THE INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MIGRANT PRESERVICE TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES

Nataša Ciabatti

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Victoria University, Australia

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Abstract

This study explores how a group of preservice teachers experienced the phenomenon of intercultural education in the Learning Area of Languages. Seven preservice teachers of migrant background shared their lived experiences of engaging with the Intercultural Capability as articulated in the Victorian Curriculum. The participants were completing a graduate Initial Teacher Education program while undertaking the practicum component of this course in Victorian secondary schools.

This study employs a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the participating preservice teachers' lived experiences of adopting an intercultural perspective in their classroom of Languages. Data gathered through individual in-depth interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis and presented in a narrative form to describe participants' personal and professional experiences. The findings in this study indicate that the Intercultural Capability is seen as a welcome and necessary inclusion to the Victorian Curriculum. However, its formulation in such a document does not appear to exert significant influence in the ways preservice teachers conceptualise the intercultural dimension. Instead, the most decisive factor contributing to their attention to the intercultural dimension of teaching is derived from their past personal experiences of learning and studying languages and living in different countries. This study also found that university learning facilitated the intercultural dimension, while teacher practicum learning impeded it. Finally, a significant finding is that incongruences exist between participants' theoretical interpretation and practical application of Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning.

This study suggests a new definition for the Intercultural Capability that emphasises the importance of not only learning *about* cultural diversity but also learning *from* and *through* it. It also recommends assigning the Intercultural Capability a more prominent role in the Curriculum to promote social cohesion and social justice rather than treating it as an addition. The study also recognises the need for critical and reflective discussions in teacher education to support teachers in becoming agents of change.

Declaration of Authenticity

"I, Nataša Ciabatti, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *The Intercultural Capability in the Language Classroom: a Phenomenological Investigation of Migrant Preservice teachers' Lived Experiences* is no more than 80,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

"I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

Ethics Declaration

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Victorian University Committee, application ID HRE19038."

Signature:

Date: 10/11/202

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Keywords

List of Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AIS	Association of Independent Schools
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
APS	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
CEO	Catholic Education Office
CICP	Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CoE	Council of Europe
DET	Department of Education
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
F	Foundation (first year of schooling in Australia)
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
ILTL	Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum And Assessment Authority
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
TA	Thematic Analysis

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Chapter 1:   Introduction

1.1   INTRODUCTION

As patterns of migration and forces of globalisation have brought together increasingly diverse populations, education has taken up the mission to make 'an important and meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies' (UNESCO 2006, p. 8). Supranational[1] institutions in the field agree on the importance of developing interculturally capable learners and on the immediate need to cater for culturally and linguistically diverse populations in schools (UNESCO 2002; CoE 2008; UNESCO 2013; UNESCO 2014; UNESCO 2015; OECD 2018). Policy documents published by major international organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) promote an understanding that public education systems should prepare their young citizens to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

In Australia, current policy documents (MCEETYA 2008; ACARA 2013b; ACARA 2020) prescribe that all teachers share this responsibility, regardless of their subject. Therefore, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is at the forefront of this mission, as it serves the purpose of creating inclusive school environments and preparing prospective teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Tarozzi 2014).

The construct of the intercultural capability[2], which exists under many different labels and terms, originates in the field of foreign[3] language pedagogy

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[1] The term 'supranational' is preferred to the term 'international' as it conveys the higher level of policy-making. Educational policies promoted by international organisations become supranational as they have direct impact on national policies (See: Valle & Pedro 2021).

[2] This study uses the term Intercultural Capability because it is the preferred term in Victoria, where this study is set. When referring to the construct that appears in the Victorian curriculum, the term is capitalised The intercultural capability appears capitalised (Intercultural Capability) when it is used to refer to it as it appears in the Victorian curriculum. The Victorian curriculum provides its own description of the rationale and aims of the Intercultural capability, which will be provided in Section 2.7.

[3] "Foreign" is a problematic term, however it is used to distinguish it from first language pedagogy. Other terms in use include second languages and additional languages to make justice to the varied linguistic repertoires learners bring into the classroom. As this study is set in Australia, it will use the

(Byram 2009). There is consensus that in our globalised world the approach to teaching Languages has moved beyond providing the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate in another language (Kramsch 1993; Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet 1999; Byram 2009; Liddicoat & Scarino 2013; Liddicoat 2020). Language education is now committed to a more engaged mission, that of teaching young people to live well together (Byram 2009). This can be achieved by equipping learners with communicative skills (Nunan 2012) and developing their 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram 1997). Due to globalisation and migration, this understanding has extended to all language teachers, whether they are teaching native speakers, speakers of Indigenous languages or newcomers, or teaching a language that is additional to the linguistic repertoire of their learners (Byram 2008, p. 1).

In this study, the terms "intercultural education", "intercultural agenda", or "intercultural project" will be used to refer to this broad aspiration. However, the specific term "intercultural capability" will be used to describe the specific construct that teachers are expected to integrate in their teaching in order to promote inclusive schools and societies. When discussing the Victorian Curriculum, this term will be capitalised. Finally, the term Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) will be utilised to refer to the current methodology proposed for teaching Languages.

This study posits that, for the intercultural project to succeed and become more than 'good intentions' (Gorski 2008, p. 516), there needs to be a move towards a more politically engaged approach (Tarozzi 2014). Teachers should see themselves as responsible for creating an inclusive and just society (see Crozet 2016). This study follows a Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy framework (Atay & Trebing 2018; Sobre 2017) coupled with an ethical paradigm based on the work of the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas (Bossio 2018; Ferri 2014; Ben-Ari & Strier 2010). Critical Pedagogy aims to transform society through education by locating the place of change in schools (Guilherme 2002), where the development of 'critical cultural awareness' should be fostered (Byram 2008). This aspect is essential for the success of intercultural education because it turns it into a broader social project. As Banks cautions:

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capitalised word Languages, which is the term used in both the Australian and the Victorian curricula. Relatedly, foreign/second/additional language teachers will be referred to as teachers of Languages.

'We are living in a dangerous, confused, and troubled world that demands leaders, educators, and classroom teachers who can bridge cultural, ethnic, and religious borders, envision new possibilities, invent novel paradigms, and engage in personal transformation and visionary action' (Banks 2014, p. 23).

Also, according to the present study, social transformation should indeed be the aim of the intercultural project in education. While the intercultural capability is no longer seen as a prerogative of second language pedagogy and is considered to be teachable in other disciplines, the classroom of Languages has long been considered the ideal site for developing the intercultural capability in second language learners (Barili & Byram 2021). Crosbie (2014, p. 97) considers that this 'quest for social transformation […] begins with a language-learning classroom in which students are encouraged to deal with cosmopolitan ideals, giving rise to a possible scenario where engagement with the world is shaped by social justice'. It is not coincidental that the majority of attention in terms of methodology, curriculum, and textbook development related to the intercultural capability has been placed on this curriculum area (Zotzmann 2016). Furthermore, in Australia teaching about cultures has historically been considered as the domain of teachers of Languages and of those of English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) (Liyanage, Walker & Weinmann 2016, p. 7). As further discussed in the Literature Review, Section 2.9, this renewed understanding of Languages pedagogy has translated into what is referred to as Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL), to reflect the terminology in use in Australia (see for example, Liddicoat & Scarino 2013; Liddicoat & Crozet 2000; Liddicoat 2008).

It is important to note that this well-documented and long-standing shift (further examined in Section 2.9) is also typical to other countries, and its inception in Australian education policies mirrors developments internationally. In spite of ILTL being the most recent pedagogical approach, however, it has been noted that the classroom of Languages appears to reflect a narrow concept of teaching language plus cultural elements (Crozet 2016; Walton & Paradies 2013; Holliday 2011; Liddicoat 2008; Sercu 2006; Kramsch 1995) and that the practice of coupling the language taught with a culturally homogeneous nation-state is still quite common (Ferri 2014; Santoro 2014; Dervin 2010; Starkey 2007). When presenting another language, teachers inevitably present culture as well. A common way of doing this is

by focusing on aspects of cultural knowledge, which are more easily transmitted and assessed. This practice might be caused by a utilitarian view of language education (Byram & Parmenter 2012, p. 50), which ends up marginalising its broader political aims. While these political aims exist in theory, they are left out of teachers' daily practice due to external pressures.

Should this situation be confirmed, it would indicate that a gap remains between the current approach theorised for second language pedagogy, namely ILTL, and the practical reality of teaching Languages. ILTL requires teachers to prepare students for communicating across languages and cultures with the aim of transforming 'students' identities in the act of learning' (Scarino 2010, p. 324). However, the practice of teaching Languages might continue to rest on traditionalist views of culture. Because the *Intercultural Capability* was recently incorporated into the Victorian Curriculum of Languages (Victorian Curriculum And Assessment Authority [VCAA] 2017), it is considered timely to assess whether this has impacted on the pedagogical dispositions and practices of future teachers of Languages. Alternatively, this might have become a matter of implementing and complying with curriculum documents. Considering this, the present study might provide insight into whether there is a commitment, on the part of prospective teachers, to what, in broader terms, could be described as the intercultural agenda in education. It is widely acknowledged that teachers are not simply transferring curriculum documents from paper to practice. On the contrary, as Robinson (2012, p. 232) argues, 'policy results in a process and finally an outcome'. This process involves a series of variables according to which teachers adopt, interpret, adapt, and resist the demands of such texts (Robinson 2012).

This power to influence policy outcomes is often referred to as teacher agency (Priestley et al. 2016). Broadly intended as the possible ways in which individual teachers 'enact practice and engage with policy', this concept should be specifically concerned with 'the conditions under which, and the means by which, teachers are able to achieve agency in their everyday practices' (Priestley et al. 2016, p. 3). While the majority of studies tend to focus on student outcomes or teaching practice, relatively little is known about how teachers perceive the intercultural capability and to what extent they are personally and professionally committed to the intercultural project (see Ohi et al. 2019; Gong, Hu & Lai 2018). However, this needs more

attention because the way teachers act, the decisions they make, and the ideas they promote in the classroom are inevitably linked to their assumptions and beliefs (Borg 2003).

The present study aims to illuminate the possibilities and struggles teachers of Languages encounter in interpreting curriculum directives and daily pedagogical practice in the context of interculturality. To achieve this, the study will explore the lived experiences of participating preservice teachers, who are required by curriculum documents to adopt an intercultural orientation to their teaching practice. The study will seek to identify any potential obstacles faced when delivering the curriculum. Chapter Two examines the significant efforts by policy-makers and scholars worldwide in the area of intercultural education. It is timely to evaluate the impact of recent changes in curriculum policies and language teaching methodology. The results of this study will inform future directions in policy-making, teacher education programs, teacher professional development, as well as language teaching methodologies.

This study considers it urgent to establish whether introducing the *Intercultural Capability* in the Victorian Curriculum is viewed as another top-down demand on teachers or whether teachers consider themselves responsible for contributing to a cohesive and just society. Grounded in a critical (Sobre 2017) and ethical (Ferri 2018) paradigm, this study employs a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (van Manen 1990) to explore preservice teachers' lived experiences (Ranse et al. 2020). Data were collected through individual in-depth interviews from a cohort of seven preservice teachers enrolled in a graduate ITE program and completing a qualification in teaching Languages at an Australian University in Victoria.

1.2   CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Increasing global interdependence and worldwide migration, the rise of emerging economies and the exacerbation of inequalities, the ongoing climate crisis and demographic growth, the information age and the pace of technological change, and the changing nature of work are all phenomena that characterise our times and that are affecting every facet of society (Lamb et al. 2020; Dooly & Vallejo Rubinstein 2018; OECD 2016). At the time of writing, climate disasters, the Black

Lives Matter movement, the refugee crisis, conflicts in the Middle East, and the war in Ukraine, were making the headlines of newspapers daily. They all highlighted the urgency to imagine a different world (Lamb et al. 2020; OECD 2016; Gorski 2008; Coulby 2006).

International organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO, the Council of Europe (CoE), and the World Bank have actively reshaped global and national educational policy agendas (Auld, Rappleye & Morris 2019). These institutions have a common interest in providing an education for 'living in society on a national and global level' (Leeman 2003, p. 32), which is also a concern of the present study. One of the reasons for adopting intercultural education is the new demographic profile of many communities and schools worldwide brought about by today's patterns of migration (Holmes 2015, p. 12).

Educating citizens who can 'interact with people who are different' (Byram 2008, p. 174) is urgent in an era dominated by a significant movement of ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse people within and across nation-states (Banks 2008, p. 132). This situation is especially pronounced while accounts of racism and xenophobia rise in 'hosting' countries (Banks 2008, p. 132).

The coexistence of diverse communities within nation-states often results in conflict, and this is expected to persist in the future. As a result, there is a pressing call on schools and educators to prepare young people for these future challenges. The intercultural project in education is seen as a way to achieve this goal. This research will turn to the myriad of interpretations surrounding the conceptualisation and nomenclature of this process.

Internationally, the rationale behind introducing intercultural education has been linked to promoting the peaceful coexistence of diverse populations and the need to address social fragmentation. For example, in 2008, *The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* affirmed that teachers need to be prepared

'to manage the new situations arising from diversity, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalisation and to resolve conflicts peacefully, as well as to foster a global approach to institutional life on the basis of democracy and human rights and create a community of students, taking account of individual

unspoken assumptions, school atmosphere and informal aspects of education.' (CoE 2008, p. 32)

In the last few decades, policy-makers have developed documents and curricula that provide students with a set of 'knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to function in a global society' (Banks 2008, p. 132). This concern is visible in the proliferation of supranational policies on this matter, such as *Education for All* (UNESCO 2002), *UN Millennium Development Goals* (UN 2005), *The White Paper 'Intercultural Dialogue'* (CoE 2008), *Intercultural Dialogue Intercultural Competencies. Conceptual and operational framework.* (UNESCO 2013); *Global Citizenship Education. Preparing Learners for the Challenges of the 21st Century* (UNESCO 2014). More recently, this notion was incorporated into the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals with Target 4.7 promoting *Global Citizenship Education* (UNESCO 2015) and the OECD elaborated, in response, the new *OECD PISA Global Competence Framework* (OECD 2018).

The amount of policy-making on this issue demonstrates that, for education systems worldwide, it has become a priority to adopt innovative and rapid responses to prepare the youth for these changes (Lamb et al. 2020; OECD 2016). It is well-documented that education is vital in forming citizens, for employment opportunities, and for countries' national and global competitiveness (Rizvi, Donnelly & Barber 2012). As a result, educational reform has been at the top of the national and international political agendas, even though the two do not always proceed hand in hand. On the contrary, 'nationalism and globalization coexist in tension' (Banks 2011, p. 243).

In Australia, the field of education arguably 'feels' such tension. International organisations have strongly influenced national education policies while maintaining directives that are typical of Australia's narrative as a successful multicultural country (Kymlicka 2003).

1.3   RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

As illustrated above, to respond to the needs of our increasingly interconnected yet increasingly divided world, considerable effort has been placed on changing the nature of pedagogy, the content of curricula, and school practices. As a result, both in

Australia and internationally, scholars and policy-makers have proposed an array of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that young people should possess to participate successfully in a globalised world. It is generally considered that if learners acquire such a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, then they are going to develop what this thesis refers to as the intercultural capability, as the present study is based in Victoria, and the Victorian Curriculum adopts such terminology (see Literature Review, Section 2.5 and in particular Section 2.5.6).

In Australia, the extent to which schools are committed to intercultural education remains unclear (Ohi et al. 2019). Research confirms that the inclusion of such notions in the national Curriculum cannot guarantee that teachers are now able to foster the intercultural capability in their learners (Walton et al. 2014; Walton, Priest & Paradies 2013). Recently, Gilbert (2019) reviewed the inception of the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum and identified the challenges their implementation would face in state curricula. Despite these challenges, Gilbert (2019) reported that ACARA obtained an 80% approval rating for the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, pointing to the fact that most teachers appear to understand the importance of transmitting not only knowledge but also values to their learners.

The fact that education systems internationally subscribe to this vision was confirmed in a UNESCO (2021) report, according to which virtually every one of its member countries has embedded at least some aspects of the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) construct in their curricula. However, the same report concludes that this has yet to translate into teachers' confidence in enacting these aspects in their classrooms. Other examples of the difficulties in translating these aspirations into practice are demonstrated in several European studies. Salazar and Agüero (2016) report a general absence of the principles of intercultural education in teacher training programs. Similarly, Roiha and Sommier (2021) found that teachers are still insecure about the enactment of intercultural education. Alismail's (2016) review confirms this to be the case in the USA. Such studies substantiate earlier findings by Sercu (2006), who found that foreign language teachers in Europe were not sufficiently prepared to embed an intercultural orientation in their teaching practices. Sercu (2006) also highlighted the need for conceptual and methodological training in the field.

Leeman and Ledoux (2015) explored teachers' interpretation of intercultural education in the Netherlands and identified four different visions, namely (1) culturalism, (2) ethnic pluralism, (3) general pluralism, and (4) equal opportunities. They found that teachers preferred a general pluralism approach where controversial issues were purposely avoided, and less controversial topics such as differences in tastes and lifestyles, were privileged. Leeman and Ledoux (2015) also found that teachers must first develop their own intercultural understanding to be able to develop interculturally capable learners. This finding is also shared by Walton, Priest, and Paradies (2013) in Australia and by Hyunjin and Connelly (2019) in the USA. Significantly, Peiser and Jones (2014, p.387) concluded that teachers' interpretations of intercultural understanding and how they translate these into pedagogical practice are highly idiosyncratic and intuitive.

This research is further corroborated in other international studies. For example, a study in New Zealand (Howard, Scott & East 2015) demonstrated that teachers have a limited understanding of the intercultural project, which was often interpreted as cultural knowledge. In Hong Kong, Yuen (2010) also found that when teachers lack confidence in developing the intercultural capability in their learners, they prefer to avoid embedding the intercultural dimension into their teaching.

It is worth noting that few studies examining migrant experiences exist in Australia. Collins and Reid (2012) lamented the lack of a national study on migrant teachers in Australia and filled this gap by conducting quantitative and qualitative research into their experiences in three Australian states (NSW, SA, WA). Bense (2014) investigated German-born language teachers' experiences in Australian schools. She also reviewed the literature on teachers' migration and mobility (Bense 2016).

The next Chapter illustrates the huge amount of effort by international bodies, governments, policy-makers, researchers, educators, and philosophers into defining and promoting the intercultural project in education in general, including the intercultural capability. However, it is unclear to what extent teachers are invested in the intercultural agenda.

The present study intends to establish whether teaching Languages today is evolving from a narrow view of homogeneous linguistic and cultural practices typically associated with a nation-state (Crozet 2016; Walton & Paradies 2013;

Holliday 2011; Liddicoat 2008; Sercu 2006; Kramsch 1995), to a more sophisticated understanding of culture as dynamic and immersed in power relations. The latter conceptualisation of language pedagogy is needed to transition towards a more social justice-oriented pedagogy.

This gap between policy intentions and the pedagogy and practices of teachers has been attributed to a lack of clarity around the rationale, conceptualisation, and nomenclature around intercultural education. In general, it is possible that 'interculturality is too complex to be grasped entirely' (Layne, Trémion & Dervin 2015, p. 7), because, while 'omnipresent', it is still a 'contested' notion (Dervin & Hahl 2015, p. 95).

According to Scarino (2010, p. 324), the main challenge for language teachers in implementing the ILTL approach is the need to develop a 'renewed understanding of language, culture and learning'. Instead of rethinking the methods, Scarino (2010, p. 325) argues that there is an urgent need to reconceptualise 'the very nature of language learning and teaching and its assessment'. This position aligns with Gorksi (2008), who contends that intercultural education requires a 'shift of consciousness' to avoid reducing it to superficial aspects such as 'food, flags, and festivals' of different ethnic groups.

Byram and Risager (1999) investigated the factors that promote or hinder teachers' attention to the intercultural aspect. Their study highlights the interplay between different elements, such as curricular documents, achievement objectives, and the students in the classroom. In addition, some practical obstacles might be scheduling and curriculum constraints (Sercu 2006) that limit teachers' opportunity to engage with this aspect.

Other issues hindering teachers' attention to the intercultural dimension of language teaching include a lack of connections between philosophical and educational theory to pedagogical practice in teacher training programs (Garrido & Alvarez 2006). There is also an absence of guidance on how to develop this approach as well as teachers' cultural knowledge (Sercu & Bandura 2005). Furthermore, the way teachers have been positioned as mere 'curriculum deliverers – as technicians implementing a set product – rather than as education professionals using the curriculum to design learning experiences for a particular group of students' (Liddicoat & Scarino 2010, p. 3) does not encourage teachers to take up the

responsibility of fostering interculturality. This situation is compounded by a lack of an understanding about the content, pedagogies, and outcomes of language teaching (Kohler 2010, p. 182). As a result, language programs often adopt celebratory approaches to diversity, rather than critical ones (Mills & Ballantyne 2010).

Significantly, Santoro (2014) and Tarozzi (2014) highlight the need for teachers' commitment to the intercultural project, while Young and Sachdev (2011), as well as Crozet (2016) reveal that teachers tend to view education about racism and other social inequalities as problematic as it involves discussing potentially controversial topics, which they do not feel confident to address. If this were confirmed, it would mean that the more engaged, social-justice orientation of intercultural education is still absent in classrooms.

An aspect that should not be ignored is teachers' understanding of student body demographics. For example, Santoro (2009) conducted a study among student teachers engaging with ethnically and socioeconomically diverse learners and found that teachers had 'limited knowledge about their students' cultural values, practices and traditions' (Santoro 2009, p. 36). This hindered their ability to develop an inter/multicultural pedagogical approach (Santoro 2009). This situation is interesting and pertinent to the present study because it might be assumed that teachers automatically feel compelled to pay more attention to issues and opportunities afforded by cultural diversity in highly multicultural settings. However, this is not necessarily the case.

An important consideration is that the majority of studies carried out in this area usually concern the teaching of English in different settings and that little research occurs in secondary schools in the State sector (Borg 2015, p. 322), which arguably are the place where teaching has more impact on overall society since the majority of young people attend government schools.

Finally, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been identified as an area where little research is done in regard to intercultural education, especially in relation to examining the values and ideals of this kind of education projects (Yemini, Tibbitts & Goren 2019), hence the choice to focus on teacher cognition in the present study. A similar observation was made concerning teacher cognition in ILTL, which, despite having become 'the overall orientation of language education in the context of globalization', is still under-researched (Gong, Hu & Lai 2018, p. 225).

Given this situation, a research opportunity has emerged. Since the Victorian Curriculum includes the *Intercultural Capability* and the specific Curriculum of Languages incorporates the intercultural dimension (VCAA 2017), it is appropriate to evaluate the impact of these policy documents on student teachers' pedagogical attention to these aspects.

While interculturality might be a novelty for teachers from other Learning Areas, teachers of Languages are likely to have some understanding of this concept. The Learning Area of Languages has been considered for a few decades at least 'the most complete and versatile tool to understand and to experience how language and culture shape one's and other's worldviews' (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet 1999, p. 11).

Much effort has been devoted to achieving change in pedagogy, even before the intercultural dimension was formally introduced in the Victorian Curriculum (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013; Liddicoat 2008). However, scholars in the field of language pedagogy have noted that 'the amount of activity at policy level belies fragility in practice' (Liddicoat & Scarino 2010, p. 5). The extent to which teachers of Languages are invested in the intercultural project remains insufficiently investigated also according to a more recent study by Cloonan et al. (2017).

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study intends to investigate the lived experiences of teachers of Languages in relation to the phenomenon of the intercultural capability in Victoria. In particular, this study has selected to limit itself to exploring this phenomenon through the lived experiences of a group of migrant preservice teachers. The present study aims to understand both preservice teachers' perceptions of the intercultural capability and its implementation in their teaching practice. Therefore, the two main research questions are:

1. How do preservice teachers perceive and interpret the intercultural capability? (Perceptions)

2. In what ways do they adopt an intercultural language teaching approach? (Implementation)

Six sub-questions are:

- What influence does the context have on their understanding and practices? [Environment]

- How do preservice teachers envision enacting the Intercultural Capability in their language classroom? [Practice]

- Do preservice teachers feel prepared to incorporate the Intercultural Capability into their language classroom? [Competence]

- How do preservice teachers conceptualise the Intercultural Capability in the Victorian Curriculum? [Beliefs]

- How do personal experiences shape preservice teachers' perceptions of the Intercultural Capability as presented in the Curriculum? [Identity]

- How do preservice teachers perceive their role and mission in relation to the intercultural project? [Mission]

The research questions that guide this study emerged from the literature review on intercultural education in general and Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) in particular. The two main research questions were further divided into different areas, which led to several sub-questions. These were designed following Korthagen's 'onion model' (2004) on teacher cognition to explore participants' lived experiences (see Section 4.6.3).

The research questions are also grounded in my personal experience of being both a teacher of Languages and EAL/D in Victorian government schools and a migrant to Australia (see Section 4.8.1) and stemmed out of my interest to approach Languages pedagogy from a more intercultural standpoint rather than from banal representations of cultural practices that tend to work against the more noble aspiration of education for intercultural dialogue and social justice.

To answer these questions, the present study adopts hermeneutic phenomenology (Moran 2000; van Manen 1990). This methodology allows for an in-depth analysis of the complex ways the participants perceive, conceive, and experience the intercultural project in education.

The decision to focus on preservice teachers rather than in-service teachers was initially made to overcome the restrictions imposed by the 2020-2022 Covid-19

pandemic (see Section 4.9). However, this eventually became an advantage, as one of the present study's findings is that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) plays a role in shaping teachers' beliefs. Thanks to this choice, it was possible to obtain a sample of participants with a fresh outlook on the current Victorian Curriculum because it was not filtered through prior experiences of curriculum and pedagogy in Victorian school settings. The rationale for limiting this study to a sample of prospective teachers is justified by the literature on teacher beliefs and epistemology, which shows that educators are 'active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs' (Borg 2003, p. 81). Thus, it can be argued that what teachers believe in guides achieving desired changes in the classroom and in society in general.

The choice to focus on teacher cognition was made because the relationship between teachers' actions and teachers' beliefs is complex (Korthagen 2004). However, teachers' beliefs, rather than their actions, directly affect their perceptions of both learning and teaching in the classroom (Korthagen & Vasalos 2010). In particular, the intercultural project involves more than selecting appropriate materials and methods; most importantly, it concerns social and political issues. This study argues that if researchers paid attention to teachers' rules, tools, and materials, they could not draw the conclusion that teachers are adopting a "truly" intercultural perspective. Because such a perspective involves ethical and moral dilemmas, the interface between teachers' internal dispositions and their actions needs to be explored (Korthagen & Vasalos 2010, Korthagen 2004; Borg 2003; Clandinin & Connelly 1987).

The cohort selected for this study includes prospective secondary school teachers who migrated to Australia from another country. For this reason, they have experienced living, studying, and working in different geographical locations. This choice was coincidental. Initially, this study was not restricted to migrant teachers. Nevertheless, it was migrant preservice teachers who showed an interest in joining the research project. This might indicate that those with direct experiences of being the *Other* are more invested in the ideals and values promoted by the intercultural project in education. It was predicted that the participants interested in this study would consist of 'intercultural speakers' (Kramsch 1993) who can 'decentre' and see

intercultural encounters from an outsider's perspective (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002, p. 12), thus providing rich data about the development of their own interculturality and how this affects their attitudes towards developing it in others.

As 'teaching has always involved making decisions within a complex and rich field of contradictions, dilemmas, and priorities' (Ball 2006, p. 83), this study adopts phenomenology as a qualitative research method to investigate teachers' lived experiences. As Chapter Four illustrates, phenomenology is both a philosophy and a methodology (Sloan & Bowe 2014, Langdridge 2007). When adopted as a research method, phenomenology offers the opportunity for '"deep" exploration into individual experience' (Creely 2018, p.108). Phenomenology recognises that knowledge is not universally true and, therefore, it can only be perceived through observation and interpretation of participants' lived experiences (Sloan & Bowe 2014; van Manen 1997). In order to allow for such depth, the investigation should be 'narrow', meaning performed with a limited cohort of participants (Creely 2018, p.108).

1.5   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of interculturality through the lived experiences of a group of migrant preservice teachers of Languages. The phenomenological approach makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the participating preservice teachers' awareness and commitment to the aims of intercultural education. This understanding is expected to contribute to a greater insight into the factors influencing teachers' engagement with the intercultural project. Such an understanding is essential to lead to improved practice in teacher education training and in the professional development of in-service teachers, as well as in more effective course design and delivery and best practice in teaching methodology.

The research also contributes to new knowledge by providing an understanding of the impact and enactment of the Victorian Curriculum through preservice teachers' experiences. This is done to gain an understanding of their influence towards supporting and maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity. If gaps between education policy and teacher training were identified, it would be possible to

understand the consequences for Victoria's socio-economic well-being and contribution to the social cohesion agenda.

Finally, the study provides scope to explore relevant issues with critical stakeholders, such as the Department of Education, policy makers, universities, principals and school leaders, teachers of Languages, MLTAV and single language associations.

1.6   THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter Two reviews relevant international and Australian literature on the intercultural project and introduces key concepts that have informed this study. It clarifies terminology used in the field, both at present and historically, before investigating the objectives of intercultural education and issues of naming, defining, modelling and describing related notions and terminology. The literature review then discusses the Australian educational context in which this study is set. It then describes Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) and presents the intercultural dimension in the Australian and Victorian curricula. The Chapter concludes with a discussion about Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in the Australian context and a review of studies on teacher cognition and its importance in exploring possible gaps between policy aspirations and the reality of the classroom.

Chapter Three provides the theoretical framework of the study. It starts with a discussion of the four paradigms used in the field of culture and communication studies. It then discusses the critical interpretations of culture and communication based on the work of critical interculturalists. It concludes with exploring the Levinasian philosophy, which further enriches the conceptualisation of the intercultural capability as understood in the present research project.

Chapter Four explains the methodology chosen to best answer the research questions of the present study. The choice of a qualitative approach is first discussed, and then the Chapter analyses phenomenology as a philosophical discipline and methodology used in this study, data collection and analysis processes. The ethical considerations of this study are also addressed. Finally, the Chapter concludes by considering its limitations and the potential for future research to build upon its findings.

In Chapter Five, results are presented in a narrative form and discussed based on the research design presented in Chapters Three and Four. Results are organised following the model on teacher cognition provided in Section 4.6.3.

Chapter Six discusses findings and provides recommendations on three areas: the need for a stronger theoretical foundation for the intercultural capability, the need for reflective practice in teacher training, which includes both initial teacher education and ongoing professional development, and the need to revisit the curriculum as guiding policy document.

Chapter Seven concludes the study, providing reflection for the future of Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning and intercultural education.

Chapter 2:   Literature Review

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Ideals of interculturality and related policies exist in society and are reflected in the field of education. Therefore, this Chapter begins with discussing the appearance of the term *intercultural* and analogous nomenclature and describes how its meaning has evolved over time to assume and indicate different concepts (Section 2.2). These societal ideals were transferred into the field of education, so the Chapter continues with a discussion of the objectives of intercultural education in different contexts and highlights the connection between the origins of intercultural education and progressive social-justice aspirations (Section 2.3). Then, the multiple ways intercultural education is envisaged in supranational policy documents are explored to identify a shift away from social concerns and towards economic competitiveness (Section 2.4). Section 2.5 will then provide a succinct overview of the terms, definitions, and models of intercultural education used in the field. These definitions vary depending on different contexts and pedagogical traditions. The Section also explores how supranational bodies and scholars have attempted to coin more "universal" aims and definitions.

The second part of the Chapter describes the Australian educational context (Section 2.6) to then analyse the inception of intercultural education in the Victorian Curriculum (Section 2.7) and the place of Languages (Section 2.8) in the Curriculum. Because this study investigates the uptake of the intercultural dimension in the language classroom, Sections 2.9 and 2.10 describe what in Australia is termed Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) and the intercultural dimension in the Languages Curriculum. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in the Australian context (Section 2.11) and a review of the literature on teacher cognition (Section 2.12), as this study provides direct testimony from prospective teachers' lived experiences of adopting an intercultural approach to their language teaching practice and how their own personal and professional biographies influence these.

2.2 *INTERCULTURAL*: MANY TERMS FOR ONE CONCEPT, ONE TERM FOR MANY CONCEPTS

Despite being common in academia and widespread in official policy across the world for many decades, the term *intercultural* is somewhat elusive and polyvalent. It tends to acquire different meanings in the different geographical, societal and academic contexts it is used (Guilherme & Dietz 2015). Ideals of interculturality are common in the most disparate fields, ranging from business management to psychology and from social work to healthcare. In particular, the interpretations of this concept and its related terms – which are composed of 'different layers of meaning [and are] elastic in their formation (with alternative suffixes, prefixes, and articles)' (Guillherme & Dietz 2015, p. 15) – depending on different cultural traditions and philosophical viewpoints (Sobre 2017, p. 40; Guillherme & Dietz 2015, p. 5). Significantly, its interpretation can only be broad and should change over time 'to meet the needs and demands of an ever-changing society' (Grant 2016, p. 4).

The present study recognises that it is an almost impossible, and perhaps superfluous, enterprise to converge onto a single and universal definition. Nonetheless, supranational institutions and scholars have put much effort into creating models and definitions that could elucidate what *intercultural* (and related) term(s) mean. This Section investigates both its origins and its evolution.

Moon (1996) reconstructs the historical circumstances in which intercultural communication studies came into being. According to Moon's analysis, the concept and term of *intercultural communication* first appeared in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s at the Foreign Service Institute, the diplomatic service of the United States federal government. Here, the anthropologist Edward Hall applied his anthropological understanding of culture to train US Foreign Service personnel, thus shifting its use to a more pragmatic, goal-oriented approach (Moon 1996). This practical application linked intercultural communication to national culture (Jensen 2003, p.2).

Around the same time, after the Second World War, also the term *multicultural* emerged. This was used to refer to approaches for managing diversity within one national or social community. This development led to the use of *intercultural* as a

synonym of *multicultural*, and thus as a way to emphasise diversity in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the USA (Leeman 2003, p. 32).

However, it is also argued that the term *intercultural* was reintroduced some decades later to overcome the perceived failure of multiculturalism as being passively tolerant of diversity, but fundamentally unable to combat structural racism and inequality (Coulby 2006, p. 246). This interpretation is evident in self-proclaimed multicultural countries such as Australia, Canada and the USA, which focus on celebrating diversity rather than eradicating inequalities between dominant and minority groups. From this perspective, such societies are considered to be ethnocentric as the dominant group positions itself in a hegemonic position and is subscribed to by all other ethnic groups. Thus, what tends to be promoted is convergence and uniformity, while divergence may be allowed in superficial ways (Liddicoat 2009, p. 191). The term *intercultural* was revived to combat this passive form of multiculturalism. The adjective *multicultural*, in this sense, is intended as the mere coexistence of many (highlighted by the prefix *multi-*). The prefix *inter-*, on the other hand, indicates better the idea of reciprocity and, thus, is preferred for its potential to encourage mutually enriching relationships between differently affiliated individuals. The expectation embedded in the term *intercultural* is that members of different groups establish some sort of dialogue, which, in turn, can produce some form of reciprocal influence. To sum up, in societies adopting passive multiculturalism as a societal policy, minorities are allowed to express their cultures with limitations and without affecting mainstream society. Therefore, the change of prefix encourages a more active form of multiculturalism, where both minority and majority groups benefit from exchanging cultural practices and shaping new hybrid cultures.

However, another possible reading of this change in nomenclature is that the disappearance of identifiable cultural groups makes it possible to gloss over political integration issues. This interpretation signals a move towards more neoliberal practices that favour internationalisation for global competitiveness rather than for achieving social cohesion and social justice (Mitchell 2003). It is difficult to establish which reading is true, and both situations may occur simultaneously.

In this sense, the origins of the ideology of multiculturalism can be traced back to the struggle to change structural and institutional practices that privilege those

positively positioned in society (Nieto 2009). Once the shortcomings of approaches that referred to different and separate cultural groups started to emerge, a new ideology was introduced, which shifted the attention away from societal responsibilities and started considering individuals' agency. This phenomenon of depoliticisation is examined by Grant (2016), who sees its appearance as coinciding with the rise of neoliberalism. This shift away from multiculturalism and towards interculturality made it more challenging to identify institutionalised forms of discrimination. This is a valid concern if applied to the current context where educational practices are more focused on equipping learners with skills and attitudes that will allow them to perform better - than others - in the workplace (Connell 2013). In contrast, the intercultural project in education should strive to create an open and safe space for learners to explore issues of privilege and marginalisation, which would allow them to imagine a different world and, consequently, to take responsibility and achieve the imagined change in the world.

Kymlicka (2003) proposes a further theoretical distinction between the terms *intercultural* and *multicultural*, theorising that *multicultural* refers to a state where all citizens are equal regardless of their cultural and linguistic affiliations; historical injustice is recognised and assimilation policies are rejected, as is the idea of a dominant group holding more rights over others. For this state to exist, individuals must be *intercultural*, as they create and maintain multicultural communities. In this theorisation both terms indicate ideological and political concepts or tools for society: *multicultura*l defining the state and *intercultural* its citizens. Based on this, it becomes more evident that 'we cannot have real interculturality without true multiculturalism' (Guilherme & Dietz 2015, p. 11). However, the relationship is bidirectional and true multiculturalism cannot exist without real interculturality. Similarly, Barrett (2013) and UNESCO (2006, p. 17) conclude that interculturality builds upon the foundation of multiculturalism. While the two cannot be considered the same, one should not obscure the other. It follows that according to this view, intercultural education can be considered complementary to multicultural education.

A critical voice is that of Alana Lentin (2005), who suggests that the replacement of the term *race* with the word *culture*, and of *racism* with *ethnocentrism*, has failed to address the 'political implications of racism in the history of the West' (Lentin 2005, p. 385). In her opinion, multiculturalism and

interculturality are concerned with managing difference without questioning the premises by which difference is created. In a similar vein, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek (1997, p. 44 in Aman 2015) criticises multiculturalism as a form of colonialism, as in both systems, local cultures are treated 'as "natives" whose mores are to be carefully studied and "respected"'.

More recently, Lentin (2020, p. 5) has asserted that race is 'a technology for the management of human difference, the main goal of which is the production, reproduction and the maintenance of White supremacy on both a local and planetary scale'. It could be argued that much of today's intercultural education efforts go towards managing differences, usually based on contested notions such as race, culture, or ethnicity. This leads to the danger of disguising racial discourses as harmless cultural discourses, thus perpetuating problematic representations of certain groups (Lee 2015). This is an important reminder that while concepts of racial, national, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic difference are central to the notion of interculturality and its relevance in the enterprise of education, these concepts are rarely challenged and contested. Instead, for the most part, they tend to be seen as natural and objective differences that people must accept to enjoy positive interactions.

Two more terms are worth examining here. One is that of *crosscultural* communication and the other is that of *transcultural* communication. The former appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, when intercultural communication scholarship was characterised by the prevalence of "comparative and positivist paradigms of cross-cultural psychology" (Kramsch & Hua 2016, p. 41). During this period, culture was commonly understood in terms of nationality, and a comparative approach was used to evaluate and contrast one national culture against another (Kramsch & Hua 2016, p. 41).

The term *transcultural* was introduced in the 1990s alongside the 'critical turn' (Dasli & Diaz 2016) in intercultural scholarship. The prefix *trans-*, highlights the processes of hybridisation that characterise contemporary societies. It indicates 'notions as "across", "beyond" and "over"' (Seidl 1998, p. 107), which are useful in portraying the idea that individuals do not belong to one specific cultural group but might have multiple affiliations and influences. This term allows for the emergence 'of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual

orientation' (Bhabha 1994, p. 1). It is associated with Bhabha's conceptualisation of a third space, a place where 'the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity' and where 'the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew' (Bhabha 1994, pp. 37-38). According to Bhabha, identities are formed 'in-between' and speakers negotiate their meanings on a sort of neutral ground. The fact that cultures are not fixed, but are multifaceted and always in flux, is largely recognised today, at least in theory. The popularity of concepts such as intersectionality demonstrates the interplay of factors other than nationality, language, and culture that influence one's cultural affiliations, for example, age, ability, class, gender, sexuality.

However, this position was also critiqued by those who view this process of individualising cultural traits as lacking the potential to address broader social issues (see Dervin, Lavanchy & Gajardo 2011; Zotzmann 2016; Guilherme and Dietz 2015). The risk of this approach is that it eventually leads to an erasure of difference, which eventually causes issues of power and historical and political implications to be ignored. Accordingly, Risager (1998, p. 247) argues that when minorities within nation-states claim their rights, 'fixing' culture is a practice that should not be entirely abandoned. Pretending racial, national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences do not exist can hardly be seen as a solution to the issues that created the necessity for introducing intercultural education as social policy. At the same time, as shortcomings of existing practices are identified, and as societies evolve and face new challenges, new ideas inevitably emerge and become embedded in new terms.

Based on this analysis, it is possible to conclude that these concepts were all shaped in response to one another. Each attempted to add a new layer of meaning to enrich the previous, but simultaneously - and perhaps inevitably – ended up detracting from other layers of meaning. Therefore, these terms should be considered complementary and essential to each other as they all analyse 'the broader, societal constellations of inequality, difference, and diversity that shape contemporary societies' (Guilherme & Dietz 2015, p. 2). The term *multicultural* refers to the existence of many different ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups that are allowed, and sometimes encouraged, to maintain their cultural practices within a national or social community. The term *intercultural* highlights mutual dialogue and influence between individuals and groups with different affiliations. Finally, the term

transcultural overcomes the limits posed by the very idea of cultural, national, ethnical, but also religious, linguistic, gender, and class-based groups as something static to which individuals exclusively belong and opens up the possibility for individuals to have multiple affiliations and to inhibit the Third Space.

The label *intercultural* can describe all these interpretations, and so all of them can be usefully applied to describe the complex and delicate task teachers need to grapple with when asked to "do" intercultural education.

Before proceeding to an overview of the declinations of such concepts in educational policy, a final remark by Dervin (2011) seems appropriate. That is, all debates around the terminology in use 'tend to overshadow the fact that all of them invoke the same basic assumption, that is, that different cultures exist' (Dervin 2011, p. 5). This highlights the fact that in any conceptualisation of multiculturalism and interculturality the focus is on difference, hence on the problems, rather than on the opportunities, that arise in intercultural situations (Ferri 2018; Phipps 2013).

2.3   THE CONCERN OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Nieto (2017, p. 2), a leading scholar in the field, traces the origins of multicultural education in the USA back to the Civil Rights movement of the mid-60s and early 70s and links it to the demands of recognition and educational justice on the part of the African American and Latino populations. Similar movements occurred in Canada, the UK, and Australia (Banks 2009), where marginalised groups such as new migrants and Indigenous populations began claiming rights such as achieving better educational outcomes. Therefore, scholars in the field, such as Nieto (2004) and Banks (2004), agree multicultural/intercultural education's main objective is ensuring good quality education for all students, regardless of their socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. This frames the idea of social justice pedagogy in the present study, which can be defined in terms of equal resources and opportunities for all students. In particular, Nieto (2004, p. 346) explains that: '[Multicultural education] challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism

(ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent'.

The term *intercultural* has a longer history in countries like the USA, Canada, and Australia. However, it was introduced later in continental Europe in response to massive inflows of migrants and refugees: in the early 70s in countries such as France, Germany, and the UK, and in the mid-1980s in countries like Italy and Spain (Catarci 2014). According to Bleszynska (2008, p. 542), intercultural education in certain European countries has become a synonym for teaching approaches that are aimed at 'the integration of immigrants into the host culture and the transformation of nation-states into multicultural ones'. Guillherme and Dietz (2015, p. 5) also state that intercultural education in Europe originated from the challenges provoked by the increasing number of students from different countries and the resulting tensions between dominant and minority groups. This translated into the adoption of the *Ausländerpädagogik* (pedagogy for foreigners) in Germany, or *pédagogie d'accueil* (pedagogy of reception) in France (Portera 2008).

