged for this study.

10. More information about this study?

If you wish to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher
 by email: l.mullejans@students.uu.nl
 by phone: +393927458224

11. Confidentiality

○ under 18

○ 18 or older

Display This Question:

*   If 11. Confidentiality = under 18*

---

11. Confidentiality

I, the parent or guardian of the child mentioned below, confirm:
 - that I have been satisfactorily informed about the study via the information letter
 - that I voluntarily give consent for my child to participate

Name Parent/Guardian:

_____

Signature of Parent:

Name Child:

_____

Signature of Child:

11. Confidentiality
I hereby give my consent to share my data with Utrecht University. I understand that my data will be handled confidentially.

Full Name:

_____

Signature:

Part 1: Background Information

Q1 1st Nationality:

_____

Q2 2nd Nationality:

_____

Q3 For how many years have you been attending the European School of Varese (Primaria + Secondaria and in years)?

_____

Q4 Which L2 class are you attending?

○ L2-German

○ L2-French

○ L2-English

The rest of the information will provide a first overview of your intercultural contacts and experiences.

Q5 What percentage of your friends are from other countries? (no exact amount is necessary, just a good estimation)

○ 20%

○ 40%

○ 60%

○ 80%

○ 100%

Q6 How many languages do you think you speak well?

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5 or more

Q7 Where did you learn these languages?

	Home	School	Extracurricular activities	Other	Does not apply
Language 1	○	○	○	○	○
Language 2	○	○	○	○	○
Language 3	○	○	○	○	○
Language 4	○	○	○	○	○
Language 5	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q9 How often do you watch movies/tv shows in a foreign language?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q10 How often have you been abroad for reasons other than school (holidays, family visits, personal reasons etc.)?

○ 0-2 times

○ 3 - 5 times

○ 6 - 10 times

○ 10 - 15 times

○ more than 15 times

Q11 From these, how long did your longest stay abroad last?

○ 0 - 2 days

○ 2 days - 1 week

○ 1 week - 1 month

○ 1 - 5 months

○ 6 months or more

Q12 How often have you been abroad with the school?

- ⃝ 0 - 2 times

- ⃝ 3 - 5 times

- ⃝ 6 - 10 times

- ⃝ more than 10 times

Q13 How long did your longest stay abroad with the school last?

- ⃝ 1 day

- ⃝ 1 - 3 days

- ⃝ 3 days - 1 week

- ⃝ 1 week - 2 weeks

- ⃝ more than 2 weeks

Q14 How often do you have to deal with people from other countries in your school?

- ⃝ Never

- ⃝ Sometimes

- ⃝ About half the time

- ⃝ Most of the time

- ⃝ Always

Q15 How many school projects (assignments, presentations etc.) do you have to do with students from other cultures at ESV?

- ⃝ None at all

- ⃝ A few

- ⃝ A moderate amount

- ⃝ A lot

- ⃝ All of them

Q16 Additional intercultural experiences in school you want to tell me about?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: Intercultural Profile
The following section will be to determine intercultural competences.
 It's possible that some of these statements describe situations that you have not experienced.
Please try to imagine such a situation and pick the answer that corresponds best to your possible
behaviour and reaction. If an answer seems difficult, please try to answer it honestly and as best as
you can.

Q17 Please try to answer the following statements truthfully. You will get five options for each
statement: 1 (strongly disagree) up till 5 (strongly agree)

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients from other countries that I don't know.	○	○	○	○	○
I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.	○	○	○	○	○
When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.	○	○	○	○	○
When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this	○	○	○	○	○
When I hear about a catastrophe happening in another country, I think about the people there and their fate	○	○	○	○	○
When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.	○	○	○	○	○

When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.	○	○	○	○	○
In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words	○	○	○	○	○
I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday	○	○	○	○	○
When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling	○	○	○	○	○
I often change my plans when I am on holiday abroad	○	○	○	○	○
When the behaviour of people from other cultures confuses me, I avoid making contact with them	○	○	○	○	○
I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.	○	○	○	○	○
I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures	○	○	○	○	○
When students from other cultures have different study habits I adapt to their habits	○	○	○	○	○
If I have behaved inappropriately towards a student from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting them	○	○	○	○	○
When there are fellow students who constitute a minority, I try to involve them in the majority group	○	○	○	○	○
I like to learn about the traditions and stories of other cultures	○	○	○	○	○

