The intercultural communicative competence of young children in a bilingual education setting

Master Thesis in Linguistics, Radboud University Nijmegen

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Declaration on plagiarism and fraud

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of children aged 4-6 attending a primary school that offers bilingual (Dutch-English) education. The data on the children's ICC were collected using an observation form consisting of categories of attitude, knowledge, and skills related to ICC which were identified by Gerlich et al. (2010). The children were observed on four school days during their regular classroom activities, with a particular focus on their interactions with persons from different cultural backgrounds. The following research questions were addressed: 1) Which positive and negative behaviours related to intercultural communicative competence can be observed in the children, and in what contexts?, and 2) To what extent can previous findings on intercultural competence in young children be used as a framework to assess the attitude, knowledge and skills that can be observed as a child develops their intercultural communicative competence? It was found that mostly positive attitudes occurred, although the attitude of hesitation was not uncommon. Children showed a substantial knowledge of English, as well as certain aspects of meta-linguistic knowledge, such as knowing about their own and others' linguistic abilities. They also exhibited a vast range of verbal communication strategies, as well as skills aimed at gaining new knowledge, and the skill of translation. The categories identified by Gerlich et al. (2010) were found to reflect the children's ICC effectively, although some modifications were suggested, such as introducing new categories of skills. The study contributes to our understanding of the aspects of ICC relevant to young children; it also strengthens the framework describing the ICC of young children in a bilingual education setting, as well as evaluates the method of observation as a way of assessing ICC in young children.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 What is intercultural communicative competence?

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a concept that has been difficult to define in the existing literature. Not only do the definitions vary, but even the term itself is far from universally accepted among researchers. Various alternative terms to intercultural communicative competence have been used, as listed below (Sinicrope, Norris and Watanebe, 2007, p. 3).

transcultural communication	international communication	ethnorelativity
cross-cultural communication	intercultural interaction	biculturalism
cross-cultural awareness	intercultural sensitivity	multiculturalism
global competitive intelligence	intercultural cooperation	pluralingualism
global competence	cultural sensitivity	effective inter-group communication
cross-cultural adaptation	cultural competence	
international competence	communicative competence	

In this study, the term intercultural communicative competence will be used, however sometimes alternative terms (especially "intercultural competence") will be used when citing other authors who use those terms. The definition of intercultural communicative competence used in this study will be one that was most agreed on among a group of 23 ICC experts in a study by Deardorff (2006), namely "The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (p. 247).

1.2 Intercultural communicative competence in language classrooms

Intercultural communicative competence has been studied in business and higher education settings in which individuals from different cultures come into contact with one another, often working towards a common goal (e.g., Corder & U-Mackey, 2015; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; Krajewski, 2011; Volet and Ang, 1998). The focus of these studies has been on developing ways in which individuals can become more interculturally competent. Research on ICC has also led to publication of materials aimed at those wanting to teach ICC, such as assessment frameworks (Intercultural Competence Assessment Project, 2004) and guidelines for the development of intercultural communicative competence workshops (Kačkere, Lázár, and Matei, 2007). While the theories and recommendations regarding ICC have been developed with adults in mind, there has not been much focus on intercultural communicative competence in children.[1]

[1] When referring to "children" in this study, adolescents are normally excluded as their abilities with regards to acquiring ICC are thought to not be very different from those of adults. Sometimes a distinction will be made between "young children" and "older children" – the former will mostly be used in reference to children around the same age as the children in this study (4-6 years old).

It is unlikely that the scarcity of ICC research on children has been due to a lack of interest in ICC in schools. A common discourse in educational settings in many countries, particularly within the context of foreign language learning, is that of internationalization. While internationalization can encompass many different things depending on its definition, it has been argued that the main desired outcome of internationalization in education is the development of intercultural communicative competence (Deardorff, 2006; Eisenchlas and Trevaskes, 2007; Stier, 2006; Vredevoogd, 2013). In this day and age, especially with languages such as English, the goal of learning a foreign language is not necessarily to communicate with the native speakers of that language, but rather to communicate with many different people in many different situations, outside of the borders of one country. However, although the value of intercultural communicative competence is widely recognised, relatively little effort has been put into setting out goals in relation to these concepts, and into incorporating them into curricula (Byram, 2014). While some may believe that ICC will develop as a by-product of language learning, in the context where opportunities for actual intercultural encounters are limited such assumptions must be questioned. In fact, studies have shown that even when contact with other cultures is present, this in itself does not lead to the development of ICC (e.g. Eisenchlas and Trevaskes, 2007; Holmes, 2006; Volet and Ang, 1998).

Even despite some recent efforts to incorporate the teaching of intercultural communicative competence into language learning curricula, research shows that much more needs to be done for such curricula to be effective. The Languages and Cultures in Europe project (LACE, 2007) reports the results of interviews with 78 primary and lower secondary teachers from 12 European countries who teach ICC in the language classroom. A major finding was that the methods that the teachers use in the classroom focus mainly on the knowledge and attitude parts of intercultural communicative competence while little attention is paid to developing skills. Another finding was that many of the teachers found it challenging to teach ICC because of time constraints, lack of training, and lack of suitable teaching resources. Moreover, teachers reported that the way intercultural competence objectives were described in the curricula was very general, to the point that they found it difficult to know what these objectives really meant and how they could be realised in the classroom. Based on these findings, the authors of the project gave a number of recommendations with the goal of prioritising and improving the teaching of ICC in language classrooms. The recommendations included giving increased priority to ICC in the context of EU initiatives, raising awareness, establishing a framework of performance indicators by experts, promoting understanding of what ICC is, outlining clear and detailed curricular goals, and funding research on the nature of ICC and the ways it can be developed and assessed in school settings.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to increase our understanding of ICC and the ways in which it can be developed and assessed in young children – 4 to 6 year olds – whose age group has received particularly little attention with regard to ICC in school settings. There are limitations as to what children this young can be taught at this stage of cognitive development, and many of the recommendations relevant for older learners might not be applicable for this age group. However, that does not mean that the development of ICC

in young learners should be ignored. As part of the Early Language and Intercultural Acquisition Studies project (ELIAS), Gerlich, Kersten, Kersten, Massler, and Wippermann (2010), found that children aged three to six did exhibit skills, knowledge and attitudes related to ICC. In their ethnographic study, participant observers looked at children in nine preschools in Belgium, Germany and Sweden once a week over the course of two years, and described every instance of an intercultural encounter that the children engaged in. The analysis of the field data revealed a number of categories that the observed attitude, knowledge and skills of the children fell under, for instance the attitude categories of interest or tolerance/acceptance. The present study will investigate the intercultural communicative competence of children in a similar setting – a primary school offering bilingual education in the Netherlands. The categories discovered by Gerlich et al. (2010) will serve as the basis for an observation form that will be used to record the children's attitude, knowledge and skills exhibited during intercultural encounters. The overarching research question is:

> Which aspects of intercultural communicative competence develop in young children in a bilingual education setting?

Furthermore, the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. Which positive and negative behaviours related to intercultural communicative competence can be observed in the children, and in what contexts?
2. To what extent can previous findings on intercultural communicative competence in young children be used as a framework to assess the attitude, knowledge and skills that can be observed as a child develops their intercultural communicative competence?

In order to answer these research questions, classroom and playground observations were conducted during four school days. The classroom where the observations took place is situated in the Dutch department of the school complex, where both Dutch and English are the languages of instruction. There are children with many different cultural backgrounds in the department, however Dutch is the dominant language. The school also has an international department where English is the main language of instruction. Once a week, a 45-minute exchange takes place where a few children from both departments visit a classroom in the other department. The observations were conducted on days when the exchange took place, as it provided an opportunity to observe the children during intercultural encounters. Children were observed during the exchange, as well as during the rest of the day when they interacted with each other, or with the researcher who does not speak Dutch.

The theoretical implications of testing whether the ICC categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) can also be found in another setting, and whether those categories are suitable for describing the children's ICC, lie in their contribution to developing a model of child ICC. A model of ICC that is widely accepted and that is applicable to any setting does not yet exist even for adults, although there are a few models that have gained significant approval (eg. Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Having descriptive models of constructs such as ICC is important for several reasons: firstly, they describe what the different components of the construct and their relationship to one another are; secondly, the provide a basis for empirical testing of the construct; and thirdly, they carry practical

implications for professionals such as teachers, educators, or psychologists who can use the models as a basis for teaching and assessment. In the case of ICC, having a model that describes the desired and undesired components that contribute to intercultural communicative competence could help teachers to understand and assess the level of ICC in children, as well as to facilitate its development. While the Gerlich et al. (2010) study provided a first step towards the development of a model, it is important to test children's ICC further, especially on a different population in a different setting. Moreover, while the study was largely explorative and the categories emerged as a result of coding the ethnographic data, the present study will investigate whether the categories can serve as a pre-defined framework that can be used to assess children's ICC. Another implication of this study is related to its data collection methodology. Observation has not been a widely used method of neither collecting data on ICC nor assessing it, despite being quite high on the list of recommended assessment method that the ICC experts from Deardoff's (2006) study agreed on. As will be discussed in more detail in section 3.2, observation may be a particularly promising method for assessing young children, since commonly used methods such as written assignments, portfolios, and retrospection would be challenging for children at this stage of cognitive and literacy development. This study explores the advantages and disadvantages of the potentially valuable data collection and assessment method.

The next chapter gives a detailed account of the theoretical background that this study will be based on. Definitions of culture are discussed, followed by a discussion of different definitions and models of ICC. Chapter 3 reviews previous literature on the development and assessment of ICC. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of the study, and Chapter 5 presents the results. The results are related back to the research questions in Chapter 6, and finally, a conclusion is given in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2. Explaining and defining intercultural communicative competence

2.1 Defining culture

The definition of intercultural communicative competence has to start with the definition of culture. There are many aspects of what constitutes "culture", as illustrated by, for example, the Iceberg Model (Hall, 1976), which distinguishes between the components of culture that are immediately perceivable (surface culture) and those that are not (deep culture) (Figure 1).

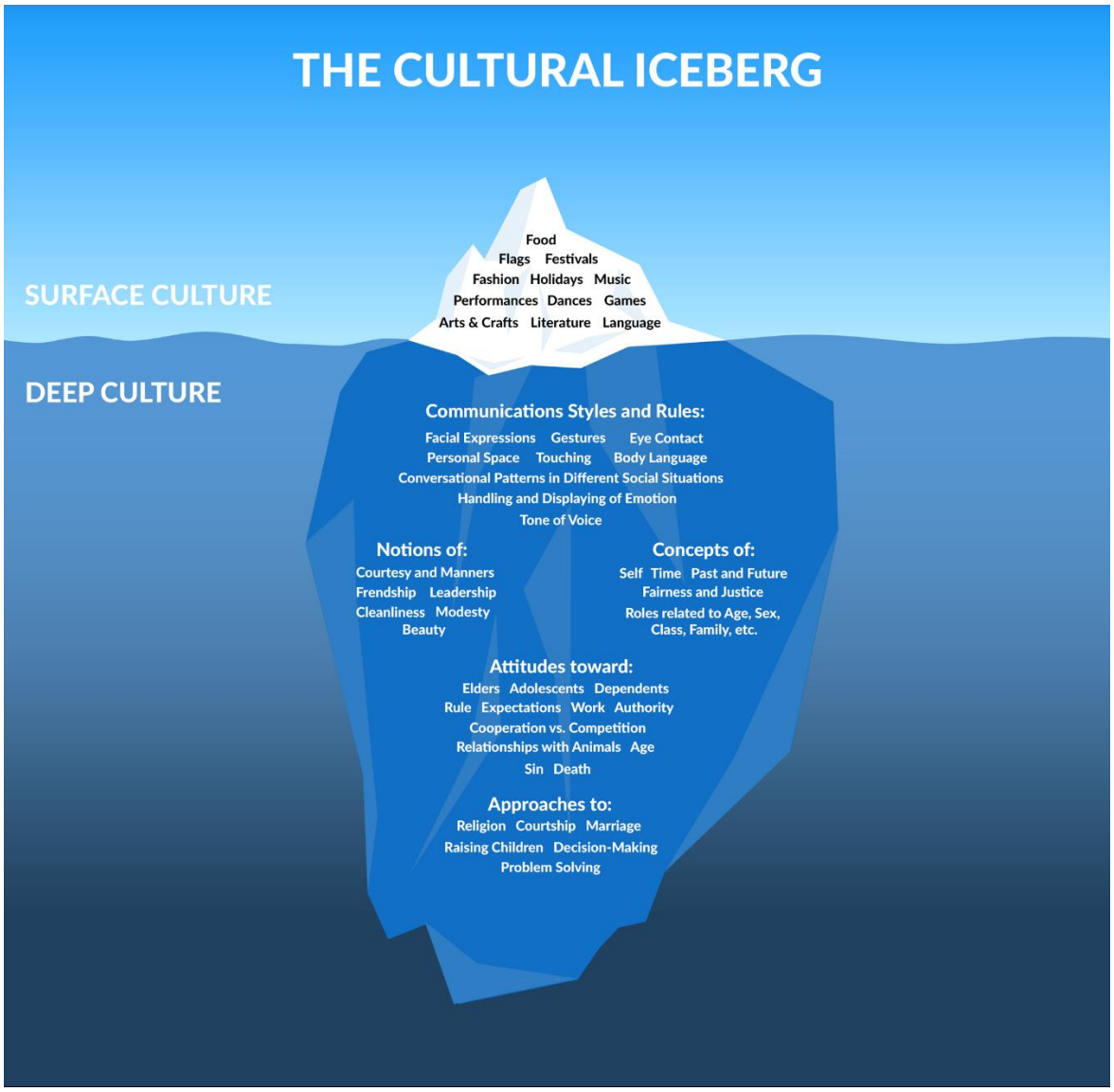

Figure 1. The Iceberg Model of Culture (Marsden, 2015).

Most definitions of culture acknowledge its multi-faceted nature (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). For example, Spencer-Oatey (2008) defines culture in the following way:

> Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of

> people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretation of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 3)

While it is agreed that culture is something shared by a group of people, there is no consensus as to how large-scale a group of people has to be for its common "assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions" (or any other components of culture present in other definitions) to constitute a separate culture. This issue is related to the fact that each large group whose members share something in common – such as a nation of people – also consists of smaller groups of people who will have even more in common – such as young people in that country, or people who live in the same city. Furthermore, the members of a group are never entirely homogenous, which raises the question of how much a person has to conform to the way of thinking or acting characteristic of a certain culture in order to be considered a part of it.

Some scholars use the criteria of nationality, ethnicity or geographical location to draw boundaries between cultures, while others also include factors such as age or gender (Wiseman, 2002). However, researchers also point out the dynamic nature of culture, and see it as something that is enacted by individuals rather than "carried" by them, and something that interacts with contextual factors such as the power relations between participants (Collier, 2015). This view is also connected to Spencer-Oatey's definition of culture as something that influences *but not determines* people's behavior or their interpretation of the behavior of others. Considering all of the ambiguities and complexities of culture, Byram (1997) suggests adapting its definition to specific purposes, which in his and our case is that of intercultural communicative competence and language learning. The most relevant aspect of culture in this case then is language. In the depiction of the Iceberg Model in Figure 1, language is shown as one of the surface aspects of culture. This means that not only is it an immediately perceivable aspect, but also that it embodies, reflects, and is connected to many of the deep aspects of culture. For example, language is linked the "communication styles and rules" aspects of culture, as portrayed in the figure. It can also reflect the attitudes, notions, approaches, and concepts characteristic of that culture. Byram explains the relationship between the cultural practices and beliefs of a group and language by stating that "language is a prime means of embodying the complexity of those practices and beliefs, through both reference and connotations (Byram, in press a), and the interplay of language and identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985)" (Byram, 1997, p. 22).

In this study, the concept that the definition of culture is particularly relevant to is that of an intercultural encounter. Since children were observed during intercultural encounters, it must be clear what counts and what does not count as such an encounter. Since language is the most relevant aspect of culture for our purposes, an intercultural encounter was operationalized on the basis of children's home languages. An encounter between individuals (child-child or child-adult interactions) who share different L1s, or where the participants do share an L1 but at least one of them has grown up with an additional language at home was classified as intercultural encounters. This includes encounters such as an L1 Dutch child interacting with an L1 Arabic child in English, but also an L1 Dutch child and an 2L1 Dutch-Arabic child interacting in Dutch. While in the

latter encounter communication may not be problematic on a linguistic level, such encounters can be still relevant for the knowledge and attitude components of ICC.

2.2 Defining intercultural communicative competence

As mentioned in the introduction, intercultural communicative competence remains a concept that, much like culture, is difficult to define. The problem lies partially in the multidimensionality of the construct, and in the fact that many of its proposed components are abstract concepts such as attitude (Aba, 2015). As such, it can be difficult to provide a complete and objective list of the components that make up ICC. Another possible reason why the definition of ICC is problematic is that the construct is relevant to many different areas of study. Aba (2015) lists the disciplines of "education, language studies, communication studies, cultural anthropology, social psychology, behavioural psychology and management" (2015, para. 6) as relevant to the study of ICC. Researchers from different areas of study are likely to focus on different aspects of ICC, and to study it for different purposes, resulting in many different definitions. Moreover, while there are many proposed theories and models of ICC, these are often not followed up in other studies. Van de Vijver and Leung (2009, p. 405) sum up the current state of research in ICC by stating: "We are now in the stage where we are unable to decide which theories are well supported in empirical data, which frameworks should be modified, and which ones should be abandoned altogether.". As such, the definition that is adapted in this study reflects only one of the many perspectives from which ICC can be described. However, it is also the only definition that has been shown to be accepted by multiple scholars.

As stated at the beginning of the study, the definition of ICC that is adapted here is:

> "The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes".

In the above definition, effectiveness is taken to mean the achievement of valued objectives, and appropriateness is understood as the avoidance of violating valued rules (Deardorff, 2004). The reason why this definition was adapted is because it was the most agreed on definition among 23 ICC scholars who were identified as experts in their field by internationalization administrators from 73 U.S. universities (Deardorff, 2006). The study used the Delphi technique, which is a structured communication method used to reach agreement among experts. The following three steps were followed: 1) the scholars were asked to write down their definitions of ICC, 2) they were asked to rate each other's definitions from step 1 on a 4-point Likert scale (4 = *highly relevant/important*; 1 = *not relevant/important to intercultural competence*), 3) the scholars were asked to either accept or reject each of the definitions. The highest-rated definition had the mean rating of 3.8, and was accepted by 19 scholars and rejected by one. Table 1 lists other definitions that were rated highly in the study.