However, since the mid-1980s, the European Union has started replacing multicultural policies and multicultural pedagogy with the concept of intercultural education (Portera 2008, p. 483). The aim of this renewed understanding is that education should promote dialogue, contact, and interaction rather than compensatory and assimilatory approaches that had characterised previous approaches to diversity management. For this reason, in current European debates and policy documents, the emphasis is on 'interaction' and 'hybridity', rather than on integration (Guillherme & Dietz 2015, p. 5).

Bleszynska (2008, p. 540) identified four significant paradigms used to enact intercultural education: 'national, racial-compensatory, civic and cultural borderland'. The national paradigm is typical of European countries, where the focus of intercultural policies is on the integration of migrants and asylum seekers escaping from wars and poverty and coming into a static national culture that has a 'historically shaped national identity' (Bleszynska 2008, p. 541). The racial-compensatory paradigm is found in the United States, where the concept of 'race' is still used, and the focus is on compensating for past loss and dispossession suffered by particular groups. In self-proclaimed multicultural countries such as Canada and Australia, the focus is on the contribution made by minorities to the cultural

landscape (hence 'cultural borderland'). In contrast, countries such as France have a greater interest in the centrality of a 'civic' society, which is superior to peripheral national and religious values.

Significantly, Bleszynska (2008, p. 542) argues that because education and the challenges a society face are geographically and historically situated, there is no single recipe for intercultural education to be implemented across all countries and the way intercultural education is adopted must vary according to the local context. This recommendation by Bleszynska (2008) has been ignored by supranational institutions, which are increasingly promoting a global education agenda (see Zajda 2015). Section 2.4 will discuss this phenomenon.

The present study posits that it is impossible to circumscribe a single definition, model, or method for intercultural education. However, it acknowledges the need to identify the overarching objectives of intercultural education. Bleszynska (2008, p. 538) articulates these objectives with three dimensions: (1) a 'macro-social/global dimension', which involves the knowledge of and respect for different cultures and recognition of human rights; (2) a 'mezzo-social/national dimension', which deals with social inequalities and conflicts resulting from diversity within the nation-state and promotes peaceful coexistence and social cohesion; and (3) a 'micro-social/individual dimension', which focuses the individual sphere to limit prejudice and discrimination.

These three aims are political in nature and involve a critical reading of the intercultural project, which not only promotes peaceful coexistence but also encourages the eradication of inequalities and the transformation of societies into more just and cohesive entities.

Based on such objectives of intercultural education, Bleszynska (2008, p. 543) identifies four main areas in which teachers should gain competence: (1) 'intercultural dialogue, co-existence and competencies'; (2) 'adaptation, acculturation and integration'; (3) 'social justice, human rights and combating racial / ethnic prejudice; (4) 'civic society, transnational communities and social cohesion'. Building on Bleszynska's objectives, Leeman (2003) states that teachers need to gain competence in five areas:

1. adopting multiple perspectives;

2. knowing 'about ethnic-cultural diversity';

3. knowing 'about inequality in the multi-ethnic society and of values and skills to tackle inequality';

4. possessing 'values and skills aimed at safe-guarding ethnic-cultural diversity, personal autonomy and communality in the school and society';

5. possessing 'values and skills necessary for living in a multi-ethnic context' (Leeman 2003, p. 33).

It is evident that these areas are broad and ambitious to address. However, as discussed in Chapter One, such aspirations have a place in Australian educational policies. The political nature of the objectives of intercultural education is also explicit in supranational policy documents, which promote its value, not because of the potential advantages it may grant the individual but for the whole society.

Finally, according to Leeman and Ledoux (2005, p. 575), intercultural education aims to address issues of 'inequality, discrimination, ethnic/cultural diversity and citizenship'. In general, this highlights the need for an approach more oriented towards social justice, equality, and the eradication of racism (Leeman & Ledoux 2005).

2.4 THE PRESSURES TO STANDARDISE INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION FROM SUPRANATIONAL POLICY

As illustrated in Chapter One, supranational institutions such as the World Bank, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and the OECD have ushered in a globalisation of educational policy. This phenomenon has led to an 'increasing colonization of education policy by economic policy imperatives' (Ball 1998, p. 122), leading to a shift away from local responses to social issues towards a more unified answer that tends to see economic prosperity as the solution to all problems (see also Grant 2016). As a consequence of the increased influence of policy-making at the international level in the field of education, in fact, a shift towards individual learners' 'performativity' has been noted (Lanas 2014). Simultaneously, said policy texts continue to contain references to social justice aspirations, for example, when the OECD's (2016, p. 11) document *Global competency for an inclusive world*

contends that 'globally competent people are engaged to improve living conditions in their own communities and also to build a more just, peaceful, inclusive and environmentally sustainable world'.

Analysing the text *PISA 2018 Volume VI: Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World?* (OECD 2018), Bailey, Ledger and Thier (2022) identify silences, assumptions, and claims of neutrality that they argue contradict stated "good intentions" as they give more power to some (privileged Westerners) to the detriment of others (already marginalised and oppressed groups). Similarly, in the policy text *UNESCO Guidelines for Intercultural Education* (2006), Dasli (2019) can uncover the tension between claims of social cohesion and peace as ultimate goals of intercultural education and a more apolitical portrayal of culture that impedes achieving such goals. In such document, UNESCO (2006, p. 37) declared the three principles of intercultural education to be: (1) about adopting cultural responsive pedagogy; (2) about encouraging educators to develop skills and attitudes that will allow their learners to participate in society fully; and (3) about encouraging respect and recognition of diversity. This framing of diversity is problematic as it relies on an essentialist view of culture that might lead to reifying tendencies. This risk is theoretically acknowledged in a subsequent publication by UNESCO (2013, p. 7), which views *intercultural competence* as a way of 'sharing an awareness of selfhood and otherness with more and more people, thus avoiding risks such as the reproduction of stereotypes and the promotion of an essentialist perspective on culture'. Once again, however, issues of power and privilege are glossed over.

Interestingly, UNESCO's previous policy documents have preferred the adjective *intercultural* in the publications titled the *UNESCO Guidelines for Intercultural Education* (2006), and *Intercultural Competences* (UNESCO 2013). However, UNESCO is now using the term Global Citizenship Education (GCED), for example, in the document *Global citizenship education: preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century* (UNESCO 2014) and the OECD *Global Citizenship Education. Topics and learning objectives* (UNESCO 2015). The term Global Citizenship Education (GCED) will be further analysed in Section 2.5.2.

The European Union, however, has used the adjective *intercultural* for almost four decades now and has promoted intercultural dialogue while highlighting education's fundamental role in embedding into our societies. In its *White Paper on*

Intercultural Dialogue, the Council of Europe explicitly states its commitment to 'the transmission of intercultural competences through education' (CoE 2008, p. 45). This document conceives *intercultural dialogue* as 'an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritages, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect' (CoE 2008). Significantly, the CoE affirms the vital role played by intercultural competences in the 21st century against prejudice and discrimination. As further discussed in the following Sections, European institutions, like other supranational policy actors, have been concerned with member States' policy-making on intercultural issues. Relatedly, Hadjisoteriou, Faas, and Angelides (2015) have identified a tendency to propose global solutions to local problems. They have done this without considering the specific histories and contexts in which such issues occur. This is problematic because national systems adopt such policies. However, they interpret them differently and implement them at will. This lack of collaboration between the national and the supranational levels results in a gap between what is wished for and what is practically achieved (Hadjisoteriou Faas & Angelides 2015).

In relation to this concern, Gorski (2006) acknowledges that the crisis of multicultural and intercultural education might have to do with top-down pressures of standardisation and accountability from supranational organisations. However, he also wonders to what extent educators contribute to such a crisis. An example is when they soften progressive messages about equality and social justice. This is an important point for this study as teachers' voices and stories will be critically examined to identify any contradictions and inconsistencies that might indeed weaken their own aspirations. As stated by (Gorski 2006), the aim is not to criticise practitioners' work but to learn how to commit more powerfully to achieve such aspirations.

Grant (2016, p. 10) agrees with Gorski's consideration but asks a powerful question: is it the fault of classroom teachers that they are not engaging critically enough with such concepts, or is the depoliticisation of 'the language of multicultural education' the responsibility of academics and ITE programs? This Chapter will further elaborate on this question when it considers Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Australia in Section 2.11 and the role that is played by accreditation bodies in shaping it.

2.5   *INTERCULTURAL:* FROM SOCIAL TO ECONOMIC VALUE

As already mentioned, a plethora of other terms are currently in use to describe what in the present study is referred to as the intercultural capability. As briefly seen in Section 2.2, such a variety is due to the construct's interdisciplinary and complex nature and to the constant evolution of its interpretation (Deardorff 2006).

The main problem with the lack of convergence onto a standard definition is that scholars, policy-makers and other stakeholders such as teachers, understand or interpret the same term in different ways and/or use different terms for the same concept (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013). Simultaneously, the fact that there is no unified definition, theory, or model, also represents a key strength in the field as having several views on the intercultural capability enriches it; furthermore, seeking to simplify something as complicated as intercultural interaction is destined to fail.

Even when one restricts the scope of research to education there is a multitude of definitions, terms, and models, making it impossible to identify one that can incorporate all the possible readings and nuances of the notions related to the intercultural capability. Concerns related to intercultural education also go under the label of *multicultural education* (see Banks & Banks 2020), *international and global education* (see Cremin 2015; Hébert & Abdi 2013), *global citizenship education* (UNESCO 2014; OXFAM, 2015), *peace education* (see Cremin 2015), as well as *antiracist education* (see Williams 2021) and *culturally responsive education* (see Ladson-Billings 1995).

Specifically related to the notion of intercultural capability, other terms used in the field of language teaching and learning range from *intercultural learning 12* (CoE 2009) to *intercultural understanding* (in the English National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages, QCA, 2007) to *ethnic and cultural diversity* (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 2008), but also *global competence* (OECD 2018), *global citizenship* (UNESCO 2015), as well as *multicultural competence*, *cross-cultural competence, cultural awareness*; and *intercultural communicative competence* (Deardorff 2006; Byram 1997) (for a complete list of terms in use, see Fantini 2009). While the same term can be used to indicate different variations of a similar notion, many different terms can be used to indicate the same

concepts (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013). The present study recognises that the ubiquity of the term *intercultural* in its various formations risks weakening the notions attached to it. Therefore, it is important for researchers to adopt a critical stance regardless of the field of application (see Ferri 2014).

This research will now turn to the myriad of interpretations around the nomenclature of this process to provide a better picture of the complexity of the intercultural project. In order to align with the Victorian context in which this study is framed, this study uses the term *Intercultural Capability* (VCAA 2017), even though the theorisation of such a concept in this study does not necessarily match its understanding as it appears in policy documents.

The following Sections provide a succinct overview of what terminology is used and their definitions and interpretations in policy documents and academic literature. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but is necessary to contextualise the complexity of defining these interrelated and often overlapping terms.

2.5.1 Global Competence

Perhaps as a consequence of the globalisation of educational policy, the OECD has now discarded the adjective *intercultural* to replace it with a more neutral and ideally uniform and universal *global.*

Global Competence is examined here because it has the potential to influence local policy and discourse on intercultural education. Indeed, this term is currently adopted by the OECD, which since 2018 measures the level of *Global Competence* of its students through its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Also because of PISA, the OECD is now considered 'the most influential international organisation in the education field' (Valiente 2014, p. 41).

This term also aligns with "Global Citizenship", one of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Engel, Rutkowski, and Thompson (2019, p. 119) warn about the consequences of such positioning as espousing the goals of neoliberal education reform might threaten UN's ideals of global citizenship, as well as encourage 'global elites and global elitism'.

The term global competence is not new and is widespread in the areas of business, government, and human resources. However, Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006, p. 268) found the definitions proposed (or assumed) in each field were primarily American derived. This is not surprising considering that the term first appeared in US policy documents in the field of education, and its father is considered to be Lambert (Hunter, White & Godbey 2006, p. 273), who describes a 'globally competent' individual as someone who: (1) has knowledge of world events; (2) has a positive attitude towards otherness; and (3) appreciates the value of otherness (Lambert 1996).

The definition of *Global Competence* has evolved since then, and the OECD (2018, p. 7) now considers it as:

'the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development'.

Once again, behind the 'good intentions' of intercultural education, it is possible to identify several issues (Gorski 2008). While initially, the main purpose of intercultural education had to do with societal advancement, an aspect that continues to appear in propositions such as 'collective well-being and sustainable development', it is possible to identify a shift towards an ideology of individual competitiveness. The choice of these two terms (*global* and *competence*) is a symptom of this. *Global* is problematic as it levels out the world, suppressing issues of power and of cultural imperialism (Grotlüschen 2018). In particular, the risk is that the values associated with the *global* are made to correspond to those of the West. As a consequence, anything that differs from those is turned into objects of appreciation and admiration. Thus, existing inequalities and injustices are perpetuated and remain unaddressed. This reverses the principles of reciprocity and mutual integration into a one-way approach to intercultural communication.

Furthermore, *global* is a loaded term that carries 'histories of meanings' with it (Tully 2014, p. 4). This turns globalisation into a given fact and prevents it from being critically examined (Grotlüschen 2018). In addition, *competence* is a term that usually relates to labour market requirements (Risager 2007, p. 227). *Competence* is also found in other policy documents by the OECD, the CoE, and UNESCO, as it is

believed that it represents the multiplicity of skills, attitudes, and the different types of knowledge that are simultaneously deployed (UNESCO 2013).

As illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2, *Global Competence*, as envisaged by the OECD stems from knowledge and the cognitive domain. Not only is knowledge valued, but action is equally valued, highlighting the importance of external outcomes, such as performance and behaviour.
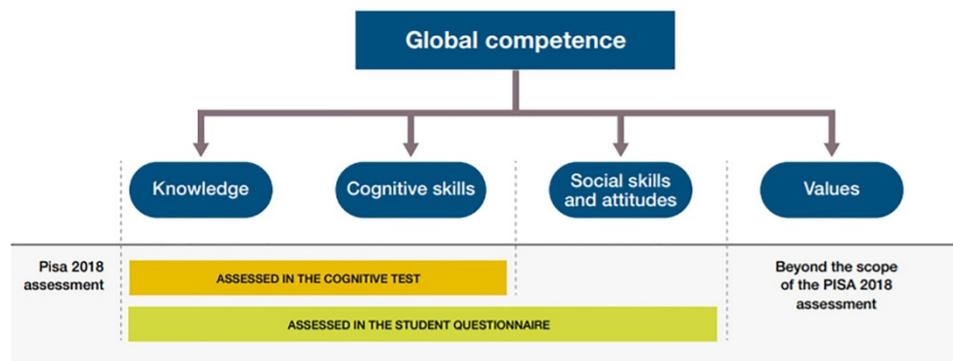
Figure 1: Global competence (OECD 2018)
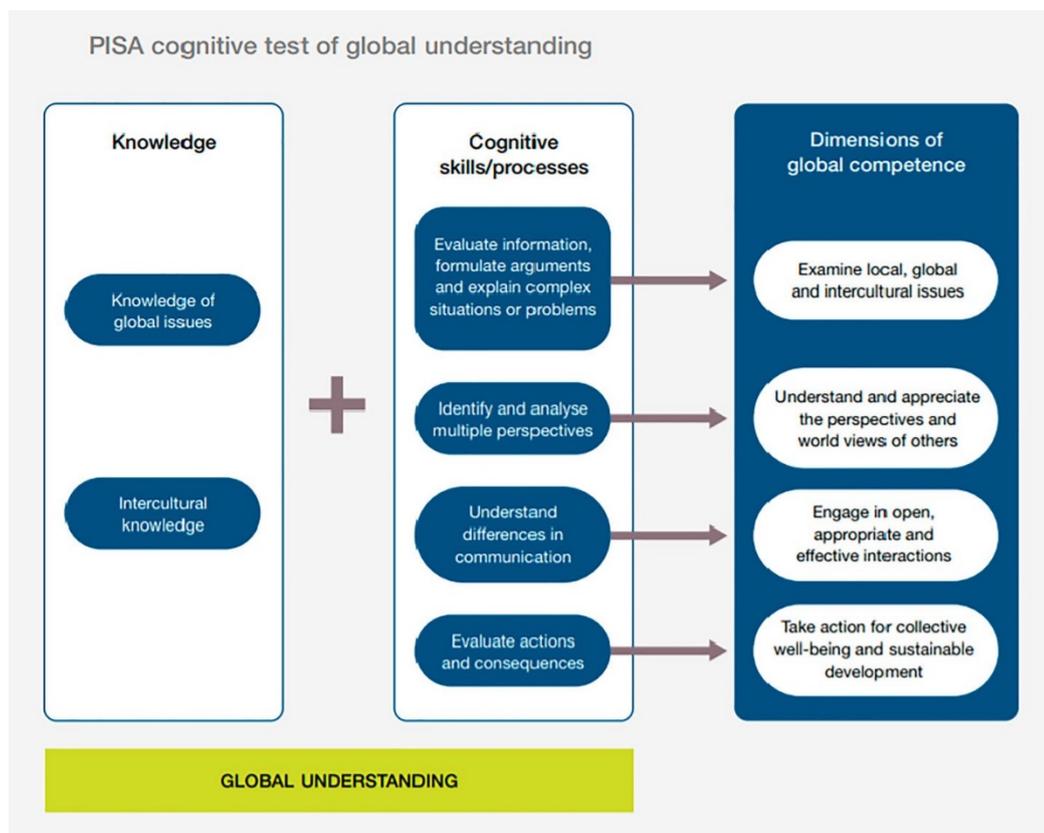
Figure 2: PISA cognitive test of global understanding (OECD 2018)

In her analysis of OEDC policy, Grotlüschen (2018, p. 199) contends that the OECD presents *Global Competence* as 'a cognitive, rational and universal skill'. She notes that OECD policy reflects values typical of the West and that this 'silently carries on with hegemonic Western or Northern discourses and exports them around the globe'. To support this reading of the policy is the fact that *Global Competence* is now being assessed, indicating a shift towards individual performance and turning this construct into a product of the 'intercultural industry' (Ferri 2014, p. 9). As will be further explained in this Chapter, the assessment of such a construct is considered problematic because of the difficulties with establishing criteria to perform assessment and the validity of such a practice at an international level. For example, the fact that *Global Competence* is now part of PISA is being critiqued, given its potential to 'reproduce assumptions that reinforce rather than challenge mechanisms of inequality' (Harshman & Augustine 2015). Other questions are: which schools and students are being rewarded, and which ones are being punished by such assessment practices? And what is the value gained from punishing those who do not demonstrate enough *Global Competence*?

There is also the argument that when something is not assessed in schools, it loses importance and might be put aside. So, by assessing it, we place it in the spotlight. However, is an education system that privileges testing and outcomes the ideal space for disrupting the status quo and shaping better societies? As Lingard and Sellar (2016, p. 2) note, global education policy has incorporated Anglo-American approaches that privilege 'top-down, test-based modes of educational accountability linked to parental choice and market reforms', and the concept of *Global Competence* seems to be driven by economic imperatives rather than social ones (see Cobb & Couch 2018).

2.5.2 Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

The idea of global citizenship expresses the aspiration of human beings to transcend geographical borders and to share a sense of belonging with the whole planet rather than being confined to local territories and nation-states. This is not a novel concept, but it undeniably finds new impetus in the age of globalisation.

Related to GCED are concepts of education for peace, democracy, human rights, and 'a concern for social justice which encourages critical thinking and responsible participation' (Osler & Vincent 2002, p. 2). It is also fundamental to sustainability issues, which are now merged with intercultural ones (UNESCO 2021).

Significantly, *Global Citizenship* was adopted for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. It also appears in UNESCO's official 'pedagogical guidance' on GCED, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and learning objectives* (UNESCO 2015). The document defines GCED as 'a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity'. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global' (UNESCO 2015, p. 14). Education for global citizenship entails being 'transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners need to be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just and peaceful world' (UNESCO 2015, p. 15). Similarly to the OECD's conceptualisation of *Global competence*, also UNESCO separates this construct into different dimensions (Figure 3), an approach taken by the Australian Curriculum (Section 2.6).

Cognitive:
To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.
Socio-emotional:
To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.
Behavioural:
To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Figure 3: Core conceptual dimensions of global citizenship education

(UNESCO 2015)

While positively presented and, in principle, aligned to the aims of Critical Pedagogy, (Balarin 2011, p. 355) notes that 'the aim of developing a global form of citizenship stands in a rather tense relation with the realities of vast numbers of marginalised citizens across the globe, to the extent that marginality appears to be the hidden other of global citizenship'. Similarly, Hatley (2019) performs a critical reading of UNESCO's policy and examines the use of the term *Global Citizenship*, the definition of which remains ambiguous. The choice of the term *global* is problematic for the reasons cited in the previous Section and is a symptom of the 'worlding of the West as world' (Spivak 1990). While the term *citizenship* carries a more precise meaning when bound to the membership of a specific national territory, it loses clarity when applied to an international context. No legal rights exist for *global citizens*, so many questions remain: how can individuals exert their willingness to create a more just and peaceful world? Moreover, how can we guarantee that by creating more global citizens, we are not concurring to create more marginalised ones? So, who benefits from becoming a global citizen and who is left out from this process?

Phipps (2014, p. 110) critiques existing conceptualisations of intercultural dialogue and states that words have become 'emptied of content, provisionality and nuance and become slogans for political enterprise'. She warns that we must be vigilant of the 'illusion of "good" they may foster' when terms are used in a 'programmatic or sloganistic' way (Phipps 2014, p. 111).

2.5.3   Intercultural Competence

Before being replaced by the adjective *global*, the term *intercultural* enjoyed a few decades of popularity in international policy.

The Council of Europe provides the following definition of *Intercultural Competence*:

'the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations' (CoE 2016, p. 10).

This definition accounts for over one hundred 'competence schemes' (CoE 2016), which allowed for the identification of specific competences and it appears to be very similar to the definition provided by Deardorff (2006), who identified forty-nine studies, each providing their own definitions of intercultural competence in order to attempt to find a shared definition of intercultural competence, agreed upon by intercultural scholars. The result of her study is that most intercultural scholars agreed with her definition of intercultural competence as 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (Deardorff 2004, p. 194).

However, Deardorff herself critiqued her own definition of intercultural competence due to the lack of non-Western voices in the pool of scholars she interviewed (Deardorff 2006, p. 260). Indeed, in this definition of intercultural competence, the responsibility for successful communication rests on the individual. This is evident in the choice of the terms "effective" and "appropriate", which are conceived as neutral, but in reality, contain a Western bias that is not addressed (Holmes 2015). On the other hand, in non-Western models, such as the one proposed by Chen (2009), communication success is not one-sided and depends on the quality of the relationship established between both parties involved.

To overcome some of the limitations she identified, Deardorff (2015) produced her *Process Model of Intercultural Competence* (Figure 4). This represents intercultural competence in a conveniently open and cyclical way that shows how individuals may enter this process at any point and can move freely between categories (Moeller & Nugent 2014). Importantly, it highlights the fact that gaining intercultural competence is a continuous process rather than an achievable goal, and at no point, one becomes completely interculturally competent (Deardoff 2006). According to Ferri (2018, p. 75), in Deardoff's framework language becomes 'the vehicle to understand others' worldviews. The ideal place for the development of intercultural competence is the foreign language classroom, where it is possible to graduate 'global ready students who are not only fluent in another language, but who can also successfully navigate other cultures' (Deardorff 2015, p. 42; see also Barili & Byram 2021).
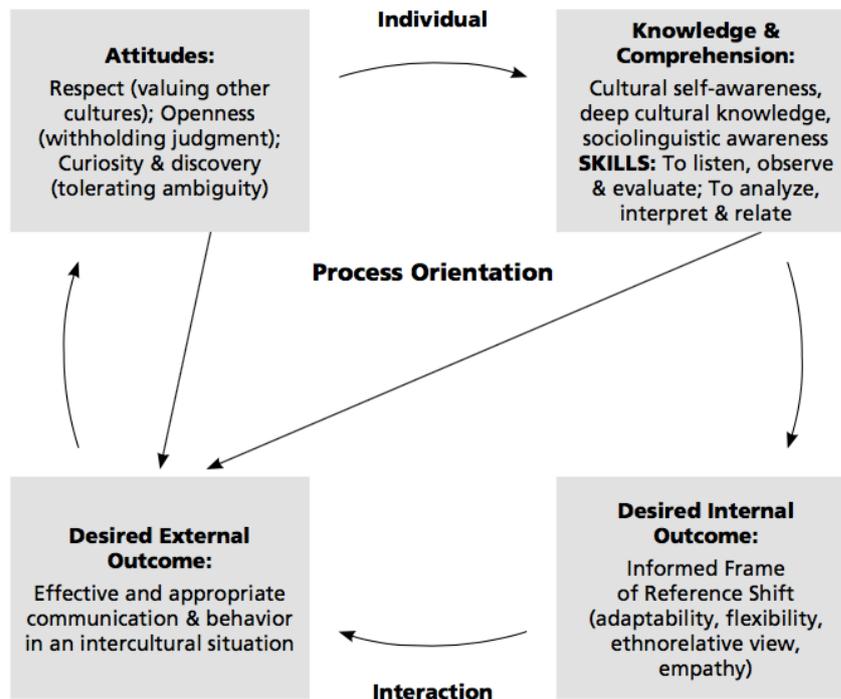
Figure 4: Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardoff 2015, p. 143)

Her model conceives *Intercultural Communicative Competence* as a multidimensional construct and which will be analysed in the next Section.

A critique to Deardoff's model and deriving definitions is that because her model includes the behavioural aspect under external outcomes and the affective aspect under internal outcomes, the acquisition of skills is seen as leading to intercultural competence for the self. In contrast, the role of others in the interaction is neglected (Ferri 2018, pp. 75-76). The focus is on skills and outcomes, and on the idea of 'language as expression of an abstract monocultural speaker' (Ferri 2018, p. 77).

Furthermore, as observable in Fig. 4, Deardroff's framework is depoliticised, thus resulting in a neutral, business-oriented rather than education-oriented model. Once again, issues with these seemingly straightforward definitions and their apparently well-intentioned aims is that they communicate that 'specific dispositions, knowledge, behaviour and strategies' can address possible misunderstanding and problems arising from intercultural encounters (Zotzmann 2015, p. 168). This depicts

the process of becoming interculturally competent as objective and predictable, while it is more likely to be 'essentially subjective and rather unpredictable' (Zotzmann 2015, p. 169).

As Aman (2015, p. 521) notes, 'in viewing education as an instrument for interculturality, there is a tendency to read interculturality as a problem of knowledge', thus reinforcing the belief that once knowledge about a cultural group is acquired, racism and inequality can be eradicated. This issue is not solved by the call to action found in CoE, UNESCO, and OECD's current policy documents, as it presupposes what Lanas refers to as 'performativity' (2017). Gaynor (2011) proposes that 'active citizenship' is now considered the ultimate remedy to existing social ills. Public institutions are devolving all forms of action to their citizens by highlighting the role of individual responsibility.

Finally, it is worth noting that in *'Intercultural Competences'*, UNESCO consistently uses the plural *competences* to highlight the indefinability of the construct. While existing models identify and describe skills and attitudes and provide teaching strategies, UNESCO (2013, p. 6) maintains that 'there are also countless others that remain to be discovered'.

In conclusion, not only defining but also modelling the intercultural capability remains a challenge. Indeed, existing frameworks and models of interculturality have been considered limiting even by their theorists (as in the cases of Byram and Derdorff) and are even considered problematic for the future of the field in some literature (see Holmes 2015).

2.5.4   Intercultural Communicative Competence

This Section will now turn to the notion of *Intercultural Communicative Competence* (Byram 1997), which is essential to the field of Languages pedagogy (Hoff 2014). Indeed, as already noted, the very notion of what in this study is referred to as intercultural capability originates in the field of foreign/second language education because it relates to another concept, intercultural communication. When learning another language, students are supposed to develop the ability to speak with people in other languages, while building an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. This process cannot be considered an obvious

outcome of language learning (Hoff 2014). Therefore Byram's (1997) model provides a useful starting point as a shared basis for language teachers to understand what is required from them when asked to foster *intercultural competence* in their students.

Importantly, Byram (1997) explicitly distinguishes between *intercultural competence* and *Intercultural Communicative Competence*, which is often absent in other models. The relationship between competence in another language and *intercultural competence* is rarely thoroughly explored outside the fields of linguistics and language pedagogy, as seen in the previous examples of models and definitions.

As illustrated in Figure 5, according to Byram (1997, p. 230), the components involved in *Intercultural Communicative Competence* include (1) Attitudes: relativising self and valuing other (*savoir être*); (2) Knowledge: of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (*savoirs*); (3) Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*); (4) Skills of discovery and interaction (sa*voir apprendre/faire*); (5) Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). The outcome would be an 'intercultural speaker', who can 'suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' as well as engage with others 'in a relationship of equality' (Byram 1997, p. 57).

The most crucial aspect in educational terms (Byram 2008, p. 236), at the heart of this framework, is that of 'critical cultural awareness', defined as 'an ability to evaluate critically and based on explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries' (Byram 2008, p. 69). Here, the role of political education is emphasised, highlighting the need to be explicitly concerned with ensuring social cohesion (Byram 2008, p. 163).

Byram (1997, p. 101) adds that this aspect of *Intercultural Communicative Competence* is not only about 'improving the effectiveness of communication and interaction but especially for purposes of clarifying one's ideological perspective and engaging with others consciously on the basis of that perspective'. He also warns that it can also lead to 'conflict in perspectives, not only harmonious communication' (Byram 1997, p. 101). This should not be seen as a shortcoming but rather as an opportunity. Indeed, a lack of debate entails the very end of dialogue.

Byram's model has been regarded as 'the most applicable' by Deardoff (2006, p. 247) and as 'foundational' by Holmes and MacDonald (2020, p. 4).

	SKILLS	
	interpret and relate	
	(savoir comprendre)	
KNOWLEDGE	EDUCATION	ATTITUDES
of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal	political education; critical cultural awareness	relativising self; valuing other
(savoirs)	*(savoir s'engager)*	*(savoir être)*
	SKILLS	
	discover and/or interact	
	(savoir apprendre/faire)	
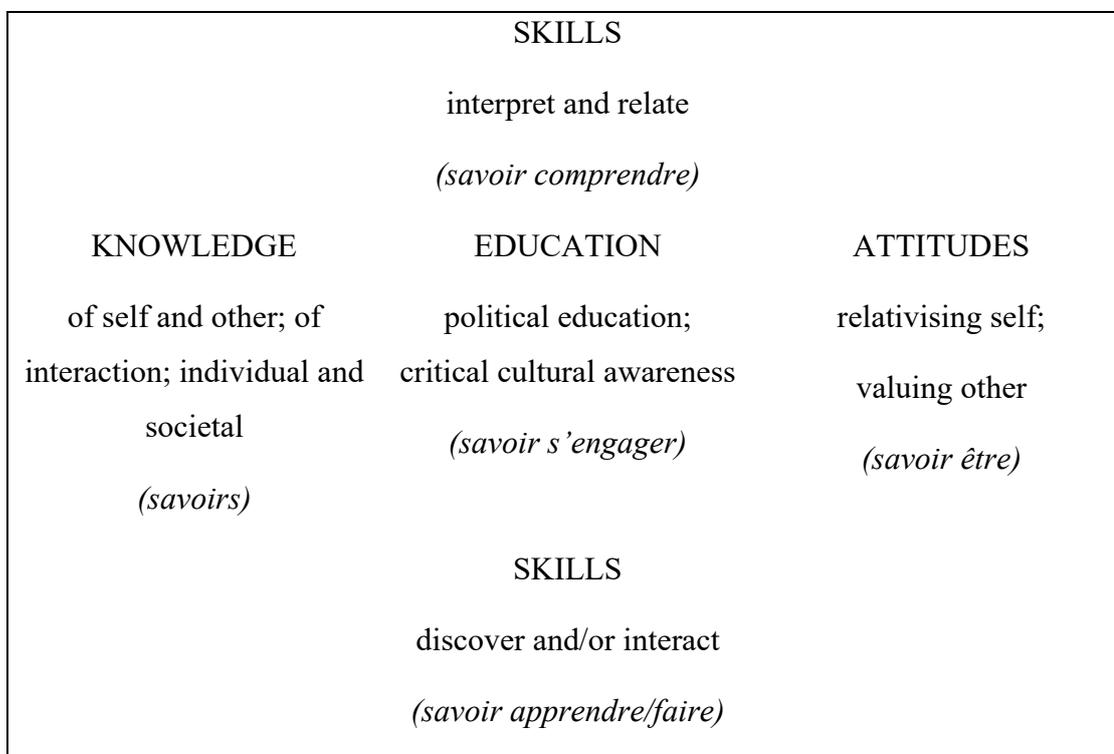
Figure 5: Factors in intercultural communication (Byram 1997, p. 230)

Nevertheless, this model was criticised by Byram himself (Byram & Wagner 2018; Porto, Houghton & Byram 2018) because it does not adequately address the affective dimension, it separates the *savoirs* into different categories following a structuralist tradition, it treats language and culture as separate entities, and it fails to include non-verbal communication. Most importantly, it still relies on an essentialised view of culture (Holmes 2015, p. 4). Nonetheless, the separation of *saviors* in different categories, though excessively rigid, is also considered convenient from a pedagogical perspective as it allows teachers and educators to identify the areas they need to focus on to develop *intercultural competence* in their learners (Borghetti 2013).

What Byram himself warned against is the 'transmission' view of teaching culture that may result in: 'the learning of trivial facts, the reduction of subtle understanding to generalisation and stereotypes, the lack of interaction and engagement because these are not tested' (Byram 1997, p. 111). To address this

shortcoming, Byram (2008), discusses the importance of transmitting attitudes of openness and discovery as the basis for developing *intercultural competence*. This is so the values that are promoted by dominant groups in language classroom do not fossilise into stereotypes and discrimination against non-dominant groups.

This more engaged view of pedagogy can hardly fit into a model or formula and cannot be imposed on teachers. For this reason, it is possible to predict that the teaching of the intercultural capability heavily relies on teachers' internal influences and on what in this study is referred to as teacher cognition (Borg 2019).

2.5.5   Not only Competence

Competence is often replaced by other terms such as *literacy* (UNESCO 2013), *awareness*, *understanding*, *sensitivity* (see Perry & Southwell 2011), and *capability*.

The term *intercultural literacy* appears in UNESCO policy documents, which define it as 'all the knowledge and skills necessary to the practice of intercultural competences' (UNESCO 2013, p. 17). Similarly to *intercultural competence*, *intercultural literacy* includes 'the understandings, competencies, attitudes, language proficiencies, participation and identities necessary for successful cross-cultural engagement' (Heyward 2002, p. 10). The benefit of the term *literacy* is that it stresses the role of learning and teaching Languages. It also conveys the "teachability" of interculturality while not limiting it to a pedagogical experience (UNESCO 2013, p. 17).

On the other hand, *intercultural awareness, intercultural understanding,* and *intercultural sensitivity* are often used individually or alternatively. According to Perry and Southwell (2011), they can be seen as related, as they all lead to developing the broader notion of *intercultural competence*. This view is evident in compositional models, where individual elements such as knowledge, skills, and dispositions are seen as producing *intercultural competence* (Zotzmann 2015, p. 172).

In Perry and Southwell's (2011) study, *intercultural competence* originates from the development of *intercultural understanding*, which in turn is the result of *intercultural awareness* and *intercultural sensitivity*. *Intercultural awareness* inhabits the cognitive domain and therefore refers to the knowledge that can be

imparted and acquired about one's own culture and other cultures. *Intercultural sensitivity* deals with the affective domain and refers to human qualities such as empathy, curiosity and respect. Together, *intercultural awareness* and *intercultural sensitivity* are believed to generate *intercultural understanding*. This becomes visible in behaviour and communication, the "action" part of other competence models.

Bennett (1993) uses the term "sensitivity" in his influential model, the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). Here, Bennett (1993, p. 22) outlines a continuum of increasing cultural awareness, understanding, and adjustment and identifies the stages through which an individual is expected to move. The individual goes from an ethnocentric view - where 'the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality', to an ethno-relative approach – where cultures can only be understood relative to one another and in a cultural context (Bennett 1993, p. 30 - 46). A benefit of this model is that it clearly illustrates a sequential progression of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Borghetti 2013). However, Bennett's DMIS is criticised for its linear progression and the closed categorisation into the stages. This prevents individuals from expressing multiple and conflicting aspects of intercultural competence (Perry & Southwell 2011). While useful in developing a theory of intercultural competence, in practice, it is improbable that an individual could move from a situation of complete isolation to a situation of integration in such an orderly way.

In summary, while it is useful to define such concepts, the borders between these terms are blurred. The 'cognitive (knowledge), functional (application of knowledge), personal (behaviour) and ethical (principles guiding behaviour) components' (UNESCO 2013, p. 12) are intertwined and influence one another. It becomes clear that there is no logical progression or endpoint.

Finally, the model was not constructed as a model for education, and references to the education sphere are scarce in all of Bennett's articles on DMIS (see Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003; Bennett 1993). Another critical shortcoming is that this model does not reference the linguistic sphere (Scarino 2009, p. 74) and how it could potentially be linked to the development of the intercultural capability.

2.5.6   Intercultural Capability

To conclude this terminology review, this Section will examine the term intercultural capability, which the Victorian Curriculum has selected and hence is used in this study. The choice of the term *capability* originates from the dimension of the National Curriculum of 'general capabilities' (further discussed in Section 2.7). The Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2013b) defines these as a set of: 'knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that apply across subject-based content and equip students to be lifelong learners and be able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world'. However, the document does not provide a rationale for choosing the term *capabilities* over others, such as *competences*.

According to some scholars (Gale & Molla 2015; Yates & Collins 2010; Reid 2005), its use might be related to the *capabilities approach* theorised by Nobel laureate economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (2009, 1985), who introduced this normative framework to counter economic measures of well-being and whose goal was instead to focus on expanding people's opportunities to achieve a good quality of life. His framework was further enriched by Martha Nussbaum, who compiled a list of elements that are considered to give human beings the capability to shape their own lives, 'rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world' (Alexander 2007, pp. 123–124). This concept is translated in the education field in pedagogies that 'extend the freedoms of young people to think: to discern, to select and to make informed and defensible choices' (Lambert 2014, p. 24).

While Gilbert (2019) claims that no evidence supports a connection between this framework and the concept of capabilities in the Australian and Victorian curricula, Gale and Molla (2015) argue that the appearance of the term *capabilities* is indeed attributable to social justice concerns in Australian policies, such as *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* (2012). Despite evoking Sen's and Nussbaum's theories, the document uses the term for purely economic reasons. This is evident in its emphasis on people and businesses' ability 'to be productive' (Gale & Molla 2015, p. 821). This means that despite being used in Australia policy-making, the analysis by Gale and Molla (2015) reveals that the notion of *capabilities* tends to lose its human-oriented and social justice-oriented ideals. Instead, it ends up becoming a synonym of labour market related skills and competences, which are useful in view

of Australia's economic interests. This is in line with the majority of studies on curriculum reform that identify a clear privileging of instrumentalist rationales in Australia's educational policy-making (see Skourdoumbis 2016; Liddicoat 2013). It also confirms Crosbie's analysis of the neoliberal agenda in education, which promotes 'skills and learning outcomes […] over activities that engage with the heart, the sense and the imagination (Crosbie 2014, p. 92).

2.6   AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM REFORM

In light of the discussion above, it is clear that curriculum reform has been a major concern internationally. In Australia, recent curriculum developments subscribe to the aspirations of intercultural education. In particular, Australian policy-making has been strongly influenced by the work of the OECD (Lingard & Sellar 2016; Lingard 2010). According to Rizvi and Lingard (2009, p. 5) 'it is through policy that governments seek to reform' practices'. However, education policy is not always clear in its intentions and might produce different effects, a phenomenon largely accepted in the literature (Rizvi & Lingard 2009).

Discussing Australia's national education system is beyond the scope of this study. However, some considerations are important to contextualise recent curriculum reform at the compulsory schooling level and to provide some background information to this research study.

The Commonwealth of Australia is organised politically at three levels: the federal level, the State level, and the local level. Regarding education, the responsibility of the Federal government is to provide funding for both the State and the private sectors and to support curriculum development in accordance with the individual States (Whitton et al. 2016, p. 12). In particular, Australian schools are divided into: State schools, which are the responsibility of the State or Territory and are coordinated by the Department of Education (DET); Catholic schools, coordinated by the Catholic Education Office (CEO); and Independent schools, coordinated by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) (Whitton et al. 2016, p. 12).

As noted by Perry & Southwell (2013, p. 4), because Australia's education system is organised in these three sectors, which all benefit from federal funds, it is marked by 'high levels of privatisation, choice and competition'. This situation is widely accepted and generally supported by Australian society (Perry & Southwell 2013). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 65.1 per cent of students attend Government schools, 19.5 per cent Catholic schools and 15.4 per cent independent school (ABS 2021). This is relevant because this study posits that the aims of the intercultural project in education are a matter of social justice. Therefore, equitable access to compulsory education is seen as inevitably linked to the opportunity to achieve a better redistribution of wealth and opportunity.

In Australian education, the intercultural project can be seen as an expression of the twofold intention of creating more cohesive societies on the one hand, and of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are believed to improve individuals' opportunities on the other. It can be argued that these two aspects are often in tension. While in Australia, the intercultural project in education remains underpinned by the concern for social cohesion and social inclusion in principle, in practice, such concern is inserted in a framework that privileges individual competitiveness and is economically oriented. Gale and Molla (2015) argue that when the focus is on the individual and their interpersonal skills to serve the nation's economic interests, structural change is unlikely to occur and disadvantaged students will likely not benefit from this approach.

Lingard, Sellar, and Savage (2014, p. 717) analyse this merging of social and economic imperatives, and they consider that the social agenda is secondary to the economic agenda. This phenomenon has led the scholars to coin the term "neo-social" to describe Australian policy-making in the field of education (Lingard, Sellar & Savage 2014, p. 717), as equity becomes essential for 'building human capital and productivity'. In particular, Lingard, Sellar, and Savage (2014, p. 715) consider that the term neo-social describes 'facilitating social well-being, but primarily for the sake of fostering greater economic productivity and economic competitiveness within the global economy'. Similarly, Davies and Bansel (2007, p. 254) found that, under neoliberalism, 'public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, previously supported as essential to collective well-being' have become marketised and hence are their primary purpose is to produce human capital.

In this context, in 2010, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the first National Curriculum, endorsed in 2015. ACARA also established the MySchool website, where schools report their performance, and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

In particular, the F-10 Australian Curriculum is divided into three major areas: alongside the more traditional teaching of eight Learning Areas (such as English, Maths, and Humanities), it is expected that all teachers engage with three cross-curriculum priorities (namely Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History and Cultures; Asia and Australian Engagement with Asia; Sustainability) and seven general capabilities (namely Literacy; Numeracy; ICT Capability; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding; Intercultural Understanding).

Learning areas	Cross-curriculum priorities	General capabilities
English	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History and Cultures	Literacy
Mathematics	Asia and Australian Engagement with Asia	Numeracy
Science	Sustainability	ICT Capability
Humanities and Social Sciences		Critical and Creative Thinking
The Arts		Personal and Social Capability
Health and Physical Education		Ethical Understanding
Languages		Intercultural Understanding

Technologies		

Table 1: Overview of the three dimensions of the Foundation – Year 10 Australian Curriculum.

In the national policy document, the cross-curriculum priorities are only to be 'addressed through learning areas and do not constitute curriculum on their own, as they do not exist outside of learning areas' (ACARA 2020). This means 'they will have a strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the learning area' (ACARA 2020). Similarly, the 'general capabilities are addressed through the content of the learning areas […] where they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning' (ACARA 2013b). While traditional pedagogy rests on teaching discipline-based content, this restructuring of the curriculum introduces a shift in the way teachers are expected to deliver their lessons. This change is presumably more suitable to the aspirations of what usually goes under the label of twenty-first century education. However, this ambitious shift involves a series of problems, the main one being the increase in workload for teachers, who are responsible for enacting it (see Salter and Maxwell 2018).

Recently, Gilbert (2019) reviewed the inception of the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, identifying the challenges their implementation would face in state curricula. Despite such criticalities, ACARA (2011) reported an 80% approval rating for the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, pointing to the fact that most teachers understand the importance of transmitting not only knowledge, but also values to their learners.

