

**Further reading**

- Aitchison, Jean (1987): *Words in the Mind. An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon* [1987]. Cambridge, MA.
- Lewis, Michael (2008): *The Lexical Approach. The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. Andover, Hampshire.
- McCarthy, Michael/O'Keeffe, Anne/Walsh, Steven (2010): *Vocabulary Matrix. Understanding, Learning, Teaching*. Andover, Hampshire.
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## 9 Teaching Culture—Intercultural Competence, Transcultural Learning, Global Education

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The idea that teaching a foreign language always includes teaching another culture has guided foreign language education since Kramsch's (1993) *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Because language is used in a cultural context and this context is reflected in the language and how it is used to communicate, foreign language learning needs to make this cultural context available to language learners: If we assume that EFL learners in a German secondary school have learned words and phrases to talk about their school day, they may be equipped with the linguistic means to share their daily school experiences (teachers, subjects, activities, tests, etc.) with pupils from an English speaking country. However, it may already be difficult for them to understand and translate words like ›school assembly‹ (UK), to understand the significance of school uniforms or grasp the role that sports play in US high school communities. These examples may illustrate that it is not only necessary to focus on language as a linguistic system, but that we also need to help our learners understand the **cultural contexts** which are reflected in the language and which are necessary to understand if they want to communicate successfully in a foreign language.

Over the last decades, a number of different concepts, approaches and methodologies have been developed which provide suggestions about what exactly culture pedagogy should focus on and how ›culture‹ can be taught in foreign language education. This chapter introduces readers to basic concepts, theories, models and methods for teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. It sets out to define ›culture‹ and provide a brief outline of how the teaching of culture in English Language Teaching (ELT) has changed over the last decades. In addition, the chapter will present **educational objectives**, **basic assumptions** and concepts of **relevant approaches** such as Cultural Studies in ELT, intercultural learning, transcultural learning, global education and multilingualism, thus providing insights into the pedagogical and methodological repertoire that foreign language education can rely on for teaching ›culture‹. Three teaching examples at the end will serve to illustrate some of the pedagogical principles and propose ideas for putting educational objectives for cultural

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learning processes into practice. The **teaching proposals** will focus on three relevant aspects: (1) representing and exploring culture, (2) understanding culture and reading literary texts, (3) participating in cultural discourses.

## 9.1 | What is culture? Definitions and concepts

The idea that a foreign language cannot be taught without the culture(s) in which this language is used to communicate has generally been accepted in foreign language education. However, the ideas about ›what‹ exactly should be taught when teaching culture and the ideas about ›why‹ and ›how‹ it should be done, have changed over the last decades. These changes can be seen as a reflection of the academic discourse in the field of **Cultural Studies** about how culture can be described, explained and understood as well as a reflection of the role that teaching and learning about culture(s) is assigned in society. It is necessary, first of all, to reflect what ›culture‹ is or how it can be defined and explained before taking a closer look at approaches and concepts of how it can be taught.

**Culture as a controversial term:** The term ›culture‹ is a controversial term which has had many different meanings. One of the past controversies is connected to the idea of culture as something that can be classified as valuable to a greater or lesser extent: In colonial times, for example, the cultural achievements of ›civilisation‹ were contrasted with more ›primitive‹ or ›uncivilised‹ ways of life in order to justify colonial oppression (cf. Sommer 2003, 7). Another distinction that is or was often made is one between ›high‹ **culture**, for example the arts, literature or architecture, and ›low‹ **culture**, which usually refers, for example to popular culture, mass media etc. Modern approaches within Cultural Studies as a discipline avoid such evaluations of culture and aim at describing, explaining and understanding culture and processes of cultural change instead.

**Culture as a set of shared meanings:** While there are still many different concepts and definitions of ›culture‹, it has generally been agreed upon that, as Hall (1997, 1) suggests, ›culture is about ›shared meanings‹:

To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. Thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and ›making sense‹ of the world in broadly similar ways. (ibid., 2)

The idea of culture as a set of shared meanings among the members of a cultural group, however, does not mean that culture could be seen as a homogeneous, stable or fixed entity. Instead, it needs to be conceived of as heterogeneous and always in a flux. As Hall points out, ›in any culture, there is always a diversity of meanings about any topic, and more than one way of interpreting or representing it‹ (ibid., 2). Any representation

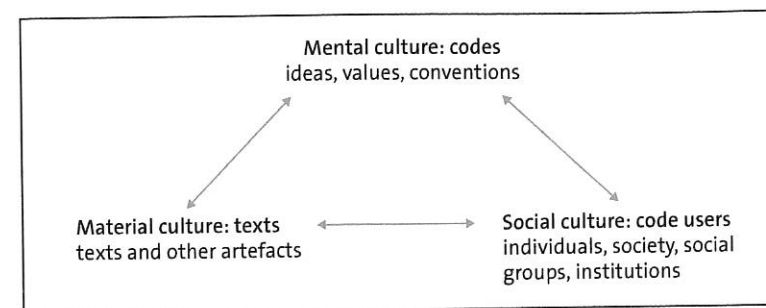


Illustration 9.1:  
Three dimensions  
of culture  
(according to  
Posner 2003, 47 ff.)

of culture in the classroom therefore needs to make sure that this **diversity of meanings** is also made accessible to learners so that they can understand **cultures as complex, heterogeneous entities**.