Table 1. Six of the seven highest rated definitions of intercultural competence. Adapted from Deardorff (2006, p. 249).

Ability to shift frame of reference appropriately and adapt behavior to cultural context; adaptability, expandability, and flexibility of one's frame of reference/filter
Ability to identify behaviors guided by culture and engage in new behaviors in other cultures even when behaviors are unfamiliar given a person's own socialization
Behaving appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations based on one's knowledge, skills, and motivation
Ability to achieve one's goals to some degree through constructive interaction in an intercultural context
Good interpersonal skills exercised interculturally; the sending and receiving of messages that are accurate and appropriate
Transformational process toward enlightened global citizenship that involves intercultural adroitness (behavioral aspect focusing on communication skills), intercultural awareness (cognitive aspect of understanding cultural differences), and intercultural sensitivity (focus on positive emotion toward cultural difference

It can be seen that while each definition approaches intercultural competence from a slightly different angle (for example, the third uses the broader concept of behaviour, rather than communication, and the fourth sees the achievement of goals as central to ICC), what characterises them is that they are all rather broad. Moreover, many of the concepts used in the definitions (such as culture, or appropriate and effective communication) require defining as well. In their extensive review of different models of ICC, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), claim that most scholars agree that the presence of certain kinds of motivation/attitude, knowledge, and skills is a necessary part of intercultural communicative competence, and that definitions of ICC should specify their desired outcomes. However, it is with regards to the specific components of motivation, attitude, knowledge, skills, outcomes, as well as with regards to the relationship between those components, that the theories of ICC can differ tremendously. Therefore, while a definition of ICC is necessary, most definitions will not give a full picture of what ICC is. For example, while the definition chosen in this study may be applicable to both children and adults, we can expect that ICC will look very differently in children compared to adults. For that reason, many scholars have developed models of ICC with the aim of specifying ICC components and their relationships to each other. Some of the existing models of ICC will be discussed in the next section. The goals of discussing ICC models are two-fold. In the first place, the discussion provides a more in-depth description of what constitutes ICC and how it can be defined. Secondly, an overview of the existing models of ICC is needed in order to develop a model of ICC in young children based on the findings of this study.

2.3 Models of intercultural communicative competence

The first model that will be discussed is Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence. This model is discussed for three reasons: 1) it is one of the most widely cited models, and one with the most recognition outside of the academia (see Byram, 2014 for an overview of the influences of his model, for example his work for the

Council of Europe); 2) the model was specifically designed with foreign language teaching contexts in mind; 3) although Gerlich et al. (2010) drew on other models as well, Byram's (1997) model served as a basis for their study of ICC in bilingual preschools. The other three models that will be discussed vary with regards their influence and recognition in the field of ICC, and were chosen because each of them approaches intercultural communicative competence from a different perspective, and each has particular strengths that may not be present in other models.

2.3.1 Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence

Byram's (1997) model consists of four competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural. The definitions of the first three competences are borrowed from van Ek's (1986) model of communicative ability, which was designed to describe the aspects of competence in a foreign language. Byram adapted the definitions to fit his model, in particular the aspects of definitions that reflected a native-speaker model, which he was highly critical of. The amended definitions are shown in Table 2. Byram criticised the assumption that a competent L2 speaker would possess the same kind of communicative competence as a native speaker of the target language, and in his view, a more desirable outcome of language learning would be that of

> a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language – or even a combination of languages – which may be the interlocutors' native language or not. (1997, p. 12).

Table 2. Byram's definitions of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence.

	Definition (1997, p. 48)
Linguistic competence	"the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language"
Sociolinguistic competence	"the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit by the interlocutor"
Discourse competence	"the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes"

In his model, intercultural competence is only one of the components of intercultural *communicative* competence. Intercultural communicative competence requires linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence in a foreign language. Intercultural competence, on the other hand, is concerned with cultural, rather than linguistic, knowledge and skills, and can refer to the ability to interact with people from different cultures in the interlocutor's own language. The inclusion of competence in a foreign

language is a major strength of Byram's model, as many other models focus only on intercultural competence. Intercultural competence consists of five components, outlined below.

- **Attitude** (*savoir être*[2]) of openness and curiosity, characterised by willingness to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality. Readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings and behaviours, readiness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviour.
- **Knowledge** (*savoirs*) about social groups in one's own country and the interlocutor's country; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal level. The latter includes declarative knowledge about how social identities are acquired, and how they shape people's worldviews, as well as procedural knowledge of how to act in specific circumstances. Procedural knowledge is therefore linked to the next component, skill of interpreting and relating.
- **Skills of interpreting and relating** (*savoir comprendre*) documents or events based on one's knowledge of own and interlocutor's culture. This includes the ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives and areas of misunderstanding, and to explain them in terms of cultural differences.
- **Skill of discovery and interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*). The skill of discovery is a skill of acquiring knowledge and understanding of cultural elements present in documents or interactions, in case of lack of or incomplete knowledge. The skill of interaction is related to the skill of discovery, as discovery can often take place through interaction. The skill of interaction relies on knowledge, attitude, and skills of interpreting and relating which need to be operated in real time.
- **Critical cultural awareness** (*savoir s'engager*) of one's own and interlocutor's practices and products. Critical cultural awareness allows one to identify and evaluate explicit and implicit values in documents and events from different cultures.

These components are in many ways inter-related. For example, skills rely on procedural knowledge, and while knowledge and attitude form the basis for intercultural interaction, they also develop *through* interaction.

Byram argues that the foreign language classroom is a setting that not only has a lot of potential for teaching intercultural communicative competence, but it is where such learning is likely inevitable. As language reflects and embodies culture, it is impossible for cultural elements not to be present in a foreign language classroom. Therefore, the question that teachers are faced with is not whether, but *how* to approach the teaching of culture in the classroom. Central to the model is the idea that language teachers should not focus on teaching about the dominant culture (e.g. the UK or United States in an English language classroom), but instead should teach how to access and analyze a wide range of cultural practices and meanings. Byram specified three locations where such intercultural learning might take place: 1) the classroom (where knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness can be taught, 2) fieldwork, i.e. experiences with pedagogical structures and education objectives outside the classroom, such as school excursions or university exchanges (where the skill of interaction, as well

[2] Byram used alternative French terms for each of the components, as he found them more elegant. The French and the English terms are not direct translations, but they are roughly equivalent in meaning.

as attitudes, can be developed), and 3) independent learning based on the tools acquired in the classroom. Therefore, even if not all aspects of ICC can be taught within the classroom, the classroom plays a central role in guiding and facilitating intercultural learning.

Figure 2 provides an illustration of Byram's (1997) model, including the four competences, a specification of the components of intercultural competence, as well as the three locations in which learning can take place, and the participants involved in the learning (*t* stands for teacher, and *l* stands for learner).

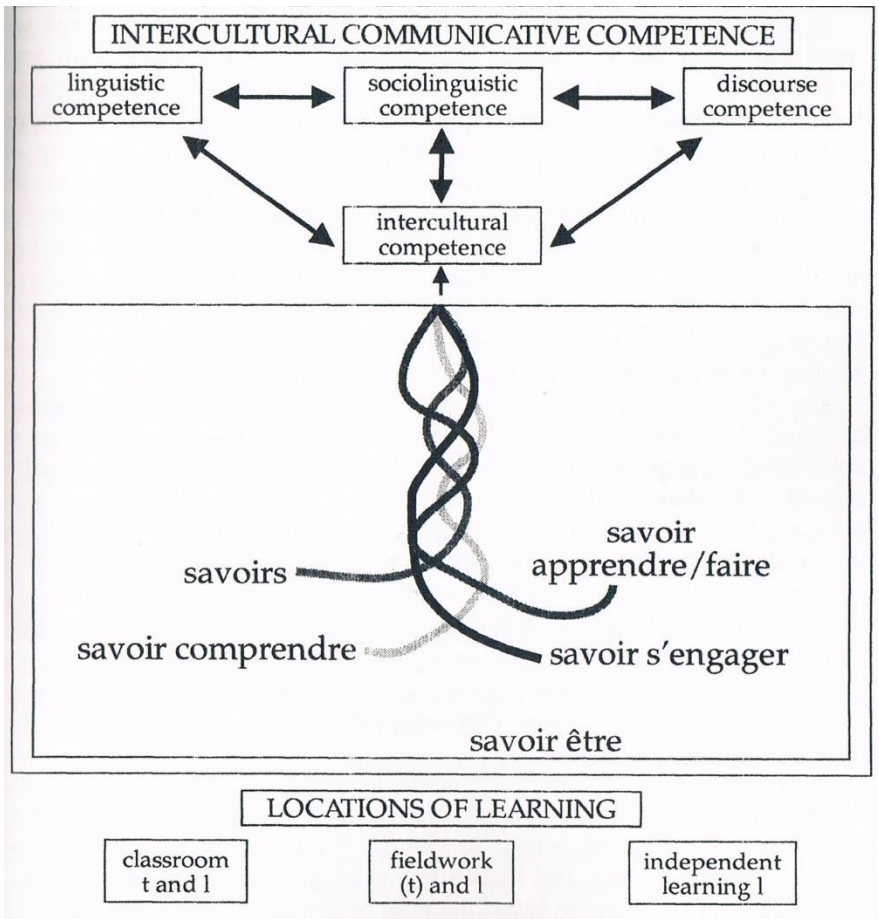

Figure 2. Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, p. 73).

Some limitations of Byram's model must be pointed out. The model provides a description of the ideal intercultural speaker, but it does not tell us what intercultural competence may look like before the speaker gets to the ideal stage, nor what the process of getting there is. The relationship between the different components is also not entirely clear. Moreover, as Byram highlights himself (2009), the list of the ICC components is not exhaustive and it does not include, for example, personality traits that contribute to intercultural competence.

2.3.2 Deardorff's (2006) model of intercultural competence

In the previously mentioned study with ICC experts, Deardorff (2006) proposed a model of intercultural competence based on the highest rated components of ICC by the experts, as well as a review of the existing literature. Two alternative representations of the model were developed – a pyramid version (Figure 3) and a process version (Figure 4). The pyramid version illustrates how the development of certain aspects of intercultural competence is dependent on other elements being in place. Starting from the bottom of the pyramid, attitude is the foundational component which knowledge and skills build on. Possessing the desired attitudes, knowledge and skills results in particular internal outcomes which in turn allows for the desired external outcome to occur. The process visualization allows for a more complex representation of how intercultural competence is acquired. The cyclical arrangement of the components illustrates how the acquisition of intercultural competence is a continuous process, and how each of the elements can improve, but perfect competence can never be reached. The arrows reaching from attitude, knowledge and skills to the external outcome illustrate how the external outcome is possible with limited competence. However, the appropriateness and effectiveness of the outcome increase when the individual continuously develops all of the subsequent components of intercultural competence.

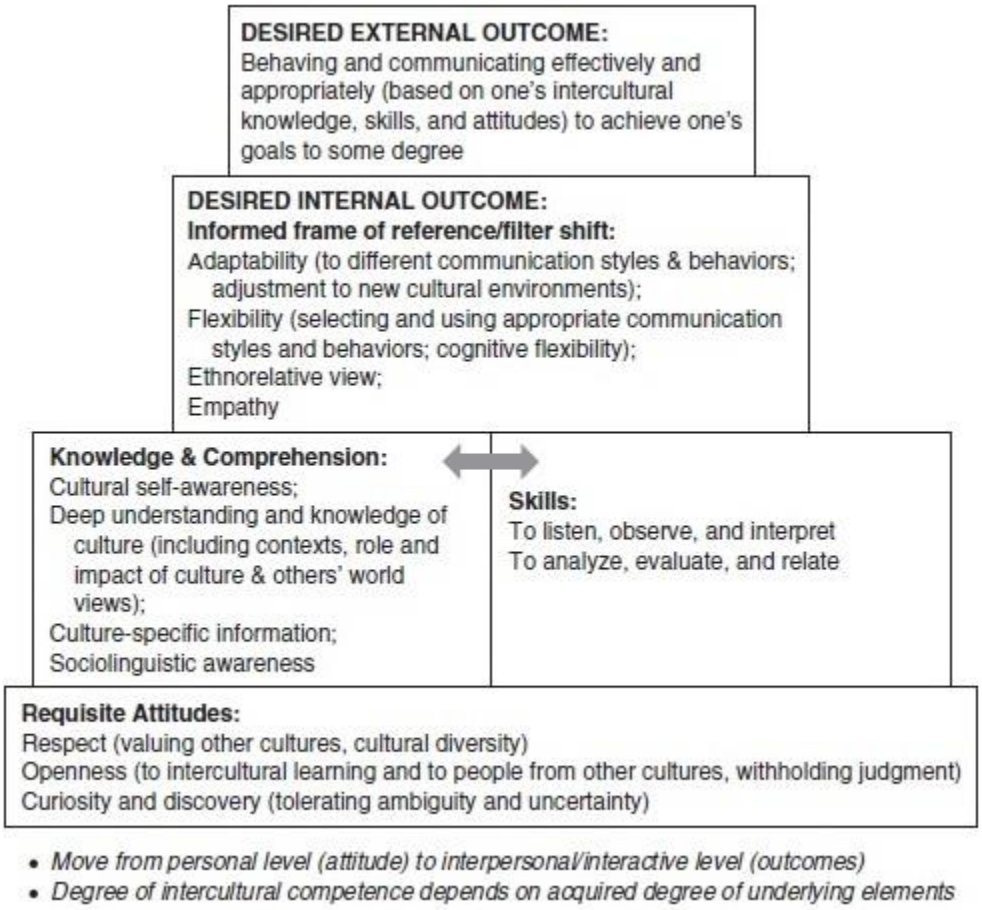

Figure 3. Pyramid visualisation of Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, p. 254).

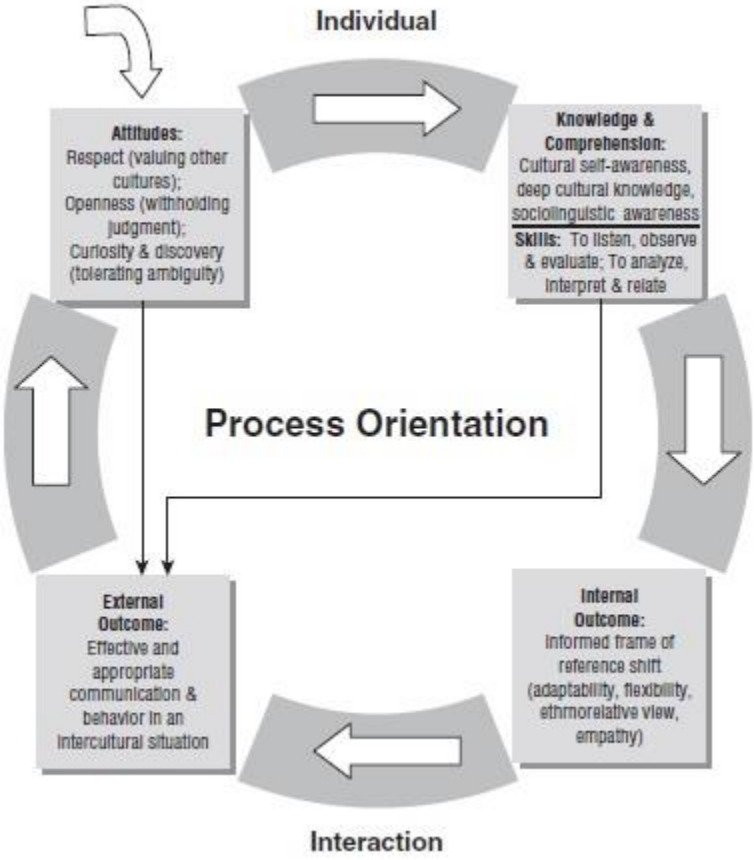

Figure 4. Process visualisation of Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, p. 256).

There are several advantages to Deardorff's (2006) model. Firstly, it is the only model of ICC that incorporates multiple scholars' perspectives on what constitutes ICC. Another advantage of the model is that it includes the desired outcomes of ICC, both internal and external, rather than just describing the interculturally competent individual's traits. The model also illustrates the relationship between the components, and the different stages of acquiring intercultural competence. It is therefore more process-oriented than Byram's (1997) model, which, as noted above, mainly describes the ideal intercultural speaker. However, Deardorff's (2006) model is also less developed than Byram's, in that the reasoning behind its development is less clear, other than drawing on the ICC experts' definitions of ICC. She does not expand on the different components of the model, and does not explain its implications. Byram, on the other hand, has had multiple publications on his model (eg. Byram & Zarate, 1996; Byram, 2008), including a book (Byram, 1997) dedicated to explaining the theory behind it, as well as to explaining how teaching of ICC based on his model could be put into practice in foreign language classrooms. Nevertheless, Deardorff's (2006) model is worth considering in the discussion on ICC, as

the above mentioned characteristics are not present in many other models, and as such it provides an original perspective.

2.3.3 The INCA (2004) framework

The Intercultural Competence Assessment project (INCA, 2004) was a European Union project aimed at developing a framework of intercultural communicative competence similar to that of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). The framework was developed with working adults in mind, in order to provide a basis for training and assessment of ICC in professional settings. It was based on the work of Byram (1997), as well as Torsten Kühlmann (1996), Bernd Müller-Jacquier (2000) and Gerhard Budin. While Byram's and Deardorff's models outline the desired attitude, knowledge, and skills, the INCA framework approaches intercultural competence from a slightly different angle. It identifies six characteristics of an interculturally competent person: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness, and empathy. Within each of those characteristics, the desired motivation, skills or knowledge, and behaviour are outlined (Table 3). Based on the desired motivation, skill/knowledge and behaviour an assessment framework with descriptors of three levels of intercultural competence ('basic', 'intermediate', and 'full') was created. Such a framework provides a very precise description of the desired components of ICC at different stages of development, although it does not show the relationships between the different components. Another advantage of this model is that it is based on several scholars' perspectives, rather than just one scholar's perspective.

Table 3. The INCA framework (INCA, 2004b).