What makes the case of Australia particularly interesting is that its National Curriculum mandates the teaching of *Intercultural Understanding*. Teachers at both primary and secondary levels are expected to "infuse" this concept across the different learning areas. In other countries, this is only taught in certain subjects such foreign languages and social studies, or taught as a completely separate discipline (Parmenter 2010). However, in Australia, all teachers are expected to involve their learners, from Foundation to Level 10, in 'learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect' (ACARA 2013a).

It is worth highlighting that ideas around global citizenship and intercultural understanding are not entirely new additions, but had already been introduced following the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] 2008). This is the key document underpinning the new curriculum. MCEETYA acknowledges the role of education in creating a 'cohesive and culturally diverse' nation. However, the primary rationale for focusing on global citizenship appears to be economic:

'In the 21st century Australia's capacity to provide a high quality of life for all will depend on the ability to compete in the global economy on knowledge and innovation. Education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this era with confidence' (MCEETYA 2008, p. 4).

This is even more prominent in the rationale for including the general capabilities which, according to the document (MCEETYA 2008, p. 13): 'underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.'

The Australian Curriculum portrays *Intercultural Understanding* as a multidimensional concept, which involves (1) recognising cultures and developing respect; (2) interacting and empathising with others; and (3) reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility (ACARA 2013a) and justifies its inclusion given its potential to create social cohesion and promote social justice:

'Intercultural understanding is an essential part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century. It assists young people to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped through their education for living and working together in an interconnected world.' (ACARA 2013a)

However, a prominent role is given to employment opportunities young people will gain by developing *Intercultural Understanding.* This is clearly stated in (MCEETYA 2008, p. 13), where *Intercultural Understanding* is considered to

'support young people to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and

training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams'.

From such statements, it is clear that the goal of building a socially cohesive nation by appreciating Australia's internal cultural diversity is secondary to the aim of producing labour-market ready candidates.

2.7 THE INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY IN THE VICTORIAN CURRICULUM

While the developments illustrated in the previous Section occurred nationally, single states and territories have been responsible for implementing the curriculum. For this reason, this study will now examine the Victorian Curriculum, which is aligned with the national document and was first adopted in 2017. The Victorian Curriculum absorbs four of its seven general capabilities, including the *Intercultural Capability*. It also includes the *Intercultural Understanding* strand in the Curriculum for the Key Learning Area of Languages.

In the Victorian Curriculum, the rationale for including the *Intercultural Capability* is defined as follows:

'Intercultural interactions have become a part of everyday life in our increasingly multicultural and globalised world. Developing intercultural knowledge, skills and understandings is an essential part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century. The Intercultural capability curriculum assists young people to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped for living and working together in an interconnected world' (VCAA 2017).

This last sentence considers the individual advantage of gaining *Intercultural Capability*, by introducing a call for action that focuses on students' performativity. In addition, the concepts of globalisation and twenty-first century living are given as plain facts that characterise our society. The term *intercultural* describes the encounters that occur in our 'multicultural and globalised world'.

Furthermore, the essentialisation of culture is not abandoned. For example, the idea that individuals are determined by their culture is still present. The definition of

"culture" provided in the glossary included in the Victorian Curriculum is the following:

'A set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing all the ways of being in that society or social group; including art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Each culture is a sum of assumptions and practices shared by members of a group distinguishing them from other groups' (VCAA 2017).

Reflecting the multidimensional model of the National Curriculum, also the Victorian Curriculum envisages a cognitive dimension (knowledge), an affective dimension (understanding), and action (skills). In particular:

'Intercultural capability aims to develop knowledge, understanding, and skills that enable students to: demonstrate an awareness of and respect for cultural diversity within the community; reflect on how intercultural experiences influence attitudes, values and beliefs; recognise the importance of acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity for a cohesive community.' (VCAA 2017).

From this definition, it can be argued that, in the Victorian Curriculum, the notion of intercultural education is presented as straightforward and free of controversies. The positive image of an interconnected society, where people can live and work harmoniously together, highlights the apparent nexus between the development of the *Intercultural Capability* and the strengthening of social cohesion. Cultural diversity is "accepted" and "appreciated" in Australia in a way that sidelines the eradication of inequalities. The Victorian Curriculum ignores societal issues such as inequality, racism, discrimination, or oppression, all terms that are utterly absent from the policy under scrutiny. There are also no references to the historical and institutional practices that led to a 'non cohesive society' and to the 'challenges' (VCAA 2017) as justifications for introducing the *Intercultural Capability* in the Curriculum. For example, what teachers are invited to do at the highest level (10) is to teach their learners to 'analyse the components of a cohesive society, and the challenges, benefits and consequences of maintaining or failing to maintain that cohesion'. This means the level of political engagement is left to the individual teacher, which would be the case even if such a document never existed. This highlights the need for an approach more oriented towards social justice, equality, and the eradication of racism (see Leeman & Ledoux 2015).

On top of this, in 2018, the assessment and reporting on the *Intercultural Capability* was mandated for all Victorian schools. Little or no formal training was provided and how to teach, report, and assess on this aspect is left to individual schools. Always in Victoria, all Learning Areas are responsible for the integration of the *Intercultural Capability*. However, teaching about cultures has historically been considered as the domain of teachers of Languages and of those of English as an Additional Language (Liyanage, Walker & Weinmann 2016, p. 7). Furthermore, research in this area preceded the introduction of the intercultural dimension in the Victorian Curriculum (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). These are the main reasons why this study investigates the classroom of Languages as the privileged site for including this aspect.

2.8   THE PLACE OF LANGUAGES IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING AND IN THE CURRICULUM

As seen in the brief analysis of recent curriculum reform (Section 2.6), both the Australian and Victorian curricula place the Key Learning Area of Languages as one of the core disciplines of compulsory schooling. Theoretically, all students in compulsory education should be taught at least one additional language throughout primary and secondary school. This discipline would presumably be allocated as much time as other subjects. The fact that plurilingualism is today considered a requisite for participation in a globalised world (Byram 1997, Banks 2017) should reinforce the message that languages should be learnt.

However, Languages are marginally taught in Australian and Victorian schools. In Australia in 2019, 10% of students were enrolled in a Languages course at the end of Year 12[4], a figure increasing to 20% when examining Victorian schools. Based on this, it is possible to affirm that the majority of students in Australia do not consistently learn another language throughout their compulsory schooling.

The decision on how and when to offer Languages is left up to each individual school, therefore, inconsistencies exist. Enrolments in Languages have been

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[4] https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-data-portal/year-12-subject-enrolments

declining, in spite of many initiatives carried out by the Australian government over the last few decades (Oliver, Chen & Moore 2016; Liddicoat & Scarino 2010). There are multiple reasons for this situation. They include the monolingual mindset (Liddicoat & Scarino 2010, p. 253) that characterise other English-speaking countries, and the consequent fact that the curriculum 'is internally structured, with some disciplines understood as central or necessary and others as peripheral or optional' (Liddicoat 2019, p. 158). In addition, there is a tendency to instrumentalise the discipline of Languages as part of the rhetoric around globalisation. This attitude devalues the humanistic endeavour of teaching and learning Languages and creates competition among which languages should be taught in schools, thus weakening their already feeble position. Some languages are assigned more value over others in view of their potential to enhance employability and mobility.

In this context, the *Intercultural Capability* is not broadly taught because it is usually left to the Learning Area of Languages. One risk of this situation is that other disciplines might consider that they do not need to embed the *Intercultural Capability* in their subject content as it is being covered in the language classroom. Another risk is that when it is implemented sporadically, it is possible that teachers of Languages, even though well-intentioned, might use bicultural understanding for simplicity's sake, and therefore associate certain cultural and linguistic practices to a specific nationality or country. This superficial approach to the *Intercultural Capability* will likely reinforce, rather than challenge, existing prejudice and bias towards cultural difference.

Related to this last consideration is the fact that many Australian students are already plurilingual, considering that Australia ranks 9th in the world for total number of migrants and that almost half (48.2%) of Australia's population have a parent born overseas, with almost a quarter (24.8%) speaking a language other than English at home (ABS 2021).

Despite this rich linguistic and cultural potential, these students bring into schools, it is rarely capitalised upon (Fielding 2016).

2.9 INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Brown (2015) reconstructs the history of foreign language pedagogy. When the foreign and second languages discipline entered educational institutions, the Grammar-Translation Method was the prevalent methodology. At the time, language learning was considered an intellectual exercise aimed at accessing literary texts. Little or no attention was paid to verbal communication. The first significant shift in Languages pedagogy occurred in the 1950s, when the 'AudioLingual Method' (ALM) was introduced. This method was used to train the US Army during the Second World War. However, its focus on drills and rote practice did not produce the expected results and soon new methodologies were theorised (Brown 2015). The birth of new theories of language – no longer seen as a rigid system of rules that learners should internalise – gave rise to various interpretations of the best ways to teach languages. Among these were the Community Language Learning (CLL), Suggestopedia, and the Total Physical Response to the Natural Approach (Brown 2015). However, the most significant change since the Grammar-Translation Method occurred with the ascent of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach: a broader philosophy of language pedagogy that drew 'on research in linguistics, anthropology, psychology and sociology and [which] rests on a view of language as a tool for communication' (Nunan 2012, p. 131). In CLT, learners are encouraged to learn grammar inductively, participate in meaningful oral and written exchanges and express their own ideas rather than repeating drill patterns. Authentic materials are preferred and task-based teaching is the norm.

With CLT, the goal of foreign language pedagogy became communication between speakers of different languages. The need to address the cultural aspect of languages emerged to make this possible. Once an agreement was reached that culture needed to be taught alongside language (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013; Abdallah-Pretceille 2006; Byram 1997; Kramsch 1995), the issue became how to address this. Following the spread of the CLT method, intercultural and multicultural pedagogical approaches started appearing in schools (Risager 1998, pp. 243-244).

Risager (1998, p. 243) identifies four approaches to language pedagogy: (1) the 'foreign-cultural approach'; (2) the 'intercultural approach'; (3) the 'multicultural approach'; (4) the 'transcultural approach'.

The 'foreign-cultural approach' is based on the idea of a single culture corresponding to a single language and spoken by a homogeneous group of people living within a single nation. In this approach, teachers of Languages foster communicative competence to develop 'native speaker' competence and teaching culture in terms of admiration for the foreign culture. This pedagogy is considered inadequate in a world where crossing borders via migration, travel, and virtually through the internet is more widespread and accessible than ever.

In Risager's (1998) 'intercultural approach' the fact that cultures are related to each other is recognised and built upon. For example, language teachers are expected to focus not only on the target culture but also on the learners' own culture when they compare it to the target culture. The objective is to foster the competence to mediate between cultures.

Similarly, in a 'multicultural approach', learners are made aware of the coexistence of different groups within one nation. The endpoint is always a cultural mediator, but one who has a greater understanding of injustice and equalities. In this approach, teachers tend to focus on minority groups within the society or State of the target culture as well as the learners' culture.

Risager (1998, p. 249) concludes that the most valuable approach to language teaching is a 'transcultural approach', where cultures are not portrayed as stable and well-defined entities, but as multiple and ever-changing. In her opinion, this is the most appropriate approach for a world characterised by 'cultural and linguistic complexity'.

As in all other cases, the ideas carried in the prefix *trans-* are not enclosed solely in such terms but are present in several understandings of the *intercultural*. The latter term is often chosen to describe culture in its poststructuralist sense: as something fluid and intersectional, impossible to circumscribe and describe in absolute terms. Because terminology is overlapping, using the preferred terminology in Australia makes is possible to conclude that the latest development of the CLT pedagogical approach is ILTL (Scarino & Liddicoat 2016; Liddicoat & Crozet 2000). Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 167) argue that, more than a teaching method, ILTL is a perspective or a stance, according to which culture is an integral aspect of language, and therefore learning about language and culture should go hand in hand.

The idea that it is important to complement communicative competence with cultural competence demonstrates how much the goals and methods of foreign language pedagogy have changed (Kramsch 2009; Liddicoat & Crozet 2000; Byram 1997). The complex and delicate role language teachers are called to fill also becomes evident when considering how adopting an intercultural approach proves to be more challenging to conceptualise and apply than just teaching cultural knowledge. These theoretical developments are reflected in supranational policy on Languages education.

In Europe, the language classroom has been at the forefront of designing a pedagogical approach to developing what is often referred to as 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram 1997). This includes a 'critical cultural awareness' component (see also Guilherme 2002). In the 2000s, the Council of Europe (CoE) extended the aims of foreign language education to 'Education for Intercultural Citizenship' (Byram 2008). Within the field of language education, the *Common European Framework for Languages* (CEFR), a CoE document that guides intercultural language pedagogy and has influenced foreign language pedagogy worldwide (Byram, Michael & Parmenter 2012). The CEFR (2001, p. 1) affirms that:

'In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture'.

Similarly, in the US, in 1996, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. This document placed a great emphasis on culture, which greatly impacted on Australia's redesign of the National Curriculum (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Crozet 1999). In Australia, this emphasis on culture in language pedagogy appears to be aligned to its American counterpart (see Guilherme 2002) and risks promoting a 'reductionist understanding of the cultural side of teaching' (Risager 2007, p. 158).

2.10   THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION IN THE CURRICULUM FOR LANGUAGES

In Australia, the intercultural orientation to Languages education has been adopted under the label Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013, Liddicoat 2008, Lo Bianco & Crozet 2003, Liddocat & Crozet 2000). This pedagogical approach was incorporated by the Australian Curriculum (Scarino 2013), in which *Intercultural Understanding* appears as one of the general capabilities (as seen in Section 2.7). It was then embedded into the Victorian Curriculum in 2015, with the Key Learning Area of Languages guiding teaching and assessing intercultural understanding (VCAA 2017).

As documented by Kohler (2010), this shift occurred when the Australian Federal Government commissioned a study into how to incorporate teaching culture in the classroom of Languages. This resulted in the release of *A Report on Intercultural Language Learning* (Liddicoat et al. 2003), which was incorporated into the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools* (MCEETYA 2005). Subsequently, a guide for teachers of Languages was created by Liddicoat and Scarino (2009). The researchers then led an investigation into the state of languages in Australian schools (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). A series of national, State, and local initiatives have been developed as a result. However, Kohler (2020) argues that it is uncertain whether the ILTL model will be enacted.

While the field of Languages education has been engaging with the concept of interculturality for quite some time, the appearance of the *Intercultural Understanding* dimension in the *Australian Curriculum* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2013a) is relatively recent. In this document, such a construct is conceived both as one of the general capabilities to be embedded across all learning areas, and as part of the *Australian Curriculum Languages* (ACARA 2012) under the strand that shares the same title, *Intercultural Understanding*.

As a capability specific to the Learning Area of Languages, namely in the *Australian Curriculum Languages* (ACARA 2012), the National Curriculum specifies that:

'the major rationale for learning languages is that being able to communicate proficiently gives learners essential communication skills in the target language, an Intercultural capability and an understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication' (ACARA 2012).

The Victorian Curriculum adopts this view and confirms that:

'The Languages curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure that students: (1) communicate in the language they are learning; (2) understand the relationship between language, culture and learning; (3) develop intercultural capabilities understand themselves as communicators'.

In Languages education literature, the term intercultural capability is defined by Scarino (2010, p. 325) as 'engaging the learner in developing the capability to exchange meaning in communication with people across languages and cultures in a way that foregrounds their positioning in the language and culture that they are learning'. The aim of ILTL is to transform 'students' identities in the act of learning' (Scarino 2010, p. 324). According to this view of language pedagogy, students of languages become aware of their own perspectives in interpreting others' perspectives.

Regardless of the terminology used, it is clear that to be valuable in the twenty-first century, teaching Languages requires teachers to move beyond the equation of language, culture, nationality. That is, cultural and linguistic affiliations must reflect human nature's complexity.

2.11   INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

In line with standardisation and accountability measures, in 2010, the Australian federal government established the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). This Institute oversees teacher quality across the whole nation with its release of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APS). Today, AITSL is the responsible body for teacher and training course accreditation. This means that to gain professional registration, preservice teachers are required to accomplish what is outlined by the APS, and undergraduate and graduate ITE offered by Universities must align with the requirements outlined by AITSL. These courses

are required to include assessment tasks that demonstrate their students' preparation for the classroom (see Whitton et al. 2016).

These measures were introduced to improve teacher quality, with the idea that better teachers produce better students and hence a better performing economy (Burnard & White 2008). While this has been seen as a move to increase teachers' professionalisation, it might have resulted in the opposite outcome. These changes are heavy on control, compliance, and managerialism. As a result, this might reduce opportunities to address the affective dimension of pedagogy (Gannon 2012), as well as the possibilities to prepare teachers with research skills (Mayer & Mills 2021, p.45).

Insofar as cultural diversity in schools is concerned, among the requirements included in the standards produced by the Australian federal and Victorian governments in order to accredit teacher education programs and teachers, there is a focus on adopting inclusive pedagogies. Previous Australian-based studies on teacher education had emphasised the urgent need to prepare teachers for multicultural classrooms (Scarino 2009; Santoro 2007), and today all teacher education courses are required to teach about creating inclusive learning environments.

Importantly, ITE programs are the site for the formation of teachers' professional identities, meaning that this is a crucial time for examining already existing beliefs, consolidating or changing such beliefs, as well as creating new beliefs that align with the aims of this thesis/the intercultural project (see Johnson & Gombolek 2020).

However, based on the picture drawn above, teacher training courses in Australia are currently envisioned as a set of guidelines and policies preservice teachers must be aware of and conform to. Arguably, adherence to a set of standards might not always allow for spaces where preservice teachers are able to engage with topics such as inclusion and diversity in a deeper manner that helps create transformative learning environments.

Research shows that teachers' decisions about the disciplines they teach and the teaching strategies they choose are deeply influenced by their beliefs. These tend to be often unconscious and unexamined (Pareja et. al 2018; Borg 2003). This means that when teachers' beliefs are disregarded, education policy might be ineffective.

Innovation also fails in schools because much of the promoted change addresses practice instead of addressing beliefs (Borg 2012). Borg (2012) argues that investigating teachers' beliefs is the only way to achieve desired changes.

This thesis' initial research design envisaged having in-service teachers from Italy and Australia as participants. This was so Italy, a country with relatively new experiences in intercultural education policy, could take lessons about policy impact and teaching practice from Australia, which has a longer history of multicultural education, and so that Australia could take lessons from possibly more innovative understandings of intercultural education. However, this became unfeasible due to the uncertainties posed by the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pandemic. The scope was changed to an analysis of preservice teachers' understandings and practices related to the intercultural capability in Victoria.

Because the Victorian Curriculum is relatively recent, investigating novice teachers' engagement with the *Intercultural Capability* is necessary because it lends weight to the social justice argument. The ways teachers perceive

and intend to teach this construct could influence curriculum development and teacher training courses to better equip teachers to be genuinely committed to this aspect of education.

The sample of participants used in this study consists of preservice teachers with experiences of migration. The interest, therefore, lies in understanding if they identify as interculturally capable individuals; if they subscribe to the aims of the intercultural agenda; if they have a clear vision of themselves as agents of change; to explore how they see themselves as teachers and "representatives" of another culture; how they conceive their mission concerning the intercultural project; and what value they attribute to developing the intercultural capability in their students.

Yemeni et al. (2019) reviewed existing research on teacher education pertaining to Global Citizenship Education. They found that the studies that address intercultural language learning and teacher training were in the smallest number. This is a surprising conclusion considering that intercultural competence originated from the field of language education (Byram 1997). They hypothesise that the field of second language pedagogy has not been directly associated with global citizenship

and is a symptom of 'Western, neo-liberal assumptions that see English as the only acceptable language' (Yemini, Tibbitts & Goren, p. 84).

2.12 RESEARCH ON TEACHER COGNITION: WHY WHAT TEACHERS THINK MATTERS

This study's research questions initially investigated whether prospective teachers of Languages in Victorian secondary schools were aware of the *Intercultural Capability* in curriculum policy and how they would teach it, with the purpose of identifying any challenges associated with the ILTL approach. As the study unfolded, however, the contradictory and complex ways supranational and national educational policy are transferred into the Victorian Curriculum and teacher accreditation programs (hence ITE) highlighted the need to explore teacher cognition.

It is increasingly recognised that policy implementation is not unidirectional, but that teachers exert agency over the prescribed curriculum by interpreting, re-interpreting, adopting, and adapting to policy based on many different factors that have been the focus of recent research (see for example, Jenkins 2020; Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). In the literature, it is widely accepted that policy-makers tend to ignore the fact that the translation of set guidelines into planning and delivering lessons is not a straightforward act (Borg 2019, p. 1151). On the contrary, teachers should be considered as policy creators (Priestley & Biesta 2013). Some scholars have noted that teachers are starting to be seen also by policy makers as 'agents of change' (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015, p. 632).

Significantly, the intercultural project involves ethical, moral, and political aspects. This means that an intercultural pedagogical approach is not limited to adopting specific methods over others. Providing guidelines and grids for teachers to follow to promote intercultural awareness in their students is unlikely to yield the expected fruits. As Ball (1993) rightly noted, policy is rarely clear in its intentions. The intercultural project be understood and undertaken with conviction to succeed.

The terminological and theoretical confusion examined in the previous Sections must be recognised as an additional burden for educators who are required to rethink the purpose of what they do in their classroom and the way they do it. If

the message in the policy is unclear, it such competing demands complicate teachers' work.

If teachers are the most important factor in transferring policy intentions into actions that impact learners, any aspiration produced in policy text is destined to fail without their commitment. This is a significant consideration because it indicates that rather than focusing on teachers' practice, it is urgent to delve deeper into teachers' beliefs, especially in relation to concepts appearing in policy texts that might be perceived as new, such as the *Intercultural Capability*.

As Peisner and Jones (2014) highlight, teachers' life experiences, interests, and personalities are the major factors influencing their approach to intercultural education. The literature is also clear about the interplay of personal and professional aspects of teachers' lives in shaping their sense of self or identity. For this reason, the selected research participants were a cohort of teachers who share the experience of learning languages while growing up, living and studying or working in different countries, and choosing to become teachers of Languages in Victorian secondary schools.

In particular, this study focuses on what Borg (2003) defines as 'teacher cognition', even if this term is far from ideal as it privileges cognition over the affective dimension, despite the latter not being excluded from its definition (Golombek & Doran 2014). In fact, Borg (2015) intended the term to refer to all psychological constructs that guide teachers' behaviour in the language classroom, such as beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, assumptions, perceptions, and conceptions. The term *teacher cognition* has been adopted in this study because the term is now widely used by other scholars and in alternation with teachers' beliefs. Teachers' beliefs, however, is a term that indicates an even narrower construct and has been therefore discarded. The difficulty of circumscribing teacher cognition is because, 'in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined' (Verloop, Driel & Meijer 2001, p. 446).

Borg (2003) reviewed several studies dealing with similar notions under different terms. He then defined teacher cognition as the 'unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think' (Borg 2003, p. 81). He also refers to it as 'teachers' mental lives' (Borg 2003, p. 86). According to Borg

(2003), teachers have cognition about all aspects of their work. Their beliefs do not operate in isolation, but are influenced by practice and contextual factors.

The inadequacy of this term is recognised by Borg (2019, p. 1167) himself, who defines research in this field as 'inquiry which seeks, with reference to their personal, professional, social, cultural and historical contexts, to understand teachers' minds and emotions and the role these play in the process of becoming, being and developing as a teacher'. An essential finding of this study is that existing research on preservice teachers' identity shows an 'inextricable link' between the personal and the professional (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009, p. 180).

Also relevant to this study is the fact that the studies (Borg 2003) analysed were almost never representative of the reality of classrooms of Languages. In this environment, the syllabus is prescribed and the teacher is usually a non-native speaker [of English] (Borg 2003). In 2015, Borg updated his review by concluding that, to date, most research concerns the teaching of English as a second language. Very little research is being done on teacher cognition in teachers of Languages in secondary schools in the State sector (Borg 2015, p. 322).

All studies on teacher cognition and related constructs, such as teacher identity and teacher agency, tend to agree that this is something dynamic and is affected by multiple factors that emerge relationally (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004).

Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004, p. 109) explain that the personal aspect of identity is what needs to be investigated to understand the translation of policy aspirations into teaching practice, as personal identity might match or conflict with educational policies, in particular in a context of rapid changes such as the current era. Teacher education is the time when student teachers are engaging with ideas of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is a crucial moment to investigate their beliefs about whom they are going to be as teachers (Bullough 2002).

Johnson (1994) sums up the benefits of research on teachers' beliefs. Firstly, they influence teachers' perceptions and judgement that determines 'what teachers say and do in the classroom'. Secondly, they regulate how teachers learn to teach and process new information about teaching and learning. Thirdly, 'understanding teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and professional teacher preparation programs' (Johnson 1994, p. 439).

In particular, Borg (2003) distinguishes three main areas:

1. teacher cognition and prior language learning experience. This becomes the foundation for the formation of ideas around teaching additional languages and which may influence one's approach to teaching for life (p. 88).

2. teacher cognition and teacher education. The influence of teacher education courses depends on whether they enter such degrees with 'inappropriate, unrealistic, or naïve understandings of teaching and learning'.

3. teacher cognition and classroom practice. Studies seem to confirm the hypothesis that theory affects practice and practice affects theory. They demonstrate how a variety of interacting and frequently contradictory factors influence language teachers' classroom procedures.

This study will explore these areas and provide insight into how beliefs about intercultural education and ILTL are formed. It will examine whether they change during ITE courses, after student teachers' experiences of being on placement (the practicum component of their teaching degree, which consists of supervised teaching practice), and when becoming familiar with curriculum documents.

A final consideration is that research on teacher cognition has also shown that a change in cognition does not automatically translate into a change in behaviour (Korthagen 2017, p. 389). This means that beliefs and behaviour should be examined jointly. A limitation of this study is that it was not possible to collect data via classroom observations due to the restrictions imposed by the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pandemic. However, the relationship between beliefs and behaviour, as a representation of their actions in the classroom, remains central to this investigation. The primary and obvious limitation of this study is that due to its qualitative nature, it is not possible to make conclusions that are valid for the whole profession.

2.13   SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This Chapter provided an indication of the difficulty of circumscribing the topic of the research project. The wide range of interpretations and fields of

application of the term *intercultural*, along with the multitude of studies on the intercultural project at different levels (from primary to tertiary education) and from different perspectives (learners, University students, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, school leaders, curriculum developers, policy-makers, etc.) makes the task of containing the scope of this study challenging.

Hence, the cohort of participants was purposefully selected. Migrant preservice teachers (how the term "migrant" is used here indicates someone who was born outside Australia and has experience of being the *Other* in the host country while acknowledging experiences of migration are not uniform) were interviewed in view of the potential to clarify how these personal experiences influence the ways in which the engagement with the intercultural project is envisioned and also how these filter the interpretation and adoption of policy documents on the topic.

The literature on teacher cognition indicates that a relationship between the personal and the professional exists, so it is foreseeable that the participants' commitment to the intercultural agenda of education is related to their own personal intercultural journeys.

Finally, it was also considered valuable to include prospective teachers from non-Western countries working with concepts embedded with Western values because there is an urgent need to reconceptualise the notion of the intercultural capability through non-Western voices (see Syarizan 2011 and Kim 2002).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two reviewed existing literature on intercultural education and generated the concern of theorising the concepts associated with it. This Chapter will outline how this concern was addressed and will present the theoretical framework of the present study. This is derived from Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP) and from Lévinas' ethical relationship between the *Self* and the *Other*. The Chapter opens with a Section summarising the four main paradigms used in intercultural scholarship and linking them to intercultural perspectives to the teaching and learning of Languages (Section 3.2). Section 3.3 expands on critical approaches and, in particular, what goes under the name of Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP). This theory is then enriched by the Levinasian understanding of the relationship between the *Self* and the *Other*, examined in Section 3.4.

Based on the literature review and on the content of this Chapter, interculturality is understood as personal and social responsibility towards the *Other*. For teachers and learners alike, the process of becoming intercultural is conceived as a life-long journey with no clear beginning and end (Deardorff 2015). In consideration of the way schools operate, this study posits that teachers of Languages are at the forefront of developing interculturality in their learners. The classroom of Languages has a unique role in schools because it is where teachers present and explain how to communicate with the "cultural" *Other*. The ways in which teachers present these concepts and skills is likely to affect young learners' perceptions about others and themselves.

3.2   FOUR PARADIGMS IN CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

This Section will present the four main paradigms used in intercultural scholarship to study culture and communication. They coincide with different ways of interpreting the intercultural project and, thus, adopting and adapting an intercultural perspective to language pedagogy. These categories are in no way stable and separate but rather represent a valuable compass to start comprehending the struggles and issues in the field.

The four main paradigms were identified by Martin and Nakayama (1999; Martin & Nakayama 2010) and are: (1) the functionalist, (2) the interpretative, (3) the critical humanist, and (4) the critical structuralist. This categorisation is particularly useful because it is coupled with a call for a 'dialectical approach' to intercultural research (Martin and Nakayama 2010, p. 59). This Section will analyse and enrich the four paradigms with contributions and insights from other scholars.

The first view of culture and communication falls within the functionalist paradigm, which conceptualises culture as a priori group membership and sees the relationship between culture and communication as 'casual' and 'deterministic' (Martin & Nakayama 1999), leading to a view of human communication behaviour as predictable. According to such interpretation, culture and language are 'entities with static characteristics and clear boundaries that overlap with nation-state borders', while diversity is portrayed as the exception to the rule (Zotzmann 2016, p. 75). If it is possible to predict 'what a person from culture x is like', then it is also possible to presume how communication should unfold. Consequently, this paradigm allows for tools and strategies to be created so that they can be used to anticipate and overcome the problems that might emerge during intercultural encounters. As Xu (2013, p. 380) notes, 'these tools, while addressing questions of communication forms rather than substantive issues and understanding, inevitably involve simplification'.

The need for neat solutions and clear answers, visible in the majority of models and definitions of intercultural communication and competence, is reflective of a functionalist understanding of culture (Moon in Nakayama & Halualani 2010, p. 45).

Furthermore, within this paradigm, 'cultural difference' is seen as a 'barrier against a more effective communication' (Jensen 2003, p. 3) Competence then becomes an important factor, which can be determined and described through a list of traits, skills, and knowledge that, once gained, allow to communicate 'appropriately' and 'effectively' in intercultural situations (Deardorff 2006).

When applied to the field of education, the risk of working within this paradigm is that when such an image of culture is presented in the language classroom, it results in the teaching of a language as a communication system that belongs to a fixed territorial reality. Usually, this is coupled with teaching cultural practices, typically represented by the "4 Fs" of foods, festivals, fashion and folklore (Coulby 2006). Teachers who adopt this perspective work towards set objectives from the curriculum and perceive their mission to equip their learners with a body of knowledge about language and culture.

The danger of this approach is that it might foster 'stereotypes or even prejudice' (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006, p. 476), with the process of teaching and learning becoming 'merely a takeover, a possession of the Other' (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006, p. 477). When this happens, existing social and political hierarchies are accentuated rather than undermined (Gorski 2008, p. 516) and the 'good intentions' of intercultural education remain unfulfilled (Gorski 2008, p. 516). Gorski (2006, p. 164) is critical of this approach because it makes multicultural education 'conservative' rather than progressive.

Similarly, as noted by (Lanas 2017, p. 558), when the objectives of intercultural education are '[…] presented as 'a priori' – something that can be pre-determined, top down, on students, and measured and evaluated – and not as something that should be agreed to in dialogue with the students', the possibilities of fostering social justice in the classroom are precluded.

Furthermore, a danger of adopting such a pedagogical approach is that it involves selecting the dominant group's perspective as the norm establishing what is considered appropriate and what is effective (Kramsch 2002, p. 284; Xu 2013, p. 387). When the *Self* is perceived as neutral and the mainstream is considered the norm, the *Other* can be categorised accordingly (i.e. EAL/D, foreign, minority, ethnic).

Meanwhile, the interpretative paradigm conceptualises culture as 'socially constructed and emergent, rather than defined a priori' (Martin & Nakayama 2010, p. 60), and the relationship between culture and communication is therefore seen as 'more reciprocal than causal' (Martin & Nakayama 2010, p. 61). Within the interpretative paradigm, categories of language and culture are seen as blurred, fluid and dynamic and 'interpretation and analysis of interactions' becomes the focus of researchers and educators (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006, p. 481). They operate on the individual level, on 'culture in action' rather than on 'culture as object' (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006, p. 481).

In particular, when language teachers understand culture and communication through this more subjective lens, they recognise that knowledge is co-constructed in a dialogic fashion and that learning and teaching process outcomes cannot be pre-determined because they emerge in the process. A possible pedagogical approach is to describe the ways in which human behaviour influences communication and vice versa. Patterns are identified and compared against other languages and cultures, which overlap in smaller speech communities instead of national communities.

Despite being more fluid and subjective, interpretative studies also tend to often link communication behaviour to a cultural group membership in a deterministic fashion (Martin & Nakayama 1999, pp. 6-7). Another limitation of the emphasis on individual agency is that it empties culture and communication from societal structures (Zotzmann 2016, p. 77).

Based on this, both paradigms are useful in portraying possible interpretations and approaches to intercultural pedagogies. Significantly, what is lacking is an interest in questioning or in changing the status quo. In order to include issues of context and power, which are essential to achieving the aims of social justice and equality promoted by intercultural education, a 'critical' turn in intercultural scholarship has become necessary.

Critical interculturalists (see Holliday 2018; Ferri 2018; Holmes 2015; Phipps 2014; Dervin 2011; O'Regan & MacDonald 2007; Jensen 2003; Monceri 2003) affirm that they reject static views of culture and identity and instead analyse the role of power in shaping intercultural communication. The main aim of a critical approach is to achieve change through the recognition of oppressive structures and strategies to resist domination (Martin & Nakayama 1999, p. 5).

The critical humanist paradigm recognises the role of 'ideological superstructures and material conditions' in shaping intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama 2010, p. 61). It moves away from an unproblematic view of culture to one that recognises culture as a 'site of struggle', whose relationship with communication is contested (Martin & Nakayama 1999, p. 8). Post-colonial studies on intercultural communication are part of this tradition (see Said 1979 and Spivak 1990).

A further critical stance is found in the critical structuralist paradigm, which also advocates addressing uneven power relationships, but it does so from a more objective standpoint. Critical structuralists focus on the macro-context, conceiving culture as 'societal structures' (Martin & Nakayama 2010, p. 63). The final aim of researchers and educators operating within this framework is social justice (Martin & Nakayama 2010, p. 63).

In this sense, both critical paradigms can be conflated as critical interculturality. Within the critical paradigm of intercultural communication, diversity is recognised as the norm, while any attempt to homogenise culture is seen as the result of oppressive power structures. Simultaneously, power is also seen as a positive force, able to transform inequalities and social injustice.

Teachers who operate within a critical stance acknowledge that their work is not a neutral act, but that they share a responsibility in the ways cultures and speakers of languages are constructed and understood. Therefore, they challenge problematic representations such as negative stereotypes. This results in welcoming and discussing conflicting and controversial opinions in the classroom. Kramsch (1995, p. 89) claims that 'a critical foreign language pedagogy […] has the potential both of revealing the codes under which speakers in cross-cultural encounters operate, and of constructing something different and hybrid from these cross-cultural encounters'.

Therefore, the benefits of a critical view of culture and communication are that it acknowledges 'the messiness and precariousness of communication' (Ferri 2018, p. 6) and it requires a deeper understanding of the many concepts associated with the idea of culture. These include 'multiple identities, essentialism, ethnocentrism, prejudice, power, hybridity (and its opposite, monoculturalism), difference (and similarity), agency (and group affiliation), and resistance (and compliance)' (Holmes

2015). Critical interculturalists highlight 'issues of inequality, asymmetries and power relations' (Ferri 2018, p. 18) and alert against the assumption that acquiring intercultural competence is a way of solving conflict and misunderstanding (Phipps 2006, p. 26).

Importantly, they question the overly simplistic notion of tolerance and reconciliation as the final aims of intercultural dialogue (Phipps 2006, p. 26). This is significant because any equation such as "knowledge + understanding = tolerance" is naïve and conceals the messiness of human relationships.

Ferri (2014, p. 9) critiques the 'intercultural industry', according to which the skills obtained via intercultural training can be successfully applied to determined contexts. Here, the functionalist view of interculturality is prominent: the emphasis is placed on difference, which is reduced to stable taught or learnt patterns. This reduction serves to avoid misunderstanding and other possible negative outcomes of intercultural communication. According to Ferri (2014, p. 9), this fixed idea of culture as a stable entity is harmful, especially because difference is evaluated from a Western perspective.

Similarly, Galloway (2015, p. 97) points out that 'linguistic, cultural and academic biases distort the complex fabric of a culture under study', thus attributing characteristics to the 'target' culture based on the perspective of the 'source' culture. This pivotal aspect will be further analysed in light of Lévinas' philosophy in Section 3.4.

3.3   CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PEDAGOGY

Current competence-based intercultural communication models tend to reflect banking models of education (Sobre 2017). This is what Giroux (1988, p. 111) calls 'the positivist discourse', which considers 'the mastery of pedagogical techniques and the transmission of knowledge' in terms of their instrumental value for broader society. On a similar note, Ferri (2018, p. 20) warns that: 'culture discourses are not neutral products but inhabit social spaces embedded in power relationships and can be used to disguise material inequalities'.

From the previous Section's discussion, it is clear that studies about culture and communication cannot be decoupled from issues of power and history. Therefore, Critical Pedagogy (CP) is considered the best approach to address the shortcomings of the functionalist paradigm used for these concepts (Xu 2013, p. 380). A critical approach involves the analysis of the historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts in which intercultural encounters occur. When communication is seen as social action 'that is embedded in broader cultural and historical and unequal power context' (Shi-Xu 2001, p. 280), intercultural communication becomes necessarily involved in issues of inequalities and power relations (Shi-Xu 2013, p. 381).

According to Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP), teachers have the mission 'to illuminate systemic injustice for students and empower them to find ways to create a more socially just world' (Sobre 2017, p. 42). In Toyosaki & Atay's (2018, p. vii), '*Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy*', CICP is committed to revealing and combating social injustices and other forms of cultural oppression. It aims to 'understand, critique, transform, and intervene upon the dynamics of power and domination embedded inside and outside classroom walls' (Toyosaki & Atay 2018, p. ix).

This results in a dialogical pedagogy that focuses on the 'process of transformation originating from the '-inter', the processual act of interaction' (Ferri 2018, p. 76). Relatedly, Ferri (2018, p. 63) recommends placing emphasis on the 'inter' rather than on the 'cultural', in order to allow for the development of intercultural understanding to occur during interaction. In this way, the focus is shifted away from teaching 'culture as object' and from pre-knowing the *Other*, and moves towards the teaching of 'culture in action' (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006, p. 481).

Sobre (2017, p. 42) sees 'dialogue, communication and identity as intrinsic in the process of sharing knowledge in a holistic fashion among teachers and students', recognising that the role of educators is to transform oppressive power dynamics and to empower students to create a more socially just world. In relation to this, Phipps (2013, p. 12) describes critical, post-colonial approaches as the ground for 'an engaged pedagogy of intercultural action in ethical and political matters'.

The present study conceives that social justice, social inclusion, equality, as well as 'peace, reconciliation, and democracy' (Holmes 2015, p. 8) are the guiding principles and ultimate goals of intercultural education. It follows that teachers who

are committed to this project would ideally share a sense of moral or political commitment to these broader societal aims. By operating within this paradigm, they share the mission to address issues of power, or, as argued by Sobre (2017, p. 42), 'to illuminate systemic injustice for students and empower them to find ways to create a more socially just world'.

While somewhat present in current educational policy texts, social justice is considered far from being embedded in the practice of Languages teaching (Dervin 2010; Ferri 2014). The way Languages are taught often continues to involve the idea of a nation-state in which land, people, language, and culture are one and separate from other national identities (Dervin 2010; Ferri 2014 p. 12). Even when this juxtaposition is theoretically rejected, the reality of materials and activities used in classroom settings tend to reinforce cultural knowledge (Starkey 2007). This occurs because 'in order to think and talk about something, we have to identify relatively permanent features of an entity that make it similar to and different from other entities' (Zotzmann 2016, p. 79). In such a process, teachers and students alike inevitably fall into the trap of essentialising.

As observed by May (2011, 42):

'There is an obvious and ongoing tension that needs to be addressed more adequately in multicultural education theory and practice between, on the one hand recognizing the significance of ethnicity and culture for (some) individuals and group identities, while on the other hand, avoiding essentializing them'.

As a solution to this impasse, Martin and Nakayama (1999) advocate for a move beyond the limits imposed by each of the four paradigms described above and suggest a dialectal approach, which engages with each of the four main paradigms identified. Dialectic, in this sense, provides an opportunity to engage with 'multiple, but distinct, research paradigms' (Martin & Nakayama 1999, p. 13). This also entails accepting the paradoxes they all bring to the discussion.

To conclude, it is important to highlight that Critical Pedagogy is strongly linked to ethical considerations (Giroux 1988, p. 219). Critical Pedagogy also recognises the influence of post-colonial theories on the critical intercultural scholars, who are inspired by what Spivak (1988, p. 308) has called 'the danger of appropriating the Other'. For these reasons, the CICP framework is enriched by an

ethical approach, based on the work of the French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas on the relationship between the *Self* and the *Other*.

3.4   LÉVINAS AND THE ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER

The contribution of Emmanuel Lévinas (1906 -1995) has been investigated in several studies on intercultural communication (see Ferri 2018; Aman 2015; Ferri 2014; Ucok-Sayrak 2016; O'Regan & MacDonald 2013; Phipps 2013, Xu 2013). His work can be usefully applied to the field of intercultural communication studies due to its ethical conceptualisation of the interdependence between the *Self* and the *Other*. The present study uses his understanding of the relationship between the *Self* and the *Other* to address some of the fundamental shortcomings identified in current conceptualisations of intercultural communication (Ferri 2014). While the figure of *the Other* is analysed extensively in post-colonial literature and by philosophers such as Dérrida (1997), Gadamer (1976), Haberman (1984), the way in which subjectivity and the relationship with the *Other* are presented in Lévinas is unique. Considered the father of the phenomenology of alterity, he offers an alternative view where ethics is the first philosophy (Moran 2000, p. 320).

According to Lévinas, Western tradition attempts to know *the Other* based on the 'familiar foundation of the Self' (Ucok-Sayrak 2016, p. 126). This is apparent in the intercultural communication and competence models examined in Chapter Two, where there is the assumption that the *Other* is knowable and that knowledge about the *Other* is a prerequisite for intercultural competence. This then represents a 'quick fix to resolving conflict and misunderstanding' (Ferri 2018, p. 18). In such conceptualisations, 'the other is considered from the perspective of the self and not from the standpoint of interaction, in which self and other are reciprocal' (Ferri 2018, p. 6).

To describe this relationship, Lévinas adopts two complimentary linguistic elements: the *Said*, which represents the transmission of content, or communicative competence, and the *Saying*, meaning the event of speech, the living experience (Ferri 2014, p. 17).

As Ferri (2014, p. 16) explains, according to Lévinas;

'the object of experience is isolated from the flow of time and is fixed in synchronic temporality by consciousness into a theme, concept, category, through the *said*. However, the presence of verbs in language reveals the temporality in terms of process, becoming, event in the *saying*'.

Hence, the *Said* fixes meanings, while the *Saying* indicates what eludes categorisation. If one adopts the perspective of the *Said*, intercultural communication unfolds based on assumptions made about the *Other's* cultural belonging and identity (Ferri 2014, p. 18). In contrast, when one adopts the perspective of the *Saying*, 'dialogue unfolds in ways that are unpredictable and that question our assumptions about culture, identity, and belonging through reciprocal interaction between others (Ferri 2014, p. 18).

This latter standpoint makes intercultural communication open to taking risks, misunderstanding, and conflict. This is what subverts the asymmetrical relation, according to which the *Self* is expected to know, understand, and tolerate the *Other*, and finally enters a relationship of authentic engagement where power is symmetrical. Ferri (2014, p. 17) elaborates on this:

'The ethical responsibility resides in this relation between self and other established in the *saying*, which Lévinas describes as a 'face-to-face' encounter: on the one hand, in the *said*, the other is reified as cultural being, on the other hand is dialogue, the other is encountered in their own singularity, uniqueness.'