**Three dimensions of culture:** Cultural Semiotics distinguishes three dimensions of culture: a **material**, a **mental** and a **social dimension** (cf. Posner 2003).

- Material culture refers to texts (literature, theatre, film, etc.) and other artefacts (art, architecture, clothing, products of everyday life).
- Mental culture includes collective ideas, norms and values, perceptions of self and other, worldviews or ideologies.
- Social culture consists of society, social institutions (educational, administrative, political, judicial) and cultural agents (individuals, collective groups, etc.).

Of course, these dimensions do not exist separately, but are linked and interact with each other constantly: Children's books, for example, are part of the material dimension of culture, but also reflect cultural norms and values (mental dimension) and there are also rituals like reading a bedtime story to young children which fulfil different social functions within the family and society (social dimension). If we look at how children's books have developed over time, it is easy to see how changes in cultural norms and values have also led to a change in the way children's stories are told (e.g. with or without moralizing undertones) and, possibly, even in the way the bedtime story ritual is performed.

**Representing culture in the classroom:** The three-dimensional model of culture is not only relevant for Cultural Studies, but also for the EFL teacher who chooses or designs materials and makes decisions about how culture can be represented in the classroom: Teaching culture, in fact, means exploring the ›shared set of meanings‹, the values, norms and ways of thinking of the participants of a cultural group, as well as the social and institutional forms in which they live. However, the opportunities to observe the social dimension in the EFL classroom directly are limited and the mental dimension can only be observed and interpreted indirectly with the help of cultural manifestations or phenomena (cf. Hall 2007, 38 f.). While it is, of course, desirable to provide opportunities for learners to experience the social dimension of culture directly through **school exchanges** or **telecollaboration**, the FL classroom is still to a large

extent dependent on the **representation of culture through artefacts** like texts, visuals, music or realia (street signs, clothing, decorations, etc.).

›Culture as text‹ vs. ›culture as discursive practice‹: Another concept or idea that is relevant for the representation of culture in the FL classroom originates in Cultural Anthropology: The metaphor of ›culture as text‹ suggests that cultures can be read and interpreted like complex texts and that every cultural text is linked to many other cultural texts (cf. Bachmann-Medick 2004). In Cultural Studies, however, the metaphor of ›culture as text‹ has also been criticised, because it neglects the ›cultural agents‹, who exchange, share and negotiate cultural meanings. This leads to an understanding of ›culture as discursive practice‹, which assumes that culture is a dialogic and discursive process in which cultural meanings are negotiated among the participants of a culture (cf. Küster 2005).

**Modelling cultural discourses:** Hallet (2002) therefore suggests that cultures can be conceived of as a vast ensemble of texts and cultural discourses, as a ›textual and discursive space‹, which can be made accessible to learners in the FL classroom by modelling cultural discourses: If every cultural text is linked to other cultural texts which together make up a particular cultural discourse (›intertextuality‹), then reading this cultural text allows learners to access or interpret the cultural discourses that constitute the respective culture. This idea, of course, relies on the assumption that any cultural text can only be read or understood within the **cultural context(s)** to which it belongs and that it is necessary to provide opportunities for learners to read a text within the relevant cultural contexts. The idea of representing cultures by modelling cultural discourses therefore implies that teachers (or course book editors) have to select a combination of texts and materials which can open up the complexity and diversity of cultures and cultural meanings to their learners.

According to Decke-Cornill (1994) and Hallet (2002), **intertextuality** and **multiperspectivity** should be guiding principles and criteria for the selection and combination of texts: The complexity of cultures and the polyphony of cultural discourses can only be represented by a multitude of texts which open up a **diversity of voices** within a culture. In addition, text arrangements also need to take into account that real-life discourses are **multimodal**, i. e. they draw on various genres and media.

#### Key points

##### Principles for modelling cultural discourses (cf. Hallet 2007, 39 ff.)

- relevance of topics and issues: selected texts need to be relevant for a particular cultural context
- openness of text combinations: learners should be encouraged to research and find additional texts
- multitextuality and multiperspectivity: text combinations should represent diverse voices of cultural discourses
- intertextuality: texts need to be perceived as linked but not redundant
- multimediality and multimodality: cultural discourses should be represented through a variety of texts, media and modes
- relevance of literary texts and films: learners can access the com-

plexity of cultural discourses through literary texts because they represent a diversity of meanings and voices, and because they take up ideas, modify them or create new meanings with the help of literary devices (cf. Surkamp/Nünning 2016, 41 f.)

