ASSESSMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: CHALLENGES AND PRACTICES¹

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Abstract

Preparing future teachers to be successful and competent intercultural communicators cannot be overemphasized in a time of migrations, cross-cultural misunderstandings, ethnic clashes, and gender politics. It is crucial to provide both instruction and training, so that students can both work on their own intercultural competence (IC), and become skilled and equipped to include IC elements in their teaching. The Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) course for pre-service English language teachers in Serbia has been reshaped several times since its introduction into the curriculum in 2008, primarily in its assessment formats. As a case study of assessment tools, the paper examines the organisation of assessment, how different assessment strategies were selected and employed over a period of 10 years. Special attention is placed on the balance between the three ICC domains, the use of summative and formative assessment, and the backwash effect against the specificities of the teaching context and pre-service English language teacher profile in a monocultural setting. It is shown that further adjustments are needed with particular attention being paid to the student profile and required outcomes for teacher education.

Keywords: *assessment, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural sensitivity, teacher education.*

Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is as needed as ever in today's world of geo-economic changes, migration, and rising ethnic and national tensions. To prepare future professionals, there have been different efforts in education to include the intercultural (IC) component. Over a period of twenty years, a number of documents have been issued by

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researchers, authors, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe to provide a framework and help for teachers working on their students' ICC (e.g. Pestalozzi programs, UNESCO Guidelines on intercultural education, OECD Global competency for an inclusive world, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters, etc.).

Universities across the globe, having recognized the need to make their students effective IC communicators possessing global readiness, have been introducing courses on ICC (de Wit, 2015; Grefersen-Hermans, 2017; Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, Liu, 2016; Spencer-Oatey, 2010). With multinational companies, migration, and the rising number of minority students, policy makers "include intercultural objectives in curricula, and teachers find themselves faced with the challenge of promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence through their teaching" (Sercu, 2005a, p. 2).

Enabling a professional to function in a foreign culture is essentially different from preparing a teacher to teach ICC, as the latter needs to develop his or her own knowledge, sensitivity, and skill in IC relationships, at the same time recognizing these elements in different cultures and learners.

Assessment is especially challenging for such ICC-development courses in higher education, due to the complexity of the concept itself, the need to have a final grade without imposing views on students, students' already formed beliefs, etc. The article is a case study on ICC assessment practices in an elective course, offered at the University of Niš, Serbia. Here future English language (EFL) teachers have to firstly develop their own ICC, and then be prepared to fulfill the requirements that the national curriculum places before them regarding the ICC of their future learners. It discusses how different ICC domains are represented in the assessment process and what tools can be used to provide enough feedback to students, while at the same time providing enough valid information for appropriate grading.

Intercultural communicative competence in teacher education and practice

It is taken as a given that future language teachers should possess intercultural communicative competence, which consists of three components. Teachers should "*know* the culture and the foreign language, and show *attitudes of interest* in otherness and [have] *skills* in interpreting, relating and discovering" (Byram, 1997, p. 70) that would lead them to become "mediator[s] between people of different cultural origins" (p. 71), effectively and appropriately communicating in intercultural situations, with people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

Cultural knowledge, intercultural sensitivity, and competence will not 'tag along' with language instruction, nor will it adequately prepare learners for IC encounters (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). ICC is a developmental process (Blair, 2017; Byram, 1997), not a "one-off act of achievement or acquisition" (Blair, 2017, p. 112), it requires a structured instruction enabling people to successfully mediate between cultures (Byram, 2008). Therefore, as a required outcome of language instruction, ICC with the broad, three-part focus presents a challenge for the classroom, and teachers need to know how to break it down into specific outcomes.