To sum up, Western philosophy conceives knowledge before ethics and attempts to know the *Other* through its reduction to the Self (Ben-Ari & Strier 2010, p. 5). Instead, for Lévinas, the responsibility for the *Other* must precede knowledge of the *Other* (Bossio 2018, p. 97) meaning that ethics always precedes knowledge.

This is not to say that knowledge needs to be discarded. On the contrary, knowledge is essential and must include knowledge of the *Self* (Bossio 2018, p. 94):

'If the individual is incapable of knowing himself and discovering his identity, he will never manage to recognize the identity of the other, and will thus see the other as a potential threat to his integrity'.

Simultaneously, it is only through the relationship with the *Other* that one truly understands the *Self*. However, this poses the danger that the Self might mediate knowledge of the *Other* through knowledge of the *Self*. Ben-Ari and Strier (2010, p.

10) claim that knowledge is insufficient and can also be dangerous, because when we believe we have knowledge of the *Other,* we risk "totalising" it.

The concepts of *Infinity* as opposed to *Totality* are central in Lévinas' philosophy of the *Other*. *Totality* refers to the fact that when we totalise the *Other*, our understanding will always be limited. In contrast, *Infinity* refers to the *Other* as being always more than what the *Self* can know, therefore the *Other* remains 'unknowable, incomprehensible, and uncontrollable' (Ben-Ari & Strier 2010, p. 6).

If transferred to the field of education, teaching practices whereby knowledge of the *Other* becomes a given fact foster stereotyping and legitimise and perpetuate injustice. Hence, there needs to be a shift away from 'the ontological difference between cultures' and a move towards 'intercultural dialogue and relation' (Xu 2013, p. 385).

A Levinasian framework allows for a dialogic re-conceptualisation of intercultural studies, where 'the relation is ethical, relational, open ended and heteronomous' (Ferri 2018, p. 63). Indeed, Lévinas' 'entire philosophy is built on the relationship between the *Self* and the *Other*, especially the responsibility for the other' (Xu 2013, p. 384). According to Lévinas, this relationship must be disinterested: otherness allows to know oneself, however, it should not be considered as a means through which one can know one's self more profoundly, because that would be an exploitation (Mkhwanazi 2013).

While adopting a critical stance, Lévinas reminds us that we are social beings, surrounded and affected by our encounters with others. For these reasons, the ideas of Lévinas are considered beneficial to a more complete understanding of interculturality. They will be used for data analysis and discussion of findings in this study.

3.5 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This Chapter provided a foundational theory for this study, which will serve for the purpose of data analysis. The starting point for data analysis is the dialogic view of four paradigms of intercultural communication suggested by Martin and Nakayama (2010). While the functionalist and interpretative paradigms (Martin & Nakayama 2010) are expected to lay the foundations for preservice teachers to

construct their perception of the intercultural capability, the humanist and structuralist critical paradigms (Martin & Nakayama 2010) are essential to the success of intercultural education. However, the latter two paradigms are further enriched by Critical Pedagogy (CP) and specifically by the scholarship on Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP), which focuses on understanding, critiquing, and transforming power dynamics in society.

Since CP is linked to ethical considerations, the theoretical framework of this study has selected the philosophy of Lévinas as a basis for establishing an ethical relationship between the *Self* and the *Other*. This philosophy could serve as a useful compass for orienting teachers in their daily work with young learners.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter explains the methodology chosen to answer the research questions of the present study in a way that is coherent with the proposed theoretical framework.

Section 4.2 discusses qualitative inquiry as the overarching research paradigm. Section 4.3 delves into the specifics of phenomenology as a philosophical discipline and methodology used in this study. The following Section (4.4) justifies the use of hermeneutic phenomenology, coupled with narrative inquiry, specifically.

Section 4.5 unpacks the adopted research methods, the recruitment process and selection of participants. Section 4.6 describes the data collection methods. Section 4.7 outlines the procedure employed for data analysis, namely Thematic Analysis (TA), and the ethical considerations of the research study and potential problems are discussed in Section 4.8. Section 4.9 explains the changes in research design imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and Section 4.10 discusses the limitations of the present study.

Finally, Section 4.11 examines and evaluates the research methods employed in this study.

4.2   QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

The present study uses a qualitative research approach to investigate the lived experiences (Farrell 2020) of preservice teachers in the classroom and the meanings they ascribe to the intercultural project in education. While qualitative methodologies tend to be critiqued by conservative approaches to research inquiry, which perceive the work of qualitative scholars as 'anecdotal' (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 927), a qualitative approach to research focuses on gaining a deeper awareness of human experience and is, therefore, most appropriate for this thesis (Mertova & Webster 2020). If quantitative methods typically focus on producing outcomes and use participants and documents to draw objective and generalizable data, the requirements of a qualitative study are different, as participants are chosen in light of their contribution with 'significant accounts of the experience under investigation' (Polkinghorne 2005, p. 140).

Qualitative inquiry allows holistically researching complex issues at the individual level (Mertova & Webster 2020). As shown in the theoretical framework in Chapter Three, research grounded in critical pedagogy should aim at giving voice to its participants (Darder, Bartodano, & Torres 2009), so that research is carried out with them, rather than on them (Breen 2007; Phipps 2013).

It has been suggested that there is a phenomenological aspect to any qualitative study (Denzin & Lincoln 2017). When phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the people who experience them, it becomes possible for researchers to delve deep into the human experience (Webb & Welsh 2019). Phenomenologists conceive that 'knowledge of the world is rooted in our (immediate) experiences' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p. 300). Therefore, it is a research methodology that guides towards deep reflection on individuals' experiences, and this allows finding their unique meaning (Guillen & Elida 2019).

The primary data collection method employed in the present study was in-depth individual interviews that followed a semi-structured format. This method was selected because indirect strategies work better to delve into teachers' internal experiences (Birello 2012). On the contrary, direct approaches to data collection, such as questionnaires and surveys, might not provide reliable data. Educators might need some time to consider and articulate their deeper beliefs, which they might be unaware of, and they need time to reflect on their experiences. As Polkinghorne

(1995, p. 138) explains: 'data about it [experience] depend on the participants' ability to reflectively discern aspects of their own experience and to effectively communicate what they discern through the symbols of language'.

In the present study, it is clear that the phenomenon under investigation is not readily accessible. Therefore, posing questions such as agreement or disagreement with the broader goals of the intercultural project in education might only lead to shallow responses. On the other hand, asking participants to tell anecdotes about how they experience interculturality in the classroom and in their own lives is likely to provide richer data. This material is expected to give access to deeper insights into how preservice teachers think about the intercultural capability. While engaging in an interview, participants might not explicitly spell out their beliefs and emotions around the phenomenon under study. It is the task of the researcher to make them visible. The complexity of investigating human experiences in a meaningful way is the main justification for having selected to adopt a hermeneutical phenomenological approach (see Section 4.3) and a narrative presentation of results (4.3.3).

At this point, it is necessary to highlight that the term "experience" in this study refers to something external that is encountered, observed, and internally processed. This is in line with Borg's review of the research body on teacher cognition, where semi-structured interviews appear to be among the most widely adopted tools (Borg 2015, p. 328).

To conclude, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of prospective teachers in relation to the concept of the intercultural capability and to Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL). The idea of "lived" experiences of individuals implies that only those who have experience of a phenomenon can talk about it. The participants in this study have recently encountered the concept of the intercultural capability both in the theory of their teacher education course and in the practice of their teaching placement in secondary government schools. However, they also have a prior understanding of this concept based on their own personal experiences of learning languages and studying, working, and living in different countries. They also have knowledge of this concept as it exists in the broader society and not only in education.

4.3   PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology explores phenomena through the examination of the ways in which people experience them. In particular, people make meaning of their own lived experiences of certain phenomena (Langdridge 2007).

The origins of phenomenology are to be traced back to the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who sought to establish "pure" phenomenology by finding a common foundation for both philosophy and science (Laverty 2003, Moran 2000). Interested in studying phenomena as they are perceived in human consciousness, Husserl believed in the possibility of disclosing the 'realm of being which presented itself with absolute certainty, arising from experience' (Laverty 2003, p. 23). This means that for Husserl, science rests on what appears in consciousness, where phenomena are to be studied. In order to do so scientifically, Husserl proposed "epoché", or "bracketing", that is to say that the philosopher must suspend judgment and maintain neutrality over the topic of inquiry. This means the philosopher's task is to describe the phenomenon (Laverty 2003, p. 24). Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) became interested in Husserl's philosophy but eventually challenged several aspects of transcendental phenomenology. In particular, Heidegger was interested in the notion of 'being in time', where to be human means to be in the world, arguing that only through the world we can make sense of it (Heidegger 1962). The idea of "lifeworld" means that our experiences are influenced by the world in which we live, which – in Heidegger's terms – presents itself to our consciousness. While both philosophers 'sought to uncover the life world or human experience as it is lived' (Laverty 2003, p. 25), this idea of situatedness in the world sets the two philosophers apart. For Heidegger, pre-understanding is a structure for being in the world (Heidegger 1962). Therefore, we cannot put aside, or "bracket", the world we are part of.

These different positions are reflected in two main schools of thought: on the one hand, is transcendental, or descriptive, phenomenology, which is based on Husserl's work, and on the other hand is hermeneutic, or interpretative, phenomenology, also known as existential phenomenology, which is based on Heidegger's work (Vagle 2018).

These two schools of thought affect the role of the researcher in the inquiry. Transcendental phenomenologists consider that the studied phenomenon is accessed

through the participants with minimal intervention on the part of the researcher; therefore, this approach claims to be objective and scientific (Vagle 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenologists recognise that any interpretation of knowledge is 'challenged by historical and cultural distance' (Moran 2000, p. 248), meaning that the object under study cannot be separated from the context in which such study occurs, nor by the person conducting the study. It follows that those who operate within hermeneutic phenomenology conceive that knowledge cannot be regarded universally true. Thus, they cannot make claims of neutrality. They also recognise that their role as researchers is active in guiding and making meaning from the inquiry (Webb & Welsh 2019). As Ranse et al. (2020, p. 947) explain, 'phenomenological researchers are actively engaged as participants of phenomenological research'.

Smith (1997, p. 80) summarises hermeneutic phenomenology as a

'research methodology aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life-world of individuals who are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively'.

It follows that by uncovering the unique ways in which participants make meaning of their experiences of certain phenomena, it becomes possible to understand such experiences.

The table below captures the main characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology as opposed to transcendental phenomenology.

	Transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology	Hermeneutic (interpretative) phenomenology
Philosophical origins	Husserl	Heidegger Gadamer
Ontological assumptions	Reality is internal to the knower; what appears in their consciousness	Lived experience is an interpretive process situated in an individual's lifeworld
Epistemological	Observer must separate	Observer is part of the world

assumptions	him/herself from the world including his/her own physical being to reach the state of the transcendental I; bias-free; understands phenomena by descriptive means	and not bias free; understands phenomenon by interpretive means
Researcher role in data collection	Bracket researcher subjectivity during data collection and analysis	Reflects on essential themes of participant experience with the phenomenon while simultaneously reflection on own experience
Researcher role in data analysis/writing	Consider phenomena from different perspectives, identify units of meaning and cluster into themes to form textural description (the what of the phenomenon). Use imaginative variation to create structural (the how) description. Combine these descriptions to form the essence of the phenomenon	Iterative cycles of capturing and writing reflections towards a robust and nuanced analysis; consider how the data (or parts) contributed to evolving understanding of the phenomena (whole)
Methodological texts	Polkinghorne	Van Manen

Table 2: Comparison of transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology adapted from Neubauer et al., 2019.

Other philosophers later enriched phenomenology as founded by Martin Heidegger. This study will consider the contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, which will be illustrated in the following Sections. Furthermore, Emmanuel Lévinas, who has been referred to in the theoretical framework (Chapter Three), was a phenomenologist himself in his quest for meaning embedded in human experience (van Manen 1990, p. 6). Lévinas is considered a proponent of

intersubjective phenomenology (Mkhwanazi 2013), closely linked to critical phenomenology (Weiss 2019). Critical phenomenology recognises the role of intersubjectivity as it is 'a method that is rooted in first-person accounts of experience', but in relation and not prior to the *Other* and 'the complex textures of social life' (Guenther 2013, p. 9). This view asserts that these accounts should not be viewed in isolation but always situated in the contextual and relational paradigms. Relatedly, interviews allow for a dialogue between the researcher and the participants so that the lived experience is shared in interaction. Asking participants to write down accounts of their own experiences would prevent such a dialogic process. On the other hand, interpreting meaning is facilitated by the fact that the researcher and the interviewee share the context of the interview and that both parties can ask clarification questions. Furthermore, this study does not look at beliefs as existing in isolation. It recognises the influence not only of the researcher in interpreting them, but also of external factors, for example, social and historical ones, on teacher cognition.

It is also interesting to note that phenomenology was influenced by Eastern philosophies, finding resonance in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, thus allowing for dialogue among different worldviews. Adopting a phenomenological lens to an intercultural study is also a way to do justice to the inherently intercultural make-up of the discipline itself.

4.4 HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY

There are several branches of phenomenology (Moran 2000), and this project has selected to draw on hermeneutic phenomenology. The word *hermeneutics* is Greek-derived and refers to the art and interpretation of texts (Moran 2000, p. 271). As briefly illustrated above, Heidegger conceived the whole human existence as an interpretative exercise (Moran 2000, p. 235) and saw this 'understanding as the central manner of human being-in-the-world' (Moran 2000, p. 249).

Heidegger's conception of hermeneutics was later enriched by the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 - 2002), who developed his own philosophy following the phenomenological approach of both Husserl and Heiddegger. In particular, he saw phenomenology and hermeneutics as closely related because both are

'concerned with describing the process by which meaning emerges' (Moran 2000, p. 248). For this reason, Gadamer focused on the centrality of language, which he saw 'as inextricably linked' with understanding and interpretation (Sloan & Bowe 2013, p. 1294). In Gadamer's words:

'Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject... To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.' (Gadamer 1976, p. 375).

For Gadamer, it is possible to understand others if one recognises that any interpretation of others' experiences is filtered through our own 'horizon', a term borrowed by Husserl (Moran 2000, p. 252). Gadamer calls this process the 'fusion of horizons', meaning that, as humans, we are separated by different horizons of understanding, but that we can reach mutual understanding by merging our horizons in a way that recalls the aims of the intercultural project:

'The attempt to understand the other must begin with the recognition that we are separated by different horizons of understanding, and that mutual understanding comes through overlapping consensus, merging of horizons, rather than through the abandonment by one of the interlocutors of his or her initial horizon.' (Moran 2000, p. 252).

For both Gadamer and Heiddeger, language is even precedent to human experience (Moran 2000, p. 269): it 'makes humans be'(Moran 2000, p. 270) and in this sense it can be applied to intercultural communication. For Gadamer, while we understand our experience from our own horizon – which is influenced by our own cultural and educational tradition - we always seek to be understood by the *Other* (Moran 2000, p. 270).

When employed as a research methodology for research, Langdridge (2007) affirms that hermeneutic phenomenology can be considered as such when it is concerned with obtaining meaning through the analysis of participants' language. Similarly, according to Sloan and Bowe (2014, p. 1292), this methodology provides the opportunity to elicit the experiences of participants and give them a voice. As the

art of interpretation is an ongoing process, hermeneutic phenomenology recognises that the research process is non linear, iterative, and tentative (see also Ranse et al. 2020). As a result, a definitive version is elusive (Laverty 2003, p. 25). This aligns with the theoretical framework of this study, where any dogmatic interpretation of the intercultural capability is critiqued as it goes against its proclaimed claims of openness and should instead recognise the precarious nature of any form of teaching and learning. The same can be applied to the findings of this study, as its data have been collected and analysed at a specific time and place, and presuppose the researcher's horizon.

For this reason, in Section 4.8.1 I reflect on my own horizon and on my own lived experience of the phenomenon of interculturality. Furthermore, I engage with texts that could be interpreted. Therefore, I recorded and transcribed interviews. The texts I produced concerned my participants' lived experiences. Hence both hermeneutics and phenomenology were adopted as research methodology.

To sum up, the centrality of language to interpret human experience was already present in Heidegger, who concieved the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Gyollai 2020) to represent the circularity of any attempt of such work of interpretation (Moran 2000, p. 269), and Gadamer further enriched this.

The following Section will turn to van Manen's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology and his application of it as a research methodology in the field of education.

4.4.1   Van Manen's six steps to hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry

In his seminal work *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy,* van Manen (1990) illustrated how to approach pedagogic human science via hermeneutic phenomenology in the field of education. He describes his methodology as:

> 'the phenomenological and hermeneutical study of human existence: phenomenology because it is the descriptive study of lived experience (phenomena) in the attempt to enrich lived experiences by mining its meaning; hermeneutics because it is interpretative in the study of

expressions and objectifications (texts) of lived experience in the attempt to determine the meaning embodied in them.' (van Manen 1990, p. 38).

Van Manen explains that Gadamer, in his book *Truth and Method* (2013), rejected the idea of applying prescriptive methods to human science scholarship and claimed that he intended to 'show that there is a way to deal with methodological concerns that is decidedly unmethodological' (van Manen 1990, p. 3). Instead, the focus is on studying lived experience and interpreting the 'texts' of life (van Manen 1990). A methodology differs from a method in the sense that it 'is not a correct method to follow, but a creative approach to understanding' (Laverty 2003, p. 28). Van Manen proposes a non-prescriptive way of doing phenomenology, recommending that the researcher maintain an ability to be reflective, insightful, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experience (van Manen, 1997). Significantly, van Manen claims that a method must be 'discovered or invented as a response to the question at hand' (van Manen 1990, p. 29). The methodology for this study and how it evolved in the search for answers to the research questions is illustrated in Figure 9.

The present research project is mapped out on van Manen's six activities in phenomenological inquiry (1990, pp. 31-32), which are outlined in Figure 6:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         1. TURNING TO THE PHENOMENON OF INTEREST              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              2. INVESTIGATING LIVED EXPERIENCE               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               3. REFLECTING ON ESSENTIAL THEMES              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             4. WRITING TO DESCRIBE THE PHENOMENON           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   5. MAINTAINING A STRONG AND ORIENTED PEDAGOGICAL RELATION  │
│                     TO THE PHENOMENON                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   6. BALANCING THE RESEARCH CONTEXT BY CONSIDERING PARTS AND │
│                          WHOLE                              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
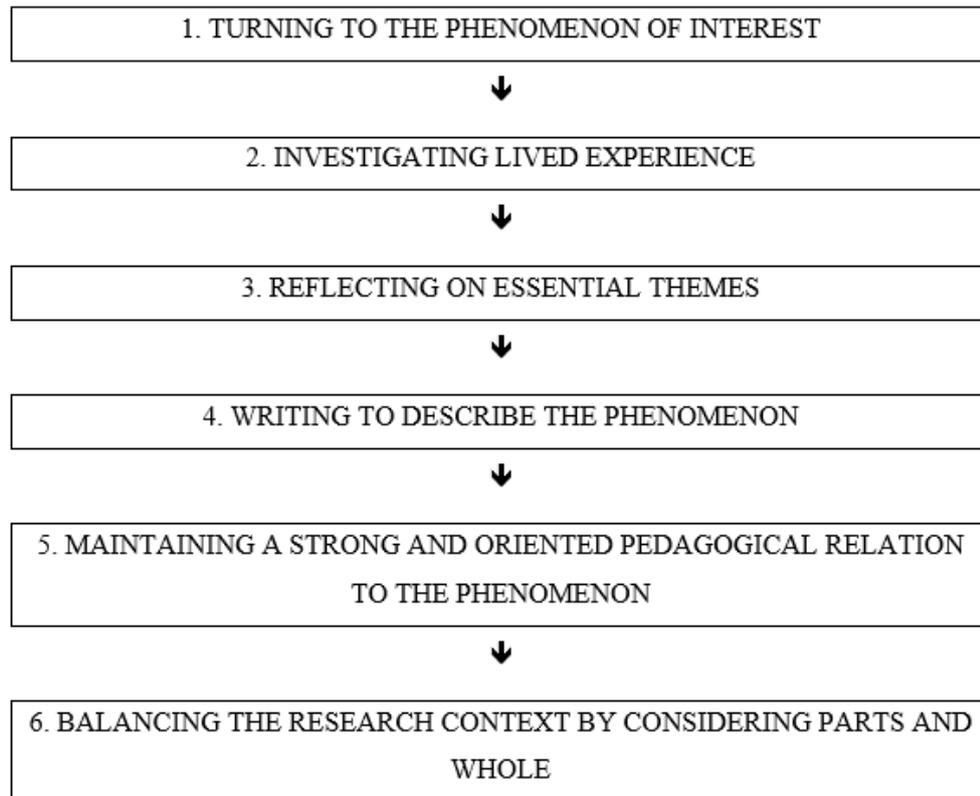
Figure 6: Van Manen's six steps to hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry (1990).

According to van Manen (1990, p. 31), the researcher must first turn to the phenomenon of interest. In the present study, the phenomenon of interest is the interplay between the theoretical construct of interculturality and the pedagogical translation of this theory into teaching practice, with particular attention to the classroom of Languages. These two research phenomena have emerged from the analysis detailed in the Literature Review Chapter, where existing definitions, theories, and models were presented, and the translation of supranational policy into the National Curriculum was discussed.

Second, the researcher must investigate the experience as lived rather than as conceptualised (van Manen 1990, p. 31). This was done when interviewing participants who had not been exposed to detailed explanations of the phenomenon but experienced it directly during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course and during their supervised teaching practice in secondary government schools. It is worthwhile noting that the participants were not prompted with definitions or models of the intercultural capability and did not receive any material to prepare for the interview.

Third, the researcher must reflect on essential themes (van Manen 1990, p. 31). This step corresponds to transcribing and analysing data from interviews and thematic analysis (TA). TA is further discussed in Section 4.7.

Then, the researcher must describe the phenomenon under study through writing. On this aspect, van Manen (1990, p. 4) notes that the activities of research and writing are to be seen as 'closely related, and practically inseparable pedagogical activities'. This step corresponds to the creation of narrative texts to do justice to the participants' lived experiences.

The fifth step requires a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon (van Manen 1990, p. 32). This corresponds to the discussion of findings, which must stay focused on the original intent of writing this thesis. The aim is to uncover the ways to develop an intercultural orientation to Languages pedagogy so that it benefits young people and encourages them to seek the transformation of the society they live in. Finally, the researcher must consider both parts and the whole of the phenomena (van Manen 1990, p. 32). This will be further clarified in the following Section. The process of interpreting is open-ended and circular, involving both individual parts (individual interview transcripts) and the whole (the entire body of interview transcripts).

Van Manen himself warns against drawing conclusions based on phenomenological inquiry. In fact, the main limitation of this study is that it cannot make general claims for the teaching profession. Instead, the value of this study is the insight into preservice teachers' lived experiences, as narrated by a selected cohort of teachers of Languages. The selection process of participants was purposive. When information about the project was distributed. I was contacted by a majority of preservice teachers of Languages with a migrant background. This could have been predicted, as a study on ILTL might draw the attention of prospective teachers with a certain degree of sensitivity towards intercultural issues. Because most of my potential participants shared a migrant experience (seven) and only one did not, I decided to exclude participants who did not share this experience, as explained in Section 4.6.

Criteria from more traditional approaches, such as validity, reliability, and trustworthiness cannot be applied to phenomenological studies where the consistency and stability of measuring instruments do not apply. On the contrary, differences

between individual human experiences are expected and valued (van Manen 1990). This also means that no conclusions of certainty can be produced (van Manen 1990), while it could be argued that many different truths, even contradicting ones, might emerge and that is expected in qualitative research. Significantly, qualitative studies do not necessarily provide clear or definite answers, but rather provide different perspectives and indicate new avenues of inquiry.

4.4.2   The hermeneutic circle

As explained in the previous Sections, the centrality of language (either spoken or written) is an essential characteristic of hermeneutic phenomenology. The majority of studies underpinned by this methodology employ in-depth interviews to gain deep knowledge of the phenomenon they wish to understand.

Because adopting a phenomenological approach involves accessing the phenomenon 'from inside or from within experience' (Creely 2018, p. 105), in this study, meaning is accessed through the texts that were created as a result of transcribing the interviews with the selected cohort of participants. These texts are written, thus fixing the speech of the interviewees rather than being texts autonomously prepared by the participants. This choice is due to the fact that the process of seeking meaning should emerge in the process and from the relationship established between the researcher and the participant, and understanding must occur in context. Specifically, meaning should be sought in human experience rather than in what is consciously known (Webb & Welsh 2019, p. 167).

The transcripts were then analysed via thematic analysis (TA). As previously illustrated, while Husserl advocated for "epoché" or "bracketing", meaning the suspension of any preconceptions, Heidegger maintains that interpreters inescapably bring their own understanding and experiences to the process of interpretation. Gadamer further elaborated on this, arguing that we cannot silence ourselves when listening to or reading someone's words (Gyollai 2020). Gadamer also noted that 'it is neither possible, necessary, nor desirable that we put ourselves within brackets' (Gadamer, 1979, p. 152). The solution, for Gadamer, is to be aware of our own assumptions and question 'the validity of our fore-understanding in relation to the new content' (Gyollai 2020, p. 4). This requires a reflective stance and, for this

reason, my own positionality as well as my own lived experience of the phenomenon are further explored in Section 4.8.1 *(Situating the Self).*

Once phenomenological researchers access texts, whether written or spoken, they will engage in a process called the 'hermeneutic circle' (Gyollai 2020), as they will move in a circular fashion from the whole of the text to parts of it, and then back to the whole (van Manen 1990). Following Heidegger's and Gadamer's ideas on hermeneutic phenomenological research, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) theorised in the areas of method and interpretation, elaborating the theory of the hermeneutic circle, which is simplified in the diagram below:
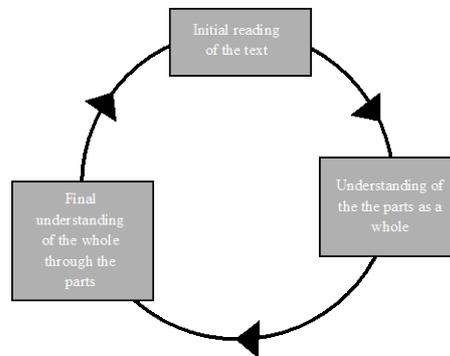
Figure 7: The hermeneutic circle

In *Time and Narrative* (1984), Ricoeur suggests that humans create stories to make sense of their lives. Similarly, Langdridge (2007) posits that hermeneutics enriched phenomenology when it became clear that our experiences are best understood when we tell stories of those experiences. In order to enter the hermeneutic circle, one must move through all steps described in the diagram above (Figure 7).

Tan et al. (2009) discuss the ways in which Ricoeur clarified the relation between speech and writing and how speech is modified in the passage to writing. In transcribing the interviews, the discourse is altered because the transcript cannot fully capture the moment in which it occurred and also because the discourse was between two persons, while the audience of the written text is different. This means that one cannot fully recreate the event and that even when researchers personally conduct the interview, they become distanced to the written text they rely on. It

follows that the person working with the text will inevitably affect the way the text is interpreted. Ricoeur (1981, p. 141) concludes that 'in the last analysis the text is the mediation by which we understand ourselves', which brings up the issue of multiple, possibly conflicting, interpretations based on who is accessing the text (van Manen 1990, p. 39). This should not be seen as a shortcoming, but as an inherent feature of postmodern, critical, hermeneutic studies.

4.4.3   Narrative presentation of results

According to van Manen (1990, p. 111) a common rhetorical device in hermeneutic phenomenology is the use of stories. Closely related to phenomenology, *narrative inquiry* is considered a powerful tool to understand 'what teachers know, what they do with what they know and the sociocultural contexts within which they teach and learn to teach' (Golombek & Johnson 2004, p. 304). It is also considered the most reliable means to understand teaching from the teachers' point of view (Golombek & Johnson 2004, p. 308). Furthermore, in line with the narrative research position taken in this study, teachers are regarded as active agents (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 19). Significantly, the realisation that teachers have a central role in developing curriculum and pedagogy led to the 'development of a narrative understanding' (Clandinin 2007, p. 2).

Following Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricouer, narrative inquiry is also a process of interpreting and reinterpreting experience (Golombek & Johnson 2004), which involves the researcher's subjectivity. As stated in Clandinin and Connelly (1989, p.11) 'when one engages in narrative inquiry the process becomes even more complex for, as researchers, we become part of the process'. Relatedly, knowledge is viewed as 'subjective, emancipatory, and productive of fundamental social change' (Merriam 1991, p. 53). Initially, narrative inquiry was not considered in the research design. However, once data collection commenced, it became clear that there was a narrative aspect in my participants' accounts of their lived experiences. In fact, I had not predicted that my research participants' biographies would become so prominent in the exploration of teacher cognition. For this reason, during the final stages of data analysis, I decided to produce short narratives collating the information that emerged during the interviews.

The decision to present the interview data gathered during this study in a narrative form derives from the fact that participants spontaneously provided biographical information. These recounts were given in order to justify their statements about their conceptualisations of the intercultural capability, as well as for the ways they envisaged to translate these into classroom practices. The short biographies I wrote for each participant are a way of highlighting the connection between their personal experiences of learning, travelling, living, and teaching, and the ways they hope to translate their own conceptualisations of the intercultural capability into their classroom of Languages.

This choice is aligned with the focus of narrative inquiry, which is 'on individual teachers and their personal understandings within a certain context' (Clandinin 2007, p. 3). As Beauchamp & Thomas (2009, p. 181) argued: 'stories are a way to express identity, and literature in teaching stresses this way of conceiving identity.'

Similarly to hermeneutic phenomenology, narrative research 'does not claim to represent the exact "truth", but rather aims for "verisimilitude"' – that the results have the appearance of truth or reality' (Mertova & Webster 2020, p. 4).

4.5   PARTICIPANTS

This research project aims to explore how prospective teachers think about the intercultural capability and what they do or hope to do to embed the teaching of such a construct in their lessons. To answer these two research questions, it was decided to run the study with a sample of participants expected to provide rich data. This aligns with qualitative inquiry, where the sample of participants should be purposive, in order to enable an in-depth investigation. This choice also matches the majority of research studies on teacher cognition identified in the literature: of the over 60 studies on second language teaching reviewed by Borg (2003), two thirds involved fewer than 20 participants. By investigating preservice teachers' interpretations of the intercultural capability; their experiences in the classroom of Languages (what they observed and how they acted during their teaching rounds and how they intend to act in the future); and their beliefs about the need for the development of the intercultural capability in their learners, it was possible to delve into the ways in

which these prospective secondary school teachers of Languages engage with the intercultural project. This study focuses solely on practitioners and explores their engagement (or lack thereof) with the intercultural project, based on the rationale that 'no education policy can operate successfully without the commitment of teachers' (Starkey 2007, p. 60).

The selection process of participants did not intend to be either objective or completely random. From the outset, it was expected that the cohort of teachers who would agree to participate in this study would consist of individuals with some sort of personal or professional interest or investment in the area of intercultural education.

To begin the recruitment process I sent out information about my research project through several Universities in Victoria, asking referents to divulge the *Information to Participants* form (Appendix A). I was approached by a majority of culturally and linguistically diverse preservice teachers. They contacted me via email and returned the signed *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix B), formally agreeing to take part in my study. Due to the uncertainty around restrictions in place during the pandemic, interviews were conducted individually via videoconference and audio recorded.

The composition of this cohort was initially accidental, meaning it occurred without my control over the recruitment process. However, it was then decided to exclude any participants born and raised in Australia. This is because qualitative studies, in general, require samples that are purposive and relatively homogeneous, and the fact that all participants shared similar life experiences was considered an advantage from a phenomenological point of view. Creswell (2018, p. 189) explains that 'the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions'. Relatedly, this purposeful selection of student teachers with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds meant that their experience of the phenomenon, both in terms of language pedagogy and in terms of intercultural capability, was somewhat similar. This resulted in the research questions being guided towards a more narrative-inquiry oriented direction. This is because after the first round of interviews, it became clear that a deeper analysis of the relationship between the personal and the professional was necessary. In the course of data collection, the

exploration of the diverse and multiple ways in which my participants' own personal intercultural experiences inform their current professional commitment to the intercultural project in education became a central focus of the inquiry.

The cohort selected for the present study was of seven migrant student teachers enrolled at one of Victoria's most culturally diverse universities, located in the western suburbs of Melbourne. All participants in the study were local or international students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who were born overseas and had completed, at least partially, their prior education in their country of origin or in a third country and who later migrated to Australia. When data collection occurred, all participants were enrolled in a graduate ITE program completing a qualification in Secondary Teaching with a major in Languages at an Australian university. Unlike the majority of teachers in Australia (see Watkins, Lean & Noble 2016), the participants are not from the dominant culture and did not attend primary and secondary school in Australia, except for two participants who arrived in Australia at the age of 16 to complete their compulsory education. Another important consideration is that, except for one case, they are native speakers of the language they teach, and they tend to identify with the culture associated with the language they teach.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Spoken languages	Cultural identification	Degree	Specialisations	Languages taught
Elisa	F	0-29	English, Italian, Japanese	Italian, Southern Italian	MA	Languages, Humanities	Italian
Lyn	F	0-29	English, Mandarin	Chinese	MA	Languages, English	Chinese
Qing	F	0-29	English, Mandarin	70% Chinese, 30% the world	MA	Languages, Economics	Chinese
Ynes	F	0-29	English, French	French	MA	Languages, EAL/D	French
Shanvika	F	0-39	English, Sinhala, French	Sri Lankan	MA	Languages, EAL/D	French
May	F	0-29	English, Mandarin	Chinese Australian	MA	Languages, Business	Chinese

Alberto	M	0-59	English, Italian	Italian	MA	Languages, Humanities	Italian

Table 3: Participants' data

All participants joined the project by giving written informed consent. Teachers were allowed as much time as they wished; some exceeded the expected duration. All seven participants were interviewed twice. Four participants provided artefacts, such as lesson plans and essays submitted for their teacher education course, which they felt clarified their theoretical understanding or practical approaches in relation to the intercultural capability. To ensure confidentiality, each interview participant and any schools or universities mentioned were given pseudonyms. Prior to the interview, the participants also answered a short survey, which collected information about gender, nationality/ies, country of origin, language(s) spoken, current study situation, as well as their cultural 'self-identification' (Fozdar & Volet 2016).

4.6   SOURCES OF DATA

Three data collection tools were used: a brief survey to draw the participants' profiles and prompt their reflection on the topic of the study. This short survey occurred prior to the individual in-depth interviews. The first interview followed a semi-structured format. It covered the questions in the interview guide (Appendix D), developed as explained in Section 4.6.3. The first interview lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. The second interview was used to probe the findings and expand on any areas of interest. All interviews occurred via videoconference due to restrictions in place during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The main source of data was the individual in-depth interview. This focused on preservice teachers' theoretical understanding and practical experiences in relation to the intercultural dimension of the Victorian Curriculum. The initial interview, which followed the interview guide outlined in Appendix D, was scheduled with the option of a follow-up interview to investigate further issues arisen during the first interview. All participants took part in the initial and the follow-up interview, with each interview lasting about an hour. All interviews were audio recorded and successively

transcribed fully for ease of analysis. Data analysis occurred manually to respect the qualitative nature of this study. In some cases, participants provided further information they felt they had left out during the interviews or that they deemed would provide a more complete understanding, such as short narratives, artefacts, or university assignments.

The fact that teacher cognition changes over time was also witnessed during the data collection process of this study. Even though the interviews were run only approximately a month apart from each other, it was already possible to note, in some cases subtle, and, in some cases obvious, changes in their responses due to work or study experiences that occurred in-between, but also due to the interview process igniting some questioning and reflections. This is a significant finding of the study because it became clear that the process of narrating their own lived experience prompted participants to understand their decisions and the reasons behind such choices. In turn this led to change in thinking and, as a result, in practice. This finding will be further explored in Chapter Six. Needless to say, if participants were interviewed on a third occasion, perhaps a few years into their teaching career, their responses would probably be very different.

4.6.1 Survey

The first instrument used for data collection was a short survey, designed using Qualtrics, featuring both close and some open questions. This was sent out to participants prior to meeting with the researcher. Questions in the survey concerned participants' data (see Appendix C). The main goal of this short survey was to draw the participants' profiles. Another purpose of the survey was to provide participants with initial prompts on the topic of the study. Asking questions about the extent to which preservice teachers believe the intercultural capability is important in the classroom of Languages and their level of confidence in incorporating culture into their language teaching practice was used to prompt the reflection on the topic of the study before the interview took place. As stated above, the selection process of participants was not necessarily objective. Participants who agreed to take part in the study had a personal or professional interest in the area of intercultural education. It is worth noting that no preparation was required nor suggested before the interview.

4.6.2   Individual in-depth interviews

As illustrated in the previous Sections, the method most often used for data collection in hermeneutic phenomenology is individual in-depth interviews. They are also commonly used in research on teacher cognition, which is interested in exploring phenomena that cannot be directly observed (Borg 2015). For this study, the 'general interview guide approach' (Turner 2010), found in Appendix D, was chosen. This approach is effective in eliciting implicit - and most likely unconscious - beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts of participants about complex and sensitive issues, such as the ones explored in the present study. This structure is also considered more suited for exploring what a group of people believe, think, and do about a specific phenomenon.

Following a semi-structured format allows participants to 'discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view' (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 349). Furthermore, this format aids the collection of 'in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic' (Turner 2010, p. 754), meaning that this kind of conversation unfolds spontaneously as the interview is guided as opposed to being dictated by a strict set of questions. An advantage of this format is that it allows the exploration of themes while giving unexpected ideas space to surface. This is consistent with the choice of qualitative methods that privilege human experience, even if they can still follow themes that were decided in advance, thus allowing for both inductive and deductive data analysis. Moreover, semi-structured interviews allow for clarifying and probing questions.

The value of interviewing in phenomenological research is that it is necessary to gather experiential narrative material (van Manen 1990, p. 66). I was able to access not only what participants consciously know about the phenomenon, but also what they experience. The relaxed, conversational character of semi-structured interviews allows respondents to feel comfortable and at ease, which is vital for collecting rich data. The advantages of such a structure is that it 'facilitates rapport, allows a greater flexibility of coverage and allows the interview to go into novel areas, and it tends to produce richer data' (Smith 2008, p. 59). Finally, participants tend to feel freer to share their stories rather than adhering to a question and answer

format. As explained by (Brenner 2006, p. 357), this type of 'interview, often also called a qualitative interview, gives an informant the space to express meaning in his or her own words and to give direction to the interview process'.

The main disadvantage is, of course, the limited comparability of responses. However, following a guide means that all areas should be covered across interviews so that data collection becomes somewhat systematic. In order to overcome this obstacle, when designing the interview guide, main themes or areas of interest (Birmingham & Wilkinson 2003) needed to be identified *a priori*, and in order to maintain some consistency across data, some initial wording of questions and a list of issues to be investigated with each participant were drafted. Due to the complexity of uncovering why teachers think what they think and do what they do, the present study has selected to use the 'onion model' developed by (Korthagen 2004) to explore the different layers of change in teacher cognition. The model is illustrated in Figure 8:

The onion model

Environment — What do I encounter?
(What am I dealing with?)
Behavior — What do I do?
Competencies — What am I competent at?
Beliefs — What do I believe?
Identity — Who am I (in my work)?
Mission — What inspires me?
(What greater entity do I feel connected with?)
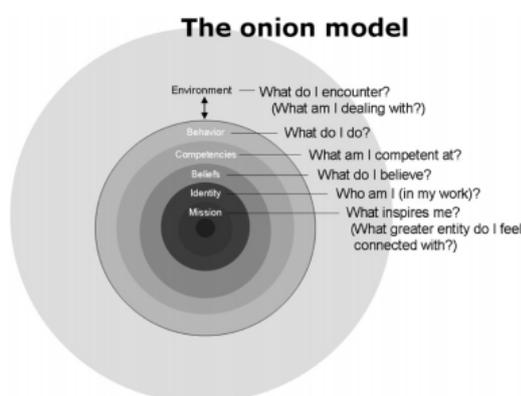
Figure 8: The onion model; Korthagen 2004

Korthagen (2017; 2004) extensively explains why competency-based approaches to teacher quality are problematic and proposes this model as a more effective way to understand what is referred to as teacher cognition. Specifically, this model overcomes the limits of teacher cognition research because it considers not only the cognitive and behavioural aspects, but also affective and motivational ones (Borg 2019, p. 1152). Moreover, it overcomes the issue of situatedness, because the outer layer involves an exploration of the school and classroom contexts in which

teachers operate. This layer is often overlooked in research about teacher cognition (Borg 2019, p. 1153).

For this reason, these seven areas of teacher cognition were investigated using both the questions in my interview guide and by encouraging participants to continue with their descriptions of experience. This occurred during the first interview. In several instances, it was unnecessary to prompt preservice teachers with questions, but rather they moved from one layer to another by themselves.

A second interview was held with each participant, approximately one month after the first one. During this follow up interview, I provided each participant with a summary of my understanding of what emerged in the first one, and asked them clarifying questions or to elaborate on certain relevant aspects. I focused on uncovering personal experiences that influenced the more inner layers. In particular, these were beliefs, identity, and mission. The second interview also applied the theory of the hermeneutic circle, as it encouraged reflection on previously told stories.

4.6.3 Interview guide questions

The research questions concern teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to the intercultural capability in the language classroom. The two broad questions, namely *(1) How do preservice teachers perceive and interpret the intercultural capability?* and *(2) In what ways do they adopt an intercultural language teaching approach?* are subdivided into six themes that match the areas to be explored during the individual in-depth interviews.

All areas are believed to have an influence on participants' ways in which they might interpret and envisage the teaching of the intercultural capability. In particular, the interview guide (see Appendix D) utilised in the present study draws from Korthagen's onion model (2004) and the questions pertinent to this study were designed to cover the areas identified by Korthagen's onion model (2004). These are:

1. Environment, which usually includes the school, the classroom, and the students. In this study, the sub-themes identified under this theme concerned external influences, namely how the curriculum documents, the

teacher education course, and the school environment impact on preservice teachers' pedagogical choices;

2. Behaviour, which indicates teachers' actions. In this study, this theme included the ways in which preservice teachers teach, or intend to teach, Languages adopting an intercultural approach;

3. Competencies, which in this study included the level of confidence preservice teachers reported having about the ILTL approach;

4. Beliefs, namely preservice teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions about culture, about language, and about the intercultural approach;

5. Identity, usually conceived as perception of a teacher's "role". In this study, personal past experiences of engaging with different cultures and languages were grouped under this theme;

6. Mission, namely the motivation for choosing teaching as a career.

The first question was designed to elicit the influence of contextual factors – these consisted mainly of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), which included the supervised teaching practice, as well as being exposed to curriculum documents - on the extent to which the teacher adopted an intercultural approach. The second question was designed to elicit the extent to which teachers consider they integrate language and culture teaching, and what methods, materials, assessment tasks they devise or intend to devise for such purpose. The third question concerns teachers' knowledge of the intercultural capability, regardless if this was based on curriculum policies or on their own interpretation. The fourth question was designed to elicit participants' commitment in developing learners who are interculturally aware, and the last two questions aimed at understanding the underlying motivation and goals for adopting an intercultural approach to language teaching and to determine if the intercultural approach was used to comply with policy requirements or as a personal commitment.

In the first interview I asked general questions following the interview guide (Appendix D) in order to let the participants articulate their own views. Often, participants were covering all areas of teacher cognition without being prompted. Once I was satisfied all areas had been covered, I finished the interview and informed the participants I was going to contact them again for a follow up

interview. I then transcribed and read the interviews in order to brainstorm follow up questions prior to the follow-up interview. During the second round of interviews I tended to ask more specific questions to clarify any points. The process of data collection occurred at different stages, meaning I interviewed the first two participants close to each other, then I did the initial coding, and then I interviewed them a second time. This iterative process allowed me to direct attention to areas I had not predicted would emerge.