A) Motivation	**B) Skill/Knowledge**	**C) Behaviour**	
i) **Tolerance for ambiguity**	Readiness to embrace and work with ambiguity	Ability to handle stress consequent on ambiguity	Managing ambiguous situations
ii) **Behavioural flexibility**	Readiness to apply and augment the full range of one's existing repertoire of behaviour	Having a broad repertoire and the knowledge of one's repertoire	Adapting one's behaviour to the specific situation
iii**) Communicative awareness**	Willingness to modify existing communicative conventions	Ability to identify different communicative conventions, levels of foreign language competencies and their impact on intercultural communication	Negotiating appropriate communicative conventions for intercultural communication and coping with different foreign language skills

iv) **Knowledge discovery**	Curiosity about other cultures in themselves and in order to be able to interact better with people	Skills of ethnographic discovery of situation-relevant cultural knowledge (including technical knowledge) before, during and after intercultural encounters	Seeking information to discover culture-related knowledge
v) **Respect for otherness**	Willingness to respect the diversity and coherence of behaviour, value and belief systems	Critical knowledge of such systems (including one's own when making judgements)	Treating equally different behaviour, value and convention systems experienced in intercultural encounters
vi) **Empathy**	Willingness to take the other's perspectives	Skills of role-taking de-centring; awareness of different perspectives	Making explicit and relating culture-specific perspectives to each other

2.3.4 Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) model of intercultural competence

Holmes and O'Neill's (2012) model is based on data collected by university students who, as part of a course on intercultural communication, where asked to interact with a "Cultural Other" over the period of several weeks, and to evaluate and reflect on their experiences. The data collection process consisted of a number of assignments structured around four stages: Prepare (identifying assumptions or stereotypes about the Cultural Other), Engage (interacting with the Cultural Other), Evaluate (recording and evaluating the experiences), and Reflect (critically reflect on the encounters). All of the assignments were compiled in a report by the students, which was then used by the researchers to answer the question of how individuals become interculturally competent in paired settings. The authors attempted to develop a model that would fill several gaps in the existing models of intercultural competence: there had been a limited number of models that are empirically-derived, developmental, and that acknowledge the role of emotions in the development ICC. Based on the analysis of the students' assignments, Holmes and O'Neill identified several phases of the process of acquiring intercultural competence in interaction:

- **acknowledging reluctance and fear** prior to engaging in interaction with the Cultural Other
- **foregrounding stereotypes** in which the Cultural Other is seen as different from the person who holds the stereotypes
- **moving beyond stereotypes** and re-evaluating them based on the experience of interaction with the Cultural Other
- **monitoring feelings** of self and the Cultural Other, in an effort to please the Cultural Other, build trust and friendship

- **working through confusion** with regards to one's own and the Cultural Other's identity; working through frustration with the difficult process of acquiring intercultural competence
- **moving from complacency to complexity** when evaluating one's own intercultural competence
- **acknowledging limitations to competence**, for example conversation topics that might be very difficult to discuss due to cultural differences, such as politics

A crucial characteristic of Holmes and O'Neill's model is that these phases are non-linear and are often interconnected: they do not necessarily occur in the order outlined above, the phases can overlap, and the learner can move back and forth between the different phases. Based on this model, the authors proposed the following definition of intercultural competence: "Critical awareness of Self and Other in an intercultural encounter, with appropriate attention to relationship building, monitoring and managing emotions, empathy, and facework" (p. 716).

This model has several limitations. Firstly, it is unclear whether the phases that the model described would occur in setting where individuals acquire ICC through means other than scheduled meetings with a "Cultural Other". Secondly, although the empirically-grounded nature of the model is a strength, the fact that it is only based on one study makes it uncertain whether it would be applicable to other settings. Thirdly, it does not address linguistic or communicative aspects of intercultural interaction (which might be because all of the participants in the study were highly proficient in English). However, it provides a valuable example of approaching intercultural competence from an emic perspective which focuses on the psychological and cognitive processes that an individual goes through, as well as on the role of emotions and relationships.

2.3.5 *Summary of the models*

Together, the four models show how ICC might be described and represented. Byram's (1997) model describes the attitude, knowledge, and skills of an interculturally competent person, as well as the different competences in a foreign language, and the role of the foreign language classroom in acquiring ICC. Deardorff's (2006) model portrays attitude, knowledge and skills in a hierarchy, with attitude being the most basic component. It also shows the process of acquiring ICC, and its desired internal and external outcomes. The INCA framework (2004) specifies six different components of ICC, each of which consists of the desired motivation, skills/knowledge, and behaviour. The framework also specifies three different levels of development, with indicators of each. Holmes and O'Neill's model (2012) model outlines the developmental phases of acquiring ICC, focusing on how the learner experiences and manages the process. The models also represent different ways in which a model might be created: Holmes and O'Neill's model (2012) was empirically-derived; the INCA framework (2004) and Deardorff's (2006) model were designed based on the insights of multiple ICC scholars; Byram's (1997) model was based on his own previous work, and on various existing studies from different disciplines.

2.4 Intercultural communicative competence in children

As previously mentioned, most of the existing theories, models, assessment frameworks, and teaching recommendations related to ICC have been developed with adults in mind, and would not necessarily be applicable to children. Although a few studies on introducing intercultural elements in primary school classrooms exist (Dziedziewicz, Gajda and Karwowski, 2014; Santos, Araújo e Sá, Simões, 2014), their relevance to understanding ICC in children is limited as they were not conducted in the context of language learning, and they were not concerned with describing or defining the ICC of children. The study by Gerlich et al. (2010) is possibly the only study to date that attempts to describe how ICC develops in children, specifically 3-6 year olds who attend bilingual preschools.

The study was conducted in nine preschools in Belgium, Germany and Sweden where at least 50 % of the instruction time takes place in English with native speaker teachers from various English-speaking countries. Over the course of two years, observational data were collected by participant observers on a weekly basis. Each observed instance of an interaction between a child and a person from a different cultural background, or an interaction with a focus on intercultural issues, was recorded in detail on an observation form. A person with a different cultural background was defined as a "person who/whose families come from a different country and/or speak a different language at home" (p. 147), and it could be either another child, a teacher, a parent, or any other adult who was present at the preschool. The data were collected with the aim to answer the following research questions:

1. Can intercultural competence be observed and described in the context of bilingual preschools?
2. What are the situations in which intercultural competence becomes visible?
3. What forms of intercultural behaviour do the children exhibit, ie. what are the indicators for intercultural competence in children aged 3-6 in bilingual preschools?
4. Does continued exposure to situations involving contact with other cultures and their representatives lead to a change in these children's behaviour? (p. 145)

In total, 131 observations were recorded involving more than 70 children and 30 adults. These observations were coded inductively by several researchers, and then compared with categories of ICC used in other studies. The categories that emerged in the dataset were divided into attitude, knowledge, and skills, drawing on Byram's (1997) model of ICC. The categories and their definitions are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6. A unique characteristic of these categories is that they not only describe the competent intercultural speaker (e.g. the attitude category of "tolerance/acceptance"), but also the speaker whose intercultural competence is still developing (e.g. the attitude category of "fear/rejection"). This is something that is often lacking in other models of ICC, such as Byram's (1997) model.

Table 4. Categories of ICC attitude found by Gerlich et al. (2010, p. 152).

Category	Definition
fear / rejection	children cry, flinch, avoid contact, yell or show other signs of discomfort when exposed to manifestations of cultural difference; children refuse contact with certain persons, languages, objects or actions related to another culture
judgmental statement	children utter phrases which express disrespect for or negative assumptions about another culture; children laugh about utterances, actions, beliefs or habits of persons from a different culture in a disrespectful way
tolerance / acceptance	children show openness or a welcoming reaction toward persons, objects and actions from a different culture; children respect rules of an intercultural situation
hesitation	children seem to avoid or seem cautious or shy towards persons from a different cultural background, their actions or objects associated with them, but they do not show signs of rejection
regret	children express sadness or disappointment about certain conditions associated with an intercultural situation
interest	children appear curious or want to gain knowledge about other persons, objects and actions that are connected to a different culture
no interest	children appear disinterested in displayed objects, themes or other newly introduced features
motivation for contact	children appear eager to become involved or to be in contact with L2 teachers or with children from different cultural backgrounds
motivation for language	children appear willing to learn the L2 spoken in preschool context or other languages; children show appreciation for language skills

Table 5. Categories of ICC knowledge found by Gerlich et al. (2010, p. 153).

Category	Definition
factual knowledge	children utter, reproduce, or recount facts relating to national or ethnic culture, identity, habits, rules, etc.
language knowledge	children utter, reproduce, recount words or phrases in a language which is not their L1; or in their L1, if L1 is not the majority language nor the target L2 of the preschool
lack of knowledge	children appear to have a deficit in factual knowledge on culture-related issues or language knowledge; this does not necessarily include a negative connotation or interpretation
meta-linguistic knowledge / meta-communication	children utter assumptions or factual knowledge about language, language construction, or communication; children talk about different languages and/or about communication strategies

Table 6. Categories of ICC skills found by Gerlich et al. (2010, p. 154).

Category	Definition
verbal communication strategy	children use verbal utterances to react to or interact with their chosen interlocutor/s from another culture, for example by choosing the adequate language, or by adapting their own language to the interlocutor's abilities
nonverbal communication strategy	children use mime and body language to react to or interact with their interlocutor/s
lack of communication strategy	children appear to lack a verbal or nonverbal strategy to interact with their interlocutor/s, which results in unsuccessful communication
negative strategy of communication	children use a successful strategy of communication to fulfil their intention, but the children's intention is to stop communication rather than to enhance it, e.g. by excluding other children
skill of discovery	children use a successful strategy to acquire knowledge or gather information, for example by asking questions
deduction / transfer	children combine factual and/or unconscious knowledge to establish interrelations between facts of which they had previously been unaware
mediation / translation	children use a successful strategy to solve a misunderstanding or a dysfunction in communication between individuals of different cultural background, for example by mediating, translating or explaining
guidance	children successfully use a strategy to include another individual from a different cultural background into a group, an activity, or to introduce him or her to certain knowledge; this strategy is not restricted to dysfunctional communication, and it usually includes other strategies, such as the skill to mediate and translate

Byram's model is repeatedly referenced by the authors in their discussion of the categories. Some of the categories, such as "skill of discovery" are also present in his model, while others are simplified versions of the components that he lists. For example, while Byram's model includes knowledge about social groups in one's own country and the interlocutor's country, a knowledge category that was found relevant to the preschoolers was simply "factual knowledge" about cultures. However, even though many of the categories are simple, it is important to note that other categories used in Gerlich et al. (2010) reflect quite sophisticated components of ICC, such as "mediation/translation" or "meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication". The multiple categories that were discovered show that intercultural communicative competence is a concept that is definitely relevant to young children. Moreover, it was found that the categories which facilitate intercultural communication occurred much more frequently than the categories which impede intercultural communication (Table 7). Negative behaviour such as fear or rejection was not only infrequent, but also temporary and mostly occurred during initial encounters only.

Table 7. Frequency of ICC categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010, p. 170).

Attitudes	#	Knowledge	#	Skills	#
fear / rejection	12	factual knowledge	38	verbal communication strategy	41
judgmental statement	8	language knowledge	57	nonverbal communication strategy	14
tolerance / acceptance	35	lack of knowledge	32	lack of communication strategy	2
hesitation	11	meta-linguistic knowledge / meta-communication	30	negative strategy of exclusion	2
regret	3			skill of discovery	28
interest	28			deduction / transfer	19
no interest	2			translation / mediation	10
motivation for language	32			guidance	7
motivation for contact	40				

The findings of the study are very informative with regards to describing the ICC of young children in a bilingual education setting. They illustrate how concepts related to ICC in adults are also relevant to children, often in their simplified form. They also outline the components that contribute to or impede intercultural communication, and give an idea of what the age-appropriate expectations with regards to ICC would be for children in this setting. However, there are still many gaps to be filled in order to understand the ICC of children. First of all, the Gerlich et al. study was conducted in a particular setting, in which children have the opportunity for intercultural contact. It is unclear whether ICC could be observed or taught in children this age who are in setting where there is no such opportunity. Secondly, the categories only represent the directly observable aspect of ICC. Thirdly, due to the study's explorative nature, the findings are largely descriptive and the categories are presented in a discrete way. As such, they do not tell us much about the relationship between the different components of ICC, nor what the developmental path of acquiring ICC would be. Although both facilitating and inhibiting components are included, we do not know which categories would be present at which stage of ICC development.

The intention of the authors was to provide a preliminary description of the ICC of children in a bilingual education setting, which could serve as a basis for further testing. The present study attempts to take this further step and expand on the study conducted by Gerlich and colleagues. Given the multitude of theories and models of adult ICC, and at the same time the scarcity of models that are thoroughly tested, the central motivation for the present study was to expand on the existing research on ICC in children, instead of approaching the ICC in young children from a completely new angle. The study aims to find out whether the categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) can serve as a predefined framework for observing and assessing ICC in young children in a bilingual education setting. Moreover, through observing the ICC of children in a different setting, yet one with a comparable population (in terms of age and type of education), an attempt is made to refine the framework that describes the ICC of young children in a bilingual education setting. Additionally, insights from the existing models of ICC in adults are used to work towards the development of a model of ICC in young children.

2.5 How can the development of ICC be facilitated?

While most of the existing literature on ICC is concerned with defining and describing it, there are also some empirical studies aimed at finding out how teachers and institutions can facilitate the development of ICC in individuals. Reviewing these studies is relevant to the present study, as children will be observed during a structured activity (the exchange with the international department of the school) which has the potential to improve the children's ICC through contact with English-speaking children from different cultures. Insights from the existing literature can help to evaluate the role of such encounters in the development of children's ICC, as well as to advise the teachers and the school about ways in which they can facilitate the development. The studies reviewed in this section were all conducted in university settings. The common theme in these studies is the acknowledgment of the positive role of interaction in the development of ICC, but also of the difficult process of engaging with other cultures, which often needs to be facilitated through structured initiatives and assignments.

The previously mentioned findings by Holmes and O'Neill (2012) revealed that interaction allows the individual to reflect on their own competence, as mirrored through their interlocutor. Intercultural encounters also allowed the speaker to develop empathy towards members of other cultures, and to build personal relationships with them. Another positive finding of the role of interaction was recorded by Krajewski (2011), who distributed a questionnaire among students attending a course on intercultural communication. The students were asked to rate each of the course activities based on how much each activity contributed to their development of ICC. Activities involving team work in culturally mixed groups were among the highest rated activities, scoring higher than research projects, essays, readings, and tutorials. However, lectures were also among the highest rated activities, indicating that theoretical knowledge also helps learners to become interculturally competent. Wong (2013) investigated the link between stay-abroad experience, linguistic confidence, and intercultural communication competence. In her study, Chinese students completed a questionnaire and participated in an interview before and after their stay-abroad experience with an English-speaking family. The author found that inexperience with intercultural contact can be a cause of anxiety about the speaker's linguistic skills and can lead to intercultural communication strategies of avoidance, passivity and rejection. On the other hand, intercultural contact can increase the linguistic confidence of an L2 speaker, which can result in more successful intercultural communication strategies such as integration, observation, proactivity, as well as a more open attitude.

What characterises the above studies is that the intercultural interactions were organized within a pedagogical context in which the participants received guidance, and in some cases the students also had theoretical knowledge of ICC. Other findings show that such pedagogical guidance is often necessary for ICC to develop through interaction, and that simply being in close proximity to people from different cultures does not necessarily lead to increased competence. For example, Volet and Ang (1998), based on their observation that local (Australian) and international (South-East Asian) students rarely interacted with one another in the classroom, conducted interviews with the students in order to gain insight into their attitude towards intercultural group work. The students were interviewed before taking part in group assignments where Australian and

South-East Asian students had to work together in small groups, as well as after the assignment in order to see whether they resulted in any change of perspective. The majority of the 40 participants stated that they preferred to work with people from their own culture. The reasons given for this preference centred around the following four themes: cultural-emotional connectedness, language, pragmatism, and negative stereotypes. Following the group assignments, many changes in perspective were observed, such as re-thinking stereotypes, feeling closer to the other culture, realising that intercultural communication is not as difficult as expected, and realising that cultural differences may not be as important as individual differences. However, when asked whether they would choose to work in culturally mixed groups in the future, there was no indication from the students that they would seek it out. The benefits of intercultural interaction during group work, on the one hand, and the reluctance on part of the students to engage in it, on the other, led the authors to propose that universities should make the effort to place students in situations where they have to engage in intercultural contact.

Similarly, Eisenchlas and Trevaskes (2007) called for Australian universities to design activities and assignments that would facilitate the development of ICC, given that despite high numbers of international students, international and local students often preferred to stay in their 'own' groups. The authors described four projects aimed at increasing ICC which they developed and successfully introduced at their university. Central to the projects was the idea that culture is reflected in everyday life practices of its members, therefore engaging with such practices is the best way to experience the culture. Another focus of the projects was to engage the students in critical reflection and/or real-life interactions, both of which were argued to facilitate ICC development. Four projects were proposed, for example a structured exchange between Chinese students and Australian students learning Chinese aimed at discussing the everyday cultural practices of both cultures, and the effect they may have on language use.

As mentioned, all of these results were found in university settings. The school in the present study provides a similar kind of setting in which children from different cultures are in close proximity. However, the population of the two settings is obviously different, in that one of them are adults and the other one are children. The setting of the present study allows us to observe intercultural encounters in different contexts, some of which are guided by the teacher and some of which are not. In this way, the observations made in the present study may reveal whether the finding that individuals need some kind of guidance and structure in order to benefit from intercultural contact holds for children as well.