Another concern for foreign language teachers trained to be linguists, is that they do not feel confident about including culture into their language instruction (Byram, 1997) or when they do, they mostly refer to the elements of 'high' and surface culture (Lazarević, 2007). Many, while believing that they are promoting IC values, still use a teacher-centered approach (Sercu, 2005b), with "culture content [that] is often superficial, not systematic, and not given much weight in the assessment process" (Schultz, 2007, p. 12). Teachers resort to factual knowledge as the most manageable to present and assess, leading to a simplistic representation of culture, stripping down interaction to particular rules, where only "surface explanations of actions are seen, without much attention given to 'contextual richness and depth'" (Fleming, 2009, p. 8). Finally, pre-service teachers come into programs with already formed beliefs about the values of teaching that are difficult to change (Hilbert, 2003).

ICC in the local context

In the region, until recently "little attention has been paid in pre-service teacher education to exploring the cultural component of language study" (Davcheva, 2002, p. 68) or to supporting teachers to become aware of themselves as negotiators, as it were, between different cultures. While there is a body of research that focuses on training international professionals, a relatively smaller number of studies aim at student development (more in Griffith et al., 2016), suggesting that "ICC is a malleable construct and that higher education may improve students' ICC" (p. 7). In the regional ICC context, language teaching curricula have been reshaped on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2001) and the focus has been on in-service teachers (Đuričić & Georgijev, 2013; Georgiev, 2014; Petrović & Jokić, 2016; Stojanović, 2016; Tanasijević, 2015; Vidosavljević et al., 2016; Višacki, 2016; Vujović, 2003).

The National curriculum for foreign language teaching in Serbia for elementary education has a heavy focus on the cognitive domain of ICC, while at the same time expecting learners to develop a positive attitude and openness both towards other languages and cultures, and one's own language and cultural heritage. The Standards of achievement for elementary education (2017) solely deal with knowledge about other cultures, while those for high school education (2015) do not include any standards related to ICC. Also, although the Law on the System of Education (2017) states the importance of ICC, pre-service EFL teachers are still not formally required to have any IC competencies upon finishing their studies, nor is that stated as a program outcome. Still, regardless of the mismatch between different legal acts, laws have started insisting on ICC as an educational outcome, ICC has its place in the Serbian educational system, and university programs for teacher education do include ICC courses, although without a unified attempt at aligning study programs with the law.

Intercultural communicative competence assessment

When it comes to assessment, it "is imperative to develop valid and reliable measures of ICC" (Griffith et al., 2016, p. 2), and different methods will fit different educational contexts (Timpe, 2013), different considerations and tools, with different challenges for instructors. There have been more than 80 different frameworks used over the period from

1957 to 2002 (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006), with the focus on different elements: perception, attitudes, behavior, knowledge – many of which are self-assessment tools. More recently, a broad review of assessment practices in higher education (Deardorff & Arasaratnam, 2017) showed that instructors from different countries mostly use a smaller selection of tools: from personal reflections, presentations and self-reports, to portfolios with reflective tasks, different questionnaires, interviews in reflective formats, and checklists.

Such a variety of tools reflects the different challenges that the concept poses with regard to assessment. Firstly, the difficulty of including all the variables: linguistic and socio-cultural context, identity, the role of language in a society, expectations from assessment (Scarino, 2007). Learner factors – cultural identity, age, gender, socio-economic status, learning style – may reduce the objectivity of assessment (Kjartansson & Skopinskaja, 2003). Teachers are advised to use data from different sources, “observation checklists, [...] attitudes inventories, surveys, portfolios, journals, self-evaluation reports, collection of written products” (Lussier et al., 2007, p. 29) to make valid assessments of learners’ ICC. In a monolingual and monocultural context, where the possibilities for applying the skills often have to be consciously designed, some of these variables will be difficult to factor in.

Different formative assessment tools and performance-based assessments can respond to the complexities of ICC better than traditional assessment. Formative assessment is more motivating (Alkharusi, 2008), can improve the quality of teaching and raise student performance (Riggan & Oláh, 2011), and is more appropriate for a three-domain concept of ICC, as it is “effective in virtually all educational settings: content areas, knowledge and skill types, and levels of education” (Sadler, 1998).