The following table shows how the two main research questions were subdivided into six sub-questions:

Main research question	Inner layers of Korthagen's (2004) onion model
• How do preservice teachers perceive and interpret the intercultural capability?	• How do preservice teachers conceptualise the Intercultural Capability in the Victorian Curriculum? [Beliefs]; • How do personal experiences shape preservice teachers' perceptions of the Intercultural Capability as presented in the Curriculum? [Identity]; • How do preservice teachers perceive their role and mission in relation to the intercultural project? [Mission].
Main research question	Outer layers of Korthagen's (2004) onion model
• In what ways do they adopt an intercultural language teaching approach?	• How do preservice teachers envision enacting the Intercultural Capability in their

	language classroom? [Practice];
	• Do preservice teachers feel adequately prepared to incorporate the Intercultural Capability into their language classroom? [Competence];
	• What influence does the context have on their understanding and practices? [Environment].

Table 4: Research questions and structure of the interview guide

4.6.4 Artefacts

Participants also shared any artefacts they deemed useful to illuminate their own ideas about the intercultural capability. These included the university assignments that had theoretical meaning to the participants or the lesson plans that included an intercultural orientation to teaching Languages. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic's restrictions, organising classroom observations was impossible. In light of this, these documents added information about how they envisage teaching the intercultural capability.

4.7   THEMATIC ANALYSIS

A deep body of work details the use of Thematic Analysis (TA) as the preferred method for data analysis in phenomenological inquiry (Sundler et al. 2018). The advantage of TA is that it can be coupled with any theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke 2006) and is considered particularly suited for embedding critical perspectives (Lawless & Chen 2019). This makes it possible to read the multiple sources of data against the understanding and theorisation of the intercultural capability as illustrated in Chapter Three.

In view of the complexity of uncovering the factors that influence teachers' behaviours and thoughts, the main themes were linked to the areas of interest based on Korthagen's onion model (2004), illustrated in Section 4.6.3. This made it

possible to explore teacher cognition systematically, while ensuring the comparability of responses. In this sense, data were analysed deductively. However, sub-themes emerged from multiple readings of the texts, which resulted in the detection of codes. It is important to note that the analysis was a constant process of digging for themes and revising areas of interest as the data collection process proceeded, rather than done at the end of the data gathering process.

The analysis followed the recommended procedures for TA as described in van Manen's seminal work, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (1990). According to van Manen (1990, p. 78), TA is 'the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work' (van Manen 1990, p. 78).

In particular, the data in the present study are participants' accounts of their own lived experiences in relation to the concept of the intercultural capability. The texts I worked with were the interview audio-recordings and transcripts, which I engaged with using the hermeneutic circle. Examining the text involves reflecting on its content in order to discover something 'telling', 'meaningful', 'thematic' (van Manen 1990, p. 86). More precisely, or perhaps more vaguely, according to van Manen (1990, p. 79), 'phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*'. This definition might be perceived as vague, but van Manen himself claims that a strict method or protocol for TA is not useful, and neither is a rigid definition of the idea of theme.

This relates to my thesis because the centrality of the participants' lived experiences was the main interest of this project. Allowing for some flexibility in the data analysis process was necessary, which is why I present narrative results. The main themes are made to correspond to the six layers of the onion model (Korthagen 2004), which is used to analyse change in teacher cognition. This begins at the outer layers such as environment and behaviour, and moves to the inner layers of identity and mission.

Every interview was audio-recorded so that I could focus on the participants' responses, rather than taking notes, and transcribed verbatim after the interviews occurred.

The first stage of analysis involved a continuous and thorough immersion in the data. During this stage, I listened to the interview transcripts and transcribed them, then I read the texts again, while listening to the interview recordings. This corresponds to the hermeneutic circle stage of initially reading the text. After transcribing the first few interviews and performing the initial coding, it became clear that teachers' understanding of the intercultural capability is deeply connected to their biographies, which influenced their identity and mission as teachers of Languages. Therefore, the second interview was conducted to ask the preservice teachers whether they saw any connection between their biography and experience of the intercultural capability, as well as clarifying or deepening any relevant aspects.

This iterative process finds confirmation in (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2013, p.76). While it is useful to establish major themes in advance, new themes are likely to be found in the process of analysing and interpreting data.

Throughout the process of data analysis, I coded the interview transcripts and again listened to the recordings. I then continued teasing out themes and sub-themes. I assigned them into codes following Korthagen's onion model (2004), which corresponds to the hermeneutic circle stage of attempting to understand parts of the whole.

Table of steps employed for data collection:	
Method and steps	**Purpose and process**
Survey, conducted prior to the interview	• To obtain some preliminary data about participants and to introduce the topic of conversation.
First interview, following the interview guide	• To obtain accounts of how participants experience the intercultural capability and ILTL, both during their teaching practicum and as part of their teacher education course.
Step 1.	• Interview first participant. • Transcribe recorded audio.

	• Create a text of participant's lived experiences.
	• Read transcribed text and listen to the audio simultaneously to obtain a deeper understanding of the preservice teacher's lived experience.
Step 2.	• Interview second participant.
	• Transcribe recorded audio.
	• Create a text of participant's lived experiences.
	• Read transcribed text and listen to the audio simultaneously to obtain a deeper understanding of the preservice teacher's lived experience.
Initial coding	• Read transcribed texts again and perform initial coding.
	• Engage in the hermeneutic circle.
Step 3.	• Interview remaining participants
	• Transcribe recorded audio.
	• Create a text of participants' lived experiences.
	• Read transcribed text and listen to the audio simultaneously to obtain a deeper understanding of the preservice teachers' lived experiences.
	• Assign a theme to each code.
Second interview	• Initially organised to have the opportunity to ask follow up questions to clarify any points.
	• In the course of data analysis, it became clear

	that it was necessary to investigate participants' prior personal experiences to assess the impact on their conceptualisation and practical application on the Intercultural. Narrative inquiry lens added.
Step 4.	• Conduct follow up interviews • Transcribe recorded audio. • Create a narrative text of participants' lived experiences. • Read transcribed text and listen to the audio simultaneously to obtain a deeper understanding of the preservice teachers' lived experience. • Read transcribed texts again and perform further coding. • Hermeneutic circle.

Table 5: Data Analysis Process

In TA, researchers engage in 'an interpretative relationship with the transcript' (Smith & Osborn 2007, p. 66). This matches the theoretical framework of the present study. For this reason, I needed to declare my own positioning, values, and beliefs (see Section 4.8.1). Reflexivity was essential at all stages of data collection and data analysis. For van Manen (2007), reflection is an essential component of phenomenology as it allows the researcher to describe what becomes evident from the account of participants' lived experiences.

The thematic approach is always inductive, so themes are derived from the analysis (Sunder et al. 2018). However, using the interview guide allowed for some deductive analysis. In particular, the analysis began with a search for meaning under the selected themes and continued exploring different meanings being identified and often connected to each other. This was a useful process in gaining a clearer understanding of presenting my results. It was soon realised that the close

interrelationships between themes and the presence of contradicting statements made regarding certain sub-themes could not be represented in a straightforward manner, for example, by grouping them in a table. To render justice to the complexity of the lived experiences of preservice teachers, it was therefore decided to present the data in a narrative form.

The final stages of TA, including reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; producing conclusions (Braun & Clark 2006) preceded re-entering the hermeneutic circle, meaning that a second reading of the interview texts occurred. This means that once I gained an understanding of the parts of the whole, I obtained a final understanding of the whole through the parts. However, to ensure this understanding was complete, I had to stay in the hermeneutic circle and re-engage with the texts in order to discover more meanings and connections. In this process, I was constantly moving back and forth, at times between individual texts, other times within the same text.

Data was then organised into tables to connect the codes under the corresponding theme for ease of comparison. The following table provides a summary of themes and codes identified:

Themes	Codes
Environment	• Influence of the Victorian Curriculum on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability • Influence of practicum experience on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability • Influence of academic component of ITE on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability
Behaviour	• Teaching of cultural practices (festivals, traditions, food, etc.) • Teaching of lifestyle and institutions (habits, schooling, etc.) • Teaching of language-in-culture and culture-in-language • In/ex-clusion of students' cultures • Alternative pedagogies
Competencies	• Difficulty of teaching the intercultural capability • Ease of teaching the intercultural capability
Beliefs	• Intercultural capability as cultural competence • Intercultural capability as empathy, respect, and cultural sensitivity • Intercultural capability for social justice
Identity	• As learners of languages • As migrants • Other personal experiences that impact on conceptualisation and application of the Intercultural capability

Mission	
	• Developing a stronger sense of belonging to global and local communities in their learners
	• Sharing love for their language and culture
	• Teaching languages to open up opportunities and for students' well-being

Table 6: Thematic Analysis

4.8   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The *Application for Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants* (HRE19038) was submitted and approved by Victoria University prior to making contacts with potential participants. This is a crucial step in ensuring that research involving human participants is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

While designing my research project I faced several ethical issues related to bias and trust, familiarity and confidentiality, as well as to power and privilege. The first considerations concern bias and trust. According to Hellawell (2006), researchers need to find a balance between developing rapport with participants and maintaining distance. As a language teacher I engage in a 'social and political activity' (Byram 2008, p. 3), and my colleagues might already be aware of my values and beliefs. This means there might be a risk of manipulation or contamination of data. As my goal is to understand teachers' beliefs and experiences and how these are affected by current policy documents and affect learners' development, I have overcome these issues by choosing to conduct research with participants who are outside my work environment and who do not know me personally. Selecting to position myself as an outsider allowed for informed consent while avoiding informant bias. Selecting to work with participants who did not know me also allowed me to overcome other obstacles, namely those of confidentiality and anonymity. These would have been difficult to maintain in my own work environment. Collecting data from participants who do not know me minimises the potential risks that 'insiderness' can cause. It also means that data can be collected in a more 'controlled' setting. Specifically, the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix B)

stated that participation was voluntary and confidentiality was assured through the use of pseudonyms for both the individual and the institution.

Further to the above, according to Drever (1995 cited in Mercer 2007, p. 7), when it comes to responding to research, peoples' openness is influenced by the way they perceive the researcher. Chavez (2008, p. 474) adds that depending on how researchers position themselves in relation to participants, participants will position themselves. I have attempted to avoid disclosing detailed information about myself as a researcher-practitioner and about the theory and aims of my research project to avoid influencing them. For this reason, the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix B) was designed to contain enough information to make informants aware of the topic without affecting their responses.

Ensuring that the present study was based on a reliable approach was of utmost importance during the research design and implementation. Particular attention was paid to obtaining consent, maintaining confidentiality, and minimising any potential harm. After distributing the *Information to Participants* form (Appendix A), I was contacted by potential participants, who were informed that the interview would have lasted approximately an hour and that, with their consent, the interview would be audio-recorded to help collect data accurately. Participants were also required to indicate that they understood that their participation was voluntary and understood that their responses would be anonymous. They were also informed that they could withdraw at at any point. All this was documented in the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix B), which they returned and signed, formally agreeing to take part in my study. Due to the uncertainty around restrictions in place during the pandemic, interviews were conducted individually via videoconference and audio recorded.

If participants experienced emotional distress during the interview, they were informed that their well-being was prioritised over the research. The *Information to Participants* form (Appendix A) included information on support available in the event the participation in the interview caused any stress or discomfort.

Creswell and Miller (2000) propose a framework to ensure the validity of qualitative studies. In particular, determining the validity of qualitative studies depends on the lens of the researcher, on the lens of participants, and on the lens of the readers (Creswell and Miller 2000, p. 126). In this study, the procedures used include: researcher reflexivity, collaboration with participants, and thick, rich

descriptions. For the latter, the aim is to create "verisimilitude" (Creswell and Miller 2000, p. 129), which is done in this study in Chapter Five with a narrative account of the interviews and quotes verbatim by the participants. In this study, the research is conducted with participants, rather than on them. Finally, a way to ensure the validity of findings is to for the researcher to disclose any "assumptions, beliefs, and biases" related to the research project. In line with this study, this procedure is situated within "the critical paradigm where individuals reflect on the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape their [the researchers'] interpretation" (Creswell & Miller 2000, p. 127). My positionality is discussed in the next Section.

4.8.1 Situating the Self

In this Section, I will explore my role and positionality as researcher-practitioner. I argue that it would have been impossible for me to adopt "bracketing" because I share the lived experience of the phenomenon under scrutiny, as I will demonstrate in this Section. Relatedly, Cameron et al. (1992, p. 5) state that; 'researchers cannot help being socially located persons. We inevitably bring our biographies and our subjectivities to every stage of the research process and this influences the questions we ask and the ways in which we try to find answers'. This aligns with hermeneutic phenomenology, which conceives knowledge as 'co-constructed' (Sloan & Bowe 2013, p. 1298) and allows researchers to bring in their 'background, prior knowledge and experience', which are expected to influence both data collection and data analysis (Sloan & Bowe 2013, p. 1298).

In particular, I have chosen to position myself along a continuum, or even multiple continua (Hellawell 2006, p. 484), of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' (Chavez 2008, p. 474), as theorised by post-structuralists and post-modernists who reject a strict dichotomy between the two categories (Chavez 2008). Such a notion is present in Mercer (2007), who sees the boundaries between them as highly 'permeable' and 'unstable'; in Victoria (2011), who challenges the stability of researchers' values and beliefs; and in (Milligan 2016), p. 248), who defines the 'in-betweener' as someone who has agency to position themselves in a 'third space' (Bhabha 1994). McNess, Arthur and Crossley (2015, p. 305) recognise that researchers 'have multiple identities, which can play out differently in different situations'. Finally, Hellawell (2006, p. 487) contends that because both perspectives

bring their own advantages and disadvantages, ideally, the researcher 'should be both inside and outside'.

I am simultaneously occupying the following positions for two reasons. First, my profession as a practising teacher of Languages in Victoria positions me towards the insider end of the continuum when conducting my research in Victoria. However, as a researcher, I seek some degree of detachment and objectivity. Second, while I am currently working as a teacher in the Australian education system, Australian schools are not my 'native' school environment because I have lived my entire student experience in another country. Furthermore, because pedagogy is a 'socially situated phenomenon' (Kelly 2014, p. 253) and 'teacher research is engaged and committed' (Zeni 1998, p. 14), I cannot expect to stay at the outsider end of the spectrum. However, reflexivity should help with distancing myself and making sense of any emotions and moral judgements encountered while interviewing participants and interpreting data.

My study follows a qualitative study design and, notably, ethical issues are more complex and less straightforward when using qualitative methodologies rather than in quantitative research. This means that simply following guidelines and protocols might not be sufficient to protect my participants' data. While the Application for Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants was submitted and approved by Victoria University prior to making contacts with potential participants, Sikes (2006, p. 105) recognises that obtaining ethics approval should not relieve researchers of their 'moral and ethical responsibilities' and that each research question produces its own ethical dilemmas. Breen (2007, p. 163) and Watt (2007, p. 82) recommend reflexivity as essential for addressing ethical dilemmas that might arise from qualitative research.

My research is sensitive as it involves the analysis and interpretation of my participants' pedagogy and methodology. Reflexivity can be useful in uncovering the ethical dilemmas that might arise from being positioned as researcher simultaneously inside and outside the researched. Reflexivity is seen as 'ethical practice' by Victoria (2011, p. 77) in view of its potential to create disruption to the researcher's prior values and beliefs.

Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012, p. 76) argues that being a critical researcher 'requires a marriage of a multitude of philosophical orientations, and a continuously

flowing and permeable multiple resource mechanism that also includes a willingness and openness to participate in listening, questioning, reflexivity, and dialogue'. Obviously, this activity cannot only be carried out a priori, but must continue throughout the research process (Victoria 2011). This also aligns with hermeneutic phenomenology, where reflexivity is considered helpful in 'interpreting the meanings discovered, or add value to […] interpretations' (Sloan & Bowe 2013, p. 1297).

In order to disclose any influences and biases that I bring into the research project, I wrote my personal narrative. Here I reflect on my interest in the phenomenon of the intercultural capability as well as in Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning.

My interest in cultural diversity and learning (and later teaching) languages can be traced back to my being born from an Italian father and a mother born in former Yugoslavia from an Anglo-Australian mother and an ethnically Slavic father, who spoke both Serbo-Croatian and Italian. My hometown of Trieste, in north-eastern Italy and on the border with Slovenia, which used to be the major port of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, also had an influence as, there, not noticing cultural and linguistic diversity is almost impossible. Yet, I believe it stretches further back to my grandfather's experience of leaving Europe for Australia in the aftermath of WWII, then moving back with his new family to Yugoslavia, and subsequently arriving as refugees in Italy; to my grandmother's experience of leaving her homeland to follow her husband across different countries; and even earlier to all the stories of displacement and migration experienced by my ancestors. No single generation that did not experience some kind of voluntary or involuntary movement across borders, either because these shifted or because leaving the place they were born in was the only option. I grew up hearing these stories, about Jewish brothers leaving Russia to avoid persecution and Irish and Scottish peasants being transported to an unknown land on the side of the planet surrounded. Growing up, different languages and dialects surrounded me and I believe this had a direct influence in choosing to enrol in foreign languages courses at University.

Attaining a Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting made my decision and process of migration to Australia easier, and this is one of the reasons why I value learning languages, not only for myself, but also for my students. How did I become

a teacher in the first place? It happened by chance or by choice, I cannot lean towards one option in particular, and I can say the same for ending up living in a multicultural city such as Melbourne and working in highly multicultural school settings (after all, it is probably quite difficult and rare to find monocultural public schools in metropolitan Melbourne these days). I can assume that inhabiting these (physical and metaphorical) spaces and working in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous settings has definitely sparked my research interest in this area.

Once in Australia, I clearly remembered facing for the first time concepts and perceptions of Italianness that I had never considered, both among non-Italian heritage Australians and Italian heritage Australians, and I realised that having my identity questioned, by others and by myself, while growing up as not-fully-Italian in Italy, made me particularly interested in notions of culture and cultural identity. Undoubtedly, my background, as well as the cultural, social and linguistic forms of capital I carry, shape and inform in specific ways my theoretical understanding and pedagogical stance on intercultural education.

My career as a secondary school teacher started after moving to Victoria, where I completed my Master's Degree studies; therefore, I have the experience of being a student in the Italian education system, and a teacher in the Australian education system. During my teaching rounds, I recall noticing stereotypical, and at times false or at least outdated, representations of Italianness in the Italian classroom, and ethnocentric attitudes towards EAL/D learners. I identified somehow with my culturally and linguistically diverse learners of EAL/D whose identity was constantly assumed or challenged by the institution of schooling, as well as with all learners in my classroom of Languages, engaging with concepts of Italian culture as learnt in Australian society, at home, and at school, and how these concepts were relatable, or not, to concepts of cultural diversity.

As soon as I entered the education system, I was made aware of the oppressive and alienating structures of dominant discourses in schooling. This inspired my interest in studies on identity and motivation in Second Language Acquisition, as well as in antiracist, cosmopolitan, democratic, and intercultural theories of education.

As a teacher of Italian and EAL/D in Victoria, I recognise that much of my understanding derives from my personal and professional experiences, which do shape and inform the aims of this study, as well as my relation to participants in this study.

The critical approach to this study derives from the observation of the external social reality and my personal perception of it. Indeed, researchers who follow critical theory adopt an 'activism stance' (Fine 1993) and do not attempt to be neutral or invisible. Rather, they take a clear position in unmasking hegemonic discourses and practices and advocate for those marginalised by them, while offering alternatives (Madison 2005, p. 4). Accordingly, the role of critical researchers is to contribute to 'emancipatory knowledge and discourses of social justice' (Madison 2005, p. 4), in order to produce a fair society (Denzin & Lincoln 2018).

4.9 CHANGES TO DATA COLLECTION

The initial research design involved a comparative study between Victorian and Italian schools. Due to the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pandemic, the process of data collection originally planned was affected. In particular, because of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to conduct classroom observations in Victorian school settings as schools remain closed for a significant amount of time and, even if they reopened, there was no guarantee researchers would be permitted on site. Travel was not an option so the comparative study could not occur.

It was then decided to focus on preservice teachers rather than in-service teachers and to conduct interviews online.

4.10 LIMITATIONS

The main and obvious limitation of this study is that due to its qualitative nature, it is not possible to make conclusions that are valid for the whole profession. However, it is also true that each individual's experience is simultaneously unique and universal, or as Atkinson (2007) contends, 'each individual life experience is simultaneously in some ways like no one else's (unique), in some ways like some others', and in some ways like everyone else's (universal).'

A limitation of this study is that it was not possible to collect data via classroom observations due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This limits the breadth of conclusions that can be made between teachers' beliefs and practice as the study relies on teachers' self-reported practices or envisioning of their future classroom behaviour.

Due to time constraints, conducting a longitudinal study was also impossible. A longitudinal study would have provided richer data and highlighted changes in teachers' attitudes over time. Research shows that all aspects of teacher cognition are constantly re-negotiated based on what they experience in their personal and professional lives (see Santoro 2009).

Because the cohort of participants in this study only includes preservice teachers with a migrant background, who were the only ones who demonstrated interested in participating in this study, it would be necessary to conduct a similar study with preservice teachers with no experience of migration to understand whether it was a mere coincidence or whether those who have experience of being the Other are more sensitive to the topic of intercultural education.

4.11   SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This Chapter has articulated the methodology adopted in the present study. The research process that was followed in this study emerged and was altered along the way as new research questions were discovered, rather than being completely preconceived. The theoretical framework and the philosophical underpinning were antecedents to establishing the methods to be followed.

This study's methodology can be explained as follows. First of all, the phenomenon of interest was established: the intercultural project in education. In the present study, this concept was explored from a theoretical perspective under the label of intercultural capability and practically linked to the reality of the language classroom under the label of Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL).

Following the Literature Review in Chapter Two, it was concluded that this concept escapes rigid classifications and is impossible to delimit in a precise way. Relatedly, teachers need to grapple with more complex decisions than redesigning materials and activities for their learners.

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, the choice was made to exclusively use a qualitative methodology, and particularly to adopt a phenomenological approach. Individual in-depth interviews were selected as main method for data collection. Considering that the collected data would be language-based, hermeneutic phenomenology was considered most appropriate for interpreting the data. These were analysed via Thematic Analysis (TA), which allowed for the exploration of the phenomenon in all its aspects and nuances.

Once data collection and analysis started, however, it became clear that the participants' answers were contradicting and that themes interwove. This led to the realisation that the close interrelationships between themes and the presence of contradicting statements made regarding certain sub-themes could not be represented in a straightforward manner, for example, by grouping them in a table. For this reason, the results of TA are presented in a narrative form. In this way, it is possible to render justice to the complexity of the lived experiences of preservice teachers.

The choice of adding narrative inquiry to the research design stemmed from the realisation that subjective experiences are best understood when we tell stories of them (Langdridge 2007). This allows giving voice to participants and doing justice to the kaleidoscopic nature of participants' interpretations and declinations of the phenomenon under study. Because participants spontaneously introduced their biographies to justify their understandings and practical applications of the intercultural capability, short biographies were written to highlight the influence of their past personal experiences.

Figure 9 further illustrates the steps that that were taken to reach the final research design.
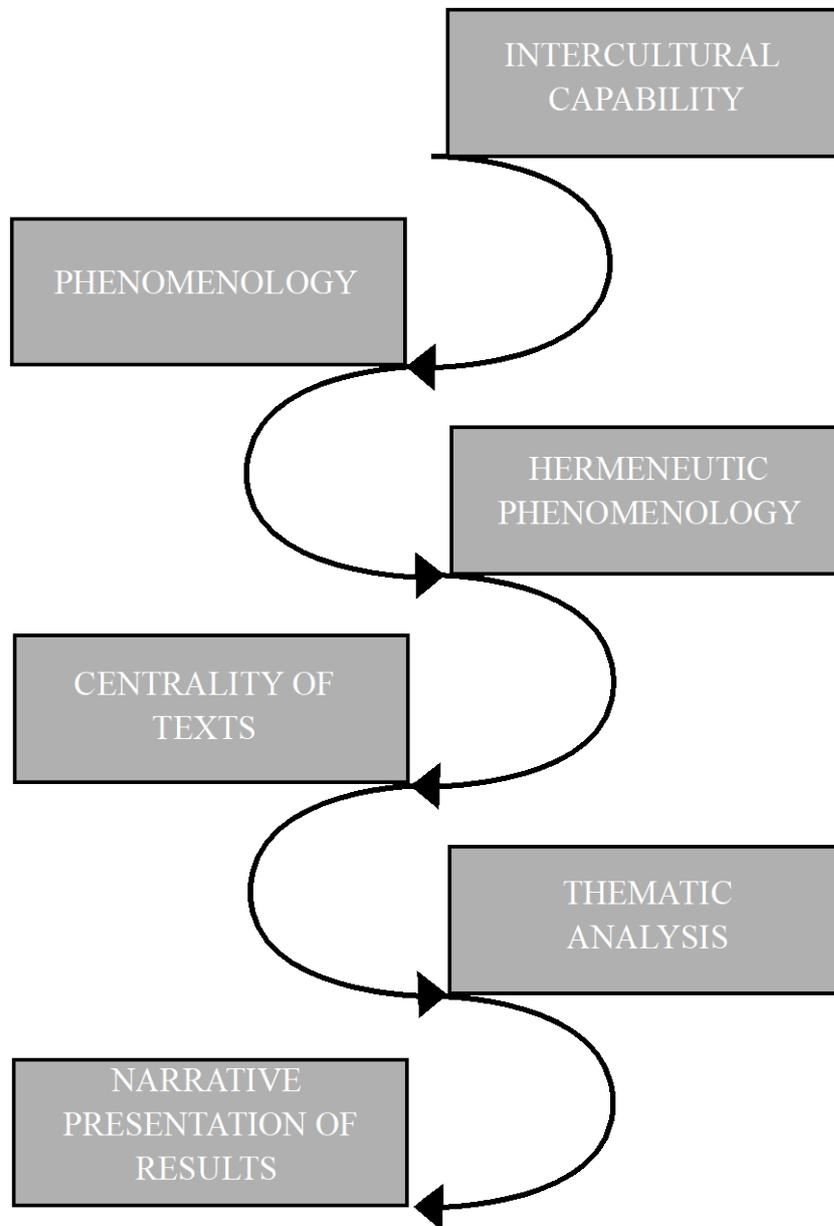
Figure 9: Methodology of this study

Chapter 5: Narrative Presentation of Results

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Teacher cognition in relation to the pedagogical theory and practice of teaching Languages within an intercultural perspective was investigated based on statements made about participants' awareness of the intercultural agenda, their attitudes towards it, their underlying goals and motivation to adopt it (or not), and the ways in which the societal and teaching contexts influence their behaviour.

This Chapter presents the results of the investigation. Initially, I had planned to group data from the interviews based on every single layer of Korthagen's onion model (2004) which was made to correspond to a theme. However, because isolating every single theme was not possible in a way that rendered justice to the views expressed by participants, I decided to cluster two main themes together in order to illuminate the close interrelationship between factors affecting teachers' conceptualisation and practice of Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL). In my presentation of the results, I compare and contrast one participant's views to others'. I believe this highlights the degree of similarity and difference in these preservice teachers' conceptualisations and applications of the intercultural capability.

It is worth noting that preservice teachers who had not reflected on the topic of ILTL prior to their participation in this study were also those who tended to focus on the external layers, namely environment and behaviour. On the contrary, those who had already considered ILTL focused more on the inner layers of teacher cognition, namely identity and mission.

5.2   RESULTS FROM SURVEYS

The survey findings are significant as all participants reported low or moderate confidence levels when teaching the intercultural capability (with three responding 'moderately confident', one 'not sure', two 'slightly confident', one 'not confident'. It makes sense for preservice teachers to feel uncertain about their teaching abilities. However, this is still considered a relevant finding as it possibly indicates a lack of sufficient engagement with this concept in teacher education programs and during the practicum component of supervised teaching practice at school.

The most important finding that emerged from the survey is that all seven participants considered the intercultural capability an integral part of teaching languages. The fact that they agreed to participate in this study was a predictor of this attitude towards it. However, it is still significant, considering that one of the research aims was to establish whether language teachers subscribe to the aims of the intercultural agenda in education. The answer is a definite yes.

Another interesting finding, perhaps unexpected in view of the cohort, is that most participants gave their cultural identification as corresponding to their nationality of origin, with two identifying with their dual nationalities, and only two providing more nuanced responses, one including local belonging and one global belonging.

At the time of the interviews, all participants were enrolled in their second year of the Master of Teaching. The majority of participants in this study are female (6 out of 7), which corresponds to the fact that the profession is largely female dominated, especially for the discipline of Languages. The age groups varied, with three participants under the age of thirty, three under the age of fourty and one over the age of fifty. All participants speak at least two languages, and two, who were also the ones with more elaborate cultural identifications, speak more than two.

5.3   RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

5.3.1   Elisa

From the initial survey, I find out my first participant is in her 20s and is currently in her second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary); her methods are

Languages and Humanities; she speaks Italian, English, Japanese, and Korean; and she identifies as *"Italian/Southern Italian"*. She feels moderately confident about teaching the intercultural capability and believes it should definitely be embedded into her language teaching practice.

Environment and beliefs

During our first interview, I quickly realise that her understanding of the intercultural capability is deeply influenced by her own life experiences, especially as a language learner. When I ask the first question about whether on placement or during her teacher qualification training she has come across the intercultural capability, she confirms that it is part of the content delivered. However, she explains: *"it is something I would have done **regardless** because I have studied languages my whole life"*. Based on this utterance, it seems that learning languages automatically develops the intercultural capability. However, this statement is immediately contradicted by introducing the idea of travelling and living overseas as more efficient ways of becoming intercultural:

*"I have to say that what I am noticing is that not necessarily everyone in my course has the same sensitivity, **people who haven't travelled a lot, who have always been in their own small town, and then suddenly decide to become language teachers, they might not be as culturally sensitive**."* [Beliefs]

Later in the interview, she will elaborate further by saying that:

*"I don't think they [language learning and the intercultural capability] are related at all. Because like I said, that's something that depends on your own level of understanding and social awareness. Like, how you see social justice issues, and you know, all of that. **The way you see that area of education has nothing to do with your level of expertise or fluency in the language**."* [Beliefs]

These statements show her conceptualisation of intercultural education as education for social justice and against discrimination. While on the one hand it might be true that learning another language provides more direct access to the people who speak that language, on the other hand, fluency in another language does not necessarily correspond to the absence of prejudices towards other social groups,

in the same way as learning additional languages does not automatically translate into increased social justice awareness and open-mindedness.

Here, it is her personal identity as a language learner, traveller, and migrant that shapes her own conceptualisation of the intercultural capability:

"*Absolutely, yeah I mean it is something I would have done that [taught the intercultural capability] regardless because I guess I am just culturally sensitive, also because I have a background in languages so it comes naturally to me. It comes down to the teacher's personal sensitivity, but it is a good thing that it is explicitly added to the curriculum. In the end I think it goes down to your sensitivity as a teacher and I am sure not all the teachers have it. People who haven't travelled a lot or who moved to Australia to become a teacher and do not examine their prejudice do not have intercultural understanding.*" [Beliefs]

Since her personal experiences are acknowledged to have made her more interculturally capable, she considers the addition of the intercultural capability to the Curriculum a welcome development that will assist other teachers in gaining awareness of this aspect: "*the fact that it is pointed out by an official document helps those teachers to be more aware of it. I believe it is a good thing that it is explicitly added to the curriculum.*" [Environment]

The concept of 'environment' here also includes the context of teaching, that is to say, the policies teachers are required to adhere to as well as the reality of schools and classrooms. This also has a role in redirecting teachers' attention. However, while curriculum focuses to the intercultural capability, schools take it away. In fact, during placement, Elisa noted that teachers are expected to submit unit plans in advance and to follow shared lesson plans. She recognises that this is an obstacle to teachers' agency and to her ability to avoid transmitting a quick portrait of one people's characteristics, which is what ends up being done for the sake of time and ticking boxes under pressures of standardisation and accountability.

"*I don't really think it's the curriculum itself, because when you look at the curriculum, you have all the names, elaborations, and they might give you examples for what you can do with it. But they are just examples, what you should look at are the outcomes… the student should be able to do this, this and that. […] I think that most teachers, just, you know, just chose the easier route to it because they are*

*always in a rush. [...] **I believe that the way schools work is the problem**. When teachers have a meeting, they discuss what topics they want to cover and this often happens at the start of the year, when they haven't met their students yet. Another problem is that all teachers need to agree on those topics and **they need to stick to the plan because all children will have to complete the same assessment tasks**. On placement, when I observe teachers, they have a meeting, and they discuss what they want to talk about, sometimes I find the things that they come up with very boring, extremely boring. So, **I definitely want to give my students more freedom, according to what they are interested in**. Yeah, obviously, you know, making sure that they stick to what they are required to know by the end of the year, as in their outcomes. But the content can change, I feel like we [teachers] **should have more freedom as to what we can change to make them more interested**."* [Environment]

The ways schools operate is recognised as a burden to aligning beliefs and behaviour.

On the other hand, she recognises the positive impact of the teacher education course she is undertaking in addressing issues of cultural diversity and developing culturally responsive practices. However, the course is not changing her philosophy of education, but rather reinforcing her beliefs:

*"The course I am taking now, especially the unit about critical numeracy and literacy for diverse communities… Here we talked a lot about stuff that I already knew. Obviously, it's not like I knew everything before, absolutely not. **It was a confirmation because the course was great. The lecturer was amazing, she had very progressive views** and that contributed as well."* [Environment]

The idea of teachers' beliefs not changing during teacher education, but rather solidifying, emerges here.

Beliefs and behaviour

Having established that her interpretation of the intercultural capability includes a politically engaged attitude (*savoir s'engager* Byram 1997), I ask her how she intends to put it in practice in her language classroom:

*"I thought about it. And it's not an easy question to answer. I'll tell you why. Because to me, the intercultural capability is not just like, "Oh, you know, we have to respect the culture, the target culture of the language we are studying", for me it's also a mutual thing, like the way I see it, **we should be able, as teachers, we should be able to respect the culture of the people who study the language. And classes will be diverse.** So it's, it's harder than we might think."* [Beliefs]

When asked to think about the practical implementation of an intercultural perspective to her own teaching, she further interprets the intercultural capability, which is thought to be about respecting the target language and culture. This is not necessarily the view expressed in policy documents, any reference to a specific target language or culture is nowhere in policy documents. Interestingly, she assigns this meaning and challenges her interpretation by adding that students' cultural identities should also be considered. Students' cultural identities are indeed included in curriculum documents, for example with regards to reflecting on one's own assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices. Reflecting on the concept of respect, she produces her own conceptualisation of the intercultural capability as a display of cultural sensitivity and respect, which are indeed included in the aims of the intercultural capability according to curriculum documents. From such statements, it is evident that the curriculum is filtered through her own interpretation and reinterpretation of the intercultural capability. It also becomes clear that the importance attributed to the notion of respect resulted from her professional experience during placement. In this case, she uses a functionalist paradigm (Martin & Nakayama 2010) and is unable to challenge it:

*"**You want to be mindful of what the learners' culture is**, because not everyone might have the same relationship with the Italian language, it is common for learners of Italian in Australia to be of Italian descent. So, you know, for them, even saying something not as respectful as the term WOG might be normal. I've heard that a lot in classes. And I know that it is disrespectful. But then again, I understand it might make them feel part of a community. They hear it every day and for them it might be acceptable. **I don't know, I am still going to teach them that that's not something that they should say**. But I get where they come from."* [Behaviour]

This episode she witnessed made her question her role and her "best" reaction to students using a derogatory term that has been historically used to offend people of Southern European descent in Australia, but that has come to be used sympathetically by those who identify with such diasporic communities.

Perhaps because she is a student teacher, she chooses to be on the safe side and warns students they should not use these terms, instead of engaging them in a discussion on the origins of the term and how it assumed new meanings over time. This shows that while she is theoretically aware of the complexity of power relationships in society, she prefers to avoid discussing this issue and prefers to assume the role of judgement about what is socially acceptable and what is not. This is an important finding as it proves that the context of schooling is helping to reproduce rather than transform existing power relations.

When encouraged to think about a specific activity she could use to embed the intercultural capability in her lessons, she suggested watching films to analyse stereotypes and cultural representations. It is clear that for her, ideally, social justice is the ultimate goal of education, inside and outside the language classroom. In practice, however, this does not seem easy to translate as she still uses:

*"**The intercultural capability is about social justice, it is not related to language learning**. It is about understanding different cultures and establishing relationships, of course, communicating in the language helps. But social and cultural issues are not necessarily reflected in the language, for that you have to have your own awareness. It should be a mutual thing, we as teachers need to respect the learners' cultures and they need to **respect the target culture so you want to avoid stereotypes and cultural assumptions**."* [Beliefs]

That said, she agrees that language and culture often go hand in hand and that there are cultural nuances in the language that show the interrelation of the two and she believes that it is the role of the language teacher to point these out. This interpretation matches the Languages Curriculum. She also reconsiders the role of learning additional languages as a way of developing intercultural understanding.

Another area I am interested in exploring in the follow up interview is her distinction between social and cultural issues she mentioned during our first interview when discussing approaches to ILTL:

"I think most students definitely already have stereotypes [of the Italian culture] because our culture is exposed everywhere, so they reduce everything to those few things. So yeah, but at the same time, what drew me to Japanese and Korean, when I started learning were actual cultural elements, rather than stereotypes. For example, when I was very young, I was interested in art and in manga, right? But I didn't use to think that every single Japanese person was into anime or into manga. The same thing happened with Korean music, or Korean drama, Korean food. These are all aspects that, to me, were fascinating and still are fascinating. What I mean is, there is a difference between culture and society. Right? So cultural elements, they stay there, but societal elements have more to do with the people and how they are, how they manage their personal relationships, their work, environment, and all other stuff related to their everyday life. And you cannot learn this from textbooks, you only really discover it until you go there. While cultural elements, they can be taught. Because they are going to be there, they're going to be permanent." [Behaviour and beliefs]

This distinction seems to be useful to overcome a functionalist approach to teaching culture while still making culture "teachable". Elements that are permanent, such as literature or cinema, can easily be taught, while ways of life can only be discovered and, consequently, the closed space of a classroom might pose challenges to this.

Behaviour and competencies

I then ask her why she responded she feels moderately confident teaching the intercultural capability:

"As teachers, we should be able to respect the culture of the people who study the language. And classes will be diverse. So it's, it's harder than we might think." [Competence]

However, so far, her experience was always in settings where the large majority of students were of Italian descent. This made her feel comfortable and competent in addressing cultural as well as social aspects:

"Yeah, I feel pretty confident because I'm Italian myself and I know what it's normally considered disrespectful and what is not. So I don't think I will have any

*major issues with that. You know what, I was also thinking, usually I tend to make comparisons with English because **English is literally like, in most cases, it's all they know**. But if I had a classroom with students whose understanding of English is quite low, I wouldn't even be able to make this sort of comparison."* [Competence]

Interestingly, despite being a plurilingual teacher, she does not consider incorporating the other languages her students might speak in her Italian classroom. Her initial stance on incorporating students' cultures is somehow contradicted by her unwillingness to incorporate students' languages. This seems to be due to the lack of confidence in her knowledge of other languages, while she is at ease when exploring different cultures. She is unaware of translanguaging pedagogies (García & Li 2013) and lack of competence in one area makes her unwilling to take risks and discover what her students know. This also translates in wanting to change her behaviour in the classroom after meeting her students:

*So that's what I mean, you know, when I say I want to wait and see which kind of class I have. Perhaps in that case, I would use Italian much more than I use English, **I would try an immersion kind of approach because I wouldn't have anything to compare Italian to. Maybe I could use gestures, images, videos, and stuff like that to build the language in context, right? But I wouldn't rely on grammar, because if they don't speak English, I definitely don't speak Vietnamese or Arabic or whatever***." [Behaviour]

Her initial stance on incorporating students' cultures is somehow contradicted by her unwillingness to incorporate students' languages. This seems to be due to the lack of confidence in her knowledge of other languages, while she is at ease when exploring different cultures.

Beliefs and identity

Biographic data, spontaneously provided by the participant, are synthetically presented in narrative form. At the start of our second interview, I summarised her own definition of the intercultural capability as the ability to be sensitive and respectful towards cultural difference and to be committed to social justice. She agreed with it and confirmed that her own understanding originated from her educational background. She also added that the fact that she is a Southern Italian (a

group that is sometimes negatively perceived in Italy) might have an impact on her increased personal interest in the issues of social justice. In addition, the fact that she studied extremely different languages forced her to come to terms with different cultural understandings, or in her own words: *"You know, **you cannot expect to keep your Italianness forever** and simultaneously deal with such different cultures."*

Her identification as an intercultural speaker also impacts on her beliefs about the importance of teaching for intercultural understanding: *"I would have done that [taught the intercultural capability] regardless [of curriculum directives] because I guess **I am just culturally sensitive**, also because **I have a background in languages so it comes naturally to me"**.* [Beliefs and identity]

Elisa is proud of her Southern Italian heritage, even though it's a group that has historically faced marginalisation in her country. She comes from a mixed-race family, with some members having Black or African roots. From a young age, Elisa was curious about different cultures and art forms, including Afro-American music and manga. In high school, her French teacher recognised her talent for languages and encouraged her to pursue studying in this field at university, which became a turning point in her life. Elisa went on to study Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, drawn to the richness of these cultures. As a University student in Italy, she was also deeply committed to social justice and minority rights, partly because of her personal connections to marginalised communities. During this time, Elisa was active on social media during, connecting with people from all over the world and learning about social issues. Her interest in Japanese language and culture eventually took her to Tokyo for a study exchange, and here she fell in love with the multicultural campus environment. Later, she had the opportunity to work as a language assistant in Australia, where she found fulfilment in teaching and connecting with her students. However, now Elisa realises that her passion lies not only in teaching languages but also in the broader purpose of education. She is currently pursuing a specialisation in Humanities and finds both subjects equally fascinating. Elisa is committed to using her skills and knowledge to make a positive impact on society and promote greater understanding among people of different backgrounds.

Identity and mission

When reflecting on her what inspires her to be a teacher of Languages in Australia, she remembers her French teacher who encouraged her to pursue the study of foreign languages. She remembers that one day, her French teacher noticed her good dispositions towards languages, and told her: *"You have never studied French before and you're so good already. What do you think of pursuing this sort of career? Why don't you study languages at Universities? Why don't you stay in this field?"* Elisa remembers this moment as pivotal in her life. It occurred at a moment when she didn't know what to do with her life and this idea resonated with her. From the moment she accepted her French teacher's advice, she found her personal and professional pathway: *"So whenever I think about my future students I want to be that person for them. **I want to be that teacher who inspires them and opens up opportunities for them**. [...] I mean, I didn't study French, but I kept on studying languages and that brought me here."* She continues: *"If I see someone that has talent, even if they are just interested, I want to be the person who notices that in them and tells them "You can do this, you can perfectly believe in yourself. And you can continue studying because it will bring you opportunities". So yeah, I want to be that source of inspiration. **And I want them [the students] to believe in themselves**."* [Mission]

Her motivation for teaching languages is also deeply connected to her own life experiences, both as a learner of languages and as a successful migrant: she is interested both in opening up the students' minds and in showing them what life and work opportunities speaking multiple languages can bring to one's life: *"When I moved to Japan, I was able to communicate with Japanese people in a respectful way because I was taught how to do so. **Thanks to this, I was able to establish meaningful relationships because I knew how to communicate with them. I think this is what is going to happen when we include the intercultural capability in our teaching practice. And for us, as teachers, it enriches us, because we learn how to communicate with our students too**."* [Identity and mission]

This statement also clarifies her initial reasoning of language learning not being sufficient for the development of an intercultural person and of the necessity to travel and live abroad to realise the transformation. It is now clear that the beliefs on the process through which interculturality develops are rooted in her personal

experience and inform her decision-making in the classroom. This finding demonstrates that teachers' identity is shaped by their own experiences as learners.