2.6 Summary of chapter

Section 2.1 of this chapter discussed the definition of culture, and introduced the way in which culture is defined in the present study, i.e. through the languages a child speaks and/or hears at home. In section 2.2, the definition of ICC used in this study was discussed, together with some other alternative definitions from Deardorff's (2006) study. Section 2.3 introduced four of the existing models of ICC in adults (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Holmes & O'Neill, 2012; INCA, 2004), in order to expand the discussion of what constitutes ICC, as well as to provide examples of ways in which a model of ICC in children might be developed. Section 2.4 summarised what Gerlich et al. (2010) found with regards to ICC in young children in a bilingual education setting, and

outlined how the present study will expand on their findings. Section 2.5 reviewed existing studies on how ICC development might be facilitated in multicultural settings, the results of which suggested that individuals do not benefit from simply being in proximity of people from different cultures, and that structured or guided intercultural encounters are more beneficial for the development of ICC.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Observation as an assessment method

Assessment of ICC can be challenging for a similar reason which makes its definition difficult: it is a multidimensional construct with many components, the relationship between which is often unclear. Furthermore, some of the components, especially those related to attitude, are latent constructs which can only be observed indirectly (Aba, 2015). In the previously referenced Deardorff's (2006) study involving ICC experts, the most agreed on methods of assessment included case studies, interviews, analysis of narrative diaries, self-report instruments, observation by others, and judgment by self and others. These methods fall under two main categories: self-reflection, and observation/judgment by others, and the two are often combined, e.g. in narrative diaries the author may reflect on their own competence and an assessor may use the narrative to form their own judgement of the person's ICC. Such methods provide a way to assess components of ICC that are not directly observable or testable. Indeed, based on the existing literature and recommendations regarding ICC, assessment based on the students' produced work (e.g. portfolios) which includes self-reflection and critical awareness is very common (Byram et al. 2002; INCA, 2004; Lazar, Huber-Kriegler, Lussier, Matei, & Peck, 2007). The empirical studies reviewed in the previous section also base their assessment of student's ICC on such methods, for example interviews (Volet & Ang, 1998; Wong, 2013) or assignments (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012). To a lesser extent, self-reported questionnaire data is also used (Arasaratnam, 2009; INCA, 2004). More traditional question-answer tests are used, but almost never on their own; they are most often used to assess components related to knowledge, as they work best with questions to which there is an objectively correct answer (e.g. Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002).

While assessment based on self-reflection and assignments is recommended and popular with adults, there are severe limitations to the extent to which it can be implemented with children. Any methods involving critical awareness and self-reflection are not possible with children, at least not up until a certain age (Gerlich et al., 2010). Other limitations related to the developmental stage of young children include literacy, attention span, and working memory (Unsworth & Blom, 2010). Among possible assessment methods, observation seems to be the only promising one. In fact, observation is already commonly used by teachers of young children in order to assess their competence or progress in different areas. School reports for preschool and lower-primary children are usually based on teacher's observations of the children's development, rather than on grades or work produced by the children. The question that remains is *how* the observations should be carried out. In the present study, attention will be paid to evaluating the effectiveness of the specific observation method (using an observation form with predefined behavioural categories which occur during intercultural encounters) in the specific setting (culturally mixed primary school offering bilingual education). The advantages of observing children during intercultural encounters are that ICC is observed in authentic rather than stimulated situations, and that children do not need to perform any specific tasks. In cases when children cannot engage in real-life intercultural encounters, assessment might be more challenging and may rely on activities (e.g. role-plays) designed to elicit behaviour related to ICC, or to simulate intercultural encounters.

Given the availability of the other methods, observation of behaviour is not very common in adult assessment of ICC. There is, however, one instrument which has been developed for adults and which illustrates how ICC may be assessed during intercultural encounters. The Behavioural Assessment Scale for Intercultural Competence (BASIC) (Ruben and Kealey, 1979; Koester and Olebe, 1988) can be used by trained and untrained observers in order to assess an individual's competence in nine areas related to ICC. The nine components, which can be assessed on a 4- or 5-point Likert scale are: display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, task-related role behaviour, relational role behaviour, individualistic role behaviour, interaction management, and tolerance for ambiguity. Analysis showed that the scores that individuals received were good predictors of how well they reacted to culture shock after moving to a new country, and how well they adjusted to the culture. However, behavioural observations have not become a popular assessment method and no other scales of such sort have been developed. Some disadvantages of observation as an assessment method need to be acknowledged: the method is often time-consuming; it is also often subjective, particularly with constructs that are not directly observable.

3.2 Participants

3.2.1 Recruitment

The participants were recruited during the researcher's internship with the bilingual education pilot in the Netherlands. Pilot schools which had both a Dutch department (in which bilingual education is implemented) and an international department (in which the only language of instruction is English) were contacted. As most of the children in international departments do not speak Dutch and come from various, mostly non-Dutch, cultural backgrounds, such schools provided opportunities for intercultural encounters through contact between the two departments. The aim was to conduct the research at one or two of these schools. The small number of schools was chosen mainly due to the time-consuming nature of collecting qualitative observational data. The data had to be collected over a relatively short period of time, and more schools would have meant fewer data per school. Observing children at only one or two schools would produce more substantial data, allowing for an emergence of patterns, and a more in-depth analysis. Six out of the 18 pilot schools had an international department, four of which were excluded as possible participants in the study from the start (for various reasons, such as being already involved in large-scale research projects). English teachers and/or bilingual education coordinators from the remaining two schools were contacted either in person or via email. Both schools expressed interest in participating, however only one of the schools responded early enough for data collection to be possible there. The teacher and the parents received written information about the purpose of the research study, about the intended procedure for data collection (including video-recording), as well as about confidentiality of the data. The parents and the teacher all signed consent forms agreeing to (their child's) participation in the study.

3.2.2 Participant characteristics

The school where the data were collected was in its second year of the bilingual primary education pilot. The aim of the pilot was to introduce bilingual education with between

30% and 50 % of instruction time taking place in English starting from grade 1 of primary school (in the Netherlands, grade 1 starts at four years old). At this school, about 30 % of the school time (one long school day and one short day) for grades 1 and 2 was spent with a teacher who spoke to the children exclusively in English, while the remainder of the time was spent with a different teacher who spoke Dutch. The observations were conducted in a classroom consisting of a total of twenty grade 1 and grade 2 children. The children had been in bilingual education since they started school: at the time of the data collection, the first graders had thus been exposed to English for about nine months, and the second graders had one year more of English experience. One exception was a grade 1 child who entered school in the middle of the year, and had only had about 5 months of exposure to English. The teacher was an English-Dutch bilingual, and although she only spoke English around the children, they knew that she understood Dutch. She acknowledged and often responded (in English) when they spoke Dutch, but she also encouraged and reminded the children to speak English during "English time", which was marked by the presence of a British flag in the classroom.

The children were between four and six years old and they came from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Information about their backgrounds was obtained by means of a parental questionnaire consisting of six questions about: 1) the parents' L1, 2) the language(s) the parents speak at home, 3) the language(s) the child speaks at home, 4) whether the child knows or is learning a language other than Dutch, English, and the home language(s), 5) whether the child has contact with people from cultures other than their own outside of school, 6) how long the child has been living in the Netherlands (the full questionnaire can be found in the Appendix). As previously discussed, in the present study "culture" was defined in terms of languages that the child speaks or hears at home – this information was obtained through questions 2 and 3. Question 1 provided additional information about the parents' linguistic background. This information may be relevant in certain cases, for example when parents have an L1 which they do not speak at home. In that case, even though the child would not be exposed to their parent's native culture through the language, they may be exposed to that culture through other means, such as through customs and traditions. Questions 4, 5 and 6 further expanded the cultural profile of the child, by obtaining information about their experiences with intercultural encounters outside of school, any other languages that they may be, or have been, learning outside of home and school, and about any possible experiences with living in different cultural environments. All of this information was kept in mind during the interpretation of children's behaviour related to ICC, although often the background information was not necessarily needed to conduct the analysis.

Fourteen out of 20 parents returned the questionnaire. For the remaining six children, information about the language(s) they spoke at home was obtained from the teacher. All of the children whose parents returned the questionnaire were born in the Netherlands, and none of them knew languages other than Dutch, English, and their home language(s). The rest of the information about children's backgrounds is presented in Table 8. As seen, only less than half (7 out of 20) children spoke and heard exclusively Dutch at home; the other children had a variety of home languages instead of, or in addition to, Dutch. At least 7 children had contact with people from other cultures outside of school, which may have an effect on the level of their ICC.

Table 8. Background information about the children participating in the study.

Child[a]	**Parents' L1**	**Languages parents speak at home**	**Languages child speaks at home**	**Intercultural contact outside of school**
C1	Father Kurdish, mother Turkish	Turkish, Dutch	Turkish, Dutch	No
C2	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	-
C3	-	-	Dutch	-
C4	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Yes, speaks English during encounters
C5	Russian	Russian	Russian, sometimes Dutch	No
C6	Father Dutch, mother Russian	Dutch, Russian	Dutch, Russian	Yes, sometimes speaks English
C7	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	No
C8	-	-	Dutch	-
C9	-	-	Dutch, French	-
C10	-	-	Dutch	-
C11	Dutch, English	Dutch	Dutch, sometimes English	Yes, speaks English during encounters
C12	-	-	French	-
C13	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Yes
C14	Turkish	Turkish	Turkish	Yes, understands and sometimes speaks English during encounters
C15	-	-	Dutch, English	-
C16	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	No
C17	Farsi	Farsi	Farsi, Dutch	No
C18	Father Spanish, mother Polish	Spanish, Polish, English	Spanish, Polish, Dutch	No
C19	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Yes, speaks English during those encounters
C20	Mother French, father Dutch	French, Dutch, English	French, Dutch, English	Yes, speaks Dutch and French during those encounters

[a]*Children were assigned numbers in order to maintain anonymity.*

During a weekly exchange, the children in the bilingual department have contact with children from the international department. A few children from the Dutch department visit a classroom in the international department for 45 minutes, and a few international children come to the Dutch classroom. The exchange had been taking place for a few months before the time of the data collection, and we set up in order to increase intercultural contact between children from the two departments. The children from the two departments also have contact with one another during breaks at the playground. Additionally, a new activity began to take place around the time when the data was collected, where once a week for about an hour, doors to all the classrooms were opened and the children were free to go and play in different classrooms with different children.

3.3 Materials

An observation form based on the ICC categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) was created. Figure 5 shows the part of the observation form with knowledge categories (the observation form consists of three pages, one with attitude categories, one with knowledge categories, and one with skills categories). The upper table presents all of the knowledge categories together with their assigned codes (K1, K2, etc.). In the lower table, the actual observations are recorded. Each instance of an observed category is presented in a separate column, and each occurrence receives a code, entered in the 'Observation code' row. The observation codes consist of the category code, the observation number, and the number of occurrence of the specific category. For example, the code K2.6.1 corresponds to the sixth observation that was made (6), which was also the first observation (1) in which the category of language knowledge (K2) occurred. In the row underneath the 'Observation code' one, details of the observations can be recorded, such as the child's exact words and/or behaviour, as well as the situation in which the child was observed, and the participants and languages involved. Table 9 shows an example of a filled in column. Individual occurrences of the categories are recorded, the details of which can be entered in the subsequent row.

Often, children exhibited more than one category related to ICC during a single observation. Noting down the observation number allowed to relate occurrences of different categories to the specific situations in which they were observed. What counted as one observation was usually one intercultural encounter, although sometimes ICC categories were observed outside of intercultural encounters, for example when children displayed factual knowledge in interaction with someone who was *not* from a different culture. Furthermore, the boundaries of what constitutes one intercultural encounter where not always clear, for example when interactions were interrupted and then resumed.

Code	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5
Category	Factual knowledge	Language knowledge	Lack of knowledge	Meta-linguistic knowledge/ meta-communication	Other

Observation code					
Exact words/behaviour Situation *Activity* *Context* Participants Languages Other comments					

Figure 5. Knowledge section of the observation form used to collect the data.

Table 9. Filled in column of the observation form.

Observation code	K2.40.26
Exact words/behaviour	C6 points to the observation form and says: "What does it read here?" Me: "Can you read?" C6: "No. This says *A*. This says four." Me: "Wow, you can read!" C6: "I can't read, only in Dutch."
Situation *Activity* *Context*	The children are watching a film, C6 is sitting next to me on the carpet.
Participants	Me, C6
Languages	English
Other comments	

3.4 Procedure

The observations were carried out during four school visits over the period of one month. Each time, the school was visited on a short English day. Multiple copies of the observation form were printed out and brought along to the classroom. Each of the observed days consisted of more or less the same activities: going to the library, where the teacher read stories to the children, making art projects, playing in the classroom, playing outside, and playing during the exchange with the international department. At the beginning of each exchange, the teacher would suggest several activities to the children from the international department, such as playing different games or drawing. The children could choose which activities they want to do, but at the same time the teacher made sure that children from both departments were doing activities together.

The exchange was only observed in the Dutch department classroom, and not in the international department classroom. This was because there were only three 45-minute long exchanges, and staying in the Dutch classroom allowed to control for setting, and draw more substantial conclusions related to the specific set-up of the exchange. While it would be interesting to observe the exchange in a different classroom, where, for example, the teacher might organize in a slightly different way, it was decided that there was not enough time to investigate such different settings.

On one of the days there was no exchange, and some other minor exceptions to the schedule occurred, such as not playing outside due to the weather. During the first two visits, the observations were not video-recorded as the parents had not yet signed the consent forms. The last two visits were video-recorded using a hand-held camera. In total, 14 hours of observations were conducted, about 4 of which were filmed. The video recordings allowed more detail to be captured, especially during extended interactions, without the demanding task of noting down the details of interactions in real time. They also allowed the researcher to engage in interaction with the children without having to simultaneously record it on the form. On the days when video recordings were made, the observations were noted down while watching the footage later.

3.5 Methodological considerations

A few methodological points had to be considered. The first one concerned the role of the researcher in the classroom, the second one concerned whether interactions with the teacher should count as intercultural encounters, and the third one concerned the translation of interactions which did not take place in English. Regarding the first point, a decision had to be made whether the children should be observed from a distance with minimal involvement on the part of the researcher, or whether the researcher should engage in activities with the children. One possible risk of being involved in children's activities was that children would change their behaviour when in proximity to an observer and/or a camera. During the first school visit, the children were first observed from a distance, and attention was paid to any negative behaviours which could result from the presence of a new person in the classroom, such as shyness or distraction. No such negative behaviours were found. The children accepted the presence of the researcher in the classroom, without any signs of discomfort. Since this was not the first time that visitors were in the classroom, the children did not seem to see it as anything out of the ordinary. When observed from a distance during their usual classroom activities, they did not seem distracted or self-conscious in any way. When the researcher got closer to them, any reactions to her presence were positive, such as including her in the activities or smiling. While adults may have gotten the sense of being judged when observed during their daily activities, this way of thinking did not seem relevant to the children. As such, interacting with the children was seen as an opportunity to observe more intercultural behaviour, as those interactions constituted intercultural encounters (the researcher did not speak Dutch and interacted with the children in English). When the camera was introduced later, no behavioural changes were observed either, although the children were interested in the device and often asked questions about it.

Another question was whether or not children's interactions with the teacher constituted intercultural encounters. The teacher always addressed the children in English, and the children spoke to her in English most of the time, although addressing her in Dutch was not uncommon either. With regards to linguistic and cultural background, the teacher spoke both English and Dutch and had lived in the United States, making her background different than that of any child. This, in theory, classifies teacher-child interactions as intercultural encounters, however the decision was made not to classify the mere act of children interacting with the teacher in English as intercultural communication, for several reasons. First of all, the use of a foreign language with the teacher was not necessary from a communicative standpoint: the teacher spoke English so

that the children learn the language, and the children spoke English because the teacher asked them to. This distinguishes such interactions from authentic intercultural communication. Because the use of a foreign language only served pedagogical purposes, it can be impossible to disentangle communicative acts that would take place during authentic intercultural communication, and communicative acts that are an act of teaching or an act of obeying the rules of the classroom. For example, it can be unclear whether children show their motivation to use the language when speaking to the teacher in English, or if they are speaking English because the teacher rewards the use of that language. Therefore, judging children's ICC based on their interactions with the teacher would not be an accurate measure of their competence. However, because the teacher and the children do have different cultural backgrounds, some aspects of ICC might become relevant during interactions with the teacher, such as attitude towards the teacher's background or knowledge about one's own or the teacher's culture. Moreover, categories that do not require an intercultural encounter to be visible could still be observed during teacher-child interactions. Such categories were thus included in the data, but interactions in which the only aspect of ICC that was visible was children's ability and/or willingness to talk in English with the teacher were not included.

The final consideration related to the fact that the researcher's knowledge of Dutch was very basic. This meant that some instances of ICC that occur when Dutch is spoken could be overlooked. During the observations that were not video-recorded there was little that could be done to circumvent this limitation. The video-recorded observations could be translated by a native speaker of Dutch, however it would be a rather time-consuming task to not only transcribe but also translate everything that was said in Dutch, especially with multiple children talking at once. As the researcher's knowledge of Dutch allowed her to understand the general topic of a conversation most of the time, a decision was made to only seek a native speaker's help when the content of the interaction might be relevant to ICC. It is possible that some relevant data were overlooked this way, but capturing everything that is said in a classroom of twenty children is impossible even without linguistic barriers.

3.6 Analysis

After each classroom visit, the data from the observation forms was entered into an Excel file, an extract of which is shown in Figure 5. The columns in the Excel file mostly paralleled the information on the observation forms, with child information and the date of each observation added. Each child was also assigned a code (C+ number; the numbers assigned were random), in order to maintain anonymity.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Code	Date	Category	Child	Grade	Cultural b	Home lan	Exact wor	Situation	Participan	Languages	Comment
2	S1.1.1	18-May	Verbal co	C1	2	father spe	Dutch; Tu	Me: "Wha	Drawing t	C1; me. D	English	
3	K2.1.1	18-May	Language	C1	2		Dutch; Turkish					
4	A4.1.1	18-May	Tolerance	C1	2		Dutch; Turkish					

Figure 6. Excel file with observation data.

The number of times that each category occurred was counted, however it must be borne in mind that the frequency of occurrence is not a direct measure of which aspects

of children's ICC are more or less developed. It can be indicative of what types of behaviours are common or uncommon in the children, but no definitive conclusions can be drawn. Because the data were collected through observation, frequency of behaviour can be linked to the context and opportunities for certain behaviours. For example, language knowledge can easily be elicited just by speaking to a child, while there might be less opportunity for the child to show factual knowledge about cultures. Moreover, some encounters may have been overlooked during the observations, given that there was only one observer for twenty children. There were also some encounters which were ambiguous, i.e. which could not be classified under any category with certainty, and which were therefore not included in the dataset. The children's ICC and the context in which it occurred were further analysed by looking for patterns in the observation details. Descriptive and interpretative notes were made for each of the categories.