Since assessment assumes there is some sort of a threshold level, putting into practice any model is contingent on “the factors in particular circumstances” (Byram, 1997, p. 78), making the threshold different in different contexts, always keeping in mind students’ cognitive and affective development (Byram, 1997). This is why ICC assessment needs a particular form and content for particular teaching situations and why ICC “cannot be assessed, or encouraged, by psychometric objective testing” (Byram, 1997, p. 90) but rather with formative tools, where students demonstrate their preferences, and where the correlation between three domains is visible.

Unlike other ICC training where there might not be any formal evaluation required, this is not the case with a formal course, as students finish with a particular mark. The immediate issue is how to assess the development of the affective domain without imposing one’s own attitudes onto students while understanding that students’ values and beliefs evolve over time, and affect knowledge and skills. Students need to be able to reconsider issues from different perspectives, all of which invariably takes more time than a semester-long course. A dilemma remains – how to give a final mark when it is very difficult “to define the development of processual competencies (Stier, 2002) by showing evident measurable results” (Lundgren, 2009, p. 147).

Present study

With the present case study, we aimed at analyzing how the course objectives and desirable outcomes dictated the application and introduction of different assessment tools. We intended to show how the course material, particular local education and social context,

and the apparent change in how students learn and process information influenced what assessment elements needed to be strengthened or changed.

A case study was used for the contained context, "to gain a detailed understanding of the process" (Bloor & Wood, 2001, p. 28) in the ICC classroom. Case studies provide an insight into a particular grouping as they gather holistic data, allow for different discoveries and therefore may produce new theories (Bloor & Wood, 2001) as well as a depth and richness of description (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). Keeping in mind that the results cannot be generalizable to a bigger population, it is important to revisit the ideas, as ICC assessment is, in effect, always heavily context-dependent.

Each assessment tool set was used as a unit of analysis, and these were compared over a period of 10 years. It is hoped that the analysis shows a holistic overview of ICC assessment, with the necessary context (Patton, 2002).

The context of the ICC course

The course was offered in 2008, when elective courses began to be more widely offered at Serbian universities. The need to strengthen the appropriate IC competencies such as critical thinking, curiosity, empathy, in addition to interpreting skills, was seen as vital at the particular moment in our society when a rise in homophobia, nationalism and ethnocentrism was detected (Dimitrijević, 2010; Radoman, 2011; Skrozza, 2008). The instructors believed that future EFL teachers had to promote intercultural values, positive attitudes and understanding.

Students at the English department receive training in literature, cultural studies, linguistics and applied linguistics. The ICC course is a 5th semester elective, it carries 3 ECTS and is taught in weekly, 90-minute long sessions.

The course set up

As the course is offered to English language students, there is a split focus between intercultural elements and students' language proficiency. Students are expected to get acquainted with the theoretical models of intercultural competence (Bennett, 2004; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004; Hall, 1976; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997; Hofstede, 1997) and raise their awareness of intercultural communication and the different factors that influence it. Other course objectives are the development of practical skills for studying how culture is expressed in language, media, discourse, and how culture influences communication; recognition of the ICC potential in language material; and the ability to adapt materials to teaching needs.

Before taking the ICC course, students have had a number of cultural studies courses (e.g. Introduction to British studies), gaining factual knowledge about Anglophone cultures. However, these are not the focus in the ICC course: students are expected to reach another level of knowledge: "the appreciation of the significance of the facts" (Byram et al., 1994, p. 137) – how they are seen in life and how they "underpin culturally shared understanding of their importance" (p. 137).

The course has been designed to provide a balance between training and education (Fleming, 2009). This is students' first formal contact with intercultural instruction, therefore, they need to learn and develop their understanding if they are to apply it to their behavior. It is important that students realize that the course is not a 'dos and don'ts list' when meeting a new culture, and they are required to analyze the ideas of a monolithic culture, identities, dynamics of culture, dispositions and values. As an illustration of theoretical frameworks, students examine video material and texts with intercultural themes. Students analyze units from different EFL textbooks for IC content to raise awareness of issues such as stereotypes and different representations of culture. Although the focus of the course is more on academic achievement, with cognitive skills taking precedence, the instructors, being aware of this from the very start, try to compensate for this through material design, student-centered learning and formative assessment.