While she is reflecting on how her personal experiences as a learner, she realises that these shape her mission as a teacher. She is grateful for the possibilities her French teacher showed her in a moment when she had no clear sense of how she could be living her adult life. Because as an adult she benefitted from learning additional languages, she now wants to share this advantage with her students. However, also negative memories associated to language learning emerge as factors influencing her approach to teaching: "*Because I'm also noticing **the difference between what I was as a student and what I don't want my future students to be**, which is an insecure person. When I was learning languages, I was the kind of student who wouldn't talk if her speech wasn't perfect. See, I don't want that in my class. The important thing here is to communicate, to be able to express yourself in a target language, doesn't matter what you're doing it for, but if you want to do it, you have to be always, I mean, not always, but you know, as much as possible, confident in doing that. In my class, I just want them to have fun and be engaged in what they're doing, which is learning a language.*" [Identity and mission]

Her account of how she became a teacher in Australia proves that it is her own intercultural journey through multiple life experiences that led her to choosing to viewing her mission as that of developing the intercultural capability in her learners. Her students, in particular, make her feel important when they say: "*Miss, you are really good at this! We want to learn Italian from you because you are really Italian*". Now Elisa realises that it is the whole school environment, the purpose of education that interests her: "*So the intercultural capability is about how you interact with people from different cultures. I think when you take into account the intercultural capability, you teach them [the students] how to interact with people from different cultures, and **that, in turn, opens their minds, you know, it changes their mindset**. And I know this for a fact, because it happens. **It happened to me when I started studying languages at school, in high school and then at University**". [Identity and mission]

5.3.2 Lyn

The survey data indicate that my second participant is a female, in her 30s, currently enrolled in the second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary), where she is specialising in the disciplines of English and Languages. She feels moderately confident teaching the intercultural capability, but she considers it an essential part of teaching languages. In the question about cultural identification she explains: *"Growing up and being educated at postgraduate level in China, I value what I have learnt at school and from other people about the Chinese culture, and see myself as a part of it".*

Environment and beliefs

At the start of the interview, when I inquire about her familiarity with the Intercultural Capability in the Curriculum, she states: *"I feel like **the intercultural capability is hidden in the curriculum**, isn't it?"*, confirming the hypothesis formulated after interviewing my first participant, that general capabilities do not receive much attention. Even though it seems that preservice teachers have knowledge that these do appear in curriculum documents, they are somehow *"hidden".* This statement shows limited awareness of this concept, which might not have been considered before, or, if it is, it seems that it could be filtered through her own beliefs and perceptions rather than through engagement with policy documents or literature around it. To confirm that this is the case also for her, I ask her if during her current teacher preparation course and placement experience she came across this concept. Interestingly, she states that because on placement her students are predominantly from Chinese backgrounds, and have both or at least one parent born in China, they have adequate knowledge of Chinese culture and therefore she does not need to raise any *"cultural awareness"* in her daily teaching. She will later state:

*"**In mainstream schools [meaning teaching Chinese language to learners who do not necessarily have any knowledge of Chinese] I would have to teach culture**... Like food and festivals are big part of Chinese culture, so **thinking about how I would teach in the future, if I am teaching the language I will teach about food, festival, history. Because to be able to speak you need to understand the culture.**"* [Beliefs]

This confirms that her interpretation of the intercultural capability is about cultural competence, meaning that learners with Chinese background do not need to acquire knowledge of culture as they already possess it, while learners without Chinese background need to learn cultural practices and this is considered to lead to enhanced communication abilities.

During her teacher preparation she remembers looking at the Victorian Curriculum, however, this did not produce an impact on her practice:

*"I don't remember clearly, but I think I probably saw, you know, that culture was embedded in the curriculum, but definitely, it **[my understanding] is not from that… Look, even if it was not embedded in curriculum, I would still do it because it is beneficial**."* [Environment]

In this answer, Lyn herself values the impact of the curriculum on her pedagogical approaches as almost non existent, however, exactly like Elisa, also Lyn considers that language teaching could not occur without coupling it with the teaching of the target culture and so it is something that she would incorporate spontaneously. This confirms a lack of familiarity with the Curriculum, which seems to have not been considered during her teaching practicum or her teacher education course.

During the second interview, when I summarise her understanding of the intercultural capability as knowledge of history, facts about Chinese culture, she confirms that, but also adds that she had time to reflect about other possible interpretations of the concept. In particular, she now reflects on the fact that her teacher education course did make her more aware of the importance of developing critical thinking in her students. Lyn considers that this aspect is closely linked to the intercultural capability:

*"It [my understanding] probably comes from some readings I did at Uni as well. I think… we did a unit on critical literacy last year as part of this Master's course. **So that was about the way we should reflect on our daily lives and the way we should influence our students to reflect on their learning or everyday lives**. For that, critical thinking is not just believing whatever you are taught, but to do your own research and get your own understanding… It was also about how to recognise cultural influences on the ways we see issues or things, so this gave me ideas about*

*the importance of critical thinking. [...] So **I believe it is important for people to have knowledge of other cultures**, no matter what environment you are in."* [Beliefs]

While her 'culture studies' approach (Crozet, Liddicoat, Lo Bianco 1999) to languages is more rooted in her experience as learner and mother, therefore to the beliefs she held prior to enrolling in a teacher training course, her 'critical cultural awareness' positioning is the result of undertaking a course in critical literacy which illuminated the ways in which culture influences our perception of reality. This proves the role of teacher training courses in provoking change, and not only reinforcing pre-existing beliefs (which is what occurred in Elisa's case). Interestingly though, at the end of the discussion, she confirms that knowledge of other cultures in the first step towards developing such critical attitudes, possibly indicating that prior beliefs tend to be stronger and continue to exert significant influence.

Behaviour and beliefs

During her school-based placement experience, Lyn had a classroom composition of learners from Chinese background, and this influenced the belief about not needing to introduce the intercultural dimension since they all belong and have knowledge of the target culture:

*"So they grew up speaking Chinese at home, you can tell some probably continued to study Chinese since they were younger, some probably just a little bit, but they are all from the same culture. [...] **I don't think I need to raise a lot of culture awareness with these students**, because 99 per cent of them are from the same culture, but I'm sure in the mainstream High School. Yeah. I don't know whether I get the chance to do placement of Chinese in those schools but definitely, **there's something to bring up with those kids or make them aware**."* [Behaviour]

In this utterance, she expresses another layer of her own conceptualisation of the intercultural capability, which is seen as useful only when teaching students who belong to cultures that are different from the target culture. This is in line with an instrumental view of education and with a conceptualisation of interculturality as a matter of knowledge. In the follow up interview, which occurs after one month and a half from the first one, she tells me that now that she has had more experience with

those students, she knows them better, knows what dialects they speak and what parts of China they come from. I take this opportunity to ask her if she think that the fact that they all speak different dialects would allow for some space for the intercultural capability, however she feels it doesn't:

"China is so big, we have many different dialects, and in different parts of China the traditions are different. I think we all share the same overarching culture, for example respecting the elderly and looking after the young ones. So I don't' think the smaller differences have a big impact on their understanding of Chinese culture. [...] In the classroom I speak Mandarin, I don't know their dialects and if they spoke dialects among each other they wouldn't understand each other, because they are so different they wouldn't have idea of what they are talking about." [Beliefs and behaviour]

On the one hand, the student teacher acknowledges the existence of different cultural and linguistic practices within one country, on the other hand, she misses the opportunity to take advantage of the rich cultural and linguistic diversity present in her own classroom to embed the intercultural capability. This practice of giving attention only to the official language while ignoring other linguistic practices is in line with the 'national paradigm' of culture (Risager 2007, p. 192), which associates a single culture with a specific people and a specific territory. At least in this specific case, one of the fundamental aims of ILTL, that of including students' own cultural and linguistic knowledge in the classroom, is disregarded, possibly in view of the lack of an official status of dialects.

When I ask her to imagine ways she would incorporate the teaching of the intercultural capability in her Chinese classroom.

*"Yeah. I think culture is quite big. Language is only part of the culture. Like for China, food is a big part of culture and festivals are a part of culture as well. So thinking about how I am going to approach the kids in the future... **Definitely, if I am teaching the language, the festivals, the food, and the history, a lot of culture will be embedded in the lesson planning**."* [Behaviour]

Because the intercultural capability is conceived as a matter of knowledge, Lyn predicts that she would be teaching knowledge about facts that characterise Chinese culture. Furthermore, her statement: "*I think culture is quite big. Language is only*

part of the culture" presupposes that language is considered as a sub-category of culture. This view is explained in the relationship between the Chinese writing system and the history of Chinese culture:

"*Because for language, you do need to understand the cultural background before you really understand the language and know how to use it. Yeah, and* **Chinese characters are symbolic**. *Some of them are the writing really, really symbolic.* **And that does explain the history the evolution of the culture, the Chinese culture as well.** *You know, what our ancestors did you know through drawing pictures of the word on the rocks, and then ended up into the current character. So yeah, there are a lot of interesting stories,* **I think to tell to my future students about the culture, which can be linked to with language learning**." [Behaviour]

Here, the relationship between language and culture is further complicated, and the idea that also language might influence culture seems to emerge. Still, while there is potential to move towards an examination of the role of pragmatics in order to provide students with a better understanding of how Chinese language works, the focus remains on knowledge about the evolution of the writing system.

Reflecting on her placement experience, she starts to move away from her initial conceptualisation of teaching culture as teaching a body of knowledge, and she recognises the multiple influences her language has been subjected to.

"*I don't know about other languages, but for Chinese, definitely this is important.* **I was watching my mentor teacher teaching the VCE students about food. And then, he linked it with the history**, *he was explaining why the food in a particular area in China has a particular taste because of geographical reasons, or he was explaining that certain foods were brought from overseas and that's why the characters were written that way.* **I think it's really important to link language with history and culture, that's really important, the students understand it better.**" [Behaviour]

The teaching approach observed is considered as intercultural as it highlights the connections between the land, its history, and the development of the language she teaches. From static, culture is now seen as dynamic, contradicting the previous

argument that the overarching culture is the same, so there is no need to look at the specificities.

Behaviour and identity

Biographic data provided by the participant are synthetically presented here in narrative form. What spontaneously emerged during the course of the first interview is that her approaches to culture and language pedagogy are deeply influenced by her own experience of trying to raise her son bilingual. While she painfully gave up asking him to speak in Chinese, she still occasionally uses her native language and uses cultural elements as a way to teach him words and expressions. This teaching approach is also related to the way she learnt languages, so also in her case it is her own personal experience that shapes the way she teaches.

Lyn's career journey has taken her from being an English teacher in China to teaching Chinese in Australia. She initially became an English teacher in China because her family had chosen that career path for her. It was a rewarding experience for Lyn, as she was able to assist young people in pursuing better careers and improving their prospects. However, when she migrated to Australia with her Australian husband, she preferred to work in the corporate sector, so she quit her teaching career. Despite this, her husband continued to encourage her to become a teacher in Australia, and when the pandemic occurred, she saw an opportunity to pursue her passion for teaching once again. She enrolled in a teaching degree, and her experience as a mother to Chinese-Australian children has informed her approach to teaching Chinese in Australia. Lyn understands the importance of raising bilingual children and has faced challenges in doing so. Despite speaking only Chinese to her son initially, he eventually refused to speak the language with her when he started childcare, causing Lyn stress and frustration. However, she continued to take every possible opportunity to explain how and why people say certain things in Chinese, always linking it back to Chinese culture. She hopes that teaching Chinese in Australia will open up opportunities for her students to gain better knowledge of her language and culture. During her practicum, Lyn felt valued for assisting students in this pursuit. She uses her experience of teaching English in China and raising

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bilingual children to inform her teaching practice and provide a rich cultural understanding to her students. She now sees teaching as a rewarding career, both for herself and for her students.

Behaviour and mission

At the start of our second interview, she acknowledges that our interview was an opportunity for her to think more deeply about this issue and that, upon reflection, she also thinks global citizenship and critical thinking are important goals of language learning.

"Um, I think it's helpful for students to develop global citizenship. Now, can see global culture everywhere. **In Australia, you know, you go to a class and there can be 25 kids from, you know, 10 different countries**, *they all have different cultures. So respecting each other and really understanding, like, the Chinese language, really understand it from a Chinese cultural perspective. It helps them to be aware of other cultures."* [Mission]

Here, she goes beyond her initial conceptualisation of the intercultural capability as cultural competence, and introduces the idea of fostering a sense of global citizenship in young people. This is justified by the fact the majority of classrooms in Australia are culturally diverse, and therefore learning about other cultural perspectives is a beneficial exercise to develop critical thinking.

"Well, there are misunderstandings about China, the Western media always says, you know, China wants to rule the world one day, but **if you don't know the culture you probably agree with them, you just take what the media says**. *But if you know, you know the culture, you're probably thinking in different ways. So I don't know… students agency… can I link it with that? So if they have their own logical thinking they can, you know, argue with people why Chinese people did this and did that, they probably didn't mean to rule the world."* [Mission]

In the second interview, after reflecting on the issues raised in the first interview, Lyn starts to move away from a knowledge-based conceptualisation of the intercultural capability and recognises that her mission is not only to equip students with knowledge of the cultural practices of a specific cultural group, but it is also

about giving access to multiple sources of information, ideally in the target language, and it is about thinking critically about the world we live in.

I then ask her how she would practically incorporate this in her teaching:

"I wouldn't mind to, um, but I would check with the humanities or politics and business teacher… no politics... Yeah. It's business related, humanities related as well. So we can definitely, we can even run an activity like a debate. **Yeah. I would be happy to, you know, involve a few different teachers, make it across subjects across curriculum. So but yes, it would be interesting.***"* [Behaviour]

Her hesitations here show that this might be the first time she considers teaching Chinese in such a way. I then ask how this could be embedded in her language course, so that it is not just a one-off experience for the students.

"I don't know maybe? Well, I mean, I can do a lesson for my for lower grade students, we can do a lesson just around the countries. How to say different countries. And how to say, different industries. Because you know, that agreement was signed, or whatever… Australia broke this agreement. What industry was that? You know, farming? I think… Yeah. What do you think? Is it too hard or too? Too easy for them? More in general, even if you discuss it in English." [Behaviour]

Here the struggle of reconciling teaching the basics of language, while also introducing complex nuances of culture is considered. How can such topics be simplified so that they can be taught to younger learners with lower levels of proficiency? A dilemma that is difficult to solve, considering that the options are to discuss such topics in English and hence lose the opportunity to develop linguistic skills or, alternatively, lower the complexity of the topics to match the level of language to be used to discuss such topics. Lyn's idea is to make the language more accessible to students, so she would just teach names of countries or names of industries. This highlights a legitimate tension language teachers face between choosing to develop linguistic skills versus choosing to develop intercultural skills.

As she considers different ways of thinking about her future Chinese classes, I ask her about how she sees her role as a Chinese teacher. In a way, she recognises her role as "ambassador" for China, even though she rejects this image of herself.

*"Yeah, **I can't say I want to, you know, spread the Chinese culture to a wider community. I don't quite see that now. But as that I started feeling I can tell more people about the China from my perspective**. Feels good."* [Mission]

What is more important is to provide students with more opportunities, especially career-wise, both in terms of being able to work with colleagues from all over the world, and in terms of speaking a language which is positioned as very important in view of its status as language for business such as Mandarin.

It seems that for Lyn, learning languages is important because of its instrumental value:

*"**I think it is important to better prepare them for their future careers**, doesn't matter what they are going to do, you always work with people from other cultures now, always, because you know, the world is all connected, thanks to the Internet, so what they face in their future work environment may be meeting with colleagues from all over the world by teleconference. So in that respect, even knowing that when you make a joke you think it won't offend anyone, you don't know… So I think it's important for the students to know that. It should help them settle in their future career. **Global citizenship is about knowing or understanding perspectives of people from different cultures, I think it will help them with their understanding and they will be more capable of thinking from all perspectives**."* [Mission]

Despite giving priority to the instrumental value of Chinese for work opportunities, she recognises that it is valuable to know that cultural habits are different, and that open mindedness is a trait needed to participate successfully in the global economy.

5.3.3 Qing

From the initial survey, I find out my third participant is in her 20s; she is in her second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary) and is specialising in the disciplines of Languages and Business Studies. She speaks English and Chinese. In the question about cultural identification, she defines herself as: "*70% Chinese and 30% the world*". She feels only slightly confident in delivering the intercultural capability, but believes it should definitely be embedded into her language teaching practice.

Beliefs and mission

Qing does not recall encountering the intercultural capability during her teaching practicum or during her studies, but she says she has accepted to join this study because she believes that this aspect of education is of utmost importance in the current world we live in, and especially in a multicultural country such as Australia: "***So it's very important to teach these kids how to live, how to study in this environment, and how to work in this environment in the future.***" For her, the intercultural capability is about learning how to live, study, and work in an increasingly interconnected world.

Based on her current supervised teaching practice experience, she realises that the learners she will have in her classroom will most likely be Australian children with Chinese background; therefore she feels it is her role to assist them in discovering their own identities. Furthermore, because she sees the benefits of having multiple identities and perspectives, she believes students will have a better relationship with themselves (and their cultural backgrounds) when they develop a better relationship with such cultures:

*"And most of the kids in my class, they are like with Chinese backgrounds. But like they, they're born here, so their parents are Chinese. So probably they are used to maybe Chinese, I hope, but not very often. [...] **I think it is very important to help them to find their true identity and the confidence in themselves**."* [Mission]

This means that for Qing, the intercultural capability is not only fundamental to living in the twenty-first century, but also to fostering students' sense of identity and in this way to increasing their personal well-being, because when accepting others, they will be able to accept themselves.

Her positive intercultural experiences seem to be positively influencing her belief in the importance of the intercultural capability.

*"If you read more books, if you hear more stories from people from different cultures, you will, you're going to have a bigger heart to **accept others and you won't have so much negative feeling**. And I think it's good for your mental health and physical health. So it is good for everyone. So it is very important to be a person with intercultural capability, I think."* [Beliefs]

The final aim of this is for the *"negative feelings to go away"*, even if she never explicitly mentions prejudice, stereotypes, racism, discrimination.

Qing values the influence of the Victorian Curriculum and of her teacher education course on her placement experience as inexistent, even though during the course of the interview the influence of her studies will become evident. Regardless, it is her strong belief that the intercultural capability needs to be a major focus of education, and she immediately links this understanding to her own biography:

*"**This capability is for me the Acceptance capability**. So it is teaching you how to accept other cultures. So **how to accept other people and this will result in how to accept yourself**. Yep, so I think it is very important. And also myself, because I lived in China until I was 16 years old, and I came to Australia at around 17 by myself. So, I wrote this answer in my survey, like, **I think 70% of my cultural background is Chinese. And also, because my father used to work in Japan he brings some Japanese culture into our house. And I have lived in Australia for like almost 10 years already. So I think, 30% of me, I'm a white person. So I can't kind of identify myself as 100% Chinese**."* [Beliefs]

As with the first two participants, also Qing spontaneously introduces her own biography in order to explain her conceptualisation of the intercultural capability. Significantly, she recognises that the intercultural capability is about people, rather than cultures, and that to get along with *others*, it is important to have a good relationship with the *self*.

Identity and mission

The autobiographic data Qing provided are synthetically presented below in a narrative form. What spontaneously emerged during the course of the first interview is that her strong belief in the necessity for the intercultural capability is influenced by her own life experiences, from childhood until today. Compared to other participants, she seems to be more aware of this influence and is able to reflect on it in greater details.

Qing was born in China. Growing up, she heard many stories about Japan from her father, who regularly visited the country for work. Her father, in particular, encouraged her to be open to the rest of the world. When she was 16, she moved to Australia as an international student. In the beginning, she felt uneasy in such unfamiliar surroundings. The language was a huge barrier for her, and she struggled to find a sense of belonging in school. She reported feeling excluded by her classmates and started hating every subject because she could not understand the teachers when they introduced the class activity. The only subject she felt she could succeed in was Mathematics, which could be explained via numbers, shapes, and formulas rather than words. Her EAL teacher noticed her strength in numeracy and encouraged her, saying she had the potential to do well in all subjects too. This teacher used non-verbal communication in class, such as eye contact and smile, to draw her attention and make her feel included in the class. She was the first person who let her understand the importance for a student to feel included in the classroom, and in the school environment and she was the best role model for showing her how to create an inclusive learning climate. This experience made Qing realise that a successful inclusive teacher should encourage all students to discover their own identities and potentials and develop confidence so that everyone can enjoy school, achieve the best learning outcomes, and prepare for the "real world".

Qing has been living, studying, and working in Australia for the last ten years and has come to appreciate her experiences with different cultures. She feels she has a very "traditional" Asian perspective and simultaneously, she also has a more "progressive" Western perspective and this double perspective provided her with an ability to analyse issues from multiple points of view. This ability, she finds, is to her advantage, as it usually assists her in finding better solutions, both in her professional and in her personal life. She feels lucky to have this opportunity to identify with different cultures. For example, she recounted the case of working at a pharmacy and being able to problem solve, drawing from her multiple cultural repertoires, while her boss was only considering one way of approaching the problem.

Today, Qing has chosen the profession of Chinese language teacher because she loves Chinese. Chinese was her favourite subject at school, and she would like to share her passion with her students. She finds Chinese very interesting and considers Chinese history a very interesting topic.

Behaviour and beliefs

I ask if Qing has got any practical strategies in mind to transmit her understanding of the intercultural capability to her students:

*"Um, I think **the process is knowing, understanding and then accepting**."* It is evident that this is not the first time she reflects on how people can develop their own intercultural capability. Her conceptualisation in stages reflects many existing models of the intercultural capability, where knowledge of the *Other* is considered necessary to develop empathy, which eventually leads to more open and tolerant attitudes. Her justification for this model is as follows: *"**When you have more knowledge, you have a bigger heart. And you can accept others' behaviours**"* [Beliefs].

In particular, considering she will be teaching mostly Australian-born Chinese students, her role is to bring cultural knowledge into the classroom. This will help her students understand their parents, which will eventually lead to more accepting attitudes:

*"Because they are young kids and they live in this environment, under this culture [Chinese], so their parents' behaviour, sometimes, they don't understand why their parents behave like that, like most of Asian parents, their voices are quite loud. So, I think these kids will feel like "why they behave like that", but because they are from different cultural backgrounds. **So I think I can like bring this information into my class, […] then they can understand and then they can accept**. So once they accept others once they accept like, okay, I can understand why my parents behave like that, why these Chinese behave like that, why they think in that way, **once they can understand others they can accept and once they accept others, they can accept themselves**."* [Behaviour and beliefs]

Qing empathises with her learners and, while the idea of culture coinciding with nation is still present and used to justify how the differences between the Chinese culture and the Anglo-Australian culture make young people feel uneasy with their parents' culture, there is also a recognition that groups, families, individuals create their own values and habits:

*"And **I think the culture is not only a country thing, I think every family is going to have like different cultures** as well. Yeah, so we need to, like I said, we need to try to understand why others will be thinking that way, why others will behave in that way."* [Beliefs]

She then elaborates on how the intercultural capability can be embedded in everyone's everyday teaching practice:

*"I think **this intercultural capability is important for everyone, not only in the school, not only, like with the students, it is important for the teachers as well, it is important in the society for everyone**. So, as long as we see the importance of this capability, the average teacher can incorporate this capability in the curriculum, but I know, **it's not going to be a very easy thing to do**. And probably because I don't have much experience, teaching experience yet, so I am too idealistic, but I hope in the future that I can teach these kids, not only teach them the knowledge of Chinese, but also the culture, but not only Chinese culture, like I can have Korean kids in my class, Thai kids in my class, South African kids in my class. And I don't want to be like, I'm a teacher here, you guys are my students, so, we are in different groups, **I want to join them into the group and study with them**."* [Beliefs]

While her teaching experience so far has involved Australian-born Chinese students, she considers the scenario of teaching in a multicultural classroom and she hopes that in her future career she will be able to create inclusive environments, where everyone's culture is valued, and where she can let the learners become the teachers of their own culture. Ideally - and she recognises that this might be idealistically too - she will be able to discover, rather than teach, different cultures. The relational nature of the intercultural capability is discussed and the fact that also teachers need to be "learners of interculturality" is added:

*"They **[the students] really experience that authentic culture so they can be the teachers** and I can learn with our kids together. So, **this is how I think I will incorporate the intercultural capability**. I want to start with the kids and I want to study I want to improve my intercultural capability as well."* [Beliefs and behaviour]

Importantly, she affirms her intention to create teaching activities and material that tailor students' identifications, without making assumptions of who her students are and what they know, thus highlighting her conceptualisation of the intercultural

capability as something that is made real in the process of creating relationships and rejecting the idea of teaching from a mono-cultural or bi-cultural standpoint.

This conceptualisation also mirrors her belief that the intercultural capability is not something that can be easily taught or acquired, but is a process that continues and has no specific beginning or end, and this is valid both for learners and teachers alike: *"I will learn with them [the students]".* In her view, teachers who are interculturally capable must be able to learn from their students and *"become always more intercultural".* [Beliefs and behaviour]

In addition, she considers including examples from other cultures, possibly those students bring into the classroom:

*"So I will ask students from different cultures to teach us their cultures to tell us their stories in their culture. And students can realize the commonalities and the differences by themselves. And I will join them. I will learn with them together. And I will ask the Thai and the South African students some questions **not from a teacher's perspective, like I already know the answer so I will ask you the question. I will ask a question from my curiosity. Can you tell me more about that?** So I think students can have higher study interest in that way."* [Behaviour]

Environment and behaviour

I then ask if, on placement, she has witnessed examples of how it can be taught or of the struggles teachers face when embedding the intercultural capability in their daily lessons. So far, at her current school, Qing has been witnessing a teaching style that reminds her of the way she learnt when she was a student in China, highlighting once again the nexus between personal biography and professional aspirations. In particular, because her personal experience with a teaching style that focuses on repetition and memorisation was negative, she aspires to be a different kind of teacher. From this point of view, she sees the value of having the Intercultural Capability in the Curriculum, as it will hopefully accelerate change in teaching methods that reflect the reality of today's world.

"So, last Saturday was the first day of my placement. And the teacher is an old lady. And she's very good, very friendly. But I think she is living in her own cultural

bubble, she's still teaching those kids the way I learnt, like 20 years ago, like she asked students to write every each new word from like page 13, to page 18, for 8 times, and memorise [...], I haven't seen the word memorise for such a long time. And **she is still using the same way to like what I have experienced 20 years ago, and the world is changing, the world is not like it was before**. *Because that was my first day so I didn't say anything. But it actually shocked me. And I think this is another example that shows that it is very important for the teachers to have the intercultural capability. So I think she's using, like the very traditional Asian way to teach Chinese. And I can see from the kids faces that like sleepy,* **they won't love Chinese in that way. Definitely***."* [Environment]

I then ask if she has considered different ways of teaching Chinese that would allow her to embed the intercultural capability in her own language classroom:

"Because Chinese is a very interesting language to be learning, but at the same time a very complicated, it is very, very boring at the beginning. So I think that like what I said, I won't like keep telling the students… "it's very important to learn that language, because you have a Chinese parents, because Chinese is going to be a very important language in the world in the future"… I won't say that. And I won't tell them that it is very important to improve the intercultural capability, but I hope I can, like, **incorporate the curriculum without they realise that we are actually learning the culture in this class today**.*"* [Behaviour]

In this formulation, she produces the idea that language learning should not be about maintaining the language spoken by the family or about the economic value it might have for a certain career, but it should be recognised for its intrinsic value. In this way, no language is better to learn than others and if all languages hold the same value, so do all cultures.

Another idea that emerges is that interculturality cannot be forced upon people. In the utterance "*without they realise that we are actually learning about culture*", she produces the wish to implicitly deliver the values and attitudes promoted by the intercultural project, without the need to make students aware of the importance of becoming intercultural beings.

The example of practice given here is consistent with her relational and processual conceptualisation of interculturality. What learners bring into the

classroom is valued and brought in for an exchange among equals: it is about learning from the *other,* rather than about the *other*.

She concludes by providing her own three-stages development model of the intercultural capability and relating it to teachers and schools in general: *"**When you have more knowledge, you have a bigger heart. And you can accept others' behaviours, you can understand why the students behave like that**. And you won't feel angry. **So I think it is important for the teachers as well**."* [Environment]

Once teachers have more knowledge about difference, then they can display more open attitudes towards their students. Also this reflects her view of the intercultural capability as relational, where teachers learn from their students as well.

5.3.4   Ynes

From the initial survey, I discover that my fourth participant is in her 20s; she is in her second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary) and is specialising in the disciplines of EAL/D and Languages. She speaks French and English and she identifies as French. She feels moderately confident in delivering the intercultural capability, and definitely sees it as part of her language teaching practice.

Environment and beliefs

As usual, I start my first interview asking whether on placement or during her teacher qualification training she has come across the concept of the intercultural capability, and she replies she never heard it mentioned at school. This response is similar to all the other participants interviewed so far. I then ask her if she has her own understanding of the intercultural capability and she decides to provide an example from her current school to explain it. During her teaching practicum, she was invited to talk about the way of life in her country because she originates from that country.

*"So I was teaching French, which is my native language so it's kind of easy for me, I think, to talk about it, because we talked a lot about that. And my mentor is French too so **it was easy actually to discuss with students about how life in France looks like**. And we were talking about schooling in France and saying: "This is how*

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*we went to school. And this is what happened. **This is the difference with Australia**". We were discussing this a lot. And students were very interested in that too, because they were curious and asked us a lot of questions. So **I think this is one way to cover this intercultural aspect, by talking about the differences and the similarities, and about our personal experience** as well."* [Environment and beliefs]

Here, the idea of culture corresponding to the nation is strongly present. French is a language spoken in many different countries around the world, but the preservice teacher talks about the culture of France. When culture is conceptualised as homogeneous and static, teaching about the institutions of the country associated to the target language, in this case schooling, can be considered an example of intercultural pedagogy when these are compared and contrasted with the Australian ones.

This response shows an interpretation of the intercultural capability as cultural competence: when teaching a target language, it is important to teach the target culture to learners who have no familiarity with it.

As the interview progresses, the goal of understanding others, not only knowing about others, emerges. Her conceptualisation of the intercultural capability shifts from the initial idea of teaching the French way of life and progresses towards teaching a language for effective communication and then towards teaching a language for mutual understanding.

*"I think so. I think, yeah, I think it's important for students, because we talk a lot about authentic learning. And **learning a language is authentic learning, because it enables you to communicate with others, but also to understand them. So if you understand people's point of view, I think is good for that.** Because when you learn the language, and then when you go into a country, and you experience it, you actually understand much more, then it goes well above just the grammar or the vocabulary aspect, because **you actually understand why people react or behave a certain way. And it's because of their culture. And, kind of, it's kind of translated within the language**."* [Beliefs]

In an almost linear way, she starts moving towards a more politically engaged conceptualisation of the intercultural capability. While initially her main goal for her learners seemed to be functioning effectively in the target culture, a goal that should

not be discouraged in language classrooms, she now discusses the aim of making people more tolerant and accepting of difference:

*"Well, because, um, yeah, because that's what I wanted to come to is, **when you understand the culture, you understand then the behaviour of people. […] You don't take it personally. That's my point.** It's when you know the culture, then it helps you to understand the behaviours and then not getting frustrated, because you're like, oh, why do they behave that way? It's not to be mean, or it's not because I did something wrong. And once you understand that, then you communicate better, and you just understand the difference."* [Beliefs]

Behaviour and beliefs

Therefore, I ask to confirm this, by asking whether she feels confident in embedding the intercultural capability in her language classroom.

*"Well, we can talk about it, then how much do students understand about it? Um, I don't know. Because I think to really experience a culture, you need to go to the country to really, truly understand it, or maybe meeting people from this country and see them in their everyday. I suppose. **Because culture is much more than just the language and also just the food**. So it's not because we're cooking something from the country that we really experience its culture."* [Beliefs]

In this utterance, immersion in the country appears to be the only possible way of experiencing authentic culture, a belief also expressed by Elisa. Ynes further elaborates on this, implying that the task of teaching the intercultural capability might be too complex and therefore the solution might be to bring in personal experiences and talk about lifestyle and habits in class:

*"I think we need to be with people and to live with them to actually experience what it is to be French or to be whatever culture, you need to see how people react to different situations and how they understand situations. So I don't know really how we can, well **we can just talk about experiences and habits that we have**."* [Behaviour]

She then provides an example of how culture influences language and how she could teach culture through the language. The idea of 'culture as nation' (Moon

1996) is still present, with the comparison of different values between France and Australia, once again portrayed as homogeneous and static. Teaching about culture appears to equate to teaching about differences and the idea of including examples from other cultures, possibly those students bring into the classroom, is not considered.

*"[...] for example, yesterday with a French friend we were talking about food, and how here food is not that important here in Australia. Then, in France, it's something really important for the family or for people. Here when we have lunch, it's just a sandwich, while in France we like being at the table, sitting down having a meal, and sharing it with others. So it's, it's very important for French people to actually have this time at the table and sharing because that's where we actually socialise with others. And so, I suppose that's maybe one of the reasons why we have quite a few expressions about food, to express feelings and things like that. And they are related to foods because I think it's something important. And yeah, and **we don't have this in Australia, so well, it's different**."* [Beliefs]

As the interview progresses, Ynes starts reflecting on the idea that just including the teaching of the way of life might not be sufficient.

*"Maybe **teaching idiomatic expressions**. It helps a lot to actually introduce the cultural aspects because expressions are like a mirror of the culture because there's always a story behind it. So I think that's the way we can maybe give a taste if we can't take the children or students to the country. **I actually think we can't teach a language without teaching the culture because you always need to explain why we say things a certain way**."* [Behaviour]

While initially language seemed to be considered only a part of culture, now culture is recognised to play a role in language as well. The 'culture in language' metaphor (Kramsch 1993) appears as a convenient and practical way of embedding culture while teaching the language. This shows a move away from the initial conceptualisation of culture pedagogy as teaching about institutions and towards an integration of language and culture, which are here conceived as inseparable.

Environment and competencies

I then ask if she sees the value of having the Intercultural Capability in the Victorian Curriculum. However, she confirms that teaching languages inevitably involves teaching about culture, because otherwise communication would not be possible, therefore it is not an essential addition to the Curriculum, it is just "*a good reminder*".

*"Um, **I think it's not something you should need to tell**. But maybe because I'm teaching my own language, if I were teaching another language, maybe I would be, I don't know, more focused on the grammar and linguistics? I suppose it's good to remind people that you need also to talk about the culture as well and what it means to be French or to live in France?"* [Competencies]

Moreover, because her students identify as either French or Australian, it seems unnecessary to include their cultural backgrounds to her teaching practice. This practice aligns with the idea of addressing intercultural issues only in classrooms where students from cultural and linguistic diverse background are present, while not addressing such issues in mainstream classes. A similar idea was shared by Lyn when she stated that she did not need to raise cultural awareness in her Chinese background learners. The same appeared in Elisa's statements about not seeing issues when teaching Italian culture to Italian background students, while finding it more challenging to teach in multicultural classes.

Therefore, I investigate whether it might be an idea to include also students' cultural identities, an aim explicitly present in curriculum policy. However, when I ask to know more about her experience of teaching in Australia, she admits that:

*"A little bit, but they were… Yeah, in the previous schools I had students from different backgrounds. Yeah, **we did have some students from different backgrounds. But that's true that we didn't really emphasise on that, or talked about their backgrounds much**. Because actually, their parents were from a different country or their grandparents. It wasn't the students themselves. They grew up in Australia, so they were mostly Australians that have a parent from another country, or both parents."* [Environment]

The factor that seems to be most affecting her pedagogy is her current practicum experience. There, possibly because of a lack of confidence in being about

to incorporate the intercultural capability in her language classroom, she appears to be reinforcing the idea of 'culture as nation' (Moon 1996). This might also be due to reinforcing her cultural identification as a French citizen in front of Australian learners.

Identity and mission

While Elisa and Qing introduced their own biographies to justify their beliefs and practices spontaneously and quite early in the interview, Lyn and Ynes started talking about their personal experiences to justify their beliefs about the intercultural capability only towards the end of our first interview. Only after thinking about issues of theory and practice, Ynes establishes a link between her own cultural diversity in France. She recognises that this aspect makes her more sensitive to students who are perceived as "different" and might be discriminated against, but also more empathetic to those who are less open towards cultural diversity.

In particular, she introduces her own cultural identity when she discusses her decision of becoming a teacher of French as a second or foreign language, and this is when I ask if she believes her intercultural biography might have not only influenced her choice of career pathway, but also her understanding of the intercultural capability.

*"Yes, definitely because my mom is French, my dad is Moroccan, so I am both. **I have two cultures, two nationalities. So I definitely had this intercultural life. At home, we had two cultures anyway.**"* [Identity]

Ynes was born in France to a French mother and a Moroccan father. She grew up in France, but she would spend a month in Morocco with her family every summer. This means that from birth, she was used to traveling to another country with a different way of life and a different language. In Morocco, everyone also speaks French because of colonisation, so she never learnt to speak Arabic, but was exposed to it. This made her aware of people speaking other languages and having different habits from the ones she had back home. For example, she recounts that while in France, people eat at the table with cutlery, in Morocco, people can eat on the floor, share the same dish, and eat with their hands. From a young age, she also

became aware of cultural differences and the existence of racism. She experienced being in France as a French person, but also being in France and perceived as a foreigner because of her last name. When people saw her last name, they would think she was not French. This made her more aware of issues of racism, and today, she can relate equally to people who are less open or not aware of other cultures and to people who arrive in a new country and face racism and exclusion.

At University, she studied French literature as she always wanted to become a French teacher in France. Recently, she decided to migrate to Australia, where she feels "completely new". In particular, she has experienced a cultural shock and feels like this makes it easier for her to relate to any migrant students in her class. She thinks her experiences of living in different cultures give her a big advantage, and many perspectives. For example, when she meets someone with other habits, she does not get surprised. She is acknowledging it and accepting it because she is aware of different people or different cultures. Ynes recognises the way her own experience of migrating to Australia makes it easier for her to relate to students who share similar backgrounds, even though she is conscious she cannot claim to know what it is like for them. For example, if she had refugees in her class, she could not claim she exactly understands what it is to be a refugee because she did not have the experience of living in a country that is a warzone. But at least at some level, she can understand it may be challenging to move to a new place, feeling excluded and detached.

She is now studying to become a teacher of French as a foreign language, a very different practice from teaching the mainstream language. However, she finds it very interesting to explore her own language, through this new perspective. This experience is making her aware that she has started understanding quite a lot about herself through teaching. When she has to explain why some things are said the way they are, that is when she actually understands much more about her own culture, because she must reflect on it. Thus, she is still learning about French culture through teaching. Thanks to this experience, she is realising that culture is definitely part of the language or language is part of the culture.

Environment and identity

When I meet her a second time for the follow up interview and I summarise her definition of the intercultural capability given during our first interview, she confirms that it is definitely rooted in her own biography, but she tells me that at the moment she is doing a course in Positive Education and that she is reflecting upon her own assumptions and biases. The shift from the first to the second interview is quite significant, proving that the course she is undertaking is having an impact on her teaching philosophy.

*"So we talked about how we would acknowledge students' backgrounds within our class, and discussed the importance of it. And in my class we're all from other countries. So we all agree that it is a good thing to talk about different cultures also, because as teachers, we think that it is also good for our students to know where we come from. [...] We also watched a snippet of a documentary. It's titled "in my blood it runs" and it shows a young boy who is Aboriginal, and we follow him at school, and then in his private life. And at one point, in that video, we see the teacher talking about the Aboriginal culture, and she reads a book. She doesn't know much about it. And she says it to her students: That's not my story. I don't know this story. But this Aboriginal student is there, and we discussed this afternoon, we were **saying she should have actually used him as the expert and asked him to tell the story instead**, because she confessed she didn't know. So and we were thinking why not using our students as experts at that point? [...] **We need to remind ourselves to use our students' knowledge**, they are knowledgeable people. **That's something I tried to actually change in my way of teaching, being a facilitator instead of being the expert in the class, triggering questions and just nurturing my students' knowledge.**"* [Environment]

The documentary watched in class made her realise students' cultures are often disregarded and even actively excluded from the teaching and learning process. However, this view of students as belonging to a specific culture and therefore as holders of a specific cultural knowledge might be dangerous too, because they might not necessarily identify with that culture, or might not want to do so in front of their peers at an age where belonging and fitting in is so important.

"I think I had a problem with my name for a while because I wasn't blending in. Because obviously, you see my name and you straightaway, unconsciously put a

*label on it, like you put me into a box. And I was always thinking, like, people used to say that **people do not understand who I am**. But then they don't understand who I am really, because **I'm much more than just a name**. And now, yeah, I feel more comfortable with having different cultures as well being from a different having different backgrounds and origins. **And I think I feel better this way here, because it's much more accepted. I feel more accepted than in France.**"* [Identity]

Once again, personal experience intertwines and reshapes new concepts learnt in class. She also adds that she realised that her experience as a learner in France, where instruction came from the teacher, and student collaboration was not encouraged, is having an impact on the way she teaches. In fact, she often finds herself lecturing and has to remind herself to stop.

*"Because in Europe, in general, it's the teacher at the front, and then students at the desk, and we all face the board. And we don't work in teams, and we all work towards an assessment that we need to pass. **And that's not the way I want to teach**. [...] Yesterday, I was actually finishing an assessment, where I had to reflect on my own teaching and my bias. And I was then reflecting on my two different placements. So on the first one, my mentor teacher was French. So I can see she adopted the Australian way of teaching. But I still think that her main focus is teacher-centred. Even if there's a mix of both, he obviously doesn't teach like in France. And I was thinking: **How can I actually change this to be more learner-centred, even when teaching a language?**"* [Environment]

Personal experiences and teacher training have a strong impact on her pedagogical approach, but there is another contextual factor that other preservice teachers mentioned, which is what is perceived as the broader Australian society. In particular, it is common to be "politically correct":

*"Yeah, I was actually thinking that there is a lot of political correctness in Australia. So there's a lot of **"Yes, you're allowed to be whoever you are. But I'm not gonna ask too many questions"**. Because I think also the learner-centred approach requires courage from the teacher to do it. Because you don't know what's going to come out from their mouth. And so if you ask her like, a hard questions such as "Do you think there is racism" for example, if you ask this question in class, and you can open up a debate, which can be where people can be heated up pretty quickly. **So you need to be the facilitator [...]. We [teachers] manage different***

personalities and different sensibilities as well. So that's why it's hard to do that. Because it requires work on ourselves first. Because teaching as such, like, "I'm the expert, I give you knowledge" it's actually easy [...]. But it's hard to jump into the unknown, because we're going to maybe talk about a topic we're not experts in. We're not experts, but that's fine. And I think that's also why it's hard to put in place because we need to accept that we're not experts." [Environment and identity]

Beliefs and mission

Ynes' conceptualisation of pedagogy is similar to Qing's, and both preservice teachers recognise the uncertainty of opening up spaces for discussions, allowing learners to bring in their own experiences, and being the facilitator rather than the holder of knowledge. This view of teaching in general and of the intercultural capability in particular also means that both preservice teachers understand that at no point they will be fully competent in interculturality, neither they will be able to avoid potential conflicts and "heated debates" if they want to develop the intercultural capability in their learners.

Finally, I ask her if she sees the value for students to develop this intercultural capability for communicating and understanding not only in the target language:

*"I don't know actually, from the perspective if they would see this as an advantage, because **I think when you're a teenager, you want to fit in, you want to be like everyone**. But yeah, definitely, I think that's why I think we should have these conversations in class and use **our students as the experts**, maybe make them the special person of the day, because I think **it's good to teach them that being different is good**. [...] Then when you start being an adult, you have to be an individual, because when you go out finding a job, the one question everyone asks you is, why should I take you rather than someone else? So actually, the individual you are is more important than the group you belong to. So that's something to prepare them for later. I think it is good to be part of a group but it's good also to be an individual and to know who you are."* [Mission]

Ynes challenges the idea that teaching about culture might bring about only positive attitudes and realises that Australian teenagers might not want to identify in any specific culture: they just want to be like their peers. At the same time, students

should be encouraged to value, rather than be ashamed of, who they are. Therefore, valuing cultural difference, fostering pride in students' identities, including material from different cultures, are all actions with the potential of making students feel more comfortable in their own difference.