The ICC categories on the observation form were evaluated after each visit by answering the following questions:

- Do any extra categories emerge?
- Are there any categories that are unnecessary? (e.g. because they overlap)
- Do any categories need redefining?

Furthermore, any methodological or interpretation issues, for example relating to the observation form as a data collection tool, were noted down. Additionally, after each visit, notes were made describing the activities that took place during the day, the general atmosphere of the classroom, the ICC of children on a classroom level, as well as any other information that did not fit into the observation form, such as non-ICC-related behavioural patterns of the children that might help with the analysis.

Chapter 4. Results

Section 4.1 of this chapter outlines the frequency of occurrence of each category, and section 4.2 provides a detailed description of the contexts in which the categories were observed. Section 4.3 compares the results found in this study with those found in Gerlich et al. (2010), and section 4.4 discusses ICC as observed specifically in the context of the exchange with the international department.

4.1 Frequency of observed ICC categories

A total of 106 situations in which behaviour related to ICC occurred were observed. Table 10 shows the number of times that each category was observed (see Tables 4-6 in section 2.4, or next section, for the definitions of the categories). As mentioned, many observations covered more than one category. Additionally, three new categories of skills emerged, shown in Table 11, which will be discussed in more detail in section 4.2.3. As seen, some of the categories were not observed at all, namely the attitude categories of "Judgmental statement", "Regret", and "No interest"; and the skills categories of "Negative strategy of exclusion", "Deduction/transfer", and "Guidance".

Table 10. Frequency of occurrence of ICC categories.

Attitude	#	**Knowledge**	#	**Skills**	#
Fear/rejection	1	Factual knowledge	1	Verbal communication strategy	85
Judgmental statement	0	Language knowledge	85	Non-verbal communication strategy	12
Tolerance/acceptance	68	Lack of knowledge	18	Lack of communication strategy	1
Hesitation	7	Meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication	14	Negative strategy of exclusion	0
Regret	0			Skill of discovery	10
Interest	2			Deduction/transfer	0
No interest	0			Translation/mediation	6
Motivation for language	2			Guidance	0
Motivation for contact	46				

Table 11. Extra ICC categories observed in the present study.

Skills	#	Definition
Inappropriate language choice	16	Children address someone in a language that they know the other person does not speak
Bilingual interaction	9	Children are capable of operating two languages in an interaction, e.g. switching between languages depending on the addressee in a multiparty interaction
Linguistic resourcefulness	5	Children use strategies aimed at achieving successful communication despite limited language knowledge e.g. describing the referent of a word when they do not know the word itself

4.*2 Context of observed ICC categories*

This section describes when, and in what way, each of the knowledge (section 4.2.1), attitude (section 4.2.2), and skills (section 4.2.3) categories occurred. As mentioned, multiple categories could often be assigned to a single observation (for example, the categories of verbal communication strategy and language knowledge almost always co-occurred). If a situation was assigned more than one category, it is mentioned under each of them. Therefore, sometimes the same instance is referred to several times, in the discussion of the different categories that it falls under.

4.2.1 Knowledge categories

Factual knowledge ("children utter, reproduce, or recount facts relating to national or ethnic culture, identity, habits, rules, etc.")

It is important to point out that this category does not include knowledge about languages, such as the languages that children speak – this type of knowledge is covered by the "meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication" category. Factual knowledge about cultures was observed only once, probably due to the fact that factual knowledge is not something that is normally visible in day-to-day interaction; it only becomes visible when it is applied, or when someone elicits it from the child. There were not many occasions on which children needed factual knowledge. The one time that it was observed was when C17 was asked by a child from the international department which country he came from, and he gave the correct answer.

Language knowledge ("children utter, reproduce, recount words or phrases in a language which is not their L1; or in their L1, if L1 is not the majority language nor the target L2 of the preschool")

Language knowledge was observed very frequently. Since language knowledge was more of a rule rather than exception, instances when it occurred were often difficult to quantify. Most children's knowledge of English was good enough to communicate what they wanted, and to understand what was said to them. Instances of *lack* of language knowledge were much less common than instances of knowledge. The language that the children used when talking to the teacher was mostly English, and only sometimes they had to resort to Dutch. When they spoke English, it was often non-target-like or simplified, however such inaccuracies did not affect communication. There was also

considerable variation in different children's English language abilities, however, all children were able to produce utterances in English, which is not always the case with children who have not been exposed to the target language for a long period of time. Furthermore, no visible differences were observed between the language abilities of grade 1 and grade 2 children. In terms of Dutch, the children who did not speak it at home all appeared to speak Dutch without difficulties to their classmates.

Lack of knowledge ("children appear to have a deficit in factual knowledge on culture-related issues or language knowledge; this does not necessarily include a negative connotation or interpretation")

Lack of knowledge was divided into lack of language knowledge and lack of factual knowledge (about languages or cultures). Lack of factual knowledge occurred six times. In three of those instances, it seemed that the children confused the concept of nationality with the concept of knowing languages. When I[3] asked C1 whether she was Dutch, she said that she was Dutch and English. However, when I asked whether her mother was English she said no, and when I asked whether her father was English she said she did not know. Based on the parental questionnaire, it turned out that both her parents were Turkish, and that they spoke Turkish and Dutch at home. As C1 spoke both Dutch and English at school, it seems that her saying that she was Dutch and English related to the languages she spoke, although it is interesting that she did not mention Turkish which she spoke at home. Another time, C3 asked me whether I was Dutch or English. I told her that I was Polish, to which she said "also English", probably referring to the fact that I spoke English. I told her that I was not English but that I spoke it, and then I asked her whether she was Dutch or English. She said that she was both, just like C1, although she is actually only Dutch.

Another instance of C1's lack of knowledge occurred two weeks later when, despite me having told her that I was Polish, she asked me whether I was from Turkey. There are two possible reasons why she asked this, one of which is that she could have forgotten what I had told her two weeks earlier. Another option is that despite my explanation that I was Polish, and that I spoke Polish and English, she still did not understand the distinction between my country of origin and the languages I spoke. If she understood my saying that I was Polish as me telling her that I spoke Polish, then from her point of view she still did not have the information about my nationality, which is why she thought that I might be from Turkey. It seems that C1 understands "being (e.g.) Polish" as "speaking Polish" and only the phrase "being from Poland" refers to nationality for her. It is unclear whether this is a linguistic problem (in which case she would have the same difficulty in Dutch in which the same adjective is also used to refer to nationality and language) or whether she does not fully understand the concept of nationality or the fact that languages spoken by a person do not necessarily match their nationality.

The two other instances of lack of factual knowledge occurred when children did not have certain types of knowledge about countries. In one of the instances, I asked C1 whether she knew where Poland was, and she said that she did not know. In another instance, the teacher asked the class whether China was far away or not. She got mixed

[3] When reporting the results, first person singular pronouns are used when referring to interactions between the researchers and the children from the researcher's point of view, in order to avoid awkward sentence constructions.

responses of “yes” and “no”. At least some children did not know whether China was far, and it is unclear whether those who said “yes” really knew it or whether they were guessing.

Lack of language knowledge occurred twelve times. It occurred mostly with single words or utterances, and was only occasional compared to all of the times when the children had sufficient knowledge to communicate in English. No instances of lack of knowledge in Dutch were observed (or at least they were not recognised as instances of lack of knowledge in Dutch by the researcher, given her level of proficiency in Dutch). There were also several ambiguous instances, for example when children did not respond when addressed in English, but it was not clear whether it was due to lack of knowledge or other, perhaps attitude-related, reasons. Children also sometimes said things in Dutch instead of English, but it was not always clear whether that was because they did not know how to say those things in English (see the “Inappropriate language choice” category). Only the instances that could be (more or less) unambiguously classified as lack of language knowledge were included in the data.

It is useful to examine how children coped with gaps in their language knowledge. There was one instance when a child fell silent when he did not know how to say something in English (also discussed under the “Lack of communication strategy” category). However, in all other instances the children had a strategy to express or overcome the lack of language knowledge. Four types of strategies were observed – 1) saying that they do not understand/do not know how to say something in English, 2) asking for clarification/explanation (x3), 3) trying to communicate despite limited language knowledge (x2), and 4) communicating their message in Dutch instead of English (x4). Strategies 2, 3 and 4 will be discussed in more detail in the categories “Skill of discovery”, “Linguistic resourcefulness”, and “Inappropriate language choice”. The first strategy, which did not result in successful communication, was observed once when C2 said something to me in Dutch, and when I asked whether he could say it in English he said “no”. Expressing lack of language knowledge is related to the category of “Lack of communication strategy” in that it usually does not lead to successful communication, however at least the lack of knowledge itself is communicated successfully to the interlocutor, making it a meta-communication strategy. It is therefore a step-up from silence, which is often ambiguous and can be interpreted in many different ways by the interlocutor.

Meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication (“children utter assumptions or factual knowledge about language, language construction, or communication; children talk about different languages and/or about communication strategies”)

Many of the occurrences of meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication took place when children communicated about the fact that they should be speaking English on days when they were with the English teacher. The teacher frequently reminded them to speak English, especially when talking among themselves, which they mostly did in Dutch. She often did it by asking questions like “I hear a lot of Dutch. Which language should you be speaking instead?” to which the children always replied “English”. She also used such questions to remind them to speak English to children from the international department. The children were well aware of the fact that they should be speaking English on English days, and/or to people who spoke English but not Dutch. They often reminded each other

to speak English, for example when C1 repeatedly said “Speak English!” to her classmates who were all talking Dutch while working on their art projects. Another such occurrence happened when C11, C13, and a child from the international department were doing a puzzle together. C13 was talking in Dutch, and C11 said “Speak English!” to him while pointing at the child from the international department.

Other situations in which meta-linguistic knowledge was displayed were when children talked about their own or others’ language abilities. For example, C14 said that she speaks Turkish, that she does not speak Polish, and that C5 speaks Russian. C6, when asked whether she could read, said that she could only read in Dutch. C3, when I told her that she spoke both Dutch and English very well, demonstrated her knowledge by saying “hello” in both languages. Children also communicated about their language abilities and preferences during interaction. C2, when asked whether he could repeat what he had said in Dutch in English, said no (already mentioned under “Lack of language knowledge”). Another time, I said to C18 in Polish that we could talk to each other in this language (his mother is Polish and he speaks Polish at home). However, he seemed to have a clear language preference: he said (in Polish) “no”, and when I asked him whether he preferred to speak English, he said yes.

4.2.2 Attitude categories

Fear/rejection (“children cry, flinch, avoid contact, yell or show other signs of discomfort when exposed to manifestations to cultural difference; children refuse contact with certain persons, languages, objects or actions related to another culture”)

The category of fear/rejection was observed once. It involved the situation described in the “Meta-linguistic knowledge/meta-communication” category when C18 did not want to speak Polish with me, despite his proficiency in that language, and despite the fact that his unwillingness to use this language was communicated in Polish. However, he did not reject the act of intercultural communication, but rather the act of intercultural communication in the specific language, since he was still willing to communicate with me in English (and he did, on other occasions).

Tolerance/acceptance (“children show openness or a welcoming towards persons, objects, and actions from a different culture; children respect rules of an intercultural situation”)

The category of tolerance/acceptance was very difficult to quantify for several reasons. First of all, it was very widespread and its presence was more of a general atmosphere of the classroom, rather than discrete occurrences. Secondly, being a rather neutral category, it was defined by the lack of other, more extreme categories, such as “fear/rejection”, “hesitation, or “motivation for contact”, rather than by the presence of a specific kind of behaviour. Therefore, the number 86 shown in Table 10 as the number of occurrences of this category, may not be a very accurate and/or suitable way of representing the presence of tolerance and acceptance.

The children accepted the presence of non-Dutch speaking people in the classroom, and the fact that they needed to communicate in English with them. The vast majority of the time when addressed in English, they responded in English, respecting the rules of intercultural communication, and accepting the fact that sometimes they needed to communicate using a language other than the language they were most proficient in. On

multiple occasions, when a non-Dutch-speaking person entered a Dutch-speaking group, the children switched the language of interaction to English, in order to include that person in the conversation. Furthermore, the children in the classroom who came from different cultural backgrounds were interacting and playing with each other without any signs of discrimination, exclusion, or any other negative behaviours based on cultural differences.

Hesitation ("children seem to avoid or seem cautious or shy towards persons from a different cultural background, their actions or objects associated with them, but they do not show signs of rejection")

Hesitation was observed seven times in situations where children seemed reluctant to engage in intercultural communication. During one of the occurrences, I commented on the drawing of C5, who was walking past me, but she did not acknowledge my comment in any way; she only glanced at me briefly and increased her pace while walking past me. Another time, I came up to C10 who was reading a book and asked her some questions about the book. She either did not respond or responded by nodding or shaking her head. This could be due to lack of language knowledge, but the fact that she avoided eye contact with me and she walked away soon after I came up to her indicated hesitation. Another instance of hesitation occurred during the exchange with the international department when the teacher sat C14 and a child from the international department together at a table where they could draw. She made them introduce each other, and then walked away. The two children did not exchange a single word after the teacher left.

Hesitation also occurred when C3 wanted to interact with a child from the international department whom she had met before somewhere else, but she was hesitant to approach him. She came up to the teacher and the following exchange occurred:

(1) C3: I know one boy.
Teacher: Who do you know?
C3: He is on the rug.
T: Did you say hello?
C3: Yes
T: Or not yet?
C3: Yes.
T: Go say hello.

C3 then walked off, but she did not say hello to the boy. However, later, she did initiate interaction with him by calling his name, introducing herself and inviting him to play with her and another child.

In another situation, three children were hesitant to engage in interaction with children from the international department. C1, C7, C16, and two children from the international department were sat down at a table playing with ponies. They were at the table together because the international children wanted to play with ponies and the teacher directed them to the table, rather than because the children chose to play together. The Dutch children were reluctant to engage in interaction with the international children, despite the teacher's requests. The children from the Dutch department were talking in Dutch to one another, and at one point the teacher came and told them to speak English so that the

international children could understand. However, after she left they continued speaking in Dutch. Soon after, the teacher came to tell them to speak English again. C1 started speaking English after the teacher left, talking about the ponies but not addressing anyone in particular. C7, however, continued speaking Dutch and when she asked C1 a question in Dutch, C1 switched to Dutch as well and they continued their conversation in that language. For C7 and C16, it is possible that this reluctance was due to their proficiency in English. C16 had been at the school only for 5 months and therefore his proficiency was likely to be lower than other children's. C7's proficiency in English also did not seem as high as other children's: she talked in Dutch a lot compared to the others, and she often struggled to formulate English utterances when asked by the teacher. However, C1's knowledge of English was much higher, and she was also one of the children who would remind others to speak English the most. Therefore, her persistent choice to speak Dutch seemed very surprising. A possible explanation for that choice lies perhaps in C7's and C16's reluctance to speak English, and C1 accommodating to them. If C1 speaks English, she includes the two international children in the interaction, but she may be excluding C7 and C16, who may not follow the conversation or participate as much if it takes place in English. In this sense, C1 is put in a complex situation to which there is perhaps no 'right' solution.

Interest ("children appear curious or want to gain knowledge about other persons, objects and actions that are connected to a different culture")
Interest was observed twice, both times when C3 asked me about my cultural background. It is possible that the children were interested in people or objects from different cultures at other times, however these two times were the only instances when interest was directly observable.

Motivation for language ("children appear willing to learn the L2 spoken in preschool context or other languages; children show appreciation for language skills")
C1 often told other children to speak English, and she also sometimes spoke English to them rather than Dutch. Other children also sometimes told others to speak English, however it is unclear whether they really wanted to speak and hear as much English as possible, or whether they were just repeating the teacher's directions in order to discipline their classmates. As mentioned before, the majority of the time when addressing each other, the children spoke Dutch rather than English. The fact that there were some children who shared the same home languages (e.g. Turkish or Russian) but who always spoke Dutch to each other could also indicate their motivation to use their second language rather than their home language. However, there is no certainty that this was their reason for speaking Dutch – several other reasons are possible, such as them not being aware that they share the same L1 with other children.

Motivation for contact ("children appear eager to become involved or to be in contact with L2 teachers or with children from different cultural backgrounds")
Motivation for contact was observed many times when children initiated interaction with someone from a different culture. It is possible that their initiating interaction in a foreign language also showed motivation for language. However, it could be that they simply spoke the foreign language because it was the only way to communicate with their

interlocutor, rather than because they really wanted to use the language. Over half of all the observed intercultural encounters were initiated by the children. The children often initiated interaction with me when they saw me nearby, for example asking questions about what I was doing, saying what they were doing, involving me in their activities, or sharing something that they made with me. Sometimes the desire for contact was very clear, as when C6 took my hand on her way out of the classroom, led me to another classroom where the children were going to watch a cartoon, and made me sit down next to her. The frequency of them initiating contact with me increased as they got to know me. During the later visits, the interactions between me and the children often extended over a long period of time, due to the children keeping up the conversation, for example by asking multiple questions, or by telling me things about themselves. Motivation for contact was also observed during the exchange with the international department, although hesitation and avoidance of contact were equally, if perhaps not more common. Instances of motivation of contact included the already described situation in which C3 wanted to interact with a boy from the international department (see the "Hesitation" category"), or a situation in which C17 initiated interaction with a child from the international department while playing together.

4.2.3 Skills categories

Verbal communication strategy ("children use verbal utterances to react to or interact with their chosen interlocutor/s from another culture, for example by choosing the adequate language, or by adapting their own language to the interlocutor's abilities)

Verbal communication occurred in the vast majority of all intercultural encounters. As already mentioned, many of the encounters were extended (sometimes lasting 10-15 minutes), showing that many children's verbal communication abilities in a second language extended beyond short exchanges. One particular situation showcases the extent of children's verbal communication abilities. I asked C6 to write down her name at the back of my observation form after she told me that she knew how to write her name. During the break at the playground, she got the idea of getting the names of all her classmates on the paper. She wrote some of the names herself, asked me to write some names, and asked some children to write their own names. Many other children were interested in showing their reading and writing skills. Because they were using my paper and pen, I was supervising the "project". The whole time, the children showed a variety communicative skills, when they had to express what they wanted to do, ask me questions, communicate ideas, etc. Moreover, the children often code-switched rapidly depending on the addressee, speaking English to me and Dutch to their classmates.