The number of students signed up for the course has tended to vary, depending on what other electives were offered. From the initial average of around 54 students during the first five years since the introduction of the course in 2008, the number has dropped to an average of 29 over the last five years due to an increased number of electives and decreased overall number of students in the study program.

Students are almost exclusively monocultural and, before exploring the ICC topics, as Davcheva (2002) would state, "they had never before had a reason, or a stimulus, to interrogate their experiences in becoming socialized into their native linguistic and cultural environment" (p. 70), thus probably being more prone to ethnocentrism than they would be aware. Most had had a tourist-like experience of other cultures, while their exploration of English-language cultures mostly came from their studies and the media.

Assessment in the ICC course

The final marks that students received are rather satisfactory –from 2008 to 2016, the percentage of students who earned the highest marks, 9 and 10, ranged between 11% and 33%, while in the last cohort of 2017 it was even higher: 60%. However, from 2008 there have been 24% to 40% of students in different cohorts who still have not taken their final, even though they have fulfilled pre-exam obligations (the reasons for this have not been explored, however, we believe graduating students put off taking exams in electives until they have passed all their other exams). Therefore, we believe that although the overall pass rate is satisfactory, some elements need to be re-examined.

Academic achievement and the development of students' own ICC were two equally important components but they made organizing and designing assessment effortful and complex. With the aim of the course being to help students firstly understand the concept of ICC with all its elements, then work on its development and finally prepare themselves to use it in their teaching, the assessment tools had to account for these different aspects that would be combined into a single grade.

Additionally, throughout the course there is insistence that students develop their critical skills and apply them increasingly more frequently as their ICC increases. Their critical thinking skills should be part of their teaching repertoire so that they would be able to

guide their own students to develop “a multi-perspective view” (Guilherme, 2011, p. 364). For this purpose, both continuous and final assessments have been employed.

As Deardorff (2011) notices, the development of ICC is a dynamic, ongoing process, and it cannot be expected that a learner will finish a course fully competent, as “there is no pinnacle at which someone becomes ‘interculturally competent’” (Deardorff, 2009, p. xiii). Therefore, it has always been crucial that students receive enough feedback, both on their understanding of theoretical models and their usage of language.

Our context of a monocultural classroom and pre-service teacher education also present several considerations for assessment. Firstly, the assessment tools used are not to be focused only on knowledge about IC competence, but on attitudes and skills too. Assessment is supposed to show students, in the form of loop-input (Woodward, 2003) what potential issues they themselves could include in their own teaching, and how to evaluate their learners’ progress in terms of ICC. Then, for future EFL teachers, the language proficiency requirement has to be taken into account. They have to provide work that is of a sufficient linguistic proficiency, approximately on the C1-C1.2 level (CEFR, 2001) and show command of ICC-related terminology. For all the listed elements, continuous assessment followed by a final project has been seen as the most suitable form, as it includes language proficiency and terminology, and takes into account the affective domain.

Considering all these aspects that make the assessment in the course complex and challenging, after ten years of implementation we analyzed the assessment tools used, to explore their benefits and drawbacks, for the particular teaching situation, the profile of students and the goals of the course, and to highlight the issues that we see relevant for curriculum designers and assessment developers in teacher education.

Assessment tool analysis

Assessment tool set 1. When the course was introduced, assessment consisted of three parts: *intercultural diary, essay, and presentation*. Firstly, students were asked to keep a weekly journal with situations and intercultural events they found interesting, either from the community or from the media. They had to note down their thoughts and feelings, and reflect on the events – either personal experiences or current domestic and foreign affairs. While the assignments were weekly, students presented the work two times during the course, and were given feedback and guidelines as to how some of the topics could be developed further. It was hoped that this would help students explore not only the facts but also the values of the people involved, and the way they were perceived.