Part 3: IC in the classroom
This part of the study is about how intercultural competences are linked to L2 language teaching

Q18 Please rate to what extent you think you have gained the following abilities thanks to the L2 classroom at ESV:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Item	0 10 20	30 40	50 60	70 80	90 100

Understanding others' worldviews

Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self reflection

Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment

Skills to listen and observe

General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures

Ability and flexibility to adapt to varying learning styles

Skills to analyze, interpret and relate

Tolerating and engaging ambiguity

Deep knowledge and understanding of culture

Respect for other cultures

Appreciation and consideration of the differences and similarities of another culture in comparison to one's own

Understanding the value of cultural diversity

Understanding of role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social and historical contexts

Awareness of relation between language and meaning in situations

Withholding judgment

Curiosity and discovery

Ability to see many values and behaviors as cultural rather than universal

Culture-specific knowledge and understanding host culture's traditions

Q19 If you have any further remarks or comments please fill them in here:

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

This is the end of the survey.
In case you should have any more questions please do not hesitate to contact me under
l.mullejans@students.uu.nl.Thank you for your time and participation!

EX-STUDENTS OF ESV SURVEY

Questionnaire about intercultural competences at ESV
Welcome!
Thank you for filling out this survey on intercultural competences at ESV. I am Laura, student of the
master programme Intercultural Communication at Utrecht University conducting research on this
topic for my master thesis.
The survey has a total of 27 questions and participation is voluntary. It should not take you longer
than 15 minutes to complete the survey. Answers can't be right or wrong, I am simply interested in
learning more about how you perceive intercultural competences.
Let's get started!

Information about participation in:
The Online Survey about intercultural competences at ESV as part of a Master Thesis Project

1. Introduction
The Online Survey about intercultural competences at ESV is part of the master thesis project by the
undersigned researcher. The study deals partly with ex-students from the European School of
Varese. The participant is hereby asked to give consent for the participation in scientific research.
The study is conducted online on behalf of Utrecht University. If a wish to withdraw from the study
should exist, you are allowed to withdraw at any time (see section 6).

2. What is the background and purpose of the study?
This online survey is part of the master thesis project of the researcher. It is therefore for
educational purposes only. The topic of the master thesis project is intercultural competences in
multilingual education. It will examine the level of awareness of intercultural competences as well as
the level of acquisition through L2 teaching of these competences. In the survey that is for the ex-
students of the European School of Varese, the researcher is mainly interested in how the
participants own intercultural competences are perceived.

3. How will the study be carried out?
The study will be conducted through an online survey of 27 questions and a length of approximately
15 minutes. The survey has been developed with the programme Qualtrics XM and is made
accessible through a link. No audio or video recordings are part of the study. The survey consists of
three parts. The first one collecting background information about intercultural experiences of the
participants in their lives, in their current job/studies and at the school. The second part consists of
assisting the intercultural competences level of the participants. The third part tries to determine if
certain skills are linked to the L2 teaching classroom.

4. What is expected?
From the participants it is expected to give consent for the processing of their data and to answer
truthfully to the several questions of the survey. The filling out of the survey should not last more
than 15 minutes. The survey will be accessed through a link and will be filled out during the
participants' free time.

5. What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of participating in this study?
As a participant you will not benefit directly from participation in this study. However, the study may
provide useful data for the future. For example, research into intercultural competences can also
provide basic information on the causes and possible approaches to language acquisition.
Potential disadvantages include:
- It may take a considerable amount of time to complete the questionnaire.
- You might face potentially confrontational questions.

6. Voluntary participation
Participation is voluntary. If you decide that you may not participate after all, no action is necessary
on your part. You do not need to sign anything. In addition, you do not need to explain why you do
not want to participate anymore. While you are participating, you can always change your mind and
stop at any time — including <u>during</u> the study. In addition, you can still withdraw your consent after

your have taken part. If you choose to do so, your research data will not be included in the analyses. However, the data can no longer be deleted if it has already been analysed or if the research data can no longer be traced back to you.