**Participating in cultural and global discourses:** The ability to participate in cultural discourses can be seen as a central educational goal of foreign language learning because it enables pupils to take part in social processes and to shape their own real-life worlds (cf. Hallet 2011, 54 ff.). Learners can develop this ability by dealing with or reacting to the texts they encounter in the foreign language classroom. If we imagine that the texts introduced into the classroom belong to real-life discourses, then the production of the learners' own (oral or written) texts as a reaction to the original one can be seen as their participation in the discourses of the respective culture. If the texts are also shared with others outside the classroom, the pupils can even be viewed as ›cultural agents‹ who take part in shaping processes of cultural negotiation.

In that respect, foreign language learning has also benefited from the introduction of new media technologies. The term ›web 2.0‹ refers to different tools and applications like blogs, chats, wikis, online communities, etc. which invite Internet users to share their texts, pictures or videos with others outside the classroom and to collaborate with them, for example in the production of written or multimedia texts. These technologies help to **connect learners** with people all over the world, thus providing **new opportunities for interaction** with real audiences and for taking over new roles (cf. chapter 12 in this volume).

## 9.2 | Intercultural approaches: concepts, models and dimensions

The role of teaching culture in foreign language education has, just as other educational activities or processes, always been influenced by social norms and values as well as by different ideas about what knowledge, skills and attitudes learners need to acquire in order to be able to satisfy their individual needs, meet the requirements of the job market or take up social, economic and ecological challenges in a globalised world. In our world today, which is characterised by mobility and migration, digitalisation and globalisation, the ability to communicate and interact with people across languages and cultures has become a key competence. This idea is also reflected in the German educational standards and curricula as well as European educational documents like the CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference for Modern Languages*), which put a special focus on the development of ›**intercultural communicative competence**‹ (ICC) in foreign language education (cf. chapter 2 in this volume).

**Development of intercultural approaches:** While in the 1970s (and before), the teaching of *Landeskunde* (area studies) was often reduced to the acquisition of knowledge about so-called ›target cultures‹, their history, political institutions and society, the idea of intercultural learning was developed in foreign language education in the 1980s and 1990s. As Delanoy and Volkmann (2006) state in their book *Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom*, intercultural learning has challenged the notion that culture was something fixed and objective. In addition, the role of the learners has become a more active one as ›they were invited to become personally involved in the exploration of English-speaking cultures as self-reflective co-constructors of cultural meanings‹ (ibid., 13). The idea that cultures must be understood as complex, dynamic and always in a flux and the notion of **learners as ›intercultural agents‹** (Hallet 2002) must not be misunderstood in the way that knowledge about culture has become obsolete, but that the role of attitudes and skills has finally been acknowledged, which had not been in the focus of teaching *Landeskunde*.

**Intercultural communicative competence:** ICC as an educational aim and concept for English language teaching has mostly been influenced by Byram (1997). The term refers to the ability to communicate and interact with people who speak a different language and come from a different cultural background. The shift from ›communicative competence‹ to ›intercultural communicative competence‹ as the educational goal of foreign language learning and from the role model of the ›native speaker‹ to the ›intercultural speaker‹ implies a special focus on the sociocultural context in which people communicate and on their cultural identities: It can be assumed that both the context and cultural identities influence the way people in a particular situation interact with and perceive each other. Byram, therefore, argues that foreign language learners need to acquire a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to become ›intercultural speakers‹.

## Definition

An **intercultural speaker** is somebody who has acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes which allow him or her to manage intercultural encounters or solve intercultural conflicts. He or she has also acquired what may be called ›critical cultural awareness‹, which means that he/she is generally aware of how an intercultural situation and the way participants communicate may be influenced by their cultural identities and backgrounds (cf. Byram 1997).

The model of ›intercultural communication‹, which is used by Byram to define the required knowledge, skills and attitudes of an ›intercultural speaker‹, includes five dimensions (Byram 1997, 49 ff., cf. table 9.1):

1. **Attitudes:** curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own
2. **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

3. **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
4. **Skills of discovery and interaction:** 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
5. **Critical cultural awareness/political education:** ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries

Byram's model was intended to help language teachers plan and assess intercultural learning processes in classroom settings and it has therefore also been used as a basis for defining different competences of ICC in the CEFR, in the *Bildungsstandards* and in the design of teaching materials and tasks (cf. Tesch et al. 2008). Recent research shows, however, that ICC continues to be an elusive concept which is difficult to assess or evaluate (cf. Hu/Byram 2009) because attitudes like ›respect for others‹ or the ability to reflect critically about one's own views cannot be categorised or measured easily. In addition, intercultural learning continues to be a **life-long learning process** and the question what FL learners can be expected to be able to do at different levels of proficiency still needs more investigation.