Because the occurrence of this category was so widespread, it was not a very informative measure of the children's ICC, as it became clear very early on that all children could, and did, communicate verbally in English (and Dutch, in case of the children who do not speak it at home). Therefore, the specific kinds of strategies that children used during intercultural communication were examined, and three new categories of skills emerged (see Table 11). These will be detailed below.

Inappropriate language choice ("Children address someone in a language that they know the other person does not speak")

Something that occurred quite a few times during intercultural communication was children addressing someone in the "wrong" language, specifically addressing people in Dutch instead of English. In all of the instances, the children had been told that the person does not speak Dutch and that they should talk in English, and in many cases the children had talked in English to the person before. These situations did not fit into any of the categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) (although sometimes they overlapped with other categories, such as 'lack of knowledge'). Even though they were instances of verbal communication, they differed from situations in which children used the appropriate language, which had much higher chances of successful communication. However, they also differed from instances of lack of communication strategy, in that using the "wrong" language could be a deliberate communication strategy.

There are several possible reasons as to why children would talk in Dutch instead of English: forgetting that their interlocutor does not understand Dutch, not knowing how to say something in English, or not wanting to speak English. While the exact reasons cannot always be known just from observation, a closer analysis of the children's utterances revealed some patterns which may provide possible explanations for their language choice. What characterises about half of the utterances in which children addressed me in Dutch instead of English is that they occur at the beginning of encounters which children initiated with me. Those utterances seemed spontaneous, in the sense that something attracted the children's attention, and they commented on it. Often what attracted their attention was my camera, and they said things such as:

(2) "Wat doe je?" (What are you doing?) (C2)
(3) "Wat is dat?" (What is that?) (C7)
(4) "Kan je me zien?" (Can you see me?) (C13)
(5) "Waarom open jij?" (Why do you open?) (C6)

Most of the phrases that they used in such situations were very simple (and in the last example, ungrammatical) and it is unlikely that the children would not know how to say them in English. A more plausible interpretation is that they forgot to speak English at those moments. Prior to addressing me, they were immersed in activities during which they interacted in Dutch with their classmates. While they do have the underlying knowledge that their classmates speak Dutch and can therefore be addressed in Dutch, and that I speak English and should be addressed in English, they failed to switch the language at such moments. Other examples that indicate that using the 'wrong' language was a mistake rather than choice include C11 who was playing with his classmates, and at one point he saw me in his range of view, held up his puppet to me, and said "Dit is de burgermeester!" ("This is the mayor"). In another situation, C9 and C17 were discussing their joint art project in Dutch while I was sitting next to them. When C9 left, C17 wanted to update me on the project, and said "We have to alleen ("only") the...alleen the…". While it is possible that he did not know the word for "only" in English, the fact that he was just talking to C9 and they both used the word "alleen" several times suggests that perhaps that word was still activated and interfered with him finding the English equivalent. While such situations of forgetting to switch the language were observed several times, it must be pointed out is that at other times the same children could switch between languages appropriately and fluidly.

When children produced Dutch utterances in the middle of an interaction in English, it was less likely to be accidental, or them suddenly not wanting to speak English. Such

utterances most likely resulted from lack of language knowledge in English. The question that still remains though is why the children chose to speak Dutch when they did not know how to say something in English. Two possible reasons come to mind: they either 1) attempted to use Dutch to communicate, perhaps with the hope that their interlocutor would understand it, or 2) they used Dutch automatically, not with the goal to reach understanding but rather because speaking is more natural to them than pausing or stopping. Often it is impossible to know which of the two was the case, for example when C15 announced to me "We are going on vakantie" ("We are going on holiday"). Other times, however, one option seemed more plausible than the other. When I asked C15 where she was going on holiday, she hesitated, then turned her gaze towards me and said "Frankrijk" ("France"). C6 produced a Dutch utterance in a similar way: she was telling me something in English, then she paused, hesitated, and looked at me, asking in Dutch whether I still needed my piece of paper. The hesitation and increased eye contact in both cases indicate that the children were checking for my understanding, hoping that I would understand what they said in Dutch. It must be noted that when children addressed me in Dutch, communication was often successful.

A contrasting situation in which Dutch was most likely *not* used as a communication strategy, occurred when I asked C19 what she was drawing and she said "Ik weet het niet" ("I don't know"). The choice of language was somewhat paradoxical – while she may have not known the name of what she was drawing in English, it is unlikely that she did not know how to say "I don't know" in English. If she had told me what she was drawing in Dutch, it could have been interpreted as her attempting communication in Dutch, and if she had said "I don't know" in English it could be seen as her communicating her lack of knowledge to me. However, the fact that she said "I don't know" in Dutch, indicated that she was not necessarily trying to communicate with me, but rather that her response was automatic, perhaps uttered more to herself rather than to me.

Finally, in some instances it was difficult to tell why children spoke Dutch instead of English. When C7 came up to me at the playground and said "Ik heb bloed!" ("I have blood"), it is possible that she spoke Dutch because she forgot that I spoke English, but it is also possible that she really wanted to tell me about the blood, and since she did not know how to say it in English, she tried communicating with me in Dutch. A similar situation took place when C2 came up to me and said "Het doet pijn" ("It hurts").

Bilingual interaction ("Children are capable of operating two languages in an interaction, e.g. switching between languages depending on the addressee in a multiparty interaction")

This category occurred nine times when children used two languages, Dutch and English, in a multiparty encounter consisting of Dutch and English speakers. Often, children switched back and forth between languages depending on who they were addressing. Other times, the language that children used to address everyone, or nobody in particular, was English, and Dutch was only used when addressing specific people with whom they usually speak Dutch. For instance, when I was accompanying C14 and C5 who were playing with water, C14 was talking about the play in English (e.g. about what she was doing, or what she was about to do), but at one point she turned to C5 and said: "maak een kopje tee" ("make a cup of tea"). In either case, the act of switching between

languages required certain cognitive skills which the children proved to be capable of. It is worth mentioning that their code-switching patterns were often complex, and not as straightforward as using Dutch with Dutch speakers and English with English speakers. Often, the children would also *not* code-switch depending on the addressee but rather address everyone in English. Such patterns are worthy of further investigation, however not enough data were recorded to do that in this study.

Linguistic resourcefulness ("Children use strategies aimed at achieving successful communication despite limited language knowledge e.g. describing the referent of a word when they do not know the word itself")

This category was observed three times, and it refers to situations in which children used verbal communication strategies in their L2 aimed at achieving successful communication despite their limited language knowledge. The three situations are transcribed below.

(6) C14: This one can you make? (*shows me strings on her pants*)
Me: A knot?
C14: This. (*points to the strings*). No-one can make this.
Me: You want me to tie it?
C14: Yes.
Me: Like a ribbon?
C14: Yes.

In this situation, C14 managed to instruct me to do something despite her limited vocabulary, both by using non-verbal communication, and generic words such as "this" or "make".

(7) C11: (*says something in Dutch*)
Me: What?
C11: And then we drove that thing what has air in it, and it's (*makes hand gestures and imitates cannon sounds*) pushed the balls out of there and it shoot soft balls on the children.

In this situation, C11 told me that another child was drawing a cannon that they saw on a school trip. Despite not knowing what to call it in English, he managed to describe it to me, while also using gestures and sounds.

(8) C9: And we also have the… paper.
Me: Ah, that's for the wheels?
C9: Yes

C9 showed me a sheet that the children used to cut out bus wheels from, but he paused, not knowing how the material is called in English. However, he managed to find a word in his repertoire, 'paper', that was broad but still described it sufficiently.

Non-verbal communication strategy ("children use mime and body language to react to or interact with their interlocutor/s")

Seven of the instances of non-verbal communication occurred when children wanted to describe or explain something that could easily be shown. For example, C4 and C12, pointed to their drawings to answer my questions about them. C6, when asked how a game that she was playing worked, explained it by demonstrating. C17, who did not seem

to recall the word “windows”, pointed to his drawing of a bus where the bus’s windows would be.

Three times, children sought contact with a person from a different culture through non-verbal modes of communication. One of the instances was already described in the category “Motivation for contact” when C6 took my hand and made me accompany her during the film. Another time, C15 was playing with a child from the international department, and they communicated non-verbally most of the time, smiling, laughing, showing things to each other, and coordinating the play. Similarly, when I was near C5 and C14, who were playing together, C5 made eye contact with me, showing me something and laughing, several times. C5 communicated non-verbally a lot in other situations as well. She seemed to prefer non-verbal over verbal communication, both in English and in Dutch (her second language), although she talked in Dutch more than in English. She was often silent and seemed hesitant when addressed by people she did not know well (including some of her classmates with whom she did not interact frequently), however she also often smiled and made eye contact with people, showing that she did enjoy interacting with others, even when she did not talk to them.

The remaining cases of non-verbal communication were when children nodded or shook their heads in response to questions. While this is a very common way of communicating, some children, such as C5 or C10, did it more often than what seemed usual, and other times they would not react to questions at all. This indicated that choosing non-verbal responses could be due to shyness or unwillingness to engage in verbal communication.

Lack of communication strategy (“children appear to lack a verbal or nonverbal strategy to interact with their interlocutor/s, which results in unsuccessful communication”)

Lack of communication strategy occurred once when I asked C8 which part of the school trip he was drawing. He made hesitant/thinking sounds and then fell silent. Another child explained what C8 was drawing, although it is possible that if he did not offer his help, C8 would eventually find a way to communicate. There were several instances of silence which could be interpreted as lack of communication strategy, however there could also be other reasons for the children’s silence. There were also some instances of unsuccessful communication in which the children did attempt some communication strategies, but they turned out not to work. Lack of successful communication was not necessarily due to children’s poor communicative strategies – failed communication is often a joint outcome. For example, on one occasion C7 was trying to tell me something in English but I could not understand her. It is not clear whether the problem was her communication, my failure to understand, or a mix of both.

Skill of discovery (“children use a successful strategy to acquire knowledge or gather information, for example by asking questions”)

Three instances of skill of discovery occurred when children elicited the meaning of words they did not know. In two of those cases, C2 and C7 did not understand an English word that the teacher used, and asked directly “what is ___?”. In the other case, C2 did not know which colour was pink, and he pointed to a crayon asking if it was pink. The two other cases of skill of discovery took place when C3 asked me questions about my cultural background.

Translation/mediation ("children use a successful strategy to solve a misunderstanding or a dysfunction in communication between individuals of different cultural backgrounds, for example by mediating, translating or explaining")

In the two cases when C2 and C7 did not understand English words and asked for their meaning, several children (C8, C9, C13) provided Dutch translations of the words. Another instance of translation/mediation took place when C8 did not know the name of what he was drawing in English, and C11 described it to me, despite also not knowing the name (example number 7 in "Linguistic resourcefulness").

4.3 ICC during exchange with the international department

While the children's behaviour during the exchanges with the international department has been mentioned in the discussion of the ICC categories, this section provides a more detailed account of what was observed during the exchanges. As mentioned, during each exchange, several children from the international department visit the Dutch department classroom for 45 minutes. Because different children visit the classroom each week, most do not know each other prior to the exchange, unless they happen to have met somewhere else before. At the beginning of each exchange, the teacher divided the children into small groups. She offered several activities that the children could choose to do, but she also made sure that the international children were spread out across groups, to create as many mixed-department groups as possible. The activities usually consisted of free play, such as doing puzzles, playing house, or drawing, rather than completing specific assignments. The children were also free to go to different groups or do different activities. The teacher monitored the classroom and intervened if, for example, some children did not know what to do, or if a child was playing alone. She also reminded the children from her classroom to speak English, or to include the children from the international department in the activities, if they did not already do so.

Because the children played in many different groups, not all encounters could be observed, and some encounters were not observed in their entirety. In total, ten full or partial situations in which children from the two departments were playing together were observed. These are briefly summarised in Table 12.

Table 12. Observed intercultural encounters during the exchange with the international department.

Encounter number	Description
1	Two children from the Dutch department were playing in a wooden toy house with two children from the international department. They were not talking to each other much, and were mostly talking to the children from their own departments. Occasionally, they communicated messages related to the play, e.g. "Look, you do this.". After a while, the international children went away to play somewhere else.
2	A child from the international department played with a child from the Dutch department in the wooden house. They mostly communicated non-verbally, but seemed engaged in the play, smiling, laughing, and showing things to each other.
3	C1 and two children from the international department were playing with building blocks. C1 was "narrating" the play and switching between English and Dutch, while the children from the international department were silent.
4	C11, C13, and a child from the international department were doing a puzzle together. C11 told C13 to speak English because of the boy, and C13 switched to English. They then continued to talk in English, but they were mainly taking to each other and not addressing the child from the international department. They also continued to speak English after the child left.
5	C14 and a child from the international department were drawing next to each other. The teacher made them introduce themselves to each other, but the children did not talk any further after the teacher left (see "Hesitation").
6	One child from the international department spoke Dutch, and she and a child from the Dutch department were playing together in the wooden house. They were engaged in the play and frequently talked to each other.
7	C3 wanted to approach a child from the international department whom she had met before, but she was hesitant. Eventually, she came up to him, introduced herself and invited him to play with her. The child, however, did not seem as interested in interacting with her, and he left after a short while. (see "Hesitation" and "Motivation for contact")
8	C17 and a child from the international department were playing at a water table together and talking the entire time in English, for about 10 minutes.
9	Later, C17 and the same child were also doing a puzzle together and talking in English.
10	C1, C7, C16, and two children from the international department were playing with ponies at the same table. The children from the Dutch department did not interact with the children from the international department at any point; they only interacted with their own classmates.

These ten situations fall under four types of encounters: those in which children fully engage in interaction with children from the international department, the way they do

with their classmates (numbers 6, 8, and 9); those in which verbal communication is limited and children seem reluctant to fully engage in interaction (1, 3, 4); those in which children communicate non-verbally (2); and those in which there is no interaction (5, 10). Number 7 does not really fall into any of these categories because one child shows high motivation to engage in interaction, while the other one is less interested. Overall, in intercultural encounters during the exchange with the international department, the children seemed more reserved and less talkative than in their encounters with the researcher, even during the first visit.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The present study attempted to assess the ICC of children aged 4-6 in a bilingual education setting using a framework based on Gerlich at al. (2010), which described the attitude, knowledge and skills categories that were found to be relevant to children attending a bilingual preschool. The second aim of the study was to test and improve this framework in the Dutch setting. In order to collect the data used to answer the research questions, an observation form comprising the ICC categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) was designed, and children from one bilingual education classroom were observed during four school days. It was found that mostly positive attitudes, such as tolerance/acceptance or motivation for contact occurred, although the attitude of hesitation was not uncommon. Children showed a substantial knowledge of English, as well as certain aspects of meta-linguistic knowledge, such as knowing about their own and others' linguistic abilities. They also exhibited a vast range of verbal communication strategies, which resulted in creating three new categories related to communication skills.

This chapter discusses the results with relation to the research questions. Sections 5.1 through 5.3 discuss the findings in relation to the first research question ("Which positive and negative behaviours related to intercultural communicative competence can be observed in the children, and in what contexts?"), and sections 5.4 and 5.5 discuss the findings in relation to the second research question ("To what extent can previous findings on intercultural competence in young children be used as a framework to assess the attitude, knowledge and skills that can be observed as a child develops their intercultural communicative competence?").

5.1 The children's ICC

5.1.1 Attitude

The most widespread attitude among the children was that of tolerance and acceptance. Negative attitudes such as fear/rejection, judgment, regret, and no interest were observed rarely or not at all. It would be interesting to see what the children's attitudes were when they first started their education. If there were any negative attitudes at that time, for example as a result of the children not dealing well with difference or with the presence of a new language, this stage seems to have almost completely passed at the time of the observations, both for the first graders and second graders. The children accepted the presence of the researcher, who was culturally different from all of the children, from the start, and their positive attitudes increased further over time. The children often initiated interaction with the researcher, not only tolerating her my presence, but also deliberately seeking contact with her. While the attitudes of tolerance/acceptance and motivation for contact were more or less transparent, it is less clear to what extent the children were curious about other cultures, as the attitude of interest was rarely directly visible. It is not certain whether the children frequently initiated contact with people from other cultures because the otherness was a source of interest for them, or whether they interacted with those people for other reasons, and the otherness did not prevent them from interacting with them, and was otherwise not very meaningful to the children. This question is particularly relevant to the interactions between classmates from different cultural backgrounds, where there was no linguistic barrier. It is not clear to what extent the

children were aware of cultural differences between themselves and their classmates, and whether such differences were meaningful to them.

Despite the children frequently seeking out intercultural contact, the attitude of hesitation was not uncommon, especially during the exchange with the international department. With regards to this exchange, we cannot be sure whether the children's hesitation was directly related to the fact that they had to engage in intercultural encounters, or to the fact that they had to interact with someone new – quite possibly it was a combination of both factors. To answer this question, we would have to compare first encounters between children from the same culture and between children from different cultures. Only one encounter between children from the two departments who were possibly from the same culture (they both spoke Dutch) was observed. It was one of the most "successful" interactions during the exchange, but since it was only one instance, it is impossible to draw any conclusions from it. It is also important to note that despite some children's inhibition in the presence of children from the international department, there were no occurrences of more negative attitudes, such as judgmental statements. On the contrary, most children respected the rules of intercultural communication, and accepted the presence of visitors from the international department, despite often not fully engaging in interaction.

One particular situation drew attention to possible links between attitude and identity. In the only instance that was classified as rejection, C18 did not want to speak Polish with the researcher. While his unwillingness to use the language, despite his proficiency in it, is at first sight an indicator of poor ICC, it is important to take C18's background into account. He speaks Polish and Spanish at home, is fully competent in Dutch which he speaks at school, as well as sometimes at home, and his proficiency in English appears to be at the same level as most other children's. It is possible that having four languages in his life makes the development of ICC more challenging for him, instead of facilitating it. In the same way as different languages are linked to different cultures, for people who speak more than one language, each language is likely to be linked to a different aspect of their identity (e.g. Byram, 2006; Grosjean, 2012). Each language will also have a different meaning to them, depending on the context in which they use it, the people with whom they use it, the language's position in the society, etc. As a child develops their own identity, they need to incorporate all of the different aspects of identity linked to different languages into one sense of self. If, for example, different languages are linked to conflicting aspects of their identity, children may (temporarily) reject the use of one of their languages. Alternatively, they may focus on an aspect of their identity that is particularly important to them, e.g. during socialisation with their peers using the majority language, and neglect their other languages. Although this is something that all children in the study might face to an extent, as they have at the very least two languages in their lives (Dutch and English), it is possible that the higher number of languages that C18 speaks in comparison to his classmates makes the process of developing an identity more challenging for him. C18's refusal to speak Polish needs to be viewed in the context of his background before drawing conclusions about the level of development of his ICC.