Students were also expected to write an argumentative essay of up to 2,500 words problematizing a particular event, or a book, series, film, personal experience, or providing a cultural profile of a particular country, counter culture group, social or ethnic group. Students were free to explore topics from their journal in more detail and expand on what they had already written. Each essay would go through at least two working drafts before the instructors deemed it appropriate as the basis for the presentation. Students received feedback both on the form and the content of their essays, where the biggest problems were drafting the thesis statement and using theoretical models to support their views.

Finally, students had to give a five-minute presentation of the most salient points of their essay. Each presentation was followed by a discussion, where other students asked for clarification, gave comments, and in general, shared opinions. As students presented in groups, these discussions were quite vibrant, and all students took part. Students were awarded bonus points for their participation in discussion.

For each of these segments, instructor feedback was very important. By its very nature, feedback shows that the teacher brings certain attitudes to the whole process of teaching; it shows teachers' empathy towards students' learning and efforts (Sadler 1998), and even more so in the case of ICC. The teacher should be a model, showing understanding, 'guiding' students as it were, and helping them develop and improve. The feedback was always twofold: it referred to the language use, but also to terminology, ideas and connections between ICC elements.

The final projects students submitted were of good quality, students showed mastery of terminology, discussed varied sources, and, though they did not venture into current social issues, their final projects had almost an equal focus on cognitive and affective domains, with in-depth analyses of material.

However, it turned out that the form of the diary was too loose and some students seemed to have needed a firmer structure. While some students followed current events and tried to apply the theoretical frameworks to analyze them, others decided to only supply their thoughts, in the form of brief notes, on general, surface culture elements (food, subculture styles, music, etc.) without linking their entries to truly IC issues. Finally, the feedback on the intercultural diary did not play a significant role, being given only twice during the course, in an open discussion. Therefore, after three years, the format was changed.

Assessment tool set 2. The first change was the one from a diary to *journal entries*. While the diary was open to any number of different topics, the journal was a series of ten topics to which students had to respond in a 500-word paragraph. The topics were given at the beginning of the semester (e.g. the nature of patriotism and nationalism; analysis of the representation of minorities in newspapers; ethnocentrism in Serbia through Bennett's model, etc.). Students were to submit their journal entries weekly over the 13 to 14-week-long semester. It was hoped that continuous assessment would give a steady insight into students' progress, and provide constant feedback to students.

The essay remained a requirement, while students were asked to have up to a page-long draft prepared for peer review during a seminar session. A *presentation* was the final part of assessment.

However, during course work, students seemed to be dwelling more on the surface culture and its elements when discussing certain phenomena (e.g. students tended to describe practices rather than analyze the reasons behind a particular behavior). What started to be noticeable was that the quality of student journal entries and final essays was variable, as students failed to draw on the theoretical frameworks with which to analyze the topics. Another drawback continued to be the high number of students, resulting in a considerable workload for the instructors.

Therefore, after the assessment tools had been in place for two years, they were slightly changed to include a heavier focus on the theoretical framework, since the instructors believed it would be important for students' teaching practice.

Assessment tool set 3. The *journal entries* were retained as an assessment tool, as the instructors believed it gave students continuous feedback, kept them on the task, and required a continual engagement with the course. They provided a platform for students to give their opinions, as students were still free to link the journal tasks to topics of their own liking.

However, the ICC topics may sound deceptively familiar from psychology or sociology courses in students' high school education, or sound 'common sense' as topics that are present in the media and everyday life, leading them to believe that the theory behind it is commonsensical as well. The instructors decided to include *two knowledge and evaluation tests* in the fourth and tenth week of the course (with questions ranging from what behavior characterizes a particular culture dimension to whether they see multiculturalism as possible in today's society). The tests aimed at estimating students' familiarity with the reading material, as well as employing critical thinking, as one of the test questions always asked for students' own perspective.

Instead of writing a full essay, students were asked to provide a *presentation proposal*, a more detailed draft, on which they would base their presentation. Students had a seminar session for peer- and teacher-feedback on the topics they wanted to explore. The instructors believed that in that way the balance in assessment was kept, since now students were tested twice in a semester, paying greater attention to the continuous assessment and reducing the weight of the final project, which formerly consisted of an essay and presentation. Still, the instructors felt that the *presentation* gave a platform for students to discuss the topic, so this element remained.