**Didaktik des Fremdverstehens:** Intercultural learning has also been the focus of approaches in German ELT research that were developed by the research group *Didaktik des Fremdverstehens* since the 1990s (cf. Bredella/Christ 1995; 2007). These intercultural approaches aim at developing learners' ability to understand people who speak a different language and have a different cultural background. They rely on the basic assumptions that (1) there is a (cultural) gap which needs to be bridged and (2) in order to enable intercultural understanding, it is necessary to enter into a dialogue between ›self‹ and ›other‹.

**Dialogue between self and other:** The notion of ›dialogue between self and other‹ includes the idea that the ›self‹ needs to turn to other positions in order to learn from them and that previous assumptions, ideas or attitudes about the ›other‹ are changed in the process. This view implies that it is necessary to ›decentre‹, i. e. to **become aware of and reflect one's**

	<b>Skills</b> interpret and relate (savoir comprendre)	
<b>Knowledge</b> of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (savoirs)	<b>Education</b> political education critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)	<b>Attitudes</b> relativising self valuing other (savoir être)
	<b>Skills</b> discover and/or interact (savoir apprendre/faire)	

Table 9.1:  
Factors in  
intercultural  
communication  
(Byram 1997)



**own views and perspectives**, in order to **overcome ethnocentric judgments**. Instead of reducing the ›other‹ to one's own interpretations, *Fremdverstehen* aims at giving the ›other‹ a voice and at reconstructing his or her views and ways of seeing or interpreting the world.

**Self and other as subjective, relational and dynamic categories:** While the concept of *Fremdverstehen* relies on the categories of self and other, at the same time, they need to be reflected critically: If self and other are understood as ontological, fixed categories where ›one's own culture‹ is contrasted with ›the other culture‹, they may lead to exclusion and stigmatisation of the ›other‹ (cf. Bredella/Delanoy 1999, 14). It is therefore important to understand self and other as subjective, relational and dynamic categories which are defined differently for each individual and are subject to change: What may be considered as ›other‹ by an individual at some point, can become familiar and may even be integrated into one's own identity; and whatever view or position is considered part of one's identity or self may suddenly, through experience or reflection, seem strange or unfamiliar to us so that we decide to distance ourselves from this part of our identity or ›self‹.

**Changing perspectives and negotiating meaning:** *Fremdverstehen* aims at **critical self-distancing (decentring)**, at understanding the other's views and perspectives and at a ›negotiation of meanings‹ which evolves from this dialogue between self and other. The ability to decentre, to change and take over another perspective in order to see the world with different eyes is therefore central to this idea of intercultural understanding. However, it is also important to understand that *Fremdverstehen* does not end with a reconstruction of the other's perspective, but includes the idea of dialogue, of an interplay in which different views or perspectives are negotiated so that pre-existing views are critically reflected and, possibly, changed. This does not imply that learners need to agree with the other's views or perspectives, but that they at least arrive at a more reflected understanding of their own views and perceptions as well as those of the other.

### 9.3 | Transcultural perspectives in culture pedagogy

**Transculturality and hybridity:** Due to the fact that our world and our societies today are largely influenced by migration, cultural change and the global exchange of information as well as goods, terms like ›interculturality‹ and ›multiculturalism‹ have been found to be unsuitable to come to terms with the growing heterogeneity and entanglements of cultures. ›Transculturality‹, like ›transnationality‹ or ›hybridity‹, are concepts that have therefore been used in Cultural Studies to describe **cultural complexity**, the **dynamics of cultural change** as well as the internal differentiation within and the **interconnectedness of cultures** (cf. Antor 2006; Risager 2006). According to Welsch's (1999) conceptualisation of the term, modern cultures can all be described as ›transcultural‹ and ›hybrid‹ because they share certain characteristics: inner differentiation and com-

plexity; external networking and entanglements of cultures; hybridisation, i. e. a mix(ing) of different cultural elements (like, for example, in the mix of Western and Indian music styles in Bhangra music).

**Transculturality** refers to a number of characteristics that are shared by modern cultures: inner differentiation, polyphony, cultural complexity, hybridity, external networking and entanglements with other cultures. Cultures and identities can be described as ›transcultural‹ if traditional categories of, i. e. national, cultural, religious communities, are deliberately questioned, broken up or transgressed.

Definition

**Transcultural identities:** In addition, we also have to assume that the multiplicity and diversity of lifestyles in a society leads to **multiple identifications** of individuals: The term ›transcultural identity‹ refers to the idea that individuals can identify with multiple cultural or collective groups that cut through traditional cultural boundaries.