7. For what purpose will the data collected be used?

Your personal data will be managed by a single person, **Laura Müllejans.** If you wish to correct or have this personal data deleted, you can do so by contacting **Laura Müllejans (l.mullejans@students.uu.nl)**. The personal data will not be passed on to people other than the researchers who are directly involved in this project.

Data will be collected during your participation in the study. These data are given a code that can only be traced back to your child with a key. This means that the research data are encrypted. We are obliged to store the encrypted research data for at least 10 years. Your data will be stored and kept on a server secured by Utrecht University. The encrypted research data may be shared with and/or reused by other scientists, possibly to answer other research questions. The key that can be used to trace encrypted data back to you personally will be destroyed as soon as possible.

8. Is any reimbursement provided for your child's participation in the study?

There are no reimbursements arranged for this study.

9. More information about this study?

If you wish to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher
by email: l.mullejans@students.uu.nl
by phone: +393927458224

10. Confidentiality

I hereby give my consent to share my data with Utrecht University. I understand that my data will be handled confidentially.

Full Name:

_____

Signature:

Part 1: Background Information

Q1 1st Nationality:

_____

Q2 2nd Nationality:

_____

Q3 What is your current work/studies?

_____

Q4 How long have you been working at your company/been studying (in months)?

_____

Q5 How many years have you attended the European School of Varese (Primaria + Secondaria and in years)?

_____

Q6 What year did you graduate from the European School of Varese?

_____

Q7 What L2 class did you attend?

○ L2-German

○ L2-French

○ L2-English

The rest of the information will provide a first overview of your intercultural contacts and experiences.

Q8 What percentage of your friends are from other countries? (no exact amount is necessary, just a good estimation)

○ 20%

○ 40%

○ 60%

○ 80%

○ 100%

Q9 How many languages do you think you speak well?

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5 or more

Q10 Where and how did you learn these languages?

	Home	School	Extracurricular activities	Other	Does not apply
Language 1	○	○	○	○	○
Language 2	○	○	○	○	○
Language 3	○	○	○	○	○
Language 4	○	○	○	○	○
Language 5	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q12 How often do you watch movies/tv shows in a foreign language?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q13 How often have you been abroad for reasons other than work/studies (holidays, family visits, personal reasons etc.)?

○ 0 - 2 times

○ 3 - 5 times

○ 6 - 10 times

○ 10 - 15 times

○ more than 15 times

Q14 From these, how long did your longest stay abroad last?

○ 0 - 2 days

○ 2 days - 1 week

○ 1 week - 1 month

○ 1 month - 5 months

○ 6 months or more

Q15 How often did you go abroad for work/studies?

○ 0-2 times

○ 3 - 5 times

○ 6 - 10 times

○ 10 - 15 times

○ more than 15 times

Q16 From these, how long did your longest stay abroad last?

○ 0 - 2 days

○ 2 days - 1 week

○ 1 week - 1 month

○ 1 month - 5 months

○ 6 months or more

Q17 How many work projects do you have to do with colleagues/fellow students from other cultures in your work/studies?

○ None at all

○ A little

○ A moderate amount

○ A lot

○ A great deal

Q18 How often do you have to deal with people from other countries in your work/studies?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q19 How often have you been abroad with the school?

○ 0 - 2 times

○ 3 - 5 times

○ 6 - 10 times

○ more than 10 times

Q20 How long did your longest stay abroad with the school last?

○ 1 day

○ 1 day - 3 days

○ 3 days - 1 week

○ 1 week - 2 weeks

○ more than 2 weeks

Q21 How often did you have to deal with people from other countries in your school?

○ Never

○ Sometimes

○ About half the time

○ Most of the time

○ Always

Q22 How many school projects (assignments, presentations etc.) did you do with students from other cultures at ESV?

○ None at all

○ A few

○ A moderate amount

○ A lot

○ All of them

Q23 Additional intercultural experiences in school you want to tell me about?