What turned out to be problematic was that students – when tested on cultural models in the first test – performed mostly unsatisfactorily. However, since students needed this knowledge in order to finish their presentations, most of them did solidify it later in the course. Therefore, testing them right after certain theory was introduced might not give us a valid insight into what students could do. Also, students expected test questions to be on theory only, and did not perform well on open-ended questions (e.g., why critical cultural awareness in Byram's model is considered to be its most important element, or why plurilingualism and pluriculturalism should be educational goals). Students also showed that they found the topics discussed difficult and demanding, especially the ones that asked them to reposition their points of view, analyze their own identity and their immediate cultural context.

Another issue noticed not only in this course, but more globally, is the way students received and processed information. For the last decade or so, students have 'managed' their courses for minimal effort and maximal benefit (Arum & Roksa, 2011), an attitude that is not conducive either to true learning or to ICC development. Students are ready to do the limited reading and do the tests on it, without "individual investment and cognitive effort" (Arum & Roksa, 2011, p. 4) which is why this particular assessment system and insistence on critical thinking is perceived as too demanding. Additionally, students believe that the wealth of information and easy access to it would be enough for a successful completion of tasks, without a true need to learn or analyze information. However, background knowledge is necessary for cognitive skills (Willingham, 2009) and for complete ICC.

The change in how students see university has been well documented (Levine, 1993; McCormick, 2003; Ritzer, 1996), as no longer a place that can provide some higher purpose,

but is seen as just one of many things that students could do (Penn, 2011). For courses that have objectives which are not immediate, but demand more global considerations and long-term investments of time, effort, and emotion, such as ICC courses, students are impatient with the demands and tend to work only towards the fixed, visible and short-term goals.

Furthermore, some of the students had additional difficulty navigating ICC topics due to their high school and vocational school educational profiles, with considerably fewer classes of literature, history, and social sciences. Material that would be important for the development of the cognitive domain, providing context for considerations of attitudes and opinions, had not always been part of their previous education. These students needed more time to get their bearings, considering, for the first time, social events in the light of different cultures and different identities.

In terms of IC sensitivity, on several occasions students tended to stress understanding, equality and tolerance as the answer to all problems, essentially showing the characteristics of the Minimization phase (Bennett, 2004). They (falsely) believed that the attitude 'we are all equal, and no one should be discriminated against' is a sign of positive intercultural attitudes. It led, in one instance, to a student writing an essay that affirmed the politics and attitudes of skinhead subculture, which indicated that students needed more context knowledge so that they would be able to activate critical cultural awareness. Therefore, after three years, tests were replaced with a different task and a new assessment tool.

Assessment tool set 4. The *journal entries* were retained, as they provided a continuous check of students' progress. The number of entries was reduced, while the requirements for them stayed the same; they were short essays on the topics assigned at the beginning of the term, to be submitted every other week.

Instead of tests, students were assigned a group project – they needed to make a *lesson plan* for teaching English that would incorporate IC elements. Since students were taking an obligatory course in Methodology of teaching English in the same semester, this was seen as a good continuation and a cross-curricular link. The instructors recognized the complexity of constructing a lesson plan with a focus shifted to ICC (considerations of learners' age and proficiency, activity design, rationale behind their lesson plan, etc.); therefore, it was in the format of a group project. The instructors believed that the lesson plan would give enough structure to students to include IC material and focus on a range of language devices at the levels of grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and pragmatic usage that could carry socio-culturally loaded meanings in a contained context for their learners.

However, while students did not have any major problems with journal entries, it turned out that lesson plans with IC elements were difficult to produce. Students mostly relied on linguistic elements and sometimes theoretical support for certain teaching decisions was missing. Topics such as food, customs and other visible elements of culture were included, while very few lesson plans provided activities that offered a discussion (or any other type of analysis) of the invisible elements of culture. The activities in lesson plans were geared more towards knowledge than other domains, and where it was possible to include other domains – especially behavioral through pragmatic and socio-cultural elements in language – students did not do so. Even with feedback and gradual gear-up to the lesson plan, students clearly needed more time to come to terms with the complexities

of various ICC elements. The scaffolding students had got from the Methodology course seemed insufficient to incorporate these new demands.