#### Ae Fond Kiss

Example

The example of a young woman in the film *Ae Fond Kiss* (Loach 2004) illustrates how individuals develop hybrid cultural identities. The character Tahara Khan describes herself as a ›dazzling mixture‹, when she states ›I am a Glaswegian, Pakistani, teenager, woman of Muslim descent who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic school‹, thus challenging notions of what it means to be ›Glaswegian‹, ›Pakistani‹, ›Muslim‹, ›Woman‹ and ›Catholic‹. The concept of ›transculturality‹, as used in Cultural Studies, therefore implies an understanding of culture as hybrid, polyphonous and entangled with other cultures and draws attention to the choices of identification that individuals have when constructing their identities.

**The FL classroom as ›third space‹:** Hallet (2002) has elaborated ›transculturality‹ as a concept for structuring and designing the language classroom: With reference to the postcolonial concept of ›third space‹ (Bhabha 1994), he suggests that the foreign language classroom itself can be viewed as a ›third space‹, as a **›hybrid space‹** for cultural encounters in which learners are confronted with and acquire previously unknown cultural meanings, in which they negotiate or reinterpret these new cultural meanings. The **›interplay of texts and cultures‹** (cf. Hallet 2002) is initiated by feeding texts from different cultural spheres (e. g. L1 cultures, L2 cultures, transcultural or global discourse communities) into the FL classroom, which are then processed and negotiated by the learners. Foreign language learners thus become **›intercultural agents‹** themselves who exchange cultural meanings, values and perspectives and thus participate in the processes of **cultural negotiation** and even cultural change. Inter-textual arrangements are seen as necessary for a negotiation of diverse

cultural meanings and for broadening the learners' repertoire of cultural orientation and identification.

**Transcultural approaches in ELT:** Transculturality is also seen as a useful concept by other researchers who emphasise that, in foreign language education, too, cultures need to be understood as complex, hybrid and always in a flux. While some argue that the intercultural approach needs to be replaced by a transcultural approach (cf. Eckert/Wendt 2003; Fäcke 2006), others argue against a transcultural approach (cf. Bredella 2012), because it assumes that there are no cultural differences and because it disregards the recognition of the 'other' and a dialogue in which the notion of 'self' can be challenged.

**Dialogue between inter- and transculturality:** Delanoy (2006) is in favour of a dialogue between intercultural and transcultural approaches. In his view, intercultural learning and its focus on a dialogue between self and other has always included the idea of a continuous negotiation of meaning, which also leads to the transformation of existing views and the development of new, hybrid positions. Delanoy, therefore, views intercultural approaches as compatible with a transcultural agenda as long as they are aware of internal cultural differences and hybridity and as long as they view cultures as dynamic, heterogeneous, hybrid entities. Regardless of these controversies, what transcultural approaches have in common is the basic assumption that contemporary culture pedagogy needs a focus on issues like cultural **diversity**, internal differentiation, **hybridity** and transcultural identities: The selection of input, goals and activities for the FL classroom should draw the learners' attention to the complexity and hybridity of cultures and identities. In this respect, multi- and transcultural literary texts offer a high potential, because they portray characters' conflicting loyalties and their hybrid identities (cf. Delanoy 2006; Schumann 2008; Freitag-Hild 2010).

There are several pedagogic and methodological principles which can help with the selection of materials and the design of tasks or even learning arrangements.

- 1. Multiperspectivity:** In order to sensitise foreign language learners to the diversity and hybridity of cultures as well as people's complex cultural identities, teachers need to make sure that multiple perspectives and diverse voices are represented and 'heard' in the classroom. This requires the integration of literary texts and intertextual arrangements that assemble a multiplicity of perspectives (cf. Hallet 2002) and that draw attention to cultural hybridity and transcultural phenomena, thus pointing to the fact that 'culture' is always heterogeneous and in a flux.
- 2. Dialogue:** Inter- and transcultural learning also includes the idea of entering a dialogue between the learners and a literary text, a literary character or different cultural views. It is important for the learners to recognise views and cultural perspectives that are different from their own and to negotiate these different positions. The task design therefore needs to make such dialogue possible (cf. table 9.2 on page 171; Surkamp/Nünning 2014, chapter II.2).
- 3. Reflection:** Inter- and transcultural learning aims at developing the

learners' ability to reflect critically about their own perspective and to break up ethnocentric views or essentialist concepts of culture and identity. They are encouraged to distance themselves from their own perspective.

**Global education:** A new, transcultural and even interdisciplinary approach to teaching culture is 'global education', an approach to education which—according to Cates (2000, 241)—'aims to promote students' knowledge and awareness of world peoples, countries, cultures and issues'. Its basic idea is enabling young people to become **responsible global citizens** and actively take part in shaping a better, shared future in the world. Global education takes up the ideas and principles of approaches like peace studies, environmental education, intercultural learning or human rights education. It involves integrating a global perspective in the language classroom through a **focus on international themes and global issues** (cf. Lütge 2015a).