5.3.5 Shanvika

My fifth participant is a prospective secondary school teacher of French and EAL/D, and is enrolled in the second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary). She is in her 30s, her cultural identity is Sri Lankan and she speaks English, Sinhala, and French. She is unsure about her ability to embed the intercultural capability, but definitely sees its value.

Environment and identity

She starts the interview by confessing that she is no longer confident she can address the intercultural capability in the classroom:

*"I mean, **I always thought I was, you know, intercultural and, you know, becoming that sort of teacher**. […] **That's what I changed my mind about once I actually started teaching at school**."* [Environment]

Similarly to Elisa she immediately identifies as an intercultural person and introduces her biography to justify this belief:

*"**I always thought of myself as an intercultural person, because I come from Sri Lanka, I get along with people from different backgrounds. I've worked with international crowds**. So I thought: This is not something, you know, that you're going to find as a challenge. But yeah, I never expected it to be like this."* [Identity]

Her current placement experience is seen as an inhibitor of her ability to teach the intercultural capability despite having been placed at a school characterised by high cultural diversity:

*"But I actually started my placement at a new school, where I was like, Oh, that's very different to what I had pictured. **It's very multicultural**. I mean, if you take 22 students in your classroom, they come from very, very different backgrounds.*

So they come from very different backgrounds, and it is difficult for them, and the way they're being brought up is different and they have a lot of challenges I would say." [Environment]

As Ynes, also Shanvika challenges the naïve idea that the intercultural capability is a concept that will be welcome by all students who identify as culturally different, thus showing awareness that the realities some young people directly witnessed and from which they are affected by cannot be easily addressed and embedded in the classroom:

*"**It is difficult to relate to some of the backgrounds** because… I know that my mentor teacher told me that, especially the students from Afghanistan and other countries that are coming to Australia by boat, have gone through extreme hardships".* [Environment]

Furthermore, she acknowledges that issues of power and race are a problem. She is struggling to gain respect from students, perhaps because she is not a white teacher. The school culture is not helping and she is even starting to wonder whether Australia is imposing its own values at the expense of students' home cultures and is questioning whether this is the right way to go:

*"Sometimes it's, like, difficult to get through to them. Because especially I don't know, because for me, I'm new, and they know that I'm a student teacher, and they don't know me, and I have no history there in that school and **it is difficult to gain respect sometimes. […] At one point I was thinking that because I am Asian myself, maybe if it was a white teacher it would be different.**"* [Environment and Identity]

Her experience is particularly interesting as she later explains that she was previously working in a very different setting, where academic standards were higher and that there, she felt like it was easy to teach French language and culture. Every occasion was good to make her students feel comfortable and confident to share about their cultures and languages. The students were engaged and she was making topics relevant to their lives, encouraging them to discover similarities, even when teaching grammar, in order to help students find a common ground, rather than focusing on the differences that separate us.

A possible explanation for this situation is that, in contexts where students' diversity is not seen as a positive trait, or where students have had negative experiences due to their origins, like in the case of refugees, trying to highlight their difference only makes things worse. Students who already feel like they don't belong might not appreciate a teacher who is portraying cultural difference as an advantage, because in their experience, being different has brought no advantage. On the contrary: it equates to hardship, trauma, and exclusion. Furthermore, if the school has a strong Anglo-Australian identity, it does not provide opportunities for students to feel included, but only makes them feel more alienated.

In her other teaching context, where students are more privileged, they also have a more positive relationship with diversity and, because they do not associate any negative consequence with it, teaching to appreciate each other's cultures is an easy task. In a positive climate, adopting an intercultural approach to language teaching is easy. However, this positive view of intercultural living as peaceful and harmonious is being shattered in the context of a less privileged multicultural reality.

During her current teaching practicum at a highly multicultural school in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, she is experiencing more difficulties. She doesn't find the school culture to be as inclusive as she would have expected from this sort of context and is disappointed in the system.

Environment and competencies

I inquire about the issues she is experiencing at her current school:

*"**At school, in general, students' cultures are not represented**. For example, in the library there are no books that are not Australian. I think **it would be beneficial for students to see their cultures validated**. Is Australia trying to impose its own values? **I know Australia is doing a lot for multiculturalism, they allow different outfits, their schools are so diverse… but is it enough?"** [Environment]

In her case, the environment has an obvious impact on how much she feels capable of addressing the intercultural capability. If the school culture is not promoting the values she considers essential to interculturality, she feels like she alone cannot have a significant impact. She observes that her mentor teacher is doing the right thing, but she sees that the students are not engaged in learning French.

When she observes a Year 7 class, she also sees students' enthusiasm and wonders why this is not capitalised upon, but tends to vanish over the course of the school year. In this case, the role of school and societal context becomes obvious:

*"But I also noticed that they're saying that sometimes when you grow up here, you forget your native language, because you don't use it anymore. You know, we speak English at home, you speak into school and you forget your own native language and when that happens… is that the way to go? [...] But my question is, **is Australia trying to impose their own values too much on the students, is that what they are trying to do by, you know, introducing only books to do with their [Anglo-saxon] culture and their [Anglo-saxon] education?"*** [Environment]

This critique to Australian society is quite relevant: Shanvika is convinced teachers, and schools, should validate students' mother tongues. Importantly, students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds should not feel less valued or even excluded. However, it is clear that in this case their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not represented in the school environment. This makes her ability to have an impact on the students a challenge.

Environment and beliefs

I then ask if she believes it is a positive fact that the intercultural dimension was included in the Victorian Curriculum and she feels like it is definitely a good thing. While she welcomes its inclusion in the Curriculum, she questions if that is enough to provoke change in schools. Then, she provides her own conceptualisation of the intercultural capability, which, for her, is about creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels at ease sharing their own cultural practices and where students learn what unites us, rather than on what makes us different.

This translates into a teaching approach that is aimed at integrating the teaching of language and culture. In practical terms, she says teachers should take the opportunity to find out about what students do in their own culture/country of origin. In this way they are not only learning about someone else's culture, but they are also learning about each other and about themselves. This interpretation of the intercultural capability is very close to Qing's. Similarly to Qing, also Shanvika recognises the role of personal cultures: "*Then they feel like **it's not learning about***

another person culture's, of course this is part of it, but it is also sharing personal cultures as well. I think that's what we should do". [Beliefs]

Environment and behaviour

Importantly, not only differences should be highlighted, but also similarities. In fact, sometimes things only appear different on the surface and by focusing on finding commonalities students can relate to each other better and understand each other better:

*"So what I would usually do in my lesson, for example, if you're talking about festivals or things like that, I always ask them about their background, for example, what festival are students still celebrating in their country if they come from a different country. I want to talk about those facts. [...] Let's say, for example, **if you come up with a topic, you should always make it work for everyone's background. It should be inclusive,** for example if you are talking about school system or how you do things like that if you can make a comparison and see the differences and find out what are the differences, but also to find out similarities. **Sometimes the things are not so different.** So that is what I think as, as language teachers we should do and also, for example, if you can base it on, even if you come up with a grammar lesson, if **you can relate to another language** that is similar or something like that and make them understand. [...] It's not just about particular topics and themes, but it's also about I think, even teaching grammar, you can make them feel make them understand that you can relate it to, I think we understand it better. I mean, that's how I learnt."* [Behaviour]

After providing examples from her own teaching experience, she admits that it is her personal experience as a learner that shapes her understanding of how students learn. In particular, referring to other teaching styles she witnessed she says:

*"Um, I think that probably it is a personal thing. She **[mentor] values students' behaviour, she keeps saying she is not going to put up with their bad behaviour. I have very different expectations.** But then again, probably when you are in front of students you feel your authority is challenged, **you adapt to the environment, maybe it will happen to me as well,** I will feel challenged and change my personality maybe?"* [Environment]

As a student teacher she recognises she might have idealistic expectations about her role and also that context might exert an influence and make people behave in ways that do not necessarily match their values.

*"Then it's all about how much they [teachers] let them [students] express themselves. And yeah, it's probably that. **It's about the culture of the school; they want all different types of students there.** And that is, that is a goal. **Their goal is to make them become more Australian. Is that what they're doing? Yeah**. Because one thing I noticed with the library, all the books are Australian books, by Australian authors. I didn't even see a print by a British author. In a way it's a good thing because they appreciate their own authors that could be a good thing as well. But I think that as it is a multicultural school, **there needs to be books or other materials representing other cultures as well**."* [Environment]

This aspect of school culture is particularly concerning for her, because, by valuing too much Anglo-Australian mainstream culture, it is as if the system wanted to fail culturally diverse students:

*"And I am scared because if that is what they want, you know, I might fail and, and sometimes I've also seen that, okay, different teachers have different styles, and **if someone else has a different method of teaching they don't appreciate each other**. So I was disappointed to see that. And I was even thinking, Oh, my goodness, can I do this? Yeah. It's like, **they want you to fail I mean, I don't know**."* [Environment]

She feels unsure about her considerations because, at least on the surface (i.e. school uniform), divergence from the dominant culture is allowed. However, she still wonders what else can be done to encourage the inclusion of culturally diverse learners:

*"And also, I think that's one thing, but then again, **I think Australia is doing their best to incorporate different cultures, the fact that they have such multicultural schools, they accept different outfits**, so that's also something that's also a big thing. **But how much or what more to do is the question, is there more to do for them to make them feel included?**"* [Environment]

While it is her strong belief that all students should be able to express their own cultural identity and feel included and valued, she also witnesses racist attitudes and

is unsure about how to respond, even if she recognises it is her responsibility to address these issues. Once again, she feels powerless when working in a community that does not support what she believes in: *"If racist attitudes exist in society and are transmitted from parents to children, what can schools do to change this?"* [Environment]

This insight proves that she is more oriented towards a social justice view of intercultural education and that while she acknowledges that schools are the places where racism needs to be eradicated from society, she is unsure how much teachers can affect society, thus limiting her sense of agency. Her experience also demonstrates that it is not necessarily the case that schools with high diversity are more oriented towards critical pedagogy. In fact, she admits that transmitting such messages is not an easy task and that context is affecting her ability to be effective: *"Then when you actually try to do it in class like I said, it's not it's easy. **I am not sure it would be different if it was a different school, but yeah** …."* [Environment]

To conclude, she provides an example of the challenge of teaching in a multicultural school:

*"So I suppose when you think of the intercultural capability, it's all about how a student or **all students can express their culture**, even though there are many different cultures, but I didn't, to be honest, see that, even among students themselves. Especially you know, even parents themselves have this sort of racist attitude going on because my mentor teacher told me that sometimes, there are so many Muslim girls who have hijabs and long pants because that's part of their culture. There's a lot and which is something very, you know, very beautiful because there are people with different outfits and things like that, but then sometimes some parents think that because there are so many Muslims attending the school, they should not send their students to this school… that sort of idea… So because of this, students get the message they should not hang out with these students (Muslim), from other backgrounds especially. **So even like, yesterday, my student was leaving and, and when I was Why? Because my father said this is not a good school. That was not his idea, that was his parents' idea.** So yeah, so, even my mentor teacher sometimes, you know, they try to, you can hear sometimes, so let's talk about religion. And things like that. And you can hear a lot of, things to do with racism as well. So **I don't know how much a school can do to educate them. Because***

sometimes, because they're coming from their parents, they tend to believe that more as well. So I think that I find a challenge because as a teacher you should be able to respond to those comments and educate them and when you when you hear something like that, surely we as language teachers." [Environment and behaviour]

As conflict and racism exist in society, this is reflected into the school environment. Here, the role of teachers, and especially of language teachers, should be to address those issues. For Shanvika, the responsibility of teachers is to make the students feel safe, no matter what their background is. Students need to feel confident and proud of their cultural backgrounds and they should feel free to express themselves:

"I would say and I think as a teacher, it's teacher's responsibility to make them all feel safe and comfortable, no matter where they come from. So yeah, that's, that's a challenge because they already have set up ideas in their heads and they have grown up with those ideas." [Behaviour]

Identity and mission

In our follow up interview, I summarise her understanding of the intercultural capability as an inclusive practice, which promotes the well-being and safety of all learners, who are made to feel valued and who can share about their own cultures so that they can all learn from each other. It is also about focusing on finding similarities, rather than differences, which do not have to be at the cultural level, but can do at the personal level too. She confirms, and then I point out that she seems very aware of social issues and that her orientation towards intercultural education might be leaning towards a politically engaged orientation. This, she explains, is due to her growing up during an ethnic conflict and of having her father encouraging learning languages as a means to be open-minded and not to be afraid of the *Other*. She thinks that this, more than anything else, has had an influence in how she understands the intercultural capability.

Shanvika grew up in Sri Lanka during an ethnic war that lasted thirty years. Her father is a journalist, whom she describes as an open-minded person who

encouraged his children to explore the world and make connections with others. He supported Shanvika in learning different languages, including French, which she later studied in France for her undergraduate degree. Thanks to her upbringing, Shanvika developed an international perspective and enjoyed many advantages as an adult. In fact, thanks to how her parents raised her, she experienced many advantages as an adult. She worked as a French language teacher for four years, before transitioning to a corporate job in the tourism industry, which allowed her to travel and visit different cities. Eventually, she decided to pursue a career in education and trained as a secondary school teacher in Australia. Throughout her professional journey, Shanvika's proficiency in multiple languages, particularly French, opened doors for her and enabled her to pursue various opportunities. She is grateful for her parents' values and support, which shaped her into the person she is today.

I ask whether other factors had an impact of her conceptualisation of the intercultural capability, for example her teacher education course:

*"Yeah, it's a mix of that. But like I said, **it's about what your family teaches you, in the beginning it matters a lot, because you grew up with them for a long time.** And that's the sort of ideas that you have in back of your head, even if you leave your family or you're away from them. **That's the foundation to who you are.** So, otherwise, I'm not saying that it's impossible, you know, to change those ideas but it's difficult for example, if you're grown up with such a set of values and ideas and then be completely do something else, it's difficult so you will always carry that identity with you. I think it's common for teachers as well. So **that's the identity that you need for your personal ideas, how you work, how you respond. So that's what you express as well as a teacher."* [Identity]

Shanvika admits that the strongest influence remains her own family. This seems to be the case especially because intercultural education is much more about values and ideas than teaching methods.

Her mission for teaching languages is closely related to her own biography: since she gained many benefits from speaking more than language, she wishes her students to have the same opportunities. In particular, she sees the value of learning

languages for her students as twofold: it opens up the world, both in terms of job opportunities, and in terms of understanding other people and other cultures:

"I mean, I was able to find a job because of French, very early on. I can always, even after I left my teaching career, I could always find a job in the corporate sector, for just the fact that I spoke two languages. So that's something I value very much and that's what I want my students to know. That they shouldn't see it as a burden to them, they should be able, you know, be interested in learning the language because that's a big benefit to people when they can understand other people and they can understand other cultures, so yeah that's the whole goal." [Mission]

5.3.6   May

My sixth participant is a prospective teacher of Chinese and Business Studies. May is enrolled in her second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary); she is in her 20s, her cultural identity is Chinese and she speaks English and Chinese. She is unsure about her ability to embed the intercultural capability, but definitely sees its value in the language classroom.

Environment and behaviour

May is familiar with the intercultural dimension of the Victorian Curriculum, and starts the interview by stating that for her one thing is reading Curriculum documents and one thing is putting them into practice, thus highlighting the gap between theory and practice. She understands the aims and values of the intercultural capability, but recognises that is not something easily done in the reality of everyday teaching.

At her current placement, May's classroom practice consists of comparing *"what happens in different countries",* specifically in Australia and in China, but also relating it to what happens in other Asian countries so that students gain knowledge of different communication styles or of different school systems, for example. Later in the interview, she will explain that she believes that having this

insight into how people do things differently leads to acquiring different perspectives.

May is teaching Chinese and she shows a thorough understanding of the Curriculum for her discipline. The fact that it is divided into four strands allows her to be aware of different students' needs. This translates into different conceptualisations of the intercultural capability. For first language learners of Chinese, she would focus on cultural knowledge about Australia, which is what is perceived as missing. In fact, first language learners are already familiar with festivals and countries in their homeland, thus making the assumption that students who are native speakers of Chinese grew up in China and that competence in language equals competence in culture. On the other hand, with background learners of Chinese, that is to say those who were born in Australia from Chinese parents and therefore speak the language at home "*probably not so well*", she would need to teach about Chinese cultural practices, which they might not be aware of. In addition, these learners might experience identity issues and feel lost and conflicted between being Australian or being Chinese. To justify this belief, May brings in her own personal experience of moving to Australia as a child. She remembers that at school, she read the book "Growing up Asian in Australia" and explored the issue of identity. For this type of learners she would choose to focus on *"**Chinese festivals, Chinese ideas, but also talking about daily life and what's the difference between Australia or China"** [Environment and behaviour]. This, she believes, will help them *"learn the language, learn the culture, but also find their identity as well"*.

Another strand in the Chinese Curriculum is only dedicated to culture and society. For the students in this category, *"language is very difficult"* as *"some of them are from Australia and they don't have any Chinese background so it's very hard for them"*. In their case, the focus is almost entirely on cultural knowledge. For example, they need to analyse how the concept of relationship or the habit of drinking tea differs in China, compared to Australia. For May, the national paradigm of culture seems to be strongly present and many assumptions are made based on the country students (and teachers) supposedly belong to.

Another influence she recognises is her supervised teaching practice:

*"Yeah, that really helps, like at Uni we talk about more like theoretical scenarios. **But once I get to the placement**, I can see, like, oh, what I did really bad,*

*like, **I have to improve which parts of my teaching, so all my shortcoming just appear**. And then my mentors, they are very, like, friendly. And they do help me a lot. They, they just very honestly point out, like, what goes wrong when I'm teaching. [...] So that's just, that's the thing I haven't found before because I don't have much experience in teaching. So that just helped correct my mistakes and helps me with, like the future teaching. So it is very helpful. So some teachers that are my, my teaching is very engaging, and some people say, the language I use is very inclusive."* [Environment and behaviour]

May is my only participant to display and recognise knowledge of the Curriculum and the expectations set by Australian schools and, in the course of the interview, it will become clear that this familiarity has to do with her experience of being a student in senior secondary school in Australia.

Having knowledge of the Curriculum and having examined the intercultural capability is interpreted and embedded in her language classroom, May filters her own personal experiences, which still influence to a certain extent the ways in which she reads policy documents.

During her placement, May reports witnessing a lack of use of authentic materials, such as YouTube videos. May believes that it is very important for students to see and hear "*people in real life*" and that technology will enhance the teaching of language by providing access to more authentic resources:

*"Because it's very new for them, and how to help them with authentic learning because they may have not been to China before, they haven't read any Chinese book so I have to provide a lot of supportive evidence or supportive material for them to know [gain knowledge of], maybe some videos, maybe some audios can bring them more into the real life in China. [...] **I usually bring a lot of video, sometimes YouTube videos help, and also pictures**."* [Behaviour]

Technology provides direct access to what is occurring in China, but another authentic source of knowledge is considered to be her personal biography and what she directly witnessed when growing up in China, which she would happily share with her students in order to develop their intercultural capability. Her mentor teacher, in fact, invites her to speak as an authoritative source of knowledge of China, thus equating nation and culture: *"And **because I am a preservice teacher, so**

basically my mentor invites me to introduce, as a host, how people are doing stuff in China because I'm from China. So she invited me as to introduce all this to the students." [Environment]

In addition, while first language learners are believed to have access to practise both their linguistic and cultural knowledge, second language learners might not and therefore she will need to provide them with online materials, *"so they can help themselves"*.

*"So **to be a teacher, I think I also have to be very honest. Like, I have to tell what it really is, and what I, what I see in my life in China, what I have experienced**, so I don't have to hide maybe, that not everyone has a TV in China. They are not so wealthy. They may not have the TV, right? But not everyone has the helicopter. That's just the truth."* [Behaviour]

When I ask if she would talk about differences within the nation, she elaborates on the tea-drinking example provided as example of Intercultural Language Teaching practice:

"I think because to be honest, I'm not a tea person. But it is in some parts of China it is so popular to see people just having tea in the afternoon together, then people are sitting together and they listen to the music or just check in with each other. It's like a very relaxing way to enjoy the afternoon especially for the oldest but now also many young people start to realise that drinking tea is good." [Behaviour]

While recognising that tea drinking is a typical Chinese tradition, she also admits she personally doesn't like tea, thus implying that culture is a national thing, but personal differences still exist.

*. "Yeah. **And I'll also talk about the fact that in different parts of China they drink different teas**. And, yeah, also, kind of because in recent years, I think, in the last 20 years or 10 years, Chinese started to do more like bottled tea because for many years before they didn't realise that they can produce like bottled tea just to carry out and drink anywhere."* [Behaviour]

Identity and behaviour

The examples of classroom practice she provided derive from her experience of being an international student in Australia, as recounted in her biography. As for the other participants, below I created a narrative text of May's biography, based on the statements she provided to justify her theoretical understanding and practical application of ILTL during the two interviews.

May was born in China. When she was fifteen, she arrived in Australia to study in high school for a couple of years. She remembers her classmates telling her that Chinese people are very rich and asking whether she had a helicopter at home. She could not understand why her peers would come up with such ideas and realised they only had a minimal understanding of what life in China was like. On another occasion, a teacher asked her if she had a television at home, which she also found peculiar, as it is usually assumed that people have televisions in their houses. Once again, she realised the amount of prejudices that existed about life in China. This is influencing her way of approaching the teaching of Chinese language and culture, as she believes it is important to make it clear that many of the stereotypes and prejudices existing in Australia need to be addressed.

She obtained her VCE in Chinese as a first-language learner. After completing high school, she enrolled at an Australian University, and is now studying her Master of Teaching. In the meantime, she continued visiting her country regularly, and she recently obtained an internship about pedagogy and assessment programs in China. All these experiences, including her current practicum, are influencing the way she teaches.

Environment and beliefs

May defines the intercultural capability as being inclusive of learners' cultural background. In the follow up interview, I ask her to confirm whether her personal experiences, both as a Chinese language learner and as an international student in Australia, have shaped her understanding of the intercultural capability and she confirms, by also adding that her University assignments, especially when carried out in groups, are having an influence:

*"At Uni, we learn how to create assessments based on the curriculum […] But we also, we can discuss with people from different cultures or people from different subjects, we design our assessments, or we learn our different study designs, we can see how other people are doing also stuff, like we can copy from each other, I don't mean in the exam or in the assessment paper. So **we learn from each other. So I think the University just provides a very good place for us to learn from each other**, and we also have the help from the tutor. So that's very nice."* [Environment and beliefs]

Another interpretation of the intercultural capability is that of respect, meaning young people should learn that "*every country runs differently*" so "***students have to know that every culture is different […] so you couldn't just judge or criticise […] or have stereotypes**. So thing is what we can learn from an intercultural class as well.*" [Beliefs]

In this utterance, May produces an interpretation of the idea of respect as not mentioning anything negative about this or that country or culture. The possibility of dialogue is therefore precluded by the idea of respect. However, she does not wish to avoid conflict completely, rather, she believes it is the students themselves who need to discover whether their knowledge is accurate or not.

*"I will try my best to tell my story honestly and also sometimes a student might ask "So all Chinese people eat their dog?" and I will just say "I don't know but I don't think so. How about you do your research to figure out if in China or the Chinese people eat dogs" […] they can figure out if it's true so that's also how like we steer independent learning as well so sometimes **if they find out that it is not true, it also consolidates their knowledge and their learning**".* [Beliefs]

Mission and beliefs

For May, the value of the intercultural capability is that by learning about differences (in thinking, in lifestyle, in traditions), young people become more curious, more open minded, and realise that everything is relative.

*"They [**students] can realise that different people have different thinking from different perspectives if they are from different cultures, from different backgrounds**, even if they are from China people still think differently […] People*

think about relationships in this way because they are from China or they have their past personal experience." [Mission]

Here, May attempts to introduce the personal factor as a variable to "doing things differently" so that nationality is not the only variable. She explains this further by stating that cultures influence each other and that today's globalised world is producing a new culture: *"the culture is not individual, it is impacted by different cultures. For example, the Chinese characters, they have impact on other countries as well. So like, I couldn't say this, like perspective, one culture only belongs to one; **sometimes the culture is not specific only to one culture. They combine each other, they share each other, and they put things together. So now the culture is very international or globalised**.*" [Beliefs]

Finally, learning other languages and learning about other cultures is important for young people to foster curiosity to learn and explore things they don't know about and the intercultural capability is just helping them understand that:

"***Understanding others better, by using the perspective of understanding or considering other cultural backgrounds, not just immediately point out this is not right.*** *But actually in some circumstances this is how it works, like people, because students I work with, at their age, they may think just from one perspectives, but learning culture, or learning another language, they just can help them to see from this different way, like help them to make the decision more comprehensive, more detailed, like this. And also they realise well that they actually realise the world is what is so big, like the overall view of the globe it's so big. So it's also like, **stimulating their interest to explore more to know more about the world***.*" [Beliefs]

Like with all other participants, also May shows multiple interpretations of this concept and a willingness to include it into her teaching practice.

5.3.7 Alberto

My final participant is a prospective teacher of Italian and Humanities. Alberto is enrolled in his second year of the Master of Teaching (Secondary); he is in his 50s, his cultural identity is Italian, however he feels proud in also being an Australian citizen, and he does not feel confident at all in his ability to embed the intercultural capability, which he definitely sees as part of his classroom of Languages.

Environment and identity

As usual, I start my first interview asking whether on placement or during his teacher qualification training he has come across the concept of the intercultural capability, and he replies he definitely did not look at it. However, during the course of the interview it will become clear that one Unit he has recently undertaken during his course was influential for his understanding of the intercultural dimension: "***No, never. […] I just stumbled across it during the readings […] that one was one of the readings I had to do at university****.*" [Environment]

I then ask if on placement he had the opportunity to consider it:

"***No... And you know why? There is no time to look at all the stuff in class, honestly. Teachers really do a lot.*** *If they have to even try to differentiate classes, according to the intercultural capability and go and look, what is the background of people in every class… I did, because I was trying to figure out how... what was the problem? The problem was that I had a couple of students that didn't participate.*" [Environment]

Here the issue of lack of time to dedicate to the implementation of the intercultural capability is raised. Students' cultural backgrounds rarely tend to be considered for differentiation purposes because it would take too much time. He only decided to take into consideration his learners' background because a couple of them did not participate in class. From this response, it is also clear that he conceptualises the intercultural capability as culturally responsive teaching, meaning that, ideally, teachers should consider the different backgrounds represented in each classroom. However, he recognises teachers' workload as a burden to this.

In our follow up interview, I summarise his conceptualisation of the intercultural capability as the inclusion of learners' cultures in the classroom, although this is not always practical. He confirms by recounting an anecdote:

"*There was an article that I read many, many years ago, when I first came [to Australia]. I was doing an assignment about whether or not Australia should be a Republic. I thought I did pretty well, I am Italian so I know all the philosophy, I quote all the thinkers and my reasoning is strong. And then I get, I get only 63. And of course I am not happy. And that's the Intercultural Capabilities. We think, you*

know, as Italians, we think in a zigzag. Instead, the Chinese have a circular way of doing it. And I experienced that with working with Japanese. And recently, I can't remember what I was thinking, but recently, I realised they check everything. Okay, that's Chinese and Japanese. They're obsessive about that. Italian are zigzagging and they repeat themselves. And Anglo Saxons instead are straightforward. And, and you know, at university, I get mad all the time. If you don't allow me to do anything that is not in the rubric, that is not in your instruction, and the minute you don't do exactly what seeing the instruction you get marked down, no matter what is the quality of your work, there is no strive to do a better job. So this is the intercultural capability for me. We are creative. We come from a creative breed. Michelangelo and all the others. You know, and that's my thought about that." [Identity]

In this anecdote of studying at an Australian University and being marked down for having a different approach to the task, Alberto conceptualises the Intercultural Capabilities as the recognition of cultural differences as an advantage rather than as a disadvantage, like it was perceived in his case. He is also denouncing the injustice of teachers not appreciating, but rather penalising, cultural differences. To justify this, he brings up different cultural thought patterns and complains that Anglo-speaking cultures tend to have a "think inside the box" pattern, while Italians are more creative. It appears that having his cultural identity recognised as "deficient" by the dominant culture, reinforced his pride in being different.

Considering the idea of boxes, I ask what his thoughts are on the rubric that accompanies the description of the intercultural capability in the Victorian Curriculum: "*I never read it. Not in a way that I can give you an honest answer. So, I think it's perfectly fine. They want to put, once again, they want to put that in the curriculum, that's fine. **In the end, it is a matter of being inclusive, a way to include people that are different in terms of cultural background**.*" [Environment and identity]

Once again, for Alberto, the intercultural capability is about the inclusion of culturally diverse learners and the recognition of the differences they bring into the classroom.

Beliefs and behaviour

In practice, this translates into teaching Languages by tackling current issues in a way that shows young people in Australia that every country in the world is multicultural. For example:

*"When we study Italy, we study what happened in Italy in the last 30 years in terms of integration, the problem we had with people, especially people who are coming from Africa and a lot of Muslims. In Milan the Chinese community is really visible. Or in Turin, there is a big community of Chinese. So **that's what I would teach them. That now no country in the world has got a cultural identity that is well defined. Unless you impose it at school**."* [Behaviour]

I then ask if he sees this as a recent phenomenon:

*"Of course not, before there was Italian emigration everywhere. Argentina, United States, Australia, in Australia it was the second ethnic group, if Italian can be defined as ethnic group, because there is disagreement, even about the concept of race in human beings. So at the end of the day, wherever you go, you can find an Italian, even if you go to Thailand, and you find somebody that runs a pizzeria. Yeah, but not just pizza. Yeah. **And before that we've got Christopher Columbus, we've got Marco Polo**."* [Behaviour]

By showing students that cultural "contamination" is a constant in human history, Alberto hopes to transmit knowledge about historical facts and promote a deeper understanding, which should not be naïve and just positive, of culture:

*"I go to the lunar festival every year. Well, but yeah, the lunar festival is very good, I like the food and everything, but then it is like... I love going to Greece, I like Greece or like, like the food I like**. I like Jamaica, for example, that doesn't mean that I can understand Jamaican history. We know the people were brought there from Africa and, and all this other stuff. If nobody tells me, I won't know**."*

This shows that Alberto rejects the practice of celebrating cultural traditions, as this does not lead to the development of any particular understanding. He recognises that "***there are a lot of simplistic ways of looking at Intercultural Capabilities […] but these capabilities are very important for deeper meaning, not just for the, that festival or the Chinese New Year***." [Beliefs] Of course, because it is the simplest way to embed the teaching of culture in the language classroom, he knows it is very

common to resort to this approach and, in fact, he has witnessed many examples of teaching Italian by talking about pasta and pizza.

When I ask how often he intends to integrate language teaching and culture teaching he answers: "*at all times*". For example, if he were doing a unit on Italian cuisine, he would teach about Marco Polo and the Silk Road, or the origin of spices or tomatoes:

"*Why we eat tomatoes? Because, you know, Christopher Columbus, and about him, nobody's talking about what he did. When he went to America, he slaughtered people. He wasn't really nice. **Teaching a bit of history.**"* [Behaviour]

I then suggest he could teach a unit on Italian colonialism and his reaction is of surprise: "*Uh, oh… ah… mh... that is a **controversial idea**. That is really controversial, because it wasn't a really good, good page of Italian history. But yes, why not. But compared to what was the colony of the British Empire it wasn't as bad. Well, yeah, I suppose that you can do that. At least we never brought back slaves.*" [Behaviour]

This is an interesting reaction as the first response is "*that was a terrible page of Italian history*", then he starts considering the possibility of teaching his students about it, possibly in view of the fact that, in his opinion, compared to British colonies, Italians did not do as much damage. This shows that his emotional attachment to the Italian culture initially impedes him to look at Italian history in a neutral way. But once he starts considering this idea, he recognises that teaching about colonialism is indeed a way to embed the intercultural capability. He also acknowledges that virtually any topic affords the chance to include it:

"*So then yeah, maybe contrast with colonisation, British colonisation, French colonisation that's intercultural. Spanish colonisation happened to the pre Columbian populations like Incas and Mayas. So that's another way to approach it, but by all means, you can talk about everything, virtually anytime.*" [Behaviour]

As with Elisa and Ynes, when I ask whether they would consider teaching more controversial issues, such as about the colonial pasts of Italy and France, they are initially reluctant, but because they all see the value of intercultural education for social justice, they end up admitting they could address these historical aspects in their classroom. This confirms the initial reluctance of teachers to lean into the *savoir*

s'engager component of intercultural education, as found for example by (Reilly & Niens 2014), p. 56: 'Most teachers in this study opted for moral global citizenship and appeared reluctant to engage with social-political issues'.

In the same way as Ynes did, Alberto also points out that there are other contextual factors that affect his ability to bring up sensitive issues in the classroom:

"*You know, **political correctness is an obsession** of the British and the Australians, they have rules for everything. For example, the University of Sydney tells us what is the right terminology to be politically correct. **I see a lot of dangers with this, because sometimes I don't know how to speak to people**. Not to mention that legally, in Australia, freedom of thought and freedom of expression are not guaranteed.*" [Beliefs and behaviour]

The fact that political correctness prevents open and honest communication is recognised as a burden to promoting discussions about more culturally sensitive topics in class.

Because of his legal knowledge Alberto has a further explanation:

"*There is a fundamental problem between freedom and equality. They are not compatible, we should know that. And in fact Australia is for equality. Once I went to the swimming pool and they made me leave because there was a group of Muslim women. Fine. But what happened to my freedom of going for a swim after I paid? So we are for equality. **Political correctness addresses equality but not freedom***." [Beliefs]

Finally, Alberto explains that he believes that the root of the issues of racism and discrimination is ignorance. When we don't know we are afraid, therefore to eradicate these issues in the future, it is important to educate young people so that they understand that no cultural group is superior to another. The value of education and of knowledge that is not only superficial, but meaningfully connected to its purpose, is evident for this preservice teacher. He confirms this when he states that: "*[My main mission] **It is education and that's why I think that the intercultural capability needs to be taught from an early age**.*"

Mission and identity

For Alberto, because discrimination comes from ignorance, the purpose of the intercultural capability is to raise awareness of people that are different from them:

"*Generally speaking, when you don't know the other you are afraid that the other is gonna take something from you, that is what generally is. And so boosting that will boost that quality eventually, **because the managers of tomorrow are the students of today and they need to know there is no one cultural group that is superior to another**, but we still see a lot of entitlement under this point of view.*" [Mission]

He links the importance of developing the intercultural capability so that young people are ready for the workplace, where they will be working with culturally diverse people. This understanding is also linked to his personal biography, as he suffered from discrimination on the workplace. More generally, he believes that nobody should believe a group has claims of superiority over another.

Because Alberto is a lawyer, he also has a good understanding of the legal system. This impacts on his experience of intercultural education:

"***Do we have to teach about different cultures and include practices that go against Western values, or do we only teach that we should appreciate cultural difference without going into much detail?*** *Or should we teach that it is fine to have polygamous marriages, but then that the law forbids it?*" [Mission]

Alberto, a qualified lawyer who moved from Italy to Australia as an adult, has experienced first-hand the challenges of being a migrant in a new country. He encountered racism and marginalisation for his cultural and linguistic differences, including being penalised for having an accent when looking for a job. These experiences have made him acutely aware of the racial prejudice that exists towards minority groups in Australia, reinforcing his pride in his Italian identity. As a result of his experiences, Alberto believes in the importance of intercultural education and culturally responsive teaching. He understands the demands placed on teachers and recognises that they cannot accommodate every requirement of the curriculum or school. However, he believes that education is a powerful tool in eradicating racism and discrimination from society. He sees the transmission of knowledge, such as teaching history, as crucial to equip young people with the understanding and skills

necessary to face the challenges of the future. Alberto's unique perspective as a migrant, coupled with his legal expertise, has given him a valuable perspective on the importance of intercultural education and promoting equality in society. His experiences serve as a reminder of the need for understanding, compassion and respect for cultural diversity.

5.4   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table provides a summary of the findings that were identified in the collated interview transcripts during the process of data analysis. The table also provides the number of research participants who shared the same view under each code.

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Environment (Findings presented in Section 6.1.1 Influences on preservice teachers' attention to the intercultural capability)	Influence of Victorian Curriculum on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability	Agreement that the intercultural capability should be included in the Curriculum (7 out of 7) In the language classroom, intercultural capability would be taught anyway, whether it appeared in the Victorian Curriculum or not (7 out of 7). Low impact on pedagogical approaches (6 out of 7).
	Influence of school-based placement on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability	Place where teachers learn about the intercultural capability (2 out of 7) Place where teachers adapt to mentors' expectations and/or school environment (4 out of 7) Place where teachers adopt an

		intercultural approach based on the students' cultural backgrounds (6 out of 7)
	Influence of academic component of ITE on conceptualisation and application of the intercultural capability	Place where teachers learn about the intercultural capability (3 out of 7)
		Reinforces existing beliefs and practices (2 out of 7)
		Challenges existing beliefs and practices (2 out of 7)
Behaviour (Findings presented in Section 6.1.2 Preservice teachers' aspirations in relation to the intercultural capability)	Teaching of cultural practices (festivals, traditions, food, etc.)	Teaching about cultural practices (festivals, foods, lifestyle, institutions) (7 out of 7)
	Teaching of lifestyle and institutions (habits, schooling, etc.)	Analysing differences and similarities between cultural practices (4 out of 7)
	Teaching of language-in-culture and culture-in-language	Teaching about culture embedded in the language, i.e. idiomatic expressions and etymology (3 out of 7)
	In/ex-clusion of students' cultures (7 out of 7)	Conflicting views about whether students' culture should be integrated in the teaching content (3 out of 7)
		Students' cultures should definitely be included in the

		teaching content (3 out of 7)
	Alternative pedagogies	Teaching history from a critical perspective (3 out of 7)
		Developing learners' inner-culture (1 out of 7)
		Teaching cultural elements as fixed and societal elements as fluid (1 out of 7)
Competencies (Findings presented in Section 6.1.1 Influences on preservice teachers' attention to the intercultural capability)	Difficulty of teaching the intercultural capability	Self-reported as developing (7 out of 7)
		Confidence depends on the school environment (1 out of 7)
	Ease of teaching the intercultural capability	Being a native speaker of the language taught helps teaching about the culture (2 out of 7)
Beliefs (Findings presented in Section 6.1.2 Preservice teachers' aspirations in relation to the intercultural capability)	Intercultural capability as cultural competence	Knowledge about culture leads to acceptance of difference (2 out of 7)
	Intercultural capability as empathy, respect, and cultural sensitivity	Teaching students to respect others (4 out of 7)
		Processual and relational understanding of the

		intercultural capability (3 out of 7)
		Learning together with students (2 out of 7)
	Intercultural capability for social justice	Living well together (7 out of 7)
		Empowering young learners (3 out of 7)
Identity (Findings presented in Section 6.1.2 Preservice teachers' aspirations in relation to the intercultural capability)	Teachers' past personal experiences provided as justification for personal interpretations and declinations of the intercultural capability in the classroom of Languages	Experiences as learners of languages (2 out of 7)
		Living and working overseas (7 out of 7)
		Experiences studying overseas (3 out of 7)
		Values transmitted by the family of origin (4 out of 7)
		Experiences of raising bilingual children (1 out of 7)
Mission (Findings presented in Section 6.1.2 Preservice teachers' aspirations in relation to the intercultural capability)	What inspired participants to choose teaching Languages as a career	Developing a stronger sense of belonging to global and local communities in their learners (7 out of 7)
		Sharing love for their language and culture (5 out of 7)
		Teaching languages to open up opportunities (life, work, travel) (4 out of 7)
		Improving students' well-being (3 out of 7)

Table 7: Summary of findings from Thematic Analysis with participants' responses

Chapter 6:   Discussion and Recommendations

This Chapter analyses and discusses findings, theorises core concepts, and provides recommendations. The first Section explores the multiple ways in which preservice teachers conceptualise, envision, and teach the intercultural capability. These are at times ambiguous, contradictory, and often uncertain.

The participants in this study were all migrant preservice teachers. They shared similar life experiences, including: learning other languages in countries other than Australia while growing up; studying and working in countries other than Australia; living in at least two countries (the country where they were born and Australia). At the time of the interviews, they were also studying at University and undertaking supervised teaching practice in the Victorian school system, where teachers must follow a State-wide Curriculum. In spite of such commonalities, data analysis highlighted differences in the ways they conceptualised the intercultural capability and intended to implement an intercultural perspective in their classroom of Languages. Remarkably, the data powerfully suggest the extent to which preservice teachers' own personal experiences affect their beliefs about educational aims and choice of teaching methodology. These were being revisited through recent experiences of being student teachers and undertaking practicum in schools.

Based on these findings, this Chapter concludes with a series of recommendations for policy-makers and teacher training educators.

6.1 DISCUSSION

This Section discusses the findings that emerged from data analysis by exploring the interplay between different areas of teacher cognition (Borg 2003). These are: (1) environment, (2) behaviour, (3) competencies, (4) beliefs, (5) identity, and (5) mission (Korthagen 2004, see Section 4.6.3). According to Korthagen (2016), when teachers display alignment among the layers of the onion model (Korthagen 2004), they can impact the school and classroom environment. This study confirms this proposition, as the participants who had yet to reflect on these aspects prior to the interviews also showed a more significant discrepancy between what they said they wanted to achieve and what they said they would do to achieve it.

As evident in the previous Chapter, the boundaries between all these aspects are porous, and the relationship between the identified themes is not always straightforward. For this reason, results were not presented in a table separating different codes. Instead, they were presented in a narrative form, linking two themes under one heading. This shows how all areas of teacher cognition are closely related and mutually influence each other. The incongruences identified during data analysis confirm that 'teachers make relatively few conscious decisions while teaching and therefore their behaviour is only partly influenced by thinking (Korthagen 2017, p. 389). For example, five out of seven student teachers discussed using teaching materials and methods that contradicted their interpretations of the intercultural capability. During the interview, they became more aware of these contradictions. They admitted that participating in this study was an occasion for them to reflect on what they value and how this can be translated into their classroom. This is a significant finding, which has implications for both in-service teacher training and for Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

This study's data show that the research participants made genuine attempts to move beyond functionalist paradigms of culture. However, the concept of the intercultural capability remains complicated to grasp both from a theoretical and practical perspective. All preservice teachers interviewed had varying, and sometimes conflicting, ideas about this aspect. While completing their teaching qualifications, none of the participants of this research study felt confident in fully understanding the intercultural capability and in adopting an Intercultural Language

Teaching and Learning (ILTL) approach. They also realised that they were not readily prepared to foster the intercultural capability of their learners. This is not seen as a disadvantage, but rather as an indication that participants began questioning their own practices and beliefs. In doing so, they began to demonstrate meaningful conceptualisations and consider new ways of embedding the intercultural capability in their teaching practice.

At the time of data collection, the most decisive influence on the participants' interpretation of the intercultural capability originated from their prior professional and personal experiences, including being learners of languages and identifying as immigrants in another country. In comparison, their recent experiences as prospective teachers of Languages in Victoria seemed to have a weaker impact. The Victorian Curriculum was considered to have little to a non-existent influence, while the academic component of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was acknowledged as a source of potential change. Moreover, the experience of participating in the interviews was reported to have sparked new thoughts concerning the possible ways intercultural capability can be conceptualised and taught. Another important finding is that, during their school-based placement, traditional ways of approaching teaching Languages were reinforced. The main issues identified in the reality of schools and classrooms ranged from time constraints to how schools operate, such as requiring teachers to follow existing scope and sequence documents and submitting lesson plans before meeting their students.

6.1.1   Influences on preservice teachers' attention to the intercultural capability

Under the theme of 'environment', three main areas were identified as sub-themes contributing to preservice teachers' pedagogical attention to the intercultural capability, namely (1) the Victorian Curriculum, (2) the study units of the University course undertaken for ITE, and (3) the supervised teaching practice at mainstream secondary schools, undertaken as part of their degree.