There were also indications that attitudes towards intercultural contact can be linked to children's personalities, when same types of behaviour could be observed when children interacted with everyone, regardless of their cultural background. Children such as C5 and C10, who were never seen to initiate contact with people from other cultures, and

who often showed hesitation and preferred non-verbal communication, did not often initiate interaction with their classmates either, and they were usually more quiet than other children. On the other hand, children such as C2 and C3 who frequently engaged in intercultural encounters, were talkative and extroverted. The relationship between ICC and personality traits which have an effect on how much individuals interact with others was also found in other studies, e.g. by Arasaratnam and Banerjee (2011).

5.1.2 Knowledge

Relatively little could be said about children's factual knowledge of cultures based on the observations. Lack of knowledge about different countries was observed several times, which could have been expected, as factual knowledge is something that is acquired gradually throughout a person's lifetime. There were indications that children confuse the concepts of nationality and languages that someone speaks, but also that these concepts are relevant to them and that they are trying to make sense of them by asking questions. C3's questions were particularly interesting, in that the responses were restricted ("Are you English or Dutch?", "Are you from Turkey?"), indicating that she thought of possible answers before asking the questions. There was nothing that would indicate that the researcher might be from Turkey, and C3's question perhaps stemmed from the fact that there are many people with Turkish backgrounds in the Netherlands. Perhaps the first thought that she has when she meets someone who is not Dutch is that they might be Turkish. Such questions suggest that she is trying to make sense of culture-related concepts such as countries and languages, and that she is trying to build an understanding of the multicultural environment that she is a part of.

Children's knowledge of English was sufficient to make communication possible, but it was not as extensive as their knowledge of Dutch (both for L1 and L2 children). It is possible that limited language knowledge contributed to instances in which children were hesitant to engage in intercultural interaction, in line with Wong's (2013) findings that individuals who are not confident in their linguistic abilities tend to avoid intercultural interaction. This was perhaps the case with C7 and C16 when they did not speak English around children from the international department despite the teacher's requests. However, at the same time, many children used strategies to overcome gaps in their language knowledge, such as communicating non-verbally, being creative with their limited linguistic repertoire, and trying to communicate in a different language (Dutch).

The extent of children's meta-linguistic knowledge included knowledge about which languages they and other people speak, and knowledge of which languages they should speak in which situations. They were also aware of the different repercussions of speaking the 'wrong' language in different situations, for example they knew that even though the teacher preferred for them to speak English, she would still understand them if they spoke Dutch. When talking to people who did not speak Dutch, they were aware that they might not be understood if they speak Dutch, and they also seemed to be aware of the social repercussions of using the 'wrong' language, such as that they might be excluding people from the conversation or activity. The teacher's emphasis on reminding the children to speak English, and reminding them that in some situations, people will not understand them unless they speak English, is likely to have significantly contributed to the development of this aspect of meta-linguistic knowledge.

5.1.3 Skills

The children showed various skills related to intercultural communication, many of which were quite sophisticated and cognitively demanding. They found ways of communicating despite often limited language knowledge, and as such, unsuccessful communication was rare, and the lack of communication strategy occurred only once. Even in the case of lack of communication strategy, the communication was possible thanks to another child's mediation skills and linguistic resourcefulness. While such skills seem rather sophisticated for young children, it is possible that their young age facilitates these skills instead of making them more challenging. A lot of the communicative strategies observed in the children are similar to strategies that all children, regardless of the languages they speak, may need on a regular basis. The vocabulary of children this age is still quite limited, and situations in which they do not know a word, or fail to describe complex ideas in a comprehensible way are not uncommon.

One specific skill that children were capable was discourse management in interactions where the participants spoke different languages, for example by code-switching depending on the addressee, or by switching the language of the interaction to one that everyone understood. Existing research shows that simultaneous bilinguals as young as two are sensitive to linguistic abilities of their interlocutors, and can accommodate to them (Genesee, Boivin, & Nicoladis, 1996; Montanari, 2009; Tare & Gelman, 2011), as well as that they can translate between their two languages (Genessee, Boivin, & Nicoladis, 1996). The present study found the same skills in consecutive bilinguals who have been learning one of the languages for only 9 or 19 months). It is possible that the opportunities for intercultural contact at the school significantly contributed to the development of those skills, as they constitute situations in which such skills may be necessary for communication, unlike interactions with the teacher where the children could resort to Dutch. It is also worth noting that many of the children already knew two languages prior to English, in which case it would be worth investigating whether that gives them a meta-linguistic advantage when acquiring a third or fourth language.

Despite children's general ability to accommodate their language to the interlocutor(s), using the "wrong" language was sometimes observed as well. As discussed, there were many possible reasons for such language choice, and the occurrence of this category could not be a simple measure of how good or bad the children's ICC was. Oftentimes, inappropriate language choice seemed to be accidental, perhaps as a result of the cognitive demand of managing two languages in real time, which is something that occurs even with the most proficient bilinguals. Other times, the use of Dutch with non-Dutch-speaking interlocutors seemed to compensate for gaps in English language knowledge. In those situations, the use of Dutch should not necessarily be viewed as communicative failure, but could also be viewed as a communicative strategy on par with the other strategies used to overcome gaps in language knowledge. This communicative strategy often worked when the children addressed the researcher in Dutch, and it is possible that it has worked in the past, as people who live in the Netherlands are likely to have at least some knowledge of Dutch. Research confirms that interlocutors' positive reactions to the use of a "wrong" language, such as showing full or

partial understanding, increase the likelihood of children code-switching in future interactions (Montanari, 2009).

5.2 Comparison of findings with Gerlich et al. (2010)

Overall, the results found in this study were highly similar to those found in Gerlich et al. (2010). In both studies, tolerance and acceptance were the rule rather than exception, and children frequently initiated intercultural encounters, while negative attitudes were uncommon. In both studies, children frequently communicated in a foreign language, as well as talked about languages, and knew about their own and others' linguistic abilities. They also asked questions in order to gain linguistic or cultural knowledge, and they were able to translate utterances into different languages.

The most puzzling difference was that when taking into account the relative lengths of observation periods in the two studies, most categories were observed much more frequently in the present study. There are a few possible explanations for this. It is possible that children in this study engaged in more intercultural encounters due to their interaction with the researcher constituting intercultural encounters, as well as due to the exchange with the international department. Both of these opportunities were not present in Gerlich et al. (2010). Another possible explanation is that more occurrences of ICC categories were observed in this study, as the categories were already pre-defined, while in Gerlich et al. (2010) more occurrences could have been overlooked, as the observations were only coded after the data were collected. It is also possible that there were differences in coding methods between the two studies, for instance, it is possible that Gerlich et al. (2010) only coded very explicit instances of tolerance/acceptance, while in this study more implicit instances were included as well.

Most of the negative categories (judgmental statement, regret, no interest, negative strategy of exclusion) that were observed in Gerlich et al. (2010) were not observed in this study. In Gerlich et al. (2010), those categories represented rare, isolated instances of children's initial reactions to cultural differences. It is possible that at the time of the observations, the children in the present study moved past the stage where they would exhibit such reactions to intercultural encounters, but it is important to point out that in neither studies were such behaviours representative of the general trends in the classroom.

Two other categories that were not observed in this study were the skills of guidance and deduction/transfer. Guidance was quite a complex skill which only occurred several times in Gerlich et al. (2010), and (at least) one of the times it was performed by a linguistically gifted child. It is possible that no children in the present study were capable of this skill. However, there is no reason to think that they were incapable of deduction/transfer. It is more likely that they simply did not have any opportunities to use that skill during the period of observations. There were in fact several instances when the children may have been using that skill, but those situations were ambiguous, and were therefore not included in the data.

Several new categories emerged in this study that were not present in Gerlich et al. (2010). However, we do not know whether the children in their study did not exhibit them, or whether the authors did not code them as separate skills. It is quite possible that the children did exhibit those skills, as the authors reported that the children used "a

variety of "verbal communication strategies"" (2010, p. 163), and that they frequently code-switched.

One interesting difference between the two studies is that in Gerlich et al. (2010), children frequently talked about physical appearance of people of different races (e.g. making both positive and negative comments about someone's appearance, exhibiting lack of knowledge about the physical features and what they mean), suggesting that these were marked categories for those children. In the present study, no comments about race were observed, despite a racially mixed classroom. It is possible that they were not observed due to a much shorter period of observation, but it is also possible that the children in this study were already used to the fact that people of different races look differently, and took such differences for granted. In Gerlich et al. (2010), many comments about physical features of different races occurred during first encounters.

5.3 ICC during exchange with the international department

While the research on the role of intercultural contact on adults' ICC showed that encounters need to be structured in order for learners to benefit from them, during the exchange where the teacher put children into different play groups there was often no or very little interaction between the children. This would contradict Volet and Ang's (1998) findings that simply putting individuals in culturally-mixed groups in the classroom would benefit them. Perhaps the difference lies in that in Volet and Ang (1998), students who were put in culturally mixed groups had to jointly work on a task, while the only directions that the children in this study received were to play together. Moreover, many of the games did not require extensive interaction, especially not verbal interaction, and the children seemed quite comfortable with silence and lack of interaction. Perhaps more structure and teacher's directions would benefit the children, for example if they had to perform tasks in which they need to collaborate with other children. Another feature of intercultural contact in the reviewed studies was that many of them required the students to consciously reflect on, or discuss, issues related to ICC. While reflecting on their own competence might be too challenging for young children, intercultural encounters might be a good chance for the teacher to focus on specific cultural aspects, for example by getting the children to talk to each other about their countries.

However, other observations indicate that more structured encounters would not necessarily be the best or only solution to increase children's benefit from intercultural encounters. The teacher reported that the open door exchange (not observed in this study), during which children could freely go to different classrooms and play with different children, resulted in more interaction with children from the international department, and that the interactions were more spontaneous. Similarly, the quantity and quality of contact between the children and the researcher, which was unstructured, were higher than between the children during the exchange. This indicates that it is not simply a question of structured versus unstructured contact, but that there may be other factors that contribute to how beneficial intercultural contact is for children.

While the open door exchange was not observed and therefore not much could be said about it, there are several possible factors that could explain why children's interactions with the researcher were more effective. First of all, the children got to know her during the time of the observations more than they could get to know children from the

international department, as different children came to their classroom each week, for only 45 minutes. The fact that the children did not know each other likely contributed to the low amount of interaction. Furthermore, during such a short period of time, the children were unable to form relationships with each other, while forming cross-cultural friendships was shown by Holmes and O'Neill (2012) to be an important part of developing ICC. Another explanation for the higher quality and quantity of contact between the children and the researcher could be that she initiated interaction with them more often than the children from the international department, indicating that perhaps the children were not necessarily "better" at interacting with her, but that she facilitated it for them. While the ultimate goal of ICC should be for individuals to interact in various kinds of circumstances, different factors that make intercultural interaction less or more difficult should be taken into account when children are still in the initial stages of developing their ICC.

5.4 The suitability of the categories in describing the children's ICC

On the whole, most of the categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010) were found to sufficiently describe the different aspects of the children's developing ICC. However, a few modifications were suggested, which are believed to strengthen the framework, not only for those specific children, but for all children of this age and in a similar setting. With regards to the categories that did not occur in this study, they cannot exactly be evaluated, and the only thing that can be said about them is that nothing in this study suggested that they should be abandoned or changed.

It was found that observing instances of lack of language knowledge was not very informative, and therefore it is suggested that the category of lack of knowledge should only consist of lack of factual knowledge. Firstly, assessing language knowledge also reveals the gaps in children's knowledge, therefore there is no need for two separate categories about language knowledge. Having the categories of language knowledge and lack of language knowledge portrays language knowledge as something dichotomous that one either has or has not, while in reality there are different degrees of knowledge, and no one possesses absolute knowledge. Furthermore, since gaps in language knowledge will always occur, particularly at this stage of the children's foreign language development, what is perhaps more relevant is *how* children deal with gaps in knowledge during interaction, rather than whether such gaps occur or not. This can be assessed through the skills categories of "lack of communication strategy", "skill of discovery", "linguistic resourcefulness", "non-verbal communication strategy", and "inappropriate language choice". Recorded instances of how children deal with lack of knowledge will entail the occurrence of lack of knowledge, but will be more informative than simply stating that lack of knowledge occurred.

With regards to factual knowledge, the same argument holds that gaps in knowledge can be revealed through stating what the child *does* know. However, it may be worth keeping the category of lack of factual knowledge for two reasons. First of all, although some skills categories, such as the skill of discovery or deduction/transfer, can show how children deal with lack of factual knowledge, not every instance of lack of factual knowledge will be shown through other categories. Secondly, it may be worth looking specifically at lack of knowledge, not necessarily in order to assess *what* children do not know, but because such instances can give insight into the children's cognition and

thought processes, such as *how* children make sense of things that they do not know. This was illustrated by the situations in which C3 confused nationality with languages that someone speaks, and was trying to make sense of these concepts.

As already discussed, three additional categories related to verbal communication were created: 'bilingual interaction', 'linguistic resourcefulness', and 'inappropriate language choice'. The category of verbal communication strategy should still remain, but having only categories of 'verbal communication strategy', 'non-verbal communication strategy', and 'lack of communication strategy' was considered too broad and did not capture the various kinds of verbal communication strategies that the children used. The category of verbal communication strategy could serve as a base category, indicating that children do communicate in a foreign language, but the additional categories are useful in order to illustrate either more complex skills related to verbal communication ('bilingual interaction'), or verbal skills which children use in order to overcome lack of language knowledge ('linguistic resourcefulness', 'inappropriate language choice'). Ideally, the category of inappropriate language choice would be divided into several categories, depending on what it indicates (e.g. 'accidental inappropriate language choice' and 'strategic inappropriate language choice'). However, it was often difficult to tell the reason for using the 'wrong' language. It is important to note that the skills categories do not present an exhaustive list of skills that children aged 4-6 in a bilingual education setting might possess. It is possible that children have more skills which were never observed in the present study, nor in Gerlich et al. (2010). It is also likely that children quickly develop new skills, and that some children would exhibit other, more advanced skills. An example of that is the skill of deduction/transfer discovered in a few instances in Gerlich et al. (2010), representing an advanced, yet possible, skill shown by young children in a bilingual education setting.

The attitude categories were the most difficult to observe, and many of the situations in which attitudes were displayed were ambiguous. However, that is likely due to attitude being a latent construct, rather than due to the irrelevance or inappropriateness of any of the categories found by Gerlich et al. (2010). Tolerance/acceptance was a particularly problematic category, as it was broad, not easily quantifiable, and often overlapped with other categories (for example, motivation for contact and verbal communication strategy almost always entailed tolerance/acceptance). However, it is also a very important marker of ICC, and, as Gerlich and colleagues said, should not be taken for granted just because it is widespread. One thing that could be done in order to improve the framework is to specify this category and how it is manifested. Gerlich et al. (2010) include two aspects of tolerance/acceptance in their definition: "children show openness or a welcoming reaction towards persons, objects and actions from a different culture", and "children respect rules of an intercultural situation". Although these two are likely to often overlap, it could be beneficial to make them into separate categories, in a similar fashion that motivation was divided into 'motivation for language' and 'motivation for contact'. The former would describe children's acceptance and tolerance of cultural differences, while the latter would describe children's acceptance of having to adapt the way they communicate with persons from other cultures, for example by using a different language, or by being patient when communication takes longer and is more difficult due to linguistic/cultural barriers.

5.4.1 Model describing the ICC of children in this study

Based on the findings of this study, the findings from Gerlich et al. (2010), and the amendments to the categories, a preliminary model of ICC was designed, shown in Figure 6. This model is only applicable to children in the age range of the participants from the two studies (3-6 years old) who are in bilingual education programmes in which they have opportunities for real-life intercultural encounters. It aims to describe the aspects of ICC which have been found to be achievable for children in the two studies, as well as what characterises lack of, or developing, competence in these children. It does not aim to provide a final or exhaustive list of components related to ICC, and it is of course subject to further testing. Furthermore, the model only illustrates what could be supported with empirical evidence, and as such does not address every aspect of ICC. For example, the empirical evidence does not allow for the construction of a model that describes the process of ICC development, the specification of different levels of competence other than "competent" and "developing", or the relationship between the different components. As such, the model resembles Byram's (1997) model most closely, as it is focused on describing the different components of ICC. However, an effort was made to introduce more elements to the model by incorporating insights from Deardorff's (2006) model and the INCA framework (2004). The INCA framework consisted of a scale of competence indicating different levels of development. In the present model, characteristics of the competent and the developing intercultural speaker are listed, and it is suggested that after further testing, developmental levels that are in between the two stages should also be specified. Deardorff's (2006) model included internal and external outcomes of ICC. In the present model, the external outcome is adapted from Deardorff (2006) and included in the model. The internal outcomes should ideally be included as well, but a full description of the internal outcomes cannot be made on the basis of this study. Although the model is preliminary, it is useful in visualising and summarising (parts of) the ICC of children in the present study, and it also helps to introduce ideas that can be used to further develop the model.