While culture pedagogy in EFL sets out from a focus on English speaking countries and cultures, global education rather starts from topics of global relevance and from English as 'lingua franca' which is used to communicate with people all over the world. The activities in the classroom should provide opportunities for learners to build up **knowledge** about various countries, cultures and global issues, to develop their **skills** of intercultural communication, to develop **attitudes** like global awareness, respect for diversity and empathy and to become aware of their social responsibility as world citizens. This includes becoming aware of how lives, lifestyles and economies throughout the world are interconnected and dependent on each other: Both in the foreign language classroom and in CLIL settings, learners can be encouraged to do some research about the T-Shirts or sports shoes they are wearing or to find out about where the food they buy in the supermarket comes from. Thus, the English classroom can also contribute to raising the learners' awareness of how their own lifestyles or decisions to buy certain products may be connected to mechanisms of the global economy, to the working conditions of textile workers in Asia or to a changing planet, to name but a few examples.

**Multilingualism and the multilingual subject:** Further developments in culture pedagogy highlight the close connection between language and culture teaching, which has been an issue for foreign language education since Kramsch's (1993) *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* and is also relevant in Risager's (2006) concept of 'languaculture'. In her book *The Multilingual Subject*, Kramsch (2009) also calls for a more dedicated recognition of language learners' **multilingual subjectivities** by taking into account the different languages (and their different identities) that learners bring to the classroom. She argues for developing language learners' '**symbolic competence**' which refers to the ability to use different symbolic systems (i. e. languages and their semiotic resources) in order to share, exchange and reflect on people's experiences: Being a multilingual subject, in Kramsch's (ibid., 201) words, means

[...] having the choice of belonging to different communities of sign users, resonating to events differently when expressed through different semiotic systems, positioning oneself differently in different languages, and ultimately having the words to reflect upon this experience and to cast it into an appropriate symbolic form [...].

## 9.4 | Teaching literature and culture

**The potential of literature for intercultural learning:** One of the research areas within culture pedagogy is concerned with the question how literary texts can be used to promote intercultural understanding and intercultural competence (cf. Bredella 2002; Burwitz-Melzer 2003; as well as chapter 11 in this volume). There are different reasons why literary texts are considered valuable in that respect:

1. **Readers as spectators, participants and critics:** First of all, literary texts invite readers to **engage with the text** (cf. Bredella/Burwitz-Melzer 2004): as a ›spectator‹ who observes what is happening in the fictional world, as a ›participant‹ who uses his/her imagination to ›take part‹ in the events of the story, who learns to see the world with the characters' eyes but also evaluates their behaviour, and as a ›critic‹ who reflects on how the text affects him/herself and on the views that are presented. Thus, literary texts can provide insights into different cultural realities and real-life worlds, they invite readers to **change perspectives** and they can also challenge the learners' views and prompt a **critical reflection** or **negotiation of self and other**.
2. **Literary texts as part of cultural discourses:** Secondly, literary texts are no mimetic reflection of reality, but use literary devices (e.g. point of view, plot, characters) to present a particular view of reality: they may draw attention to individual voices and experiences, exaggerate or distort social developments, question dominant ideas in society or present utopian or even dystopian visions of what life could be like (cf. Surkamp/Nünning 2014, chapter III.1). Literary texts, in that sense, take part in the cultural discourses of a society and can therefore also provide access to the cultural discourses to which they belong (cf. Hallet 2002; 2007).
3. **Multi- and transcultural literature:** Thirdly, transcultural approaches highlight literature's potential of drawing attention to the diversity and complexity of cultures and cultural identities: Internal differences, conflicting ideas and multiple, hybrid identities are especially portrayed in postcolonial literature or multi- and transcultural literary texts. Dealing with culture and cultural hybridity as well as cultural identities can raise the learners' **awareness** of the complexity and diversity of cultures and identities (cf. Schumann 2008; Freitag-Hild 2010).

**Empathetic and cultural reading:** When teaching literature to promote intercultural understanding and transcultural learning, there are different ways of reading literary texts that can be used to support different cultural

learning processes (cf. Schumann 2008): Empathetic reading refers to methods that help learners to take over the perspective of various characters, to reconstruct their views and understand their situation and behaviour from the inside. Cultural reading aims at reading a literary text as part of a cultural discourse. This includes **contextualisation**: in order to understand how a literary text responds to or comments on cultural discourses, it is necessary to read further fictional and non-fictional texts to be able to reconstruct the particular voice of that literary text. These different ways of reading literature are also represented in the task typology for teaching literary texts as presented by Freitag-Hild (cf. 2010, 120 f.).