Since it seemed that this type of assessment presented more difficulties for students than the instructors had anticipated, and that students did not meet the requirements, it was omitted from assessment in the following academic year.

Assessment tool set 5. Finally, for the last two academic years the assessment tool has to a certain extent been restored to the initial format, consisting of six *journal entries*, *essay draft*, *essay* and *presentation*. The content of journal entries has been slightly changed, but they essentially explore similar issues as before (the nature of nationalism, ethnocentrism, prejudice, etc.). The requirements for the presentation have remained the same, while the essay is 1,500 words long.

Another change was introduced for the past four cohorts, when students had a chance to join a study group for ICC that was organized by the instructors and led by a visiting teaching assistant through the Fulbright US teaching assistant program. These are usually young teaching assistants who provide the much-needed intercultural contact for our students who then need to activate their affective and behavior domains and become the mediators of their culture. Students are given extra credit for attending the study group sessions as they explore the topics that are mentioned but not explored in detail in regular classes. This proved to be a useful addition to the course, as it brought students together in a group, allowed them more time to explore topics and gave them an opportunity to tailor the reading and viewing material on their own. These students, in their presentations and essays, showed more confidence and more awareness of IC issues. This was seen in their grades too: from 2014 to 2017, the percentage of the students who passed the exam in their first exam term was 39%, 64%, 63%, and 60%, respectively. Also, the percentage of those who passed with As or Bs was 21%, 33%, 11% and 83%, respectively.

Concluding remarks

Each assessment tool in itself provides reliable evidence on students' achievements. The formats of an essay, lesson plan or presentation have clear standards and students are aware of how they need to perform in order to pass or achieve a particular grade. However, the questions of the ratio of different tools and how to appropriately represent three domains still remain because the ICC elements have to be balanced with academic expectations.

Additionally, given the social context, the instructors have always felt a need to increase students' IC sensitivity to their own society, as they would soon be educators themselves. It is important for instructors to help students develop the ability to recognize the processes that lead to the hidden oppression of minorities, to see practices which might allow stereotypes to remain unquestioned, and both policies and practices that cater to ethnocentric feelings and attitudes. However, using different frameworks that are generally used (IDI, for example, designed by Bennett (2004), or INCA, designed by the INCA project team) would need to be adapted for our purposes, compromising their validity.

Continuous feedback given on all aspects of students' performance helped students in terms of their thinking, especially for journal entries and essays. Students needed guidance

in order to do a deeper analysis of IC issues, to move from the statement and description of the phenomena to the exploration of culture characteristics. In this respect, the introduction of the study group proved to be a significant benefit, as they had structured support and interacted with a culturally 'different' instructor. The double scaffolding that was provided through formal instruction and the study group proved to be of considerable importance for student performance.

The considerations about the assessment tools in the pre-service ICC course for EFL teachers point to several issues, some of which are not always under the control of university instructors. Firstly, there are the changes in the high school curricula where the amount of teaching material (not necessarily in foreign languages, but in other school subjects) tends to take up most of the time, leaving little room for critical analysis of the content. Therefore, university students do not come equipped with some basic tools that would be useful for their introduction to and further exploration of ICC. The students signed up for the ICC course have repeatedly claimed that they had never been required to deliberate over any of the issues. While this should be taken with some reserve, it has been noticed in the work with students. Further efforts will have to be made to decide how to have a valid indicator of students' progress while providing them with enough scaffolding and practice.

Further, as this course is just one of many academic courses students take, the weight of the final grade will always be more on the cognitive side, with limited evidence of students' affective development. An incentive for lifelong learning should be one of the outcomes of the course, where students would see IC development as a lifelong process, and where they should be able to truly decentre (Byram, 1997).