Significantly, during their practicum experiences, preservice teachers stated that they were not relying on the Curriculum in order to be guided in the teaching of the intercultural capability. Participants reported that they had to adapt to the school and their mentors' expectations when on placement. Therefore, the practicum

component of their ITE can be considered a factor that significantly intrudes on and reinforces traditional language teaching methodologies, such as focusing on grammatical and lexical components. This comes to the detriment of creating innovative opportunities for change, such as focusing on the social aspects of language use and teaching culture through language (see Kramsch 1995). On the other hand, when preservice teachers were undertaking the theoretical units of their degree, this presented the opportunity to examine aspects of multicultural and inclusive education in tutorial discussions at the University, which was recognised as a positive factor influencing their formation as teachers.

- **Victorian Curriculum**

In this study, six participants out of seven explicitly reported low levels of influence of the Curriculum content on their pedagogical approaches. Some preservice teachers expressed stronger views about the lack of effect of Curriculum guidance on their practice than others. Remarkably, none of the participants in this study showed direct and thorough knowledge of the *Intercultural Capability* as presented in the Victorian Curriculum.

All participants interviewed agreed that the *Intercultural Capability,* as presented in the Victorian Curriculum, is a concept that must be valued by all teachers and should be explored explicitly in both ITE and in schools. All preservice teachers acknowledged that it is a crucial aspect and its importance was also extended from the classroom into the broader school environment and society. While acknowledging its importance in the Curriculum, all participating preservice teachers reported that they would teach the intercultural capability regardless of whether this notion appeared in the Victorian Curriculum. This is a significant finding, as it shows that a personal interest in the intercultural capability was pre-existent. However, the fact that this interest is not affected by its presence in the Curriculum should be of concern for policy-makers as it indicates a weak formulation.

Significantly, none of the participants reported high levels of confidence about their ability to embed the intercultural capability in their lessons. This might be because they are student teachers, so they are still questioning their expertise. It also confirms findings by Skourdoumbis (2016), namely that teachers know that general

capabilities exist, but unaware of the reason why they were introduced in the first place. This finding also suggests that general capabilities receive little attention and even though they appear in policy documents, they end up being disregarded, to some extent in ITE courses and predominantly in the realities of schools.

In relation to their classroom of Languages, participants agreed that the presence of the intercultural dimension in the Victorian Curriculum for Languages is a useful way to remind teachers that they should tie cultural and linguistic elements together when delivering their lessons. At the same time, they felt that this understanding was already obvious to them and justified this by recounting their prior language learning experiences. All preservice teachers expressed the belief that language teaching inevitably involves addressing cultural aspects. However, these were often seen as fixed elements (traditions and institutions), and only some participants formulated them as culture embedded in the language (for example, registers of formality, idiomatic expressions, etymology), or as language embedded in the culture (for example, acceptable content, structure of a text). This could potentially explain why participants do not regard the Victorian Curriculum as enriching their understanding of teaching Languages, namely because they already know that teaching another language involves teaching about another culture.

When Skourdoumbis (2016) analysed how secondary school teachers embed the seven general capabilities present in the Australian National Curriculum, he found that participants asserted their agency over the Curriculum and implemented it based on their unique interpretations of the capabilities. This study confirms that these preservice teachers' understanding of the intercultural capability appears to be implicit and intuitive rather than explicit and systemic.

- **Initial Teacher Education**

While the Victorian curriculum does not greatly impact on these preservice teachers' pedagogical practices, participants reported that the academic components of ITE were influential in developing better pedagogical approaches. Remarkably, three participants spoke about some study units in their coursework as having a strong impact on changing, or reinforcing, their beliefs about the intercultural capability. Participants commented on the university educator being able to engage

them in critical reflections about their biases and issues of race and discrimination. This is a key finding as it shows that the most substantial impact on teachers' beliefs in relation to a Curriculum component is derived from a course that allows the opportunity to examine current personal beliefs and societal issues critically. This finding is corroborated by the fact that most student teachers stated that participating in this study was a helpful way to start examining their own teaching practice.

Preservice teachers had different experiences in their teacher training courses. Some interviewees confirmed that their prior beliefs were consolidated during ITE (this was the case for Elisa and Alberto). Others showed they were willing to reconsider their prior beliefs (Lyn), while others showed a definite change in the way they conceptualised the intercultural capability. For example, Ynes stated that this change was prompted both by the interview process and by reflecting on such topics during a unit undertaken as part of her teacher training between the first and the second interview.

Despite recognising the contribution of ITE, all preservice teachers reported low confidence levels regarding both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the intercultural capability. This lack of confidence might be attributed to a lack of direct engagement with this concept. Hence it indicates the need for teacher education to address the intercultural capability. This finding also confirms claims in the existing literature that teachers are still insecure about teaching intercultural education (Roiha & Sommier 2021; Alismail 2016). In Salazar and Agüero (2016), this insecurity was linked to a general absence of the principles of intercultural education in teacher training programs. However, it can be argued that providing guidelines and principles around the intercultural capability might still be insufficient and that teacher training needs to encourage reflection and consider situated contexts. If, as Korthagen (2017) claims, what is needed is a better alignment between the layers of the onion (Korthagen 2004), it might be more effective to provide opportunities for preservice, as well as in-service teachers, to explore these layers in order to realise how the most inner layers affect the outer ones. Since previous studies have found that teachers' 'self-efficacy beliefs' are one of the main factors guiding teachers' behaviour (see Wyatt 2018), teachers might feel more competent in translating such beliefs into behaviour once these are brought to light.

- **Confronting the reality**

As part of their teacher education training, student teachers in Victoria are required to undertake between 45 and 60 supervised days teaching practice in schools when undertaking an undergraduate or postgraduate teacher education course[5]. While completing the required teaching rounds, preservice teachers felt that their practicum experiences consolidated traditional teaching approaches and did not allow many opportunities to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches.

This was in contrast with the academic component of ITE, which was effective in promoting engagement with the concept of the intercultural capability. In fact, according to the majority of participants (Elisa, Qing, Shanvika, May), their mentor teachers tended to be "stuck" in traditional ways of teaching and unwelcoming of change, in view of the disruptive potential of adopting different approaches as well as of integrating "new" materials. Relatedly, because of the pressures to pass the practical component of their teaching degree, student teachers felt compelled to adapt to their mentors' demands.

This confirms findings existing in the literature (see Flores & Day 2006, Grudnoff 2011), according to which preservice teachers feel obliged to imitate their mentor teachers, instead of exploring and implementing their own strategies to establish their own professional identities.

The impact of mentors' supervision of preservice teachers is under-researched according to a review conducted by Griffiths, Shean, and Jackson (2021). White et al. (2010) highlight the importance of professional experiences in the preparation of preservice teachers, and Buchanan et al. 2013 stress that effective professional development opportunities are essential for retention of graduates.

Participants in this study also realised that their mentor teachers were not open to trialling new methods and materials for practical reasons and cited workload and lack of time among the factors that impeded in-service teachers to consider innovative teaching practices. The fact that the new Curriculum has increased the workload for teachers is also documented in other studies (Salter & Maxwell 2018).

The ways in which schools operate also have a role in limiting teachers'

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[5] https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/news/regulatory-measures-extended-preservice-teachers-and-ite-providers-0

ability to respond to their students' needs. For example, one participant (Elisa) raised the issue that teachers feel pressured to conform when they are required to submit their unit plans in advance and follow lesson plans shared across their faculty. This, she witnessed, happens even before starting the academic year and meeting the learners, which affects teachers' ability to respond to their students' specific needs. It also hinders their ability to follow their own judgement over the prescribed guidelines. This finding aligns with concerns expressed in existing literature. For example, Rowe and Skourdoumbis (2019) analyse the Australian Government's reform agenda to improve teacher quality via teacher training and conclude that the attempts to standardise teaching practice and increase teacher accountability are detrimental to teacher agency.

This highlights a contradiction between the demands imposed on educators. On the one hand, they are supposed to be inclusive of and responsive to individual students' needs. On the other hand, they are limited in exerting agency because they are expected to conform to curricula, scope and sequences, and assessment schedules. These conflicting demands inevitably add to the burden of in-service teachers. This, in turn, appears to limit preservice teachers' ability to embed pedagogical approaches that align with their aspirations.

The Australian context was also considered as influential in determining participants' pedagogical approach. Remarkably, interview data show awareness of the marginal role of Languages in the Australian educational system, and this was seen as a disadvantage to students in a globalised world, both in terms of work and in terms of personal opportunities, thus highlighting the instrumental value of Languages education (Porto, Houghton & Byram 2018). As a consequence, teachers might need to use stereotypical representations of their culture to attract students' interest in selecting to study Languages beyond the compulsory limit decided by schools.

6.1.2   Preservice teachers' aspirations in relation to the intercultural capability

Data demonstrate that the intercultural capability is envisioned as the understanding of differences and the display of sensitivity and respect. This is in line with other definitions examined in the literature, such as intercultural understanding,

intercultural sensitivity, and respectful and appropriate communication (Perry & Southwell 2011; Deardorff 2004). The majority of participants (Elisa, Qing, Ynes, Shanvika) expressed their wish to continue learning from their students and strived for an interpretative understanding of intercultural communication. Some seemed inclined to adopt what Lanas (2014) refers to as 'thoughtfulness'. Lanas (2014) defines this 'as approaching each situation simultaneously with the ethicality of a teacher and the humbleness of a learner'. In a similar study, Syarizan, Minah, and Norhafezah (2014) found that, among Malaysian students, it was common to consider the intercultural capability as a relational process including both the *Self* and the *Other* in the communication. As predicted, having non-Western participants resulted in obtaining data that demonstrate how the relationship between the *Self* and the *Other* can be conceptualised in educational settings (Syarizan, Minah & Norhafezah 2014).

In general, data collated from the interviews show a movement towards a more processual and relational understanding of the intercultural capability. Remarkably, all participants expressed, more or less explicitly, the intention to show learners how interconnected and mutually influential different cultures are. However, while all participants appeared to agree that cultures mutually influence each other, there was also a tendency to envision ILTL as transmitting knowledge about cultural practices that perpetuate the myth of the nation-state as homogeneous.

The approach to analysing differences and similarities between the host culture and the culture(s) associated to the language taught was common among participants' approach to teaching. However, some preservice teachers (Alberto, Elisa, Qing) were able to produce alternative pedagogies, For example, Alberto considered teaching about cultural traditions was simplistic and counterproductive. He saw that studying history was as an effective way to teach that separating cultures is an artificial exercise. Elisa distinguished between ever-changing social practices and more stable cultural elements, which can be studied to increase students' motivation and to broaden their general knowledge of facts and artefacts. Qing shared a similar philosophy, which can be regarded as a relational view of teaching, reporting that she wished to learn *from* and *with* her students rather than feed them information. She recognised that she might have too idealistic expectations but that she hoped to foster empathy and introduced the idea of inner culture and self-care as

a way to overcome conflicts. She also stated that "knowledge leads to understanding, understanding leads to acceptance", proposing a theory that exists in models for intercultural competence (Perry and Southwell, 2011). Because she reflected on, and even theorised, the intercultural capability in the classroom, Qing displayed alignment between her aspirations and her application of an intercultural pedagogy.

- **Exercising the notion of living well together**

All participants acknowledged that intercultural relationships form part of the world we live in. The majority of preservice teachers (Elisa, Lyn, Qing, Shanvika, Alberto) mentioned that they view the intercultural capability as important for future work opportunities. Some (Elisa, Qing, Shanvika) stressed that it is definitely going to improve personal opportunities in general. In particular, all participants agree that it involves the idea of living well with other people. At least in principle, the participants in this study seemed to aspire to a critical and ethical reading of the intercultural capability, especially in light of having been victims of bias and stereotyping. How this can actually be implemented in the classroom remains uncertain.

Data also show that participants share a mission to empower young people. The intercultural capability appears to be at times explicitly linked to social justice concerns (Lamb et al. 2020), and data show that in a few cases participants felt that, as teachers, they have a 'social and political responsibility' (Kramsch 1995, p. 91). According to these preservice teachers (Elisa and Alberto), the intercultural capability includes making young people aware of social and cultural issues that are not necessarily reflected in the language. In fact, in some cases, it was conceptualised as completely separate from language. For example, one participant (Elisa) claimed that a plurilingual speaker could not be automatically considered as someone who is free from prejudice towards linguistically and culturally different people. For her, teachers committed to the intercultural agenda operate in any Learning Area, and they see their role as working against inequalities and social injustice in the world. When teachers show what needs change in society, they give their learners opportunities to become aware of issues and gain the tools to address them.

Another participant (Alberto) was critical of the Victorian Curriculum, stating that while it includes the *Intercultural Capability, the Ethical Capability, the Critical*

and Creative Thinking Capability, it also leaves out many controversial issues that would be beneficial for students to engage with. He said: "We put the good intention first, but then nobody follows up." One student teacher (Shanvika) was particularly disappointed by the school culture of a highly multicultural school where she was doing her school-based placement. She questioned whether the school's and education system's intention were to be inclusive of other cultures or whether the actual - and hidden - agenda is to make all students (especially those from "more" culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) conform to an ideal Anglo-Australian norm. This experience made her more aware of institutional racism (Gillborn 2006), and of the bias existing in overt and covert forms that force students to lose their cultural identity and assimilate to a national ideal. Shanvika had a very positive experience adopting an ILTL approach in one school context. Here, she could discuss cultural and linguistic similarities, teach idiomatic expressions, and include students' experiences in her lessons. However, she now struggled to adopt the same approach in a different school context. In this highly multicultural school, she noticed that conflict, rather than dialogue, seemed to dominate. In this context, she felt powerless and even perceived her own difference as a disadvantage. Her experience shows that when cultural differences are considered enriching and beneficial, fostering the intercultural capability in learners is an easy and enjoyable experience. However, when cultural difference is seen as a disadvantage by the students themselves who experienced trauma in view of their cultural background, and by the school environment, which does represent other cultures appropriately but rather promotes an Anglo-Australian norm, the task of teachers is complicated. In this case, teachers become suddenly aware of the limits imposed by the idea of the intercultural capability as a recipe to cure societal ills.

- **Teaching culture or teaching inter-culture?**

A major finding from this study is that incongruences exist between participants' theoretical interpretation of the intercultural capability and their practical application of ILTL. The most immediate pedagogical approach to teaching the intercultural capability in language teaching was related to transmitting knowledge of cultural practices and traditions, facts, and foods. Envisioning ILTL in practice involved analysing similarities and differences between the target and the

host cultures (for example in the cases of Lyn, Ynes, May). For this purpose, both the target and host cultures were conceived as homogenous and fixed. A common approach involved including knowledge about traditions, lifestyles, institutions, history, and geography of the country. This resorting to a functionalist paradigm of culture (Martin & Nakayama 2010; Risager 2007) is possibly considered a more straightforward approach to embedding culture in their lessons.

All participants in this study considered, at least to some degree, culture as corresponding to the nation. This aligns with the functional paradigm of Martin & Nakayama (2010) and is justified by the necessity 'to identify relatively permanent features of an entity that make it similar to and different from other entities' (Zotzmann 2016, p. 79) when illustrating and discussing, in this case, a language and its speakers (for example, Chinese native speakers are assigned Chinese nationality, even though this is not always the case).

One participant (May) adopted a functionalist approach, especially when teaching Chinese to students without a Chinese background. Here, she considered mastering a 'body of knowledge about the culture' (Crozet, Liddicoat, Lo Bianco 1999) as a replacement for linguistic abilities, because for these students: "Chinese is too hard." While she essentialised culture in order to be able to teach it, she also showed awareness of social issues and she recognised that there are many nuances within one culture. Lyn, whose approach falls under the functionalist paradigm (Martin & Nakayama 2010), imagined that she would incorporate the teaching of the intercultural capability by prioritising the 'uncritical teaching of four Fs (Foods, Fairs, Folklores and Facts)' (Crozet 2016). This is in line with her conceptualisation of the intercultural capability as 'cultural competence' (Crozet, Liddicoat, Lo Bianco 1999). There was also a will to portray her culture in overly positive terms, perhaps in light of the negative image it is given in the media and in Australian society in general. This was a common approach, shared by most participants, which shows their intention, at times biased, to eradicate prejudice towards the people who are speakers of the language they teach.

Another participant (Elisa) argued that popular national representations of a linguistic group are often beneficial to attract students' interest in the Australian context, where Languages are not a compulsory subject throughout secondary schooling. However, she is also aware that it is important to challenge rather than

reify such cultural stereotypes. She envisages using teaching materials that question existing representations of cultural and linguistic groups. This means that, at times, she would include teaching materials that are somehow stereotypical, while simultaneously trying to challenge the negative feelings around cultural difference. Some preservice teachers (Elisa, Qing, Shanvika) recognised that teaching culture as corresponding to a national ideal conflicted with their willingness to show that cultures are multifaceted and that change over time, place, and also based on who is observing them.

As a solution, some participants proposed integrating language and culture via teaching about idiomatic expressions and etymology to make learners more aware of the changing nature of both language and culture. Even the more socially engaged participants did not initially discuss the controversial aspects of the cultures associated with the languages they teach, such as colonialism and genocide. However, the conclusion was reached during the interview that such topics should be discussed.

Significantly, the intercultural capability was never exclusively conceptualised as 'cultural competence' (Crozet, Liddicoat, Lo Bianco 1999), demonstrating that culture is no longer only considered in terms of national culture.

The 'interlinguistic, intercultural, and transdisciplinary perspective on language learning' advocated by (Scarino & Liddicoat 2016) was not completely absent from participants' pedagogical practice as some expressed the intent to include their learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, however inconsistencies and uncertainties were apparent. For example, the concept of translanguaging (García & Li 2013) did not appear to be known, and only two preservice teachers (Qing, Shanvika) stated that they would allow students to use their first languages in a way that would make them feel proud of who they are. Another participant (Elisa) explained she was reluctant to include other languages she does not speak, as it would make her lose control over the class.

These incongruences also confirm findings by Young and Sachdev (2011) and Peiser and Jones (2014), who conclude that language teachers have an intuitional approach to the intercultural capability. They also consider that they are implementing it, even without Curriculum guidance.

A significant finding is that, in contradiction with the reported low confidence levels, the research participants made statements about the ease with which they feel they can discuss the culture associated with the language they teach. For the participants in this study, belonging to the culture associated with the language they are teaching makes the task of ILTL easy to carry out. Once again, this contradiction indicates that teaching about culture is sometimes considered as intercultural education, sometimes it is not. To clear any confusion, Kim (2002, p. 373) advocated the separation of intercultural and cultural communication competence, as the latter was culture-specific, while the former 'should remain constant across all intercultural situations regardless of specific cultures involved'.

In general, it can be concluded that while there is a theoretical understanding of the intercultural capability as a critical and ethical endeavour, the way preservice teachers intend to put it into practice is not necessarily aligned with such aspiration. The fact that participants' aspirations coexist with functionalist approaches aligns with findings from Tupas (2014, p. 247), who report that 'conflicted trajectories' prevail in conceptualisations of intercultural communication. Tupas (2014, p. 247) states that there are:

> 'attempts of students to be critical but, in practice, their criticality is enmeshed in reifying tendencies. Generally, students in the classes did not exemplify traits of highly 'critical' communicators. Instead, their engagement with interculturalism was conflicted. Thus, 'criticality' as it is envisioned remained incomplete and in need of further development.'

- **Self discovery of the intercultural capability**

At the core of teacher cognition is what Nieto (2006, p. 464) refers to as 'an elusive something', that 'sense of mission' that leads individuals to choose to embark on this profession. Closely related to the *Self* was also the justification for choosing this profession as participants used words like 'love', 'passion', 'inspire', 'enthusiasm' to describe why they became teachers of Languages. Lanas (2017, p. 557) argues for rethinking intercultural education in ITE in terms of love, which is seen as an alternative to 'instrumentalism, performance orientation, emotionlessness'.

As discussed above, most participants shared the aspiration to teach Languages in order to develop a stronger sense of both local and global identity and belonging in their students. The subject area of Languages was seen as potentially beneficial for their well-being, with some participants (Qing, May, Shanvika) feeling that it was their responsibility to assist their young learners, especially those of cultural and linguistic backgrounds that differ from the Anglo-Australian norm, in finding a place in the social and educational context. The justification for these beliefs was closely connected to the inner layers of the onion model, namely identity and mission (Korthagen 2004).

Defining identity proves to be a challenge because it is closely connected to the *Self* and it is shaped by emotions as well as reflection. It is understood through stories and discourse, it is linked to agency, and it is influenced by the context in which we act (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009 p.176). This finding aligns with existing research on preservice teachers' identity, showing an 'inextricable link' between the personal and the professional (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009, p. 180). Data clearly show that research participants' conceptualisations and practical application of the intercultural capability are derived from their life experiences. Most participants spontaneously recounted their personal intercultural journeys, that is to say, what, in their opinion, had made them more intercultural. These experiences include living and working in a different country, learning other languages while growing up (Elisa, Shanvika), studying in a different country (Qing, May, Alberto), as well as raising bilingual children (Lyn). The fact that these prospective teachers were able to empathise with their students was explained by own personal experiences of being perceived as the *Other* in Australia. Six out of seven preservice teachers interviewed reported experiencing painful incidents of racism and discrimination. They stated they were now more sensitive and interested in addressing the prejudices and stereotypes that lead to such behaviour.

Elisa and Shanvika recognised that other cultural influences have shaped their *Self* and could not maintain a single cultural identity. The same applies to Qing, who described herself in the survey as "70% Chinese, 30% the world". For Elisa and Qing, the idea of belonging to a third space, or of being across cultures, is present both in themselves and in the ways they teach. This differs from Lyn, who had a stronger identification with her culture of origin and tended to maintain a more rigid

separation between cultures. Ynes initially approached the teaching of French culture through a national paradigm, and it was only after taking a course in inclusive education that she started leaning towards a more learner-centred approach that takes into consideration her students' cultures.

Moreover, most participants claimed that they shared the aspiration to teach Languages so that they could create academic and personal opportunities for their students. This aspiration mirrored the benefits the participants experienced from being able to speak other languages, which they wanted to pass on to their students.

In conclusion, the most significant finding of this study is that the intercultural capability is conceptualised by these preservice teachers as personal and social responsibility towards the *Other*, thus proving that their "good intentions" are present and that they want these values realised in the classroom. Simultaneously, these preservice teachers' application of the intercultural capability is primarily intuitive and relies on individual interpretations. This corresponds to earlier findings by Peiser and Jones (2014).

6.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis will now offer some recommendations that have been drawn from this thesis' discussion.

The first consideration is drawn from Chapters Two and Three and concerns the lack of clear theoretical (philosophical and epistemological) foundations for the concept of intercultural education. It is therefore directed to scholars, educators, researchers, and teachers.

The second consideration is drawn from the previous Section, which demonstrates that ITE courses should create opportunities for novice teachers to reflect on deeper aspects of teacher cognition, particularly on how their biographies and values shape their approaches to teaching and learning. These opportunities should also be extended to practising teachers via professional development courses. This recommendation applies to the whole teaching profession since the general capabilities are not the responsibility of a specific Learning Area, according to the Australian and Victorian curricula.

The third recommendation is directed to policy-makers, as it is evident that the current formulation in the Victorian Curriculum is not producing a systematic application of the intercultural capability in everyday teaching practice.

6.2.3   A theoretical foundation for intercultural communication scholarship

The research data, mainly deriving from individual in-depth interviews, indicate that all paradigms explored in Section 3.2 are somewhat present in preservice teachers' conceptualisations and practical implementations of the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL). While both the critical and ethical paradigms are essential for turning the "good intentions" of intercultural education into a real possibility, the research data suggests that these paradigms appear as weak and uncertain, especially when it comes to translating ascribed meanings of the intercultural capability into the practice of teaching.

This highlights the need for a strong theoretical (philosophical and epistemological) foundation for intercultural education to counteract neoliberal forces in the field. The critical turn in intercultural education scholarship examined in Chapter Three is still far from being known and accepted outside the circle of those interested in it. In addition, the neo-social phenomenon in Australian education policy (Lingard, Sellar & Savage 2014) risks weakening the efforts made by critical intercultural communication scholars, since the social agenda is present in education policy. This 'rejuvenated governmental interest in enabling healthy and positive social environments', however, appears to exist 'primarily for the sake of fostering greater economic productivity' (Savage 2013, p. 187) instead of existing primarily for the benefit of all students, regardless of their linguistic, cultural, or socio-economic background as proclaimed in the document underpinning the current Australian Curriculum, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008).

In the last few decades, supranational organisations have imposed, on schools around the world, "vertical" decisions through policy documents, frequent testing, assessment tools, and externally designed curricula. Today, there is an urgent need for teachers and educators to reclaim the "horizontal" place of education in society. "Horizontal" in the sense that the purpose of education is to create the conditions that

sustain the possibility of imagining the creation of a better world, precisely as politics, in the broadest sense word, should do. As Coulby (2006, p. 246) argues: 'if education is not intercultural, it is probably not education, but rather the inculcation of nationalist or religious fundamentalism'.

Therefore, it is urgent that scholars, researchers, teacher educators, and teachers agree on the terminology, the aims, and the local declinations of intercultural education. This study shows that critical and ethical paradigms are useful in theorising intercultural education. The first one is needed to illuminate the shortcomings of existing intercultural education descriptions and models, and link issues of culture and communication to power issues. The latter is useful from a pedagogical perspective as Lévinas himself claims: 'the absolutely foreign alone can instruct us' (Lévinas, p. 73). In particular, Lévinas' idea of ethics as the 'first philosophy' (Moran 2000, p. 320) can be utilised for an epistemological foundation for intercultural education, where ethics towards the *Other*, rather than knowledge of the Other, becomes the premise, not just of the intercultural capability, but of any form of education.

6.2.3 'Core reflection' in teacher training

A critical finding from the present study is that participating preservice teachers began questioning their own practices and beliefs when undertaking a study unit that allowed for reflection on personal assumptions and expectations and when participating in this study's interviews. In the process of questioning, they moved away from traditional approaches to teaching culture and started to perceive and envisage teaching the intercultural capability in more complex and nuanced ways.

Findings from this study support much of the literature on reflection and reflexivity in teacher education (Korthagen 2014, Korthagen & Vasalos 2010). Once preservice teachers started exploring the most personal motives behind choosing to become Languages teachers they started realising their approach to teaching Languages was closely linked to their beliefs, identity, and mission. This allowed them to examine their teaching practice from a more conscious perspective.

Relatedly, Korthagen (2017) proposes that alignment across 'core qualities' affect competence and thus behaviour. When this is achieved, teachers are

empowered to make decisions that influence the school and classroom environment. This would reverse the phenomenon observed in this study, where context affects teaching. Therefore, ITE courses should allow student teachers to examine the deeper influences on how they approach their role as teachers, to promote a better understanding of how they can translate their 'core qualities' (Korthagen 2017) into practice. This deeper form reflection is called 'core reflection' by Korthagen (2017) as it relates to the inner layers of teacher cognition, those that are not often considered in teacher training.

It is recommended that teacher training develop teacher agency so that both preservice and in-service teachers feel ready to live up to the aspirations of intercultural education. As proposed by Lanas (2017, p. 560):

'Reflecting on intercultural topics requires retaining complexities, accepting multi-vocality, openness and the questioning of fixed truths […] intercultural education in teacher education is not simply a forum for *teaching the skills needed* to re-imagine new possibilities for social justice, but a forum *where that re-imagination can occur'*.

During data analysis, it became clear that preservice teachers are required to navigate in a sea of conflicting and competing demands. While they are already consciously aware of some, they have examined other aspects to a lesser extent. This highlights the need for spaces, in ITE courses where student teachers can re-imagine their ideal and practical aspirations of adopting a truly intercultural approach.

In particular, the fact that some participants showed a change in thinking about the phenomenon as a result of taking part in this study, demonstrates that to achieve awareness, and, if necessary. Improvement. Teachers should have safe spaces in which they can narrate and understand their lived experiences. In particular, the process of retelling their own lived experience led participants to understand their decisions, and the reasons behind such choices. In turn this led to change in thinking and, as a result, in practice.

ITE programs should provide further opportunities for all student teachers to critically and reflectively examine their own interpretations and assumptions about culture and interculturality. The role of reflection was found to be a 'catalyst' for critical intercultural understanding for student teachers in Moloney and Oguro

(2015), demonstrating that ITE courses can enhance the personal and professional growth of novice teachers when they include reflective tasks.

Rather than promoting the standardisation of educational aims, already present in global and national policy, it is recommended that ITE courses promote a strong theoretical (philosophical and epistemological) foundation for intercultural education so that all prospective teachers are exposed to its transformative aims.

As Lanas (2017, p. 561) argues: 'if both educators and students expect the answers to be readily 'out there' to be found, transmitted, learned and applied, intercultural education will serve to uphold the status quo'. This means that rather than providing quick solutions and recipes for intercultural living, ITE courses should offer spaces where prospective teachers are encouraged to reflect on, and formulate, their personal position on intercultural education, and the relationship between what they do in the classroom and what happens in the broader society. In this way, rather than conforming to what is already known, teachers can gain agency over issues over their actions in the classroom and meet their learners' needs, or, it might be more appropriate to say, actually meet their learners.

These opportunities for critical and reflective examination of behaviour, beliefs, identity, and mission should also occur with in-service teachers via ongoing professional development.

For novice teachers of Languages, it is recommended that ITE and professional development for in-service teachers explore Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) in an open-ended way, so that its mission to transform learners in the process of acquiring another language is fostered in the classroom.

In schools, the Learning Areas division is convenient for timetabling and staffing, but an "infusion" of the general capabilities does not seem to be systematically applied to individual disciplines. Currently, in the classroom of Languages, students compare and contrast Australia to the countries associated with the language that is taught. This practice is evident in what participants observed during their school-based placement experiences, where there is still an emphasis on differences and similarities between an idealised Australian culture and an idealised target culture. This was also evident in teaching materials, exam papers (for example, in the VCE exams) and textbooks preservice teachers encountered on placement.

Preservice teachers were unsure about their ability, as teachers, to develop the intercultural capability in their learners and would benefit from having examples of curriculum and teaching practices that are transformative and action-oriented. This lack of support and alternative models for teachers was already denounced by Young and Sachdev (2011). However, rather than only providing materials and textbooks for ready consumption, it might be also beneficial if schools offered opportunities for their staff to reconstruct the curriculum along with their learners (Hooley 2020).

In collaboration with colleagues in other disciplines, teachers need the agency, time, and means to shape the curriculum to best respond to local realities and specific needs of their learners. In this way, teachers can uphold the mission of transforming unequal power relations in a way that ensures the realisation of the possibility to imagine a different world. This can be realised if teachers are responsible for providing disadvantaged children with the resources and means they need to fight to regain power. At the same time, teachers must provide more advantaged students with an understanding of what power means and how they can best redistribute it for everyone's sake. By doing so, both teachers and their learners can be committed to equality and social justice and work against the depoliticisation of intercultural education (Coulby 2006, 249).

6.2.4   Education policy should place more emphasis on intercultural education

Closely related to the finding examined in Section 6.2.3 is the finding that incongruences exist between participants' theoretical interpretation and practical application of ITLT. All participants believed in the importance of teaching Languages for intercultural understanding and that it was their task to link the target language to the target culture in their daily practice. The latter was often portrayed as coinciding with the country associated with the language they teach in practical examples.

This is coupled with a weak degree of influence on the part of teacher training as well as policy documents. Relatedly, as teacher training relies on documents such as the Australian and the Victorian curricula, but also the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APS), it is recommended that more emphasis is placed on

the intercultural capability so that it becomes a focus of ITE and in-service teachers' professional development.

Asserting that cultural differences exist is a truism, however, there needs to be a shift from automatically associating certain cultural and linguistic practices to a specific nationality or country. This pedagogical approach, more grounded in the interpretative and critical paradigms examined in Chapter Three (Martin & Nakayama 2010) was also found to be the most challenging to implement by the participants of this study, who aspired to it. This clearly indicates the need for a pedagogical approach that intentionally shows learners how connected and interdependent we are.

The aims of teaching Languages go well beyond communicative skills and include personal, social, and primarily ethical, responsibility towards the *Other*. The data collected in this study prove that the "good intentions" of intercultural education are present in preservice teachers' cognition and that preservice teachers are committed to these values and they intend to realise them in the classroom. This also means that teachers need to take responsibility not only to deliver "narrow" curricula, such as developing the specific skills needed to speak in another language, but need also to develop "broad" curricula by creating links with other disciplines and incorporating larger social issues. This should be done with the aim of contributing to social change. The participants offered several theoretical and practical ideas, and this demonstrates the fertile ground that policy-makers can cultivate when designing language-in-education policies.

In the current formulation, the *Intercultural Capability* in the Victorian Curriculum lacks transformative potential. Too much emphasis is placed on cognitive aspects, hence on gaining knowledge about the *Other*, and too little importance is given to actual interactions. Schools are where these interactions take place, especially in a country with the cultural diversity of Australia. The Victorian Curriculum should highlight that interculturality needs to be a reciprocal process and cannot be reduced to passive acceptance of linguistic and cultural difference of a theoretical *Other*. Learners' linguistic and cultural diversity needs to be built upon and should replace ideals of an anglo-Australian norm that is no longer (and perhaps never was) reflective of society. Otherwise, the opportunity for transformation and of two-way integration will be missed.

The classroom of Languages, much like any other classroom, should be a site for open dialogue, dissent, and debate. Teachers and learners should be free to discuss issues, question given truths, and find common ground within conflicting views. In such spaces, there should be no room for quick recipes and banal formulas that have no impact on the status quo. The *Intercultural Capability* in the Victorian Curriculum, therefore, should clearly be directed at addressing issues of privilege and oppression.

Chapter 7:   Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate whether Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning (ILTL) is being used as the current methodology in the classroom of Languages, following recent curriculum changes in Victoria, Australia. Specifically, this study explored teacher cognition in relation to the theoretical concept of the *Intercultural Capability* in the Victorian Curriculum and the practical application of ILTL. The selected cohort was composed of a preservice teachers with a migratory background, completing a graduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program while undertaking the practicum component of this course in secondary government schools.

Findings from this study contribute to knowledge in the fields of language pedagogy and teacher education. First, the study provides valuable insights into how a group of migrant Victorian preservice teachers understand and intend to adopt an intercultural approach to their language classroom. This is an area that requires further exploration, since little is known about how the personal experiences of migrant teachers affect their conceptualisation and practical application of the intercultural capability. This study also identifies areas of teacher cognition that influence their ability to teach effectively. Finally, the results of this study suggest that there are incongruences between the multiple interpretations of the intercultural capability and its practical application, which appears tentative and sporadic, thus perpetuating the gap between policy and practice identified in the literature (see Section 1.3).

As reported in the previous Chapter, based on the findings of this study, the participating preservice teachers welcome and accept the concept of interculturality and the general aims of ILTL as an overarching principle guiding language pedagogy. These preservice teachers appear committed to the intercultural project in education. This commitment derives from their experiences, which have shaped and will continue to shape how they define culture and the intercultural capability. Being all migrant teachers with various experiences of learning different languages when

growing up and living in different countries, they all felt that such experiences had made them more intercultural. Moreover, they all view intercultural education as vital to our current world. Consequently, they all consider the inclusion of this concept in policy documents beneficial both for the teachers and for the learners.

Although the participating preservice teachers subscribe to the general aims of intercultural education, they found it difficult to challenge fixed ideas of culture and the dominant narrative of a national culture associated with the languages they teach. Upon reflection, participants showed they understood culture as a complex and dynamic concept, and not necessarily tied to national borders. They recognised that the main aim of an intercultural pedagogical approach is to achieve a society where difference is an inherent feature of society, rather than a pigeonhole for those who do not conform to an ideal standard. Nevertheless, even when a more fluid view of culture was acknowledged in theory, they struggled to implement alternative pedagogies and address controversial topics in their classroom. They reported their intention to avoid stereotypes and harmful generalisations in their language classroom, however they seemed unsure about how this could be effectively achieved.

Their commitment to the more engaged aspect of intercultural education might be explained by the fact that the preservice teachers who participated in this study were migrants and suffered some form of discrimination because of their difference. Yet, in their teaching practice, they could not escape the functional paradigm of culture (Martin & Nakayama 2010), possibly because of a lack of support and alternative models (see Young and Sachdev 2011). Relatedly, research participants admitted that they were not satisfied with their competencies in adopting an intercultural approach in their teaching. It is also possible that this is due to weak and ambiguous messages about what intercultural education is about, which impedes the impact of policy on practice.

A significant finding is that participants reported that they would adopt an intercultural approach regardless of policy directions and they considered the Victorian Curriculum to have little or no influence on their pedagogical approach. This could be because, as novice teachers, they are relatively inexperienced in terms of language teaching. It could also be explained by the fact that these preservice teachers were already aware that teaching a language inevitably involves teaching

cultural elements. In fact, they considered the intercultural capability as implied in their role as teachers of Languages.

In terms of teaching methods, all participants believe that teaching the relationship between language and culture is a means to help young learners understand how one affects the other, which is considered to foster students' intercultural capability. For example, participants provided examples of how they would embed the 'language-culture' relationship in their lessons (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013), such as teaching etymology and idiomatic expressions.

The formative role of academic training was acknowledged, especially when participants recalled learning about issues of inclusion and diversity and about multicultural education. Remarkably, the formative role of their school-based placement experience reinforced traditional language teaching methodologies rather than encouraged change. Some participants reported adapting to the teaching methodology their mentors preferred, in order to pass the course practicum component.

Future research could build on the findings of this study by investigating the lived experiences of intercultural education of participants who do not have personal migration experiences in order to establish whether the conceptualisation of the intercultural capability and ILTL's practical application changes based on personal experiences with cultural diversity. Future research should also be conducted with experienced migrant teachers of Languages in Victorian schools to see if they interpret culture and the intercultural capability in similar ways to the preservice teachers in this study or whether it is different and perhaps more closely aligned to those of non migrant teachers. A longitudinal study could also establish whether, with experience, this group of teachers can adopt transformative pedagogies in their practice.

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the intrinsic incongruences between participants' practical application of ILTL and their multiple theoretical interpretations of this concept. This gap presents challenges for preservice teachers' ability to understand and implement education policy and curriculum documents, which has consequences for policy-makers and teacher education programs. Recommendations include that curriculum documents redefine the concept of the Intercultural Capability to highlight that not only learning *about* cultural diversity is

necessary, but also learning *from* and *through* cultural diversity. This study also recommends assigning the Intercultural Capability a more prominent role in the Curriculum so that it is not treated as an addition but as central to promoting social cohesion and fostering social justice. Finally, regarding both initial teacher education and teachers' professional development, the need for promoting critical and reflective discussions has been identified. This is expected to support teachers in becoming agents of change.

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Appendices

Appendix A

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled 'Developing an Intercultural Orientation in Language Pedagogy: a Study of Pre Preservice teachers' Perceptions and Experiences in Victorian Schools'.

This project is being conducted by Nataša Ciabatti, a student researcher, as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr. Teresa De Fazio and Dr. Oksana Razoumova from the College of Arts and Education.

Project explanation

This study investigates how teachers of languages engage with the concept of Intercultural Language Teaching. It explores their interpretation of the intercultural dimension and the way they translate it into practice in their own language classroom. Data will be collated to provide evidence of the personal and professional understandings and experiences of preservice teachers of adopting an intercultural orientation to Language Teaching.

The aim of this study is to identify key drivers, opportunities and challenges existing for teachers, in order to inform educators, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, etc. with the broader goal of contributing to the dialogue around implications for best practice in language teaching methodology.

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to participate in this study to share your perspectives and experiences of embedding Intercultural Language Teaching in your language classroom. You will be asked to allow the researcher to conduct an individual interview of the expected duration of 1 hour. The interview will be audio-recorded. A follow up interview might be organised.

You will be able to choose to opt-in or out of any of the study activities at any moment and without any implications.

All data will be coded and de-identified so that participants and the school/University where they work/study will remain anonymous.

What will I gain from participating?

This study will investigate the personal and professional understandings and experiences of Preservice teachers of Languages and EAL/D in teaching languages within an intercultural orientation.

Your participation is critical to contributing to the field of knowledge of current teaching practice in Victorian schools.

The benefits include contributing in a meaningful way to building a specific body of knowledge on the subject that will allow the establishment of and improvement of learning initiatives, resources, opportunities, processes and tools of contemporary language teaching practice.

No direct benefit is provided.

How will the information I give be used?

Participants will remain anonymous. If you wish to continue to inform the study through follow up conversations, you are welcome to provide your contact details. All contact details will be coded for anonymity and records will be stored accordingly to ensure anonymity and confidentiality are respected.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

It is not expected that any stress, discomfort or inconvenience be experienced by subjects participating in this study beyond the normal experience of everyday work life. The discussion of your teaching practice involves minimal risk, however, should you experience any stress or discomfort you can talk to school counsellors or contact BeyondBlue on 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day / 7 days a week).

Your participation is voluntary and you can decide not to participate or to opt-out at any stage of this project, without any implications.

How will this project be conducted?

This will be conducted observing and interviewing a random sample of Preservice teachers. Data will be collected by the Student Researcher through individual interviews with participants.

Who is conducting the study?

The Chief Investigator for this study is Dr. Teresa De Fazio. Email: teresa.defazio@vu.edu.au or phone 03 9919 5892.

The Associate Investigator for this study is Dr. Oksana Razoumova. Email: oksana.razoumova@vu.edu.au or phone 03 9919 4354.

The Student Researcher of this study is Nataša Ciabatti. Email: natasa.ciabatti@live.vu.edu.au or phone 0422038572.

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into the intercultural orientation to language teaching.

This study investigates the relationship between teachers' professional identities and curriculum interpretation in relation to the Intercultural capability in the Languages and EAL/D subject areas. The aim of this study is to identify key drivers, opportunities and challenges existing for teachers, in order to inform educators, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, etc. with the broader goal of contributing to the dialogue around implications for best practice in language teaching methodology.

You are invited to participate in this study by providing your perspectives on your understanding and experiences of embedding an intercultural orientation into your everyday teaching practice.

The benefits will include contributing in a meaningful way to building a specific body of knowledge on the subject that will allow the establishment of and improvement of learning initiatives, resources, opportunities, processes and tools of contemporary language teaching. No direct benefit is provided.

Participants will remain anonymous. If participants wish to continue to inform the study through any follow up activities they are encouraged to provide contact details. However, all contact details will be coded for anonymity and records will be stored accordingly to ensure anonymity and confidentiality are respected.

It is not expected that any risk of stress, discomfort or inconvenience be experienced by subjects participating in this study beyond the normal experience of everyday work/study life.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, "[Click here & type participant's name]"
of "[Click here & type participant's suburb]"

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:
"[Click here & type name of study]" being conducted at Victoria University by:
"[Click here & type name of Chief Investigator]"

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Nataša Ciabatti

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Short survey
- One individual interview (30 minutes - 1 hour)
- Follow up individual interview (30 minutes - 1 hour)

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher
Teresa De Fazio
 +61 3 9919 5582

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

1)   **What is your gender?**

1.   F

2.   M

3.   Non-binary

2)   **What is your age group?**

1.   20-29

2.   30-39

3.   40-49

4.   50-59

3) What languages do you speak?

_____

4) How would you describe your cultural identification?

_____

5) In which degree and year are you currently enrolled?

_____

6) What are your subject specialisations?

_____

_____

7) Which Language(s) are you going to teach?

_____

8) Do you see the Intercultural Capability as part of your classroom of Languages?

1.   Yes, definitely

2.   Yes

3. Not sure

4. No

5. Not at all

9) Do you feel confident delivering the Intercultural Capability?

1. Definitely confident

2. Moderately confident

3. Not sure

4. Slightly confident

5. Not confident

Appendix D

Interview guide

1)   ENVIRONMENT

a)   Either on placement or during your studies, have you ever come across the concept of the Intercultural Capability?

b)   Does the fact that it is included in the Victorian Curriculum encourage you to teach it?

2)   BEHAVIOR

c)   Have you witnessed examples of the Intercultural Capability? What were they?

d)   How would you incorporate the Intercultural Capability in your teaching?

3)   COMPETENCIES

e)   Do you feel confident delivering the Intercultural Capability?

4)   BELIEFS

f)   What is the value for your learners to develop the Intercultural Capability?

5)   IDENTITY

g)   Did your experiences influence your interpretation of the Intercultural Capability?

h)   Do you consider yourself intercultural?

6)   MISSION

i)What do you hope to achieve in your language classroom?