Task type	Task function (aims)	Task formats and examples
1. warming up / tuning in	developing curiosity and readiness to deal with cultural ›otherness‹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pre-reading tasks: building hypotheses and expectations about characters, topics, etc.</li> </ul>
2. self-reflection	creating awareness and critical reflection of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sharing reader reactions: reading log, discussing and reflecting reactions to characters, events, etc.</li> </ul>
3. interpretation and change of perspectives	understanding perspectives: interpretation, change of perspectives, coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>while-reading tasks: character profiles, run-on diaries</li> <li>assignments and tasks with a focus on characters and their relationships</li> <li>creative tasks: scenic interpretation, rewriting texts</li> </ul>
4. analysis and reflection	understanding and reflecting effects of literary devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>literary analysis of characters, content, literary devices</li> <li>reflection about reader reactions</li> </ul>
5. negotiation and participation	negotiation of meaning, dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class discussions about reader reactions and interpretations</li> <li>class discussions about cultural views, experiences, perspectives</li> <li>writing a review</li> </ul>
6. contextualisation	contextualising and cultural reading: understanding a text within its cultural context(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>researching background information, cultural knowledge</li> <li>intertextual comparison of different texts</li> <li>relating a text to one's own lifeworld</li> </ul>
7. reflection	self-reflection, awareness of requirements for intercultural learning and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflecting self and other</li> <li>reflecting one's own intercultural learning process</li> </ul>

Table 9.2:  
Task types for promoting intercultural competence through literature



## 9.5 | Teaching culture in and beyond the classroom: three teaching examples

The following examples serve to illustrate how these theoretical considerations about why and how we need to teach culture in foreign language education can be put into practice.

Putting theory  
in practice

**1. Representing and exploring culture: a learning circle about South Africa:** The first example refers to a learning circle about »Exploring South Africa: The rainbow nation« and provides some ideas for representing culture in the classroom. It was designed for a class of 10th graders in the year 2010 when South Africa was hosting the Fifa World Cup. The fact that the eyes of the world were focused on South Africa, but the pupils' knowledge about the »rainbow nation« was rather limited, was the reason for the class to take a closer look at this country, to find out more about its past and present, its society, culture and political issues—and about the question what hosting the World Cup meant for South Africa and its people.

**Modelling cultural discourses:** The teaching unit started by working with two short films about teenagers in Cape Town: *Teens in South Africa* (Download: <http://www.planet-schule.de>). They provided insight into the everyday lives of the two teenagers and their families, whose lives were also linked to social, cultural and historical issues of the country (Apartheid, sports, living in a township, education, AIDS). The fact that the films were linked to several relevant discourses of the country's past and present made it possible for the teacher to look for additional texts (e. g. pictures, photos, postcards, articles, cartoons, film trailer, map, statistics, etc.) that would open up these cultural discourses to the learners. The topics that were touched upon in the film and taken up again for the learning circle included Apartheid, the film *Invictus* (as an example of how a nation can be united through sports, cf. also Alter 2016), education, facts and figures and a reading corner about Nelson Mandela. These five topics were chosen as stations for the learning circle and learners had to work through three of them in small groups.

In addition to modelling cultural discourses of South Africa's past and present, the learning circle engaged learners with texts and materials by providing authentic, **complex target tasks** (cf. chapter 6 in this volume): While working their way through different assignments for the selected materials, learners had to use their knowledge and skills, for example to design a poster about how apartheid violated human rights or prepare a one-minute-speech about why the class should go to see the film *Invictus* in the cinema. After the learning circle, the students were encouraged to work on a magazine which would open up relevant aspects about South Africa's past and present to other people in and outside their school. Every group of students was responsible for a double page on a topic of their choice (e. g. Fifa World Cup, Apartheid, Kwaito Music, etc.). Thus, it was also possible for the learners to research topics and relevant texts independently and to present to others what they thought was relevant to know about the host of the 2010 Fifa World Cup.

**2. Understanding culture and entering a dialogue with literary texts:** The second example refers to teaching a young adult novel: **Sherman**

Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (cf. also Eissenmann 2016). It is the story of fourteen-year-old Arnold Spirit (Junior), a member of the Spokane tribe living on a reservation in the north-west of the USA. His life at the »rez« (reservation) is characterized by poverty, violence and alcoholism, but he can also rely on his loving parents and grandmother for support. However, due to brain damage, he is a fragile character who is continually beaten up by the other children at his Native American school. His only friend is violent Rowdy, who protects him. When one day, Junior realizes that he is still taught with the same old books his mother had had at school, he becomes angry and throws the book at his teacher. It is the turning point of the story where Junior has to decide whether he wants to stay at his old school without any hope or perspective for the future or transfer schools to Reardan, which is attended mostly by wealthy white children. At the new school, he is an outcast again because he is the only Indian, but he also makes new friends and we follow his first year at the new school with a number of ups and downs.