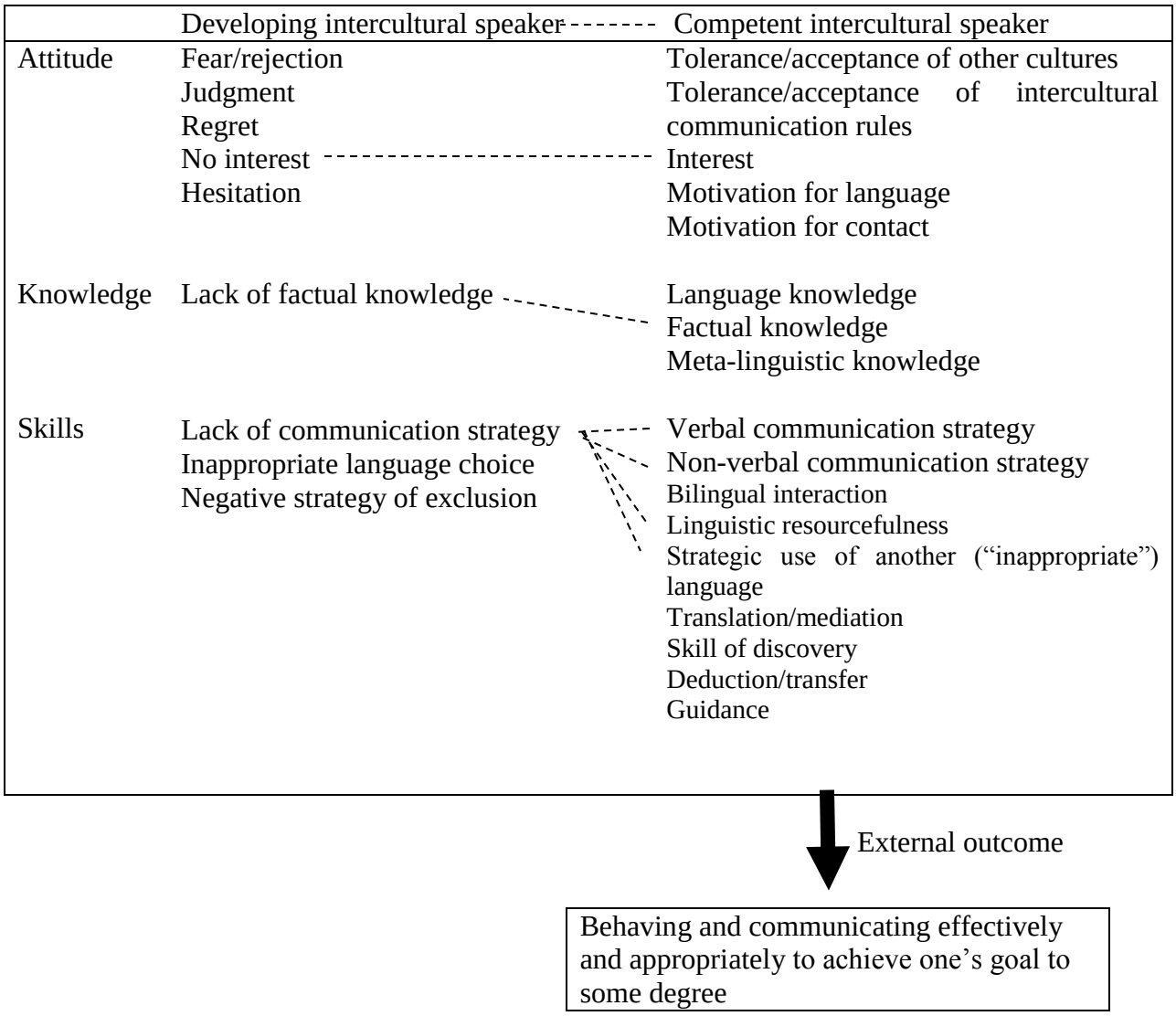

Figure 6. Preliminary model of ICC in children aged 3-6 in a bilingual education setting with an opportunity for intercultural encounters.

The dotted line between "competent intercultural speaker" and "developing intercultural speaker" indicating that competence and lack of it are a continuum, rather than a dichotomous distinction. Furthermore, dotted lines were placed between specific components which have a direct counterpart on both sides, such as "interest" and "no interest". The line indicates that these two are the opposites of the same construct, as well as that, again, the distinction between interest and no interest is continuous rather than dichotomous. Of course, each of the positive components in theory has a negative component, e.g. "skill of discovery" and "lack of skill of discovery". However, in case of skill of discovery, and other categories which do not have an explicit negative counterpart assigned to them, the negative counterpart is defined only by the lack of the positive counterpart, rather than by anything that can be observed separately. For example, there is nothing specific that happens when a child lacks the skill of discovery. Finally, an

arrow points downward from the ICC components to the desired external outcome, taken from Deardorff's (2006) model, which was found to be a realistic outcome for this population as well.

The category of an inappropriate language choice was provisionally divided into two for the purposes of the model. While the various reasons for the use of the 'wrong' language were often difficult to discern and were therefore all assigned to one category; in the model, inappropriate language use was divided into two parts (differentiating inappropriate language choice that is strategic, from instances where it is not strategic), in order to illustrate that it can be both an indicator of a competent and less competent intercultural speaker.

5.5 Observation as an ICC data collection/assessment method

As predicted, the main weaknesses of the observation method were that it was time consuming, and that many observed situations were ambiguous and subject to interpretation. While observing the children once a week for a month gave a decent picture of their ICC on a classroom level, it was not enough to form a full picture of individual children's competence, for most children. Many situations had to be carefully examined before assigning a category to them, and for some of them it was not possible to know what the child's behavior signified. For example, silence was often ambiguous, and could indicate many things such as lack of knowledge or a hesitant attitude. However, it is important to keep in mind that most existing methods of assessing ICC are longitudinal, and that no method can give a completely clear-cut and objective assessment of one's ICC. Apart from the two weaknesses, which are likely to be present in other methods of assessment as well, the observation method was found to be rather effective. However, despite its general effectiveness, it was not an effective method of assessing all aspects of ICC. The effectiveness of the method with regards to the different categories will be discussed in more detail below. It will be argued that for some aspects of ICC, other assessment methods would be more suitable, in line with the view of ICC experts from Deardorff's (2006) study, who suggested that combining multiple assessment methods is often most effective. Furthermore, recommendations aimed at making the method easier and more effective will be suggested.

The observation method was found to be most successful for the assessment of skills, particularly skills related to interaction. Skills were exhibited often when children interacted with persons from other cultures, and their occurrences were rather unambiguous. Close analyses of interactions were particularly informative. However, skills such as skill of discovery or deduction/transfer do not occur spontaneously very often, since children may simply not need them. Rather than waiting for them to occur, these could be elicited through games/exercises in which, for example, children need to solve a problem or gain information, and it can be observed which skills they use in order to do so.

Observation, however, was not found to be an effective way of assessing knowledge. Fortunately, knowledge is a component of ICC that is the least problematic in the discussion of ICC assessment methods, as it can be assessed in a relatively straight-forward manner through other methods, and does not face the same challenges as the assessment of attitude or skills. Language knowledge is already assessed separately in most bilingual education settings, and while observation is a common method with

children this age, it is recommended to assess language knowledge separately from other aspects of ICC. This is because language knowledge is a multidimensional construct in its own, and it deserves to be inspected separately in order to get a full picture of a child's foreign language development. The issue with factual knowledge, on the other hand, was that it rarely occurred spontaneously. Moreover, it is unlikely that a comprehensive sample of the kind of knowledge that is both relevant, and age-appropriate for the children could ever be obtained through observing knowledge spontaneously produced by the children. Just like certain skills, knowledge is usually only shown when it is needed, so the kind of knowledge that children would produce would be dependent on what kinds of situations they find themselves in. Therefore, it is advised to design games or activities in order to elicit children's factual knowledge. Factual knowledge is very easy to elicit, for example just by asking questions. Of course, assessing factual knowledge would also require specifications of what kind of knowledge the children should be expected to have, for example based on themes that children were introduced to in the classroom. Finally, meta-linguistic knowledge was assessed more easily through observations (it was observed 14 times, compared to the one instance of factual knowledge), however it may also be possible to incorporate it into assessing factual knowledge. An example of how meta-linguistic knowledge could be assessed was seen when the teacher asked the children questions about which languages they should speak in which situations.

Attitude was quite difficult to assess through observations, not because it rarely occurred, but because it was the most ambiguous and least direct aspect of ICC. The relationship between children's behaviour and their underlying attitude was often unclear. Moreover, even when children's attitudes were more or less clear, it was not always certain whether these related to intercultural aspects, or to something else. The most obvious example of this was seen during the exchange with the international department, where it was not certain to what extent the attitudes that the children displayed were towards the intercultural aspect of the encounters, and to what extent the attitudes were towards encounters with new people. However, even though the assessment of attitude was difficult, observation may remain the best method to assess it in young children. As already mentioned, although methods involving self-reflection are commonly used with adults, they would not be successful with young children, taking into account the stage of their cognitive development. One other possibility would be a method used by Dziedziewicz et al. (2014), in which children aged 8 to 12 were given an imaginary scenario of an intercultural encounter, and asked how they would react to it. However, it is not sure whether such method would work with younger children, as it requires a certain degree of abstract thought. Moreover, even if such scenarios would provide an insight into children's feelings or thoughts regarding intercultural encounters, we cannot be sure whether these would be the attitudes that they would display during real-life encounters. As such, observation remains the assessment method that is most likely to be successful with young children in a bilingual education setting.

Assessment of children's attitude using this method is challenging, however there are several things that can be done in order to make it easier and more effective. The most important consideration is to keep in mind the context in which attitudes are displayed. This includes the immediate context of the encounter and its surroundings, as well as information about the children. The demands of the situation in which attitude is displayed should also be considered, instead of simply observing which attitude

categories occur or not. For example, it may be easier for a child to be tolerant/accepting in some situations than others. Other examples where context may be crucial for the assessment of attitude were described in the earlier sections of this chapter, such as the rejection of interaction in Polish by C18, and the unwillingness to speak English by C1. Therefore, for researchers, it is important to collect as much information about the assessed children as possible, as well as to conduct longitudinal observations when possible, in order to get to know the children and their personalities. When observations are conducted by a teacher, they should already have the advantage of knowing the children. Therefore, in case of time constraints, interviewing teachers about children's attitudes may complement the observations done by the researcher.

With factual and language knowledge being assessed independently using the many available methods of assessing knowledge, and with certain skills being elicited through games or activities, what is left to assess through observation are mainly interactional skills and attitude. With fewer ICC components to observe, the process of observation would become less demanding for the observer. Having multiple observers would also make the process of observing less demanding and shorter. In the present study, this would have been particularly useful during the exchange with the international department where there were many small groups of children spread out across the classroom, and it was impossible for one person to observe all of the interactions. More than one observer would also increase the reliability of the data, as it would allow to measure the inter-rater reliability. Additionally, video-recording was found to be helpful, particularly for close analyses of extended interactions.

5.6 Limitations of the study

There are several limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. First of all, as the observations were conducted over a relatively short period of time, no conclusions can be made about the process of ICC development, such as which categories emerge at which stage of development. Secondly, the observations were conducted on a relatively small number of participants limited to a specific setting. As such, it is not certain to what extent the results can be generalised to other children, even if they are of the same age and in a similar setting. Moreover, the findings cannot tell us anything about children in a different age range, in a different type of education, or without an opportunity for real-life intercultural encounters. ICC may have to be approached from a very different angle for children who learn a foreign language as a subject a few hours per week, or who are in a culturally homogenous setting. These limitations are reflected in the proposed model of ICC, which is by no means applicable to all children. Moreover, the model still does not specify relations between the different ICC components, as not much could be concluded about them based on the relatively short period of observations.

We also do not know much about the internal processes that occur as the children develop their competence. We only see how ICC is manifested externally in an observable way, but we do not how it is experienced from the children's perspective. We are also not certain how children perceive cultural differences, and to what extent those differences are meaningful to them. Another limitation of this study is that although individual differences with regard to different children's ICC were observed, not much can be said about the factors that influenced the differences. Despite the available information about the children's backgrounds, not enough data was available to draw any

conclusions about the effect of, for example, coming from bilingual households, or having experience with intercultural encounters outside of school, on the children's ICC.

One limitation of conducting studies in natural settings is that there are multiple factors that are not controlled for, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about relationships between different factors, such as cause and effect. Therefore, while some children were more competent than others, we cannot be sure what influenced the level of their competence. Moreover, although a parental questionnaire was used, and some behavioural patterns related to children's personalities were observed, there was still much possibly relevant information about the children that was not known, which may have affected the interpretation of the findings. Another limitation is that most of the data on intercultural encounters were collected in children's interactions with one person (the researcher). A wider sample of different types of interactions would have been more informative. Similarly, it would have been useful to observe children during more than one type of structured intercultural encounters with peers, in order to draw stronger conclusions about how the development of ICC can be facilitated through such encounters.

5.7 Suggestion for future research

There are many ways in which further research could expand our understanding of ICC in children in general, or in the specific setting from this and Gerlich and colleagues' (2010) study. As mentioned, the model of ICC that was suggested is subject to further testing, and more empirical research would likely uncover new components of the model. Furthermore, studies relying on a review of existing literature, for example literature on child psychology, could also expand the model. One of the most important next steps would be to study the process of ICC development through longitudinal studies. The study by Gerlich et al. (2010) was longitudinal, however as it was preliminary, it was not focused on the developmental process. Findings from longitudinal studies could, among other things, allow to construct a scale of competence, with indicators of different levels of competence. Further research could also expand the longitudinal study into older age groups, in order to gain a more complete picture of ICC development.

Another focus of future research could be on how ICC in children develops in different settings, for example educational settings or geographical settings. Research could also investigate how to facilitate, and make the most of, intercultural contact in order to develop ICC. In settings where real-life intercultural encounters are not possible, alternative ways of intercultural contact, such as video conferencing or writing letters could be examined. With regard to assessment, research could focus on designing tasks aimed at eliciting certain aspects of ICC which may not often occur spontaneously. Research with a focus on developmental psychology could also expand our understanding of ICC in children. Such research could look further into, for example, the relevance of culture-related concepts to children at different ages, as well as into what skills could be expected from children at different stages of cognitive development, for example with regards to meta-linguistic awareness.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The findings with regards to the children's ICC were found to be similar to those of Gerlich et al. (2010). Positive attitudes were common, while negative attitudes occurred rarely, if at all. The only exception was the attitude of hesitation, which occurred a significant number of times, particularly during first encounters with children from an international department of the school, during which often little interaction occurred. The children whose parents did not speak Dutch at home had a very good knowledge of Dutch, and the majority of all children had a substantial knowledge of English, which allowed them to communicate many kinds of messages. The children also knew which languages should be spoken when, as well as which languages they and others spoke. Most children could communicate verbally with ease, and employed a variety of communication strategies in case of gaps in language knowledge. The children could also code-switch fluidly between Dutch and English, translate between the two languages, and they were sensitive to the linguistic abilities of others.

The framework consisting of the categories discovered by Gerlich et al. (2010) was found to be largely effective and appropriate in describing the ICC of children in this study. However, three new skills categories ("bilingual interaction", "linguistic resourcefulness", and "inappropriate language choice") emerged and these were added to the framework. Furthermore, the category of tolerance/acceptance was divided into two sub-categories ("tolerance/acceptance of other cultures" and "tolerance/acceptances of intercultural communication rules"). The category of lack of knowledge was replaced to "lack of factual knowledge", as that was the only kind of lack of knowledge that was found to be worth investigating separately. Based on the amendments to the framework, and the results of the present study, a preliminary model of ICC in young children in a bilingual education setting was proposed. The model describes the attitude, knowledge, and skills of a competent intercultural speaker, and those of a developing intercultural speaker, as well as specifying the desired external outcome of a competent speaker. The observational method employed in this study was also evaluated, and some suggestions were made with regards to assessment of ICC, such as assessing language knowledge separately from ICC, and assessing factual knowledge through methods other than observation.

The general consistency of the results between this study and Gerlich et al. (2010) was a positive finding as it strengthened the evidence that the discovered categories of ICC are relevant to young children, and that they can be expected to occur in a different bilingual education setting. Furthermore, the framework used to describe and categorise ICC in Gerlich et al. (2010) was strengthened by testing it in the present study. Empirically-derived models of ICC are rare, however empirical models that are based on more than one study are even more rare. This study shows the importance of further testing, something that has not been done much with regards to models of ICC in adults. It is unlikely that a single study will cover all of the relevant aspects of a construct, and it may be more useful to expand existing ICC models, instead of coming up with multiple new models.

Aside from expanding our understanding of ICC in children in general, the present study also employed and evaluated an assessment method that can be used with young children, which was found to be largely effective. It also expanded the research on the

role of interaction on the development of ICC to a non-university setting, providing possible new insights about the role of structured and unstructured interactions. However, as mentioned, there are still many limitations to this study, which are hoped to be addressed through further research. As ICC was found to be a concept that is relevant to young children, it is important to expand the field of research on child ICC, especially with regards to teaching and assessment.

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations for the bilingual primary education pilot in the Netherlands, and for similar bilingual primary education programmes elsewhere, could be suggested. As the children in this study were shown to exhibit a variety of skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes related to ICC, they could benefit from teachers' further guidance in their development of ICC. A first step that teachers could take is to familiarise themselves with the categories related to ICC in children that were found in this study and in Gerlich et al. (2010). This could raise their awareness of how ICC manifests in young children, as well as of the general level ICC level of the children in their classroom, and of how it could be further developed. Some suggestions on how teachers could help children make the most out of intercultural contact were given in section 5.3, and the recommendations included giving the children more concrete goals to the encounters, and introducing a discussion of culture-related topics to such encounters. Such topics can also be brought up during other classroom activities, not necessarily during as part of intercultural contact, particularly topics that can expand children's knowledge of other languages and cultures. This was seen to an extent in the present study, where the teacher frequently talked about languages, which likely contributed to the children's meta-linguistic knowledge. Ways of assessing ICC were also discussed, all of which would be suitable for use by teachers in the classroom, and not only by researchers.

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Appendix

Parental questionnaire about children's linguistic and cultural background.

1. Which language(s) do you and your partner speak natively?

   You: O Dutch O Other, please specify

   …….

   Your partner: O Dutch O Other, please specify

   …….

2. Which language(s) do you and your partner speak at home?

   You: O Dutch O Other, please specify

   …….

   Your partner: O Dutch O Other, please specify

   …….

3. Which language(s) does your child speak at home?

   O Dutch O Other, please specify ……

4. Does your child know, or is learning, any languages other than the home language(s), Dutch and English?

   O Yes, please specify …….. O No

5. Does your child have regular contact with people who do not speak Dutch or your home language(s)? (e.g. with family friends, or on holiday)

   O Yes O No

   If yes, what language(s) does your child speak in those situation?

   ……

   ……

6. Has your child always lived in the Netherlands?

O Yes O No

If not, what other countries has your child lived in?
……
…….