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

Part 2: Intercultural Profile
The following section will be to determine intercultural competences.
 It's possible that some of these statements describe situations that you have not experienced. Please try to imagine such a situation and pick the answer that corresponds best to your possible behaviour and reaction.

Q24 Please try to answer the following statements truthfully. You will get five options for each statement: 1 (strongly disagree) up till 5 (strongly agree)

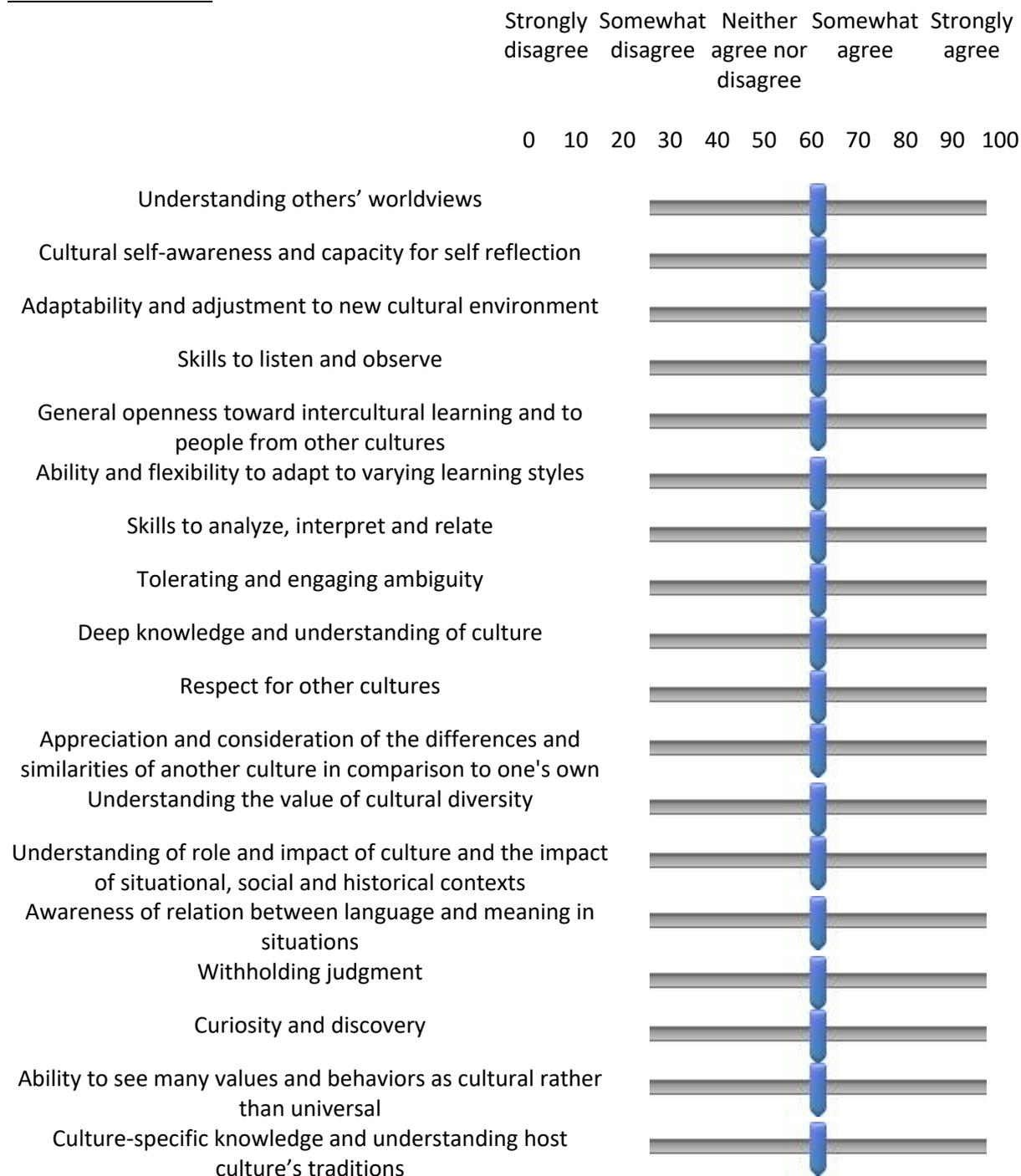|	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients from other countries that I don't know.	○	○	○	○	○
I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.	○	○	○	○	○
When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.	○	○	○	○	○