**Teaching potential:** The novel is a good choice for 14–15-year-olds for a number of reasons: First of all, it is told by a 14-year-old himself whose voice is that of a youngster speaking to other young people and the way he tells the story is quite humorous. In addition, the story focuses on topics like first love, friendship and striving to be accepted, which can help teenagers to identify with Junior, although he is not a typical hero. What makes the novel interesting for intercultural learning is that the narrative perspective (Junior as I-narrator) invites readers to take over Junior's perspective and therefore also helps to understand what life is like for him or how he feels about some of the (tragic) events that happen throughout the story. The novel can provide learners with an inside view of one young (fictional) Native American who lives on a reservation but takes up the challenge of attending an all-white school nearby. From a transcultural point of view, it is also interesting to look at Arnold's complex (trans-)cultural identity which he develops throughout the story: »I realized that, sure, I was a Spokane Indian. I belonged to that tribe. But I also belonged to the tribe of American immigrants. And to the tribe of basketball players. And to the tribe of bookworms« (Alexie 2009, 198).

**Empathetic and cultural reading:** The teaching unit should include a focus on both empathetic and cultural reading as suggested in inter- and transcultural approaches: empathetic reading can be encouraged by focusing on Junior, his identity and self-image and/or his experiences throughout the novel. It is advisable to invite learners to work on a number of tasks and activities supporting the interpretation and change of perspectives (cf. table 9.2 on page 171): collecting important information about Junior, an interpretation of his cartoons, writing a characterisation or role biography, retelling an event at school to his grandmother, acting out a role interview, as well as an analysis of Junior's development throughout the novel. At the same time, it is also necessary to provide opportunities for learners to read about reservations and to inform themselves about their past and present. Thus, learners can compare Junior's story to other information they find about reservations and relate the



different texts to each other. Tasks for contextualisation (cf. table 9.2) are relevant to make learners aware of the fact that this particular novel is not a mirror of real life, but presents a unique voice (e.g. both funny and tragic) within the cultural discourses about reservations and Native Americans: Junior's story needs to be understood as a fictional account of life on a reservation; it is not a reliable source of information, but can be seen as one out of many possible voices which enables readers to see the world through this particular character's eyes.

**3. Participating in cultural discourses: »Raise your voice—change climate change«:** The final example is a project on climate change in grade 11. The students in the class were especially talented in the natural sciences so that the teaching unit matched their interests. Before the project started, the students had already studied various materials on the topic (articles, statistics, documentaries, etc.). The project itself was based on an idea which had been pursued by YouTube and CNN in the weeks leading up to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009. YouTube and CNN had started a campaign with the name »Raise your voice—change climate change« which was aimed at individuals who also wanted to have a say in the climate change debate and who wanted to »raise their voice« for politicians and world leaders to hear. They invited people to upload their videos with a message on climate change, and the online community could vote for the best video. The winners were invited to join in a TV debate with global leaders during the Copenhagen Conference.

Unfortunately, when the project started in December, the Conference had already ended so that the audience for the pupils' videos was a lot more limited than it could have been. Nevertheless, the project task for the pupils was to raise their voice, too, and in groups produce a video, poster, cartoon or presentation with their message on climate change. The final products were then presented to the classmates in a gallery walk so that every pupil had the chance to raise his/her voice in front of an authentic audience and to discuss their personal viewpoint with a small group. Each group of learners had prepared a statement that they wanted to make—about climate change, about an individual's responsibility, about ways for reducing one's carbon footprint, about the state of the earth. By researching and selecting relevant information, by choosing an adequate format for communicating their message and by voicing their ideas during their presentations, learners were given the opportunity to participate in the global discourses and exchange their views with their classmates. Using Internet tools, telecollaboration or projects like the one by YouTube and CNN, of course, even extends the ways of communication as it includes a global audience of world citizens (cf. also chapter 13 in this volume).

## 9.6 | Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to introduce readers to the basic questions of culture pedagogy: What is culture and how can we teach it? As the brief survey of different approaches for the teaching of culture has shown, culture pedagogy has witnessed some profound changes over the last decades and has been influenced to a great extent by developments in Cultural Studies. We have seen that cultures can be defined as »shared sets of meaning«, but that we also need to include the material and social dimension. The notion of culture as a vast textual and discursive space which can be made accessible to learners can be a useful idea for the representation of cultures in the classroom. Byram's model of ICC and the concept of *Fremdverstehen* can be used as a basis for planning learning processes because they draw attention to the different skills, attitudes and knowledge that are required for successful intercultural encounters. In addition, literary texts can be valuable for cultural learning processes because they provide opportunities to change perspectives, to reflect about one's own and other people's views and because they can prompt an exchange and negotiation of meaning.

### Further reading

- Delanoy, Werner/Volkman, Laurenz (eds.) (2006): *Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom*. Heidelberg.
- Hallet, Wolfgang/Nünning, Ansgar (eds.) (2007): *Neue Ansätze und Konzepte der Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik*. Trier.
- Risager, Karen (2007): *Language and Culture Pedagogy. From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*. Clevedon.

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