Also, our experience goes against the claims that students "are highly strategic in their use of time and allocate it primarily to the topics they will tackle assignments on" (Gibbs, 2014, p. 1), as the tests results for most of the students were not satisfactory. Even when they had a chance to show their knowledge, when a smaller sample of curricula was covered, students for the most part showed less than satisfactory results because they seemed to see that information as something they could always reach for, while not processing it and making it an integral part of their learning. It would take a more comprehensive initiative to change students' views to learning than can be provided within the confines of this course.

Lastly, once students pass the course, they will have few opportunities during their in-service professional development to continue working on ICC. Therefore, coursework should set the foundation for students' independent learning and empathic attitudes, so that they are more appreciative and aware of differences, making their future interculturally-based language teaching more informed, structured, and embedded in their own interculturally positive attitudes and competencies (Paunović, 2011). Also, much more empirical insight into teachers' classroom practice is needed, and further research would be more than welcome: a similar comparison of assessment tools in other teacher programs, for other foreign languages, and especially for minority or 'small' languages.

Ideally, we should hope to have a course on ICC development followed by courses training our pre-service teachers on how to include ICC elements in their teaching practice, which would narrow the focus and potentially help students gain knowledge, raise their awareness, develop critical thinking, and make them more skilful in and responsive to ICC issues, essential for 21st century challenges.

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ПРОЦЕНА ИНТЕРКУЛТУРНИХ КОМУНИКАЦИОНИХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЈА У ИНИЦИЈАЛНОМ ОБРАЗОВАЊУ НАСТАВНИКА ЕНГЛЕСКОГ ЈЕЗИКА – ИЗАЗОВИ И ПРАКСА

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Апстракт Веома је важно обучавање будућих наставника да буду усешни и компетентни интеркултурни посредници у време миграција, међународних несјоразума, етничких сукоба. Неопходно је обезбедити им и теоријска и практична знања да би могли да наставе да развијају своју интеркултурну комуникативну компетенцију, а да у исто време постану обучени и спреми да укључе интеркултурне елементе у своју наставу. Изборни курс Интеркултурна комуникативна компетенција који похађају студенти Дејаршмана за

аналитику прошао је неколико пута кроз измене од када је уврштен у курикулум 2008. године, и то највише у начину оцењивања студента. Као случај, рад анализира организацију оцењивања, различите стратегије које су примењиване током последњих 10 година. Посебна пажња се поклања односу интеркултурних домена, коришћењу сумативне и формативне оцењивања, редефинисању наставних циљева и метода инструкције (backwash effect) и специфичностима контекста у коме се обучавају будући наставници енглеског језика. Резултати показују да је потребно даље истражити профил студента и образовних профила и на основу тога радије даље на примени различитих стратегија оцењивања.

Кључне речи: оцењивање, интеркултурна комуникативна компетенција, интеркултурна сензитивност, иницијално образовање наставника.

ОЦЕНКА МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА – ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПРАКТИКА

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Резюме Образование будущих учителей – статья успешными и компетентными межкультурными посредниками в период миграций, международных недоразумений и этнических конфликтов, имеет большое значение. Необходимо предоставить им как теоретические, так и практические знания, в качестве основы для дальнейшего совершенствования межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции и, в то же время, подготовиться для включения межкультурных содержаний в свой учебный процесс. Выборный курс Межкультурная компетенция, который посещают студенты англистики, прошел несколько изменений с момента его включения в учебный план в 2008 году, главным образом в способе оценки студентов. В качестве тематического исследования, в статье анализируется организация оценивания и различные стратегии, которые были представлены в течение последних 10 лет. Особое внимание уделяется межкультурной сфере, использованию итоговой и формирующей оценки, переопределению целей и методов обучения (эффект обратной промывки), а также специфике контекста, в котором обучаются будущие учителя английского языка. Результаты показывают, что необходимо следить за профилем студентов и образовательным профилем и на этой основе продолжать работать над внедрением различных стратегий оценивания.

Ключевые слова: оценка, межкультурная коммуникативная компетентность, межкультурная чувствительность, образование учителей.