When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When I hear about a catastrophe happening in another country, I think about the people there and their fate ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I get confused when there are no reliable transport timetables in the country where I spend my holiday ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I often change my plans when I am on holiday abroad ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When the behaviour of people from other cultures confuses me, I avoid making contact with them ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When students from other cultures have different study habits I adapt to their habits ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

If I have behaved inappropriately towards a student from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting them ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When there are fellow students who constitute a minority, I try to involve them in the majority group ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I like to learn about the traditions and stories of other cultures ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Part 3: IC in the classroom
 This part of the study is about how intercultural competences are linked to L2 language teaching.

Q25 Please rate to what extent you think you have gained the following abilities thanks to the

L2 classroom at ESV:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100

Understanding others' worldviews

Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self reflection

Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment

Skills to listen and observe

General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures

Ability and flexibility to adapt to varying learning styles

Skills to analyze, interpret and relate

Tolerating and engaging ambiguity

Deep knowledge and understanding of culture

Respect for other cultures

Appreciation and consideration of the differences and similarities of another culture in comparison to one's own

Understanding the value of cultural diversity

Understanding of role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social and historical contexts

Awareness of relation between language and meaning in situations

Withholding judgment

Curiosity and discovery

Ability to see many values and behaviors as cultural rather than universal

Culture-specific knowledge and understanding host culture's traditions

Q26 If you have any further remarks or comments please fill them in here:

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

This is the end of the survey.
In case you should have any more questions please do not hesitate to contact me under
l.mullejans@students.uu.nl.Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Opening:
Hi, nice to meet you!
And thank you for joining me for this interview for my master thesis. And if it would be ok with you I would start recording now?
Ok. Could you first of all state for how long you have been teaching, how long you have been at the school and please state which L2 language you are currently teaching in the S7.

Knowledge about intercultural competences:
1. How important do you think is the ability to handle intercultural situations and are you familiar with the term "intercultural competences"?
2. Between attitude, knowledge and skill which one do you think the students develop the most?
   a. In the school?
   b. In the L2 classroom?
3. Are you familiar with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (and the role of intercultural awareness p.103)
4. Are you familiar with five aspects of ICC by Byram:
   a. attitude (savoir etre),
   b. knowledge (savoirs)
   c. skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre)
   d. skill of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre)
   e. critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)
5. Would you say you try to integrate these principles in your teaching?

IC in the classroom:
6. Do you think the development of intercultural competences is associated with language acquisition?
   a. On a scale from 1 to 5, how strongly do you think this link is?
7. Would you consider the L2 classroom to be the primary environment to acquire intercultural competences (in general)?
8. Do you think intercultural competences are transmitted at ESV and in the L2 classroom?
   a. If not, what do you think is the cause of this? (eg. lack of time, lack of resources)
   b. Do you have the feeling that due to reasons such as lack of time you have to choose between teaching the language and teaching intercultural competences?
   c. And if we do not consider the L2 classroom, what other aspect of ESV do you think transmits intercultural competences to the students?

IC in L2 teaching:
9. Are you familiar with methods and techniques for developing intercultural competences? (eg. reflection, mix students for projects, narration of stories to take over another identity, ethnographic tasks, presentations about cultures, case studies, role play)
10. What do you think would be an ideal classroom situation be for facilitating greater intercultural sensitivity?
11. How do you or would you assess students' intercultural development?

Extras:
12. In the survey, in the comment section, some students mentioned peer to peer education and a certain kiva project.
    a. Could you explain to me what these are?
13. In case you have taught at a national school, do you see a difference of IC level among the students? in the school environment? In the teaching?

Closing:
This would be the end of the interview. Do you have any further questions or remarks?
Thank you very much for your cooperation and have a nice day!

PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism
Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:
- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism

entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.
Name: Laura Müllejans
Student number: 8351783
Date and signature: 25.04.2021 *Laura Müllejans